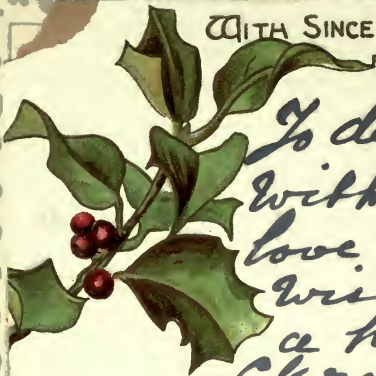


AMONG FRENCH INNS



By
CHARLES GIBSON

WITH SINCERE GOOD WISHES
FOR CHRISTMAS.



To dear Hattie
with May's
love and
wishing her
a happy
Christmas



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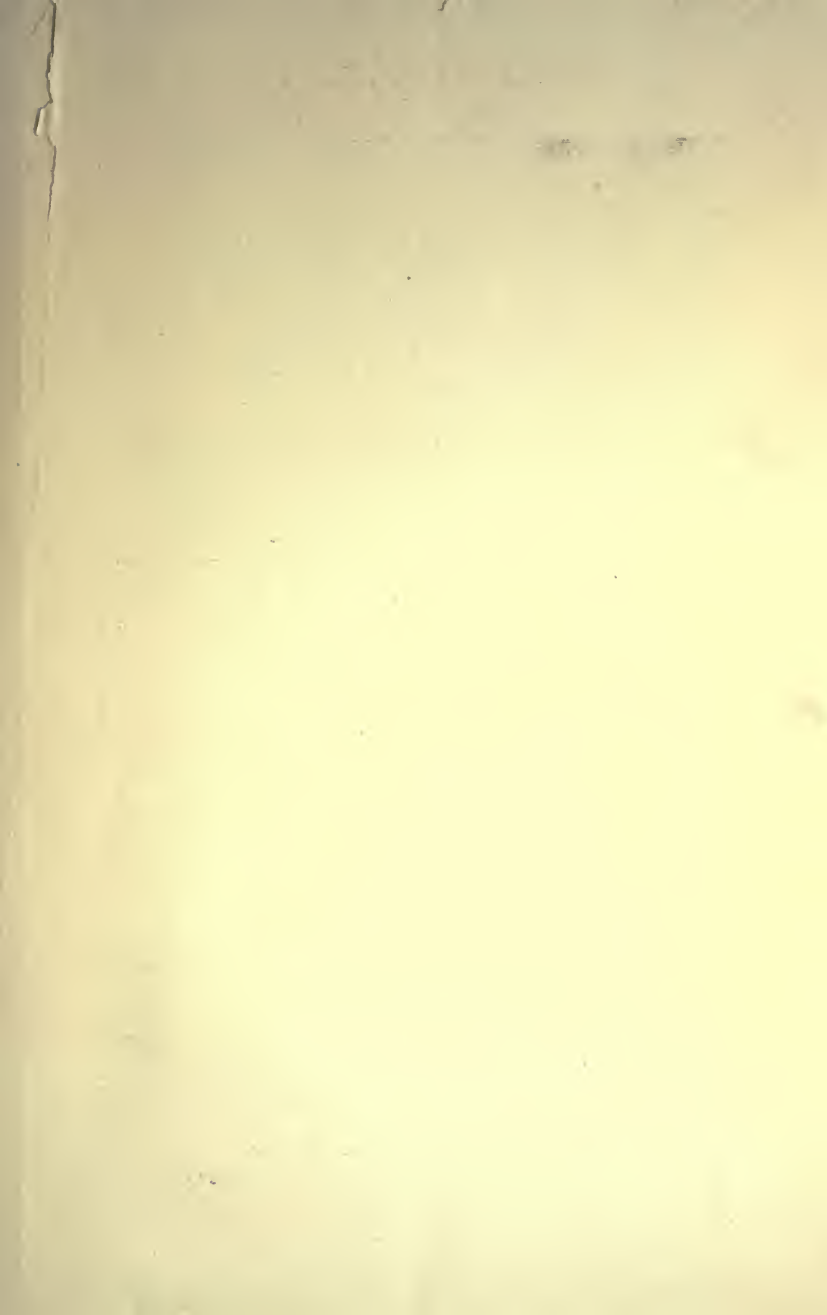
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HÔTEL DU GRAND CERF, GRAND ANDELY

(See page 199)

LITTLE PILGRIMAGES

Among French Inns

THE STORY OF A PILGRIM-
AGE TO CHARACTERISTIC
SPOTS OF RURAL FRANCE

BY

Charles Gibson

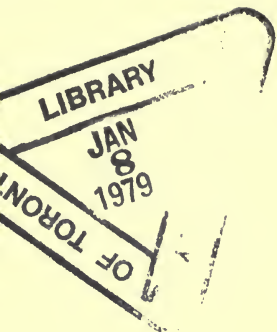
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Published, November, 1905

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Boston, U. S. A.

TO

My Mother

WHOSE LOVE, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND SYMPATHY

HAVE BEEN THE

CONSTANT GUIDE TO MY LIFE

THIS BOOK IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

MY acknowledgments are due to the proprietors of the inns, as well as to Mrs. Charles H. Paine, through whose assistance I have been enabled to obtain many of the views from which the illustrations in this volume have been taken.

PREFACE

THIS volume is the outcome of several summers, or portions thereof, that have been spent in picturesque parts of France. An extended stay has permitted me to examine into some of the history and legends of this delightful country, to obtain some experience of the character of its inns, and to acquire — I trust — something of its atmosphere.

A number of notes were taken on the spot, and these have been allowed to mellow in the memory, so that in writing of them there is a touch of reminiscence which may not perhaps be out of place in a volume of this sort. I desire to state that this pilgrimage is *Among French Inns*, not one made to them exclusively. Advantage has been taken of this fact to deal rather broadly with the places visited in the present narrative.

“But is it a narrative?” some one may ask, and perhaps rightly. All it attempts to be is a form of history, purporting to be that of an excursion made by a number of types

Preface

of character that are frequently to be met with when travelling on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. If any readers of the doings or sayings of the characters in this book should claim a resemblance to themselves, they are undoubtedly wrong. No such resemblance exists; none could exist; none was ever intended to exist! The characters of the story that is woven into the pages of these travels are not individual portraits. They are only attempted reproductions of types, at once amusing in real life, and food for contemplation and thought. I would counsel my friends to look for them when they travel in these regions, for they add greatly to the pleasure of the trip.

To those who are led to make a pilgrimage Among French Inns, we would say a word or two in regard to the practical side of so poetical a trip. If these inns are, in certain rural districts, more primitive than those of England, they are never without good cheer in the way of food and drink. The cuisine in France is different altogether from the cuisine in England—as different as can be. Each has its good points; but in the cuisine of the Frenchman there is a subtle art which nothing can take from him.

Preface

In the bedrooms, feather beds abound; linen sheets, windows that open sidewise, and let in draughts in cold weather. Go to the inns in summer or spring, rather than in winter. The rates are not expensive, and the "extras" less abundant than in the larger hotels. The early breakfast of coffee and rolls is, let us say, in the neighbourhood of a franc, about twenty cents in American money. The *déjeuner*, or luncheon, from eleven until one-thirty, *table d'hôte*, is from two to three francs. Dinner is in proportion.

For those who do not wish to make an expensive trip, the second class, in travelling, is preferable. Third class, as a rule, is to be avoided in the country districts. To those who are fond of scenery, the railway journeys, especially in Normandy, will be a source of unmitigated pleasure and delight. I have attempted to give a slight idea of this in these pages, with how unworthy a pen I myself am only too well aware.

There will be little use in expecting the coachmen of the public carriages to be polite. They rarely if ever are. They bully and cheat the unwary traveller whenever occasion crops up. Still, they are so funny; every one is so funny; there is so much real

Preface

mirth in the study of character alone, that if we take most of the people we meet in a spirit of good humour, we shall find ourselves growing fat from laughter.

It is important to treat the French with a great deal of politeness. They are a polite race, and deal in a multitude of manners. Receiving these themselves, they look for them in strangers, and are susceptible to kindness and good nature. They may be violent, if they are offended ever so little, but are capable of making themselves entertaining and charming.

To those who love it, life in France may be a perpetual dream of enchantment. There is a sense of art everywhere, rarely to be met with except in Italy. Every Frenchman is an artist, and every place he enters, he makes his studio. It is surprising to see in the simplest, the most uneducated peasant, a knowledge and a sense of art or historical research, unheard of in our own country, or even in England.

In short, France is France. Nobody can properly describe it to you if you have not been there. You must go and see it, and enjoy it for yourself. That you may enjoy it, and that you may patronize the inns, with

Preface

as pleasant an experience as my own, I sincerely trust. And if the descriptions in this humble volume find favour in your eyes, I shall be more than gratified, and feel well repaid for having written it. Should you do this, and become a pilgrim to the rural haunts of France, we may then accompany one another in the appreciation of a common joy.

CHARLES GIBSON.

9 CHARLES STREET, BOSTON, 1905.

INTRODUCTION

AS we look upon the map of Normandy, the most northwesterly province of France, we may see that it is divided into five Departments. Each of these Departments has its own distinctive capital and its characteristic life, dividing this beautiful portion of France, as it were, into so many counties, small in area and yet large in the part which they have played in the early history of France, and the influence which they have exerted upon the world at large.

To the northeast is the Department of Seine Inférieure, which is perhaps the richest, in its wealth of cities and its artistic and historic treasures. In the centre of its northern coast is the town of Dieppe, which was at one time so favourite a watering-place for the French and English, but which is now, like Calais and Boulogne, one of the principal Channel ports. In the extreme southwestern corner of the Department is the city of

Introduction

Havre, the port of Paris and the most important town upon the coast. South of Dieppe, and beautifully situated on the banks of the Seine, is the city of Rouen, the capital of Normandy, and in many senses its most important town.

South of Seine Inférieure is the Department of Eure, whose capital and principal town is that of Evreux. West of Eure is the Department of Calvados, which occupies the northern central portion of Normandy, and whose most important towns are Caen, Bayeux, and Falaise. On its northern coast are also situated the twin towns of Trouville and Deauville, the fashionable rendezvous of France during the summer season.

Directly south of Calvados is the Department of Orne, whose capital is Alençon, and which also contains the interesting town of Argentan. This is the most southern part of Normandy, and borders upon Brittany and the Department of La Sarthe, which leads in turn into Touraine, and is the gateway to the centre of France.

On the west coast of Normandy is the Department of La Manche, which extends over its entire area from north to south; it includes the important seaport town of Cher-

Introduction

bourg, which is now one of the great transatlantic terminals, as well as the cathedral town of St. Lo, and lastly, the little town of Avranches and the town of Coutances. Avranches is built upon the brow of a steep hill, overlooking a wonderful view of the coast of Brittany and the Mont St. Michel. Southeast of Cherbourg, and nearly in the centre of a great square expanse of land, extending in a northwesterly direction into the ocean, is the town of Valognes, and in the southern portion of La Manche is the ancient town of Mortain.

Such is the general geographical aspect of this picturesque province of France.

Southwest of Normandy lies Brittany, which is as distinctive in its character as the former, and full of interest to the traveller. It is bounded by the English Channel on the north, and stretches to the most western point of France. The most westerly town of importance is Brest. The great peninsula formed by this province is like a gigantic finger pointing toward the ocean, and marking it, apart from the rest of France. It is, therefore, geographically unique in this respect.

Southeast of Brittany, and toward the

Introduction

centre of France, we find Touraine, known as the garden of France, and including, like the other provinces, several Departments. To the southeast again we have Provence, reaching from the valley of the Rhone toward Northern Italy and the Alps.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	xiii
I. AT THE HOTEL FRASCATI, HAVRE	1
II. IN SEARCH OF AN INN, BETWEEN HAVRE AND ROUEN	32
III. AT THE HOTEL DU GRAND CERF, FECAMP	82
IV. CAUDEBEC TO ROUEN	117
V. ROUEN	140
VI. AMONG THE INNS OF BRITTANY	170
VII. AT THE HOTEL DU GRAND CERF, LES ANDELYS	194
VIII. WITH THE DUCHESS AT TROUVILLE	239
IX. IN AND OUT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ORNE	275
X. AT THE HOTEL DE GUILLAUME LE CONQUERANT, DIVES	313
XI. AMONG THE INNS OF TOURAINE	336
XII. IN OLD PROVENCE	371
XIII. AT THE HOTEL DE LA FORET, BARBIZON	389
INDEX.	407

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
HÔTEL DU GRAND CERF, GRAND ANDELY (<i>See page</i> <i>199</i>)	<i>Frontispiece</i>
HÔTEL FRASCATI, HAVRE	10
HÔTEL DE VILLE, HAVRE	15
GENERAL VIEW OF LILLEBONNE — REMAINS OF OLD ROMAN THEATRE, LILLEBONNE — MODERN CHÂ- TEAU AND TOWER OF OLD CASTLE, LILLEBONNE	52
CHURCH OF NOTRE DAME, LILLEBONNE	54
HÔTEL BLANQUET, ÉTRETAT	76
THE BEACH, ÉTRETAT	79
HÔTEL DU GRAND CERF, FÉCAMP	82
MARKET-DAY, FÉCAMP	98
HÔTEL DE LA MARINE, CAUDEBEC	118
MARKET-PLACE, CAUDEBEC	130
APPLE-ORCHARD, NEAR ROUEN	142
TOUR DE LA GROSSE-HORLOGE, ROUEN — THE CA- THEDRAL, ROUEN	150
COUTANCES, FROM THE RAILWAY	172
BAY OF MONT ST. MICHEL, FROM AVRANCHES	174
HÔTEL POULARD, MONT ST. MICHEL	178
CHIMNEYPiece, HÔTEL DU GRAND CERF, GRAND ANDELY	200
CHÂTEAU GAILLARD	206
DIEPPE CATHEDRAL	232
CHURCH OF NOTRE DAME, TROUVILLE	240
A FARM NEAR TROUVILLE	257
HÔTEL DE VILLE, DREUX	279

List of Illustrations

	PAGE
CHÂTEAU DE MAINTENON	280
FIFTEENTH CENTURY HOUSE, CHARTRES	291
STATUE OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR, FALAISE	318
HOSTELLERIE DE GUILLAUME LE CONQUÉRANT, DIVES	324
GENERAL VIEW OF SAUMUR — HÔTEL BUDAN, SAUMUR	340
HÔTEL DE FRANCE, CHINON	353
CHÂTEAU DE LUYNES — OLD HOUSE, LUYNES	361
HÔTEL DE LA PROMENADE AND TOUR ST. ANTOINE, LOCHES	368
AVIGNON	384
HÔTEL DE LA FORÊT, BARBIZON	390

Among French Inns

CHAPTER I

AT THE HOTEL FRASCATI, HAVRE

IT was with but a general idea of France, an idea rendered somewhat misty, we must own, by a night on the English Channel, that we landed one morning at Havre, with the intention of spending a month or two among the picturesque and rural haunts of this favoured country. Our party of three was composed of an Englishman, a Frenchman, and an American, the latter of whom had undertaken the duties of historian to the expedition. The Frenchman had agreed to be the guide, and the Englishman was to content himself with enjoying the scenery, eating the French *poulets* and salads, which were sure to be served at the country hotels and inns, and, if possible, with getting a little rest and relaxation, after the London season.

Among French Inns

It was the fourteenth of July. And to those who have ever had the misfortune to arrive in France on this day of all others to avoid, perhaps we may not look in vain for sympathy. It is the date of the great "*fête de la République Française*;" and even if one is an enthusiastic republican, the day is at best a trying one on which to move about. It is the corresponding celebration to the Fourth of July in America, with just a touch of the Frenchman's enthusiasm thrown in; and if one chances to be a foreigner who is in search of peace and quiet, the arrival is something of a shock.

That the sailors might enjoy the holiday to its utmost, the boat was docked and the passengers landed at five A. M., instead of the scheduled time of seven-thirty. The miserable travellers, who had just settled themselves for a short nap, after tossing about on the Channel all night, are bundled out on to an empty quay, bewildered and dazed, and more dead than alive. The lady from London, who was to have joined her husband there, as she confidently assured us the night before, finds him not, and is left in a tearful condition on the dock, consoling herself with a cup of "*café au lait*" and a brioche. An

At the Hotel Frascati, Havre

elderly dowager, who is mercifully travelling with her maid, is so overcome by this unexpected arrival, that she is seized with an attack of asthma, and her shortness of breath is noticeable for some distance down the quay. At last her maid dives into the depths of a travelling dressing-case, and produces a cigarette, which somewhat relieves the sufferer, and her neighbours, from the fear lest she strangle to death.

What a change from the arrival in England! To one unaccustomed to the many charming qualities of the French and their natural mannerisms, the first impression on landing is that of being at the mercy of so many lunatics. Everybody is jumping about, rushing hither and thither, throwing their arms wildly in the air, chattering, quarrelling, hurrying, apparently getting nowhere and accomplishing nothing. The neatness, the order, the quiet and reserve, which we left on the other side of the Channel, has entirely disappeared. Here, everything is just the opposite. The buildings are dirty, but picturesque. The disorder is complete and apparent. The people are in a frenzy of excitement over nothing and no one, from the moment we first set foot on French soil.

Among French Inns

And yet it is all fascinating and attractive, full of life and animation, and stirring even the most phlegmatic to a smile, or a frown. The dirt and squalor are picturesque and artistic; the whole scene is changed, in the twinkling of an eye, as we step off the boat. The blue sky and brilliant sunshine, whose cheerfulness is in contrast to the misty atmosphere of London, refreshes and invigorates, and — in short, it is France.

“Vous n’avez rien à déclarer, monsieur?” exclaims a voice in our ears, and instantly innumerable custom-house officers surround us and tear open our luggage in a ruthless manner. The Englishman’s leather boxes, whose neatness would never have been disturbed in Britain, are dragged here and there, without any apparent reason, scratched and dirtied, so that even his calm is ruffled and his dignity disturbed. The Frenchman’s cases being of light wood, tied up with cords of rope, are cut open somehow or other. On the whole, the American’s steamer-trunks fare the best of the three, being designed for heavy travelling, and strongly bound with brass and iron.

“Nothing to declare, messieurs?”

“Nothing; absolutely nothing.”

At the Hotel Frascati, Havre

But all to no avail.

"Allons, garçon!"

And there being no hope of a cab at this hour in the morning, we end by walking to the hotel, preceded by an octogenarian porter rolling our luggage on a truck.

"But what hotel shall we go to?"

"The Hôtel Frascati, of course," says the Frenchman; and though our English companion is inclined toward the D'Angleterre, and the American toward the De l'Europe, we give way to the superior knowledge of the drum-major of the party, and proceed to the best hotel in Havre. What the Adelphi is to Liverpool, such is Frascati's to Havre, the haven of the transatlantic travellers, the delight of the Americans, and the embodiment of all that is comfortable and desirable.

"But I thought this excursion was to be spent among French inns," persisted the Englishman, with that dogged love of consistency which is so a part of his race.

"To be sure," says the Frenchman; "but let us indulge ourselves for this once in the best that the town affords. We shall have plenty of opportunity later to test the hospitality of the rural hostelries. Frascati's is one of the features of Havre, and its pro-

Among French Inns

prietor has at least an innholder's license; so that we may stretch the imagination a little and enjoy the good cooking and comfort of the place for a day or two." In this way the momentous question was settled, and we wandered on through the picturesque streets, enjoying our first morning in Norman surroundings.

The porter, in spite of his burden, was soon making himself agreeable, and imparting information to the party in general, and the Frenchman in particular.

"Oh, yes, this is the '*fête de la République*,' messieurs. Is this the first time *ces messieurs* have seen one?"

Ces messieurs, at least two of them, certainly never had seen a "*fête de la République*" before; and for the moment, perhaps, sincerely wished that they might never see one again. But that was purely from motives of personal comfort, and nothing to do with the glory of France and her republican institutions. The porter, however, soon developed into an imperialist, and volunteered some information which made us rather curious as to his early history.

"Ah, messieurs," said the old fellow, pausing in the middle of the street and

At the Hotel Frascati, Havre

pushing his cap over his left eye, "this is not the first *République* that I have seen in France. I saw the *République* of 1848 when it was born — and when it died, too," and he gave a chuckle to himself, as much as to say "and a good thing it was." "I saw the last Empire as well, messieurs, the one that went out like a candle in 1870. Those were great days at the Tuileries and Fontainebleau. Oh, those were the days," and again he cocked his cap still further over his left eye. "Many's the time I've seen the Emperor drive out with the Empress, and she looking as beautiful as a young goddess. I'd touch my hat to them, and they'd bow in return; for they all knew me, as I stood near the palace gates and swept the walk. But they're gone now, and nobody thinks of me. But if they ever came back they'd remember me, I can tell you," and the old man smiled to himself, as he thought of the brilliant days that were gone.

By this time we were well on our way toward the centre of the town, and the long rows of houses and buildings, with their white stones, blackened with age and dirt, and their iron balconies, were following one another in rapid succession; giving way

Among French Inns

here and there to a public square or a civic building. The numberless cafés, with their awnings, and their rows of chairs and tables on the sidewalks, were just coming to life; for everything is early in France. The patrons of the establishments were bustling about behind their long glass windows, covered with signs of "Byrrh," "Bock," "Restaurant-Café," etc. The streets, paved largely with rough, flat stones, about a foot square, were anything but smooth to travel over. But the general attraction of this strange new life, suddenly appearing out of the summer morning as if by magic, made one forget the practical, and consider the whole more like a scene on the stage than reality.

As we proceeded, the porter continued to regale us with stories of King Louis Philippe and Napoleon III., interspersed with reminiscences of the Empire, which entertained us until we reached the hotel. Trams and railway lines frequently crossed our path, and added to the general appearances of business which were everywhere predominant. For Havre is to-day a city of industry and commerce, and its riches lie in these directions, rather than in historical or architectural monuments.

At the Hotel Frascati, Havre

The religious sentiment and artistic genius which are to be found at Rouen, are absent here. History and worldly goods have taken the place of art. As the port of Paris and "one of the keys of France," Havre is now what Liverpool has been to England, though it has not sprung into this position through a fluctuation of commercial interests, nor through sudden growth.

As a port and town its importance has been recognized since the sixteenth century. It has had as patrons such men as Richelieu and Colbert. It has been rescued from the hands of enemies by Catherine de Medicis and her sons Charles IV. and the Duc d'Anjou. In its citadel the crafty Mazarin held captive, under the guardianship of the Duc d'Harcourt, the three princes, Condé, Conti, and Longueville, during the troubles of La Fronde. It was on this occasion that Condé wrote the following lines to his jailer:

"Cet homme gros et court,
Si connu dans l'histoire ;
Ce grand Comte d'Harcourt
Tout couronné de gloire,
Qui secourut Casal et reprit Turin,
Est maintenant recors de Jules Mazarin."

Among French Inns

With the lines still in our ears, we arrived at the door of the Hôtel Frascati. Our walk through the town had separated us from our friend the porter, whom we now found awaiting our arrival, with cap in hand and attentively waiting for a tip. We presented him with a five-franc piece for his pains and his conversation, which more than delighted him, and he left us with evident regret and a definite intention to celebrate at the nearest café.

The hotel is situated on the beach, and is really not far from the quay, though our morning constitutional had made us take a longer route through the city. But once arrived, we found a courteous manager, and many anxious waiters and house-porters with green felt aprons, ready to do our every bidding for the coins which were already as good as theirs.

As the Frenchman soon remarked, "the hand is in the pocket in France from the morning till evening; and it must never be taken out empty." So we were made aware, without the least hesitation; for even a sou is dear to the heart of the Gaul, and he is miserable without some attention, be it great or small, it matters not. There is usually,

HÔTEL FRASCATI, HAVRE





At the Hotel Frascati, Havre

however, an accepted tariff for the various degrees of service which one receives, and this we learn in time, though as a rule, only after some rather costly experience.

Did *ces messieurs* wish rooms? Yes, *ces messieurs* wished rooms facing the sea, and rest and *déjeuner*, as soon as possible. All these desires were gratified in due season. The rooms were large and comfortable, and the view from the windows agreeable, overlooking the promenade and the beach, and everything as pleasant as could be desired. The heavily curtained beds, the linen sheets, icy in winter but grateful in the heat of summer, the immense feather mattresses, the little stands with white marble tops, and the inevitable glass tray, with bottles for rum and water and sugar before retiring, were typical of France.

On returning to the hotel office later in the morning, refreshed and ready for amusement, we were more than surprised at reading among the list of guests the following names:

Mr. and Mrs. James Blodget Wilton.

Miss Gladys Wilton.

Valet and maid, all from New York.

Among French Inns

His Excellency, Count Romeo di Pomponi, Rome.

It would appear by the date of the register, that they had all arrived, by the steamer of the Transatlantic Company, from America, the day before. This was indeed a discovery, and one which gave our party no little to talk about during our second inspection of the city of Havre; for we had determined to see what we could, in spite of the crowds and the holiday. The arrival of *la famille* Wilton, accompanied by the ardent Count Romeo, was sure to lead to a series of entertainments and excursions which we had scarcely expected to indulge in at Havre. But since the fates had decreed that the beginning of our pilgrimage should be neither simple nor rural, neither entered into with sackcloth and ashes, nor attended by the more bucolic duties, we settled ourselves down to the altered conditions of the present, and proceeded to investigate the city itself.

"The foundation of Havre was not far from being prosaic," said the Frenchman, by way of historical introduction to our personally conducted tour. "In fact, it owes its existence to the poor fishermen of the fifteenth century, who, beaten by the stormy

At the Hotel Frascati, Havre

winds of the Channel, sought refuge in this harbour at the mouth of the Seine. The few huts which they erected along the shore, and a small chapel dedicated to Notre Dame, constituted the entire town, which, as a matter of course, was called Havre, the French for harbour. Under Louis XII. some wooden constructions were built to shelter the town from the sea, and for a time the chapel of Notre Dame de Grâce gave to Havre the name of Havre de Grâce. The place, however, did not assume any importance until the time of François I. This famous monarch 'adopted the new-born town,' and with his characteristic energy and taste for building, he soon made many important additions."

"Go on," said the Englishman. "Why do you stop when we are just beginning to be interested? I see nothing worth looking at as yet, so we may as well listen to you."

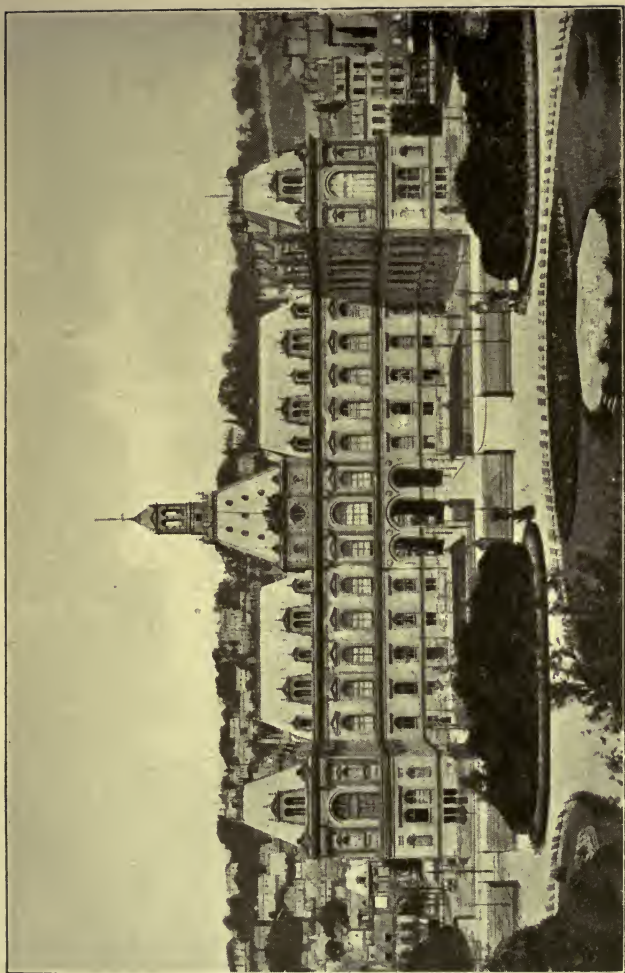
"Thank you," said the Frenchman, "I will proceed."

"The history of Havre is remarkable for three things: the number of sieges which it has sustained, the royal visits with which it has been honoured, and the numerous plans for enlargement, of which it has been the

Among French Inns

object. In 1562 it was delivered over to the Protestants; but these were soon expelled by the Earl of Warwick, who entered the town with the English troops.

“Catherine de Medicis, however, recognized the importance of holding such a place, besieged the town with her two sons, and at last obtained possession of it. Under Henry IV. the governorship of Havre was in the hands of the Duc de Villars, and at his death it passed into those of his brother. But in spite of the persistent attacks of the English, assaulted as it were both by the storms of the sea and the passions of men, the town seems to have grown and flourished in its commercial wealth and mercantile importance. The very storms to which it owed its existence were the means of saving it from its enemies at a later period of its history. For when the Duc de Choiseul was in command of the military forces of Havre, the English fleet, which was about to make an attack, was forced to desist by the fierce gale which raged beyond the harbour. Picture a scene more typical of the history of this maritime city! The fleet ready to attack and sack it; the ships' decks cleared for action; and the elements apprehending the battle



HÔTEL DE VILLE, HAVRE .



At the Hotel Frascati, Havre

and defending that which they had been the means of creating. But another scene of man and nature struggling with one another for the mastery; and man the loser."

The Frenchman ended his address, as he passed through the crowds of merrymakers in the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville. The building which gives the square its name is a considerable structure. But to-day the town has little to offer to the eye. An endless expanse of docks and shipping is the almost unbroken sight which greets the visitor. The only monuments of interest are the Churches of Notre Dame and St. François, the Tower of François I., and the Musée-Bibliothèque.

The Church of Notre Dame is built on the site of the ancient chapel, and is an imposing monument of the sixteenth century. It is in the style of the Renaissance, although the tall windows, and the small chapels of the apsis, are in the Gothic period of architecture. The Church of St. François, dedicated to St. François de Paule, dates back to a few years before the present structure of Notre Dame, and is little more than a cold, rather classic exterior, of slight interest or beauty.

Among French Inns

The Tower of François I., placed at the end of one of the *jetées* as a defence to the entrance of the port, is interesting in many ways. Built at the beginning of the sixteenth century, it was honoured by the presence of the so-called founder of the city, who received, at the expense of the town, a magnificent banquet, the memory of which has long remained in the annals of its people. François I., ever the patron of building and architecture, seldom took even a passing interest in a place without leaving behind him some memorial in stone; from which posterity has reared to him an imperishable name. For at times it would seem that only words and stones endure to record the deeds of history.

In spite of the lack of monumental or historic beauty at Havre, the mind is ever inclined to turn toward the past. For it is interesting to review the many royal visits of which this place has been the recipient. In 1603 the first monarch of whom we have a record came in state to view the place and give to it his patronage and interest. It was Henry IV. of France.

Later, Louis XV., the most fastidious of monarchs, honoured the city with his pres-

At the Hotel Frascati, Havre

ence. We are told that he was not favourably impressed, and was in truth immensely bored with his visit, finding the city too commercial for his tastes and temperament. Louis XVI., during his reign, came likewise to Havre. His visit was of more lasting benefit, for he took so great an interest in the city that he set on foot many plans for its improvement, as well as that of its vicinity.

The next ruler to visit Havre was Napoleon I., who came in 1802, when all was brilliancy and success. His second visit, in 1810, was already clouded by the shadows of foreboding evil, and he failed to leave the vital stamp of his individuality behind him. Strange, that so great a monarch, filled with the desire to tear down and create anew, should not have been impressed by the latent possibilities here; the key to the Seine, as well as the beacon of the Channel. Lastly, in 1831, came Louis Philippe, surrounded by the good-will of his subjects and the power of the new monarchy. True to the traditions of his predecessors, he made his pilgrimage to the now important city, and received the homage of its citizens.

We fear that we may have allowed our thoughts to linger too long among the relics

Among French Inns

of a place which has more to do with the business of to-day than with the memorials of past centuries. If so, the motley crowd about us would bring them back again, in spite of our inclination to waft the fancy toward something other than the present moment. The immense proportion of strangers and foreigners who are continually coming or going, make the floating population cosmopolitan to a degree. The streets are filled with people of many nationalities. Italians, Spaniards, English, and Americans, Swedes, Russians, Austrians, all elbow one another in the crowd, speaking many languages and eying one another with friendly or suspicious curiosity. For it is the "*fête de la République*," and every one is out for a good time and a holiday.

The cafés are teeming with life. The men, in loose, blue blouses and trousers, and many in wooden sabots, are laughing, quarrelling, and drinking intermittently. Peasant women, with round white caps and generous figures, are talking in the quaint Norman dialect, dragging their progeny behind them, and sitting at tables with their husbands and families.

"*Tient garçons!*" Another glass of cider,

At the Hotel Frascati, Havre

and two of red wine! Awh, bawh! *C'est la fête. Que voulez-vous?* " And so it goes.

As we pass, a good woman nudges her friend with her elbow and points us out. To them we are always "*les Anglais*," impossible for them to understand, but bringing money into pockets in summer, and welcome enough as such. A little urchin shouts after us:

"Oh yeas! I'm English!" And we all laugh, it is so irresistibly funny.

Every one is drinking to "*la France*" or "*la Russie*," and having a beautiful time. What would you? *C'est la fête de la République!* "Let us eat, drink, and be merry," is the order of the day.

On the way back to the hotel, pushing our way good-humouredly through these children of sunny France, we encountered no less a person than Mr. Blodget Wilton himself, surrounded by an immense crowd and having a quarrel with his *cocher*. To any one who has had dealings with the French coachman, surmounting his miserable excuse for a victoria, and beating his still more miserable drudge of a horse, — lame, tired, and unfed, — this scene would scarcely be a surprise.

The crowd was laughing and jeering. The *cocher*, with red face and distorted eyes,

Among French Inns

was gesticulating wildly, swearing fearful oaths and pushing his glazed top hat far back on his head. A gendarme was vainly trying to pacify every one and succeeding with no one; for nobody really knew what they were quarrelling about except Mr. Wilton, and he, poor man, could not explain, having no command of the French language, and being outnumbered and outvoiced by the multitude.

"*Vatong, scélérat!*" finally shouted the Englishman to the *cocher*, having got into the centre of the throng without meaning to.

"Oh yeas! I'm English," came back from the depths of the crowd, and even Mr. B. Wilton was forced to smile and forget his anger for the moment.

"Well, well, where did you all drop from?" said he, delighted to see some familiar faces. "I never can make these idiots understand," he added. "Here, give this money to the policeman, and tell him to settle with this lunatic, and let's walk home to the hotel together. Where are you staying? At Frascati's? That's queer. We're all there, too. Just arrived yesterday — brought the dago along with us. He would come, though I hate to have him hang around

At the Hotel Frascati, Havre

Gladys. Well, well, the ladies will be delighted to find you are here, in this God-forsaken hole. I never can get on in these foreign languages."

By this time the *cocher* was already on his way to the café opposite with his friend the policeman; and the crowd was left (discussing the size of Mr. Wilton's watch-chain and the value of the pearl in his scarf-pin).

"It was gold," said one. "Did you see it? It was as large as a halter."

"Nonsense," replied another, "it was only gilded."

"Awh — I'm not so sure of that," drawled a third. "These English are so rich; they say they eat gold over there." And he pointed a bony finger in the direction of the sea.

"And the pin! Did you see that?" broke in another. "It was like the brooch of my wife's grandmother, that was made from a shell found on the beach. It came to us in my wife's contract when we were married. I always thought it would sell well, if pigs went a-begging and the hens stopped laying eggs at the farm. Oh, *ces Anglais!* But one never knows. Give me Normandy, though,

Among French Inns

and a good Norman cow, for my taste." And off they all went, gossiping, down the street.

On arriving at the hotel we found Count Romeo in a great state of excitement at finding we were in the neighbourhood. He had scarcely recovered from the agonies of the sea-voyage from America, but was all smiles and affability and full of a wonderful flow of language, half-Italian, half-French, and a good deal of so-called English.

"Most extraordinary chance! Oh, what chance, indeed! You here, my good friends. And the England? How did you leave it? And the London? How was she? Pleasant, ah, yes, pleasant — America? Oh, I was always in movement over there, and so fat; always so fat on *that* side of the water. But here I am thin, oh, so thin! On the ship I threw everything out; and the stomach has completely receded. Now he can walk in comfort, without protruding. But it was a terrible experience!" And the poor count looked volumes as he described it.

Mr. Wilton gave a contemptuous glance at his Excellency, and walked off, muttering under his breath, "That fool of a dago!" The gallant count, however, was soon forget-

At the Hotel Frascati, Havre

ting his troubles over a glass of absinthe on the terrace, and waxed positively eloquent over his experiences in America.

“Never reposing themselves, the Americans, oh, never. Always in movement, always busy. And the money, too, — always moving, — never in the same place for five minutes. I thought I had the fortune in the hand: but *fute!* Off it went. And the high buildings. Oh, la, la! what dizziness! They makey me altogether upside down. And then the ascenders. Up at the top, and then down to the bottom, with the breakfast all in the throat.”

The poor count! He was neither a good traveller, nor a man of business; but always a fund of amusement and good nature, except when overheated or seriously offended, when he was at times almost terrible to behold, his fierce mustachios bristling with indignation, his hair *en brosse*, his fat form distended to twice its natural size. Such was his Excellency in righteous anger.

It was in comparing the charms of the representatives of the fair sex, in France and America, that he was perhaps at his best. Then all the fire and ardour of his Southern nature found freedom in utterance. Then

Among French Inns

would his eyes soften with the love-beams of Italy, and his hands, ordinarily fat and listless, wave in graceful circles through the air. But we shall have opportunity, later, to hear some of his discourses, and at present, "*déjeuner* is served," and every one is ready for an omelet and a ragoût of chicken.

"Oh, count," said the decided voice of Mrs. Wilton in our ears, as we turned to enter the dining-room of the hotel.

"Oh, count! And oh, — why, — oh!" and then followed a series of further exclamations, unintelligible to the male ear, as a lady caught sight of three old friends.

"Well, dear me, this is sudden; and so unexpected. But let us go in to *déjeuner*, and hear where you came from later."

Mrs. Blodget Wilton was a brilliant example of the most determined and persevering class of American motherhood. Early in life she had been tied by the circumstances of fate. Later, as her only child reached, or rather approached, the marriageable age, she became the conscious possessor of sudden fortune. With capability as her forte, and within her that power which had hitherto been dormant,

To strive, to conquer, and achieve,

At the Hotel Frascati, Havre

her migration from the west of America to the very heart of New York, and later to Europe for an occasional visit, had been definite and complete. The hitherto unknown Wiltons of Wisconsin became the spectacular Blodget Wiltons of Fifth Avenue. A name was established, a family founded upon gold dug from American soil and created by the energy of a virile Western civilization. Such were the annals of the Blodget Wiltons.

How the wife and mother had longed to hyphenate that name, as some had done before her! How she had planned and lain awake nights and argued. But Mr. Wilton, though small in stature and inferior in physical size to the ample proportions of his spouse, was a successful and decided little man in some things, and the name had remained in its original state. Still there was much for her to do in life. Having fed her way into the greater portion of the fashionable world of America, her adventurous spirit sought new fields to conquer, new channels to success; and France had been the object-point. In these days, when the power of gold holds mankind in its complete embrace, to entertain sufficiently, and with

Among French Inns

discrimination, is to create at once a place for oneself in the worlds of Europe and America.

The quick and active mind of Mrs. Blodget Wilton had realized this great fact in the social sphere, and her capable nature had been incessantly directed toward this end.

"We must feed the world, and make our friends enjoy themselves," she had said, first to herself, and later, with emphasis, to her husband.

"Do whatever you want, only don't bother me," had said Mr. Wilton. "You can feed the Salvation Army if you like, and I'll pay the bills up to two hundred thousand a year, but no more."

So the campaign began; and with her skilful engineering, and the natural, good-natured hospitality of her soul, Mrs. Blodget Wilton proceeded to feed her way into the sacred heart of society. Now she could get up a dinner of twenty at a moment's notice, and even ask the guests over the telephone. There *was* a time, however, when it was whispered about that she could not get up a dinner at all, and that nobody knew her; at least, no one who amounted to anything. But that was all past and gone; and now only a few "old cats" dared to raise their voices in criticism.

At the Hotel Frascati, Havre

(And that was really because they were not invited themselves.)

Thus the Blodget Wiltons sailed forth on the social current of this world, and with them their daughter Gladys, who was really a pretty and attractive young girl, unspoiled by the rather frivolous glitter of her surroundings and the exploitation of her mother, who was in turn both sensible and foolish.

"We must make an excursion to Étretat, if the weather is fine to-morrow, in an automobile," said Mrs. Wilton at luncheon.

"Oh, that would be exquisite," sighed the count, all smiles at the idea. "And the bathing and the *monde!* That will be a change from this dull old Havre."

Mr. Wilton, however, balked at the idea of an excursion in an automobile. He was not of the turn of mind that took joy in violent passages through the air, covered with clouds of dust, and half-choked with flying insects in summer-time. He had no liking for goggles, and cared not to array himself in fantastic garb of the India rubber type, to protect himself from the ravages of nature.

"None of your wild-goose chases for me, Mrs. W.," said he, between a glass of red wine and a mouthful of Camembert cheese.

Among French Inns

"None of that landing in some outlandish place, off in the country, with a broken tire, or a gear that won't work, for *me!* I'm too wise a bird for any more of that kind of sport, this year. You can go without me."

The truth was, Mr. Blodget Wilton much preferred to go down to the Bourse and compare the prices of stocks, send cablegrams to Wall Street, or receive wireless messages from the incoming steamers, to all the excursions in the world. He had not completely gotten over the "corner in pork," which he had made in Chicago a few years previously, and was really never happy unless he was in touch with the market, or comparing the rise and fall in food-stuffs, that could control the output of the entire universe; for Mr. Blodget Wilton was a man of large conceptions, though he was a good six inches shorter than the average height of mankind.

The rest of the party took kindly to the idea of an excursion to Étretat in automobiles, and the afternoon was spent in looking them up, and in ascending the heights on which Ingouville and Gravelle are situated. These two adjoining towns were made a part of Havre in 1856. We took tea at a pretty

At the Hotel Frascati, Havre

restaurant overlooking the lower part of the city and the harbour. The ladies took tea and the gentlemen various forms of French beverages. Here it was less crowded than in the town itself; and the view and colouring at sunset were most effective, and repaid them for the climb.

The poor count, who had walked up part of the way for exercise, arrived puffing and wheezing like a grampus, and fatter than ever. Indeed, it seemed that his experience on the ocean had done him little or no good, and that there was every reason to expect he would soon be as fat as he had been in America.

"Oh, my dear count," said the Frenchman, who showed decided signs of jealousy toward his Italian rival, "Oh, my dear count, you must be more careful, lest you have an attack some day, and Italy lose one of her most distinguished sons. You must be more careful. You are all warm. You alarm me. Order some chartreuse; it is good for the eruption. *Mon oncle* Hippolite, who died during the last Revolution, used always to say it was an excellent preventive for apoplexy."

Of course, no one for a moment believed

Among French Inns

that the Frenchman's uncle Hippolite had ever recommended chartreuse for apoplexy, but everybody urged the poor count to take some, just to see what effect it would have upon him. And he did; and liking it so much, and finding it so good, took two or three glasses more of the sweet intoxicant, and, oh, horrors, became only warmer and fatter than before. The Frenchman was in triumph at the success of this contemptible trick, and the rest of the party made merry at their expense.

It was amusing to observe Mrs. Wilton's complete possession of the restaurant while we were there, and to see her order about the manager, the waiters, and the musicians, until they, too, were impressed with her wealth and her commanding presence. Miss Gladys was all smiles and pleasantry during the afternoon, and definitely inclined to encourage the advances of all the gentlemen of the party, to flirt with each one of them, and throw them all over at a moment's notice if any one else came along. Such was the delightful temperament of this young lady that she made everybody like her, without apparently caring anything for anybody. Still, nobody could resist the smile and the

At the Hotel Frascati, Havre

droop of her eyelid, and it was enough to feel that she even condescended to flirt; in itself an inexpressible pleasure to her admirers.

"Oh, mademoiselle, do not these lights in the distance incite the feeling of loave?" sighed the count, as they drove back to Havre, through a winding road lined with villas and garden walls.

But Miss Wilton only laughed and said in reply: "Oh, Count di Pomponi, you are an amusing man."

The scene by moonlight, half-hidden by the gardens and villas, was worthy of some stage setting: a city lying at one's feet, the great jetties with their tangle of shipping, just discernible in the soft beams, a faint suggestion of the merrymakers below coming to us as we wound our way downward. Here, then, was the port of Normandy and Paris, stretched before us like some half-distinct object-lesson of the maritime development of France, like a wonderful myriad-jewelled carpet laid beneath us, and we hovering above it. For in the almost fairy-like atmosphere of this country nothing seems entirely real to American eyes.

In another hour our first day at Havre was over.

CHAPTER II

IN SEARCH OF AN INN

Between Havre and Rouen

"I'M tired of Havre, and as we feel rested, I think we had better join your party and hunt up some attractive old inn, where we can stay for a little, and make trips through this part of Normandy," said Mrs. Blodget Wilton, as we met early the next morning after our *café au lait*.

"I should like nothing better," said Mr. Wilton, "only you can do the automobiling, and I will go on comfortably to Étretat with the baggage. I'm getting too old to go jolting round the country in those infernal machines." So we all started off, leaving Mr. Wilton to meet us wherever we might turn up, at Étretat, or some other more rural spot in the surrounding country.

We were distributed in two automobiles, hired for several days, or longer. Mr. Wilton had promptly made a business arrange-

In Search of an Inn

ment, in writing, to cover the whole party, which was the only interest he seemed to take in the whole affair. As it was necessary to separate the count and the Frenchman, for diplomatic reasons, the former was invited to escort Mrs. Blodget Wilton. She liked him better than her daughter did, and could talk freely about the royal families of Europe, and glean from him many interesting facts, which she stored up in her brain; and then he amused her, and that in itself was an advantage. The aristocracy of Europe was her joy, and titles had always been an intoxicant which she was unable to resist. Kings were her greatest happiness. With queens she had as yet but slight acquaintance.

As we dashed down the Boulevard François I., she poured out her heart to the count.

"You see, I really feel perfectly familiar with kings; riding on bicycles, short skirts, and all that sort of thing. I never have any trouble in writing notes to them. But emperors are different; there is so much red tape; I never know how to address them. It really is very difficult."

With the august surroundings of the greater sovereigns of Europe Mrs. Blodget Wilton was as yet unable to cope; for while

Among French Inns

they were inclined to be polite to Americans of large fortune and a certain *savoir vivre*, the conventionalities of the great powers were rather a drawback to the more easy and familiar ways of a democratic personage like our good-natured companion. The count breathed soft words of flattery and encouragement into her ears, though he was half-choked with the dust,—for there were no watering-carts of the American type on the boulevard,—and he diverted her mind with an anecdote of the French Bonapartists at the time of the Second Empire.

We were to take a preliminary run to the seaside suburbs of St. Adresse and La Hève. A tramway leads from the Cour de la République to St. Adresse, if one desires to go that way; or it is an agreeable walk of about four kilometres, little more than two and a half miles, along the cliff. The road is a pleasant one, and the sun, dancing on the waters of the Channel, with the blue sky above, made the trip there a charming one. On arriving, we all paid a franc and entered the Casino, which is always a necessary part of a French watering-place, and after exhausting the pleasures of this establishment, took a look at the bathers on the *plage*.

In Search of an Inn

This is much frequented by both ladies and gentlemen of various degrees. The charge is fifty centimes, and seventy-five centimes with costume. The costume is a distinctive element of the French bathing establishment, and well worth studying — at a discreet distance. The bathing-houses are on wheels, and neatly painted, with pointed roofs, and are nicely fitted up inside. They are usually drawn up or down the broad, sandy beach, to suit the tide; and the bathers step in and out without having to walk to the water.

Stout ladies, thin gentlemen, young women, youths, and children, jump and gambol about in the surf, bounced up and down, or rolled over by what is known in French as "*le jeu des vagues*." Sailors protect the incautious bather from danger by patrolling the deeper water in a rowboat. After his bath the patron of the bath-house is reminded of the necessary tip by the good Norman woman or the good Norman man who has charge of his particular bath-house, usually a picturesque creature with bare legs and in native costume.

The party made a short visit to the prettily situated little chapel of Notre Dame des Flots, which is the religious haven of the

Among French Inns

relatives and friends of sailors and fishermen of the place. There they pray for those who brave the dangers of the Channel, and burn candles to the favourite saint; the simple Norman faith, half-mixed with superstition, guiding their thoughts to the belief that the Holy Virgin watches over their welfare, if thus invoked. There is something natural and human in the part which the Church plays in their lives, and in the power which the priest exerts over their thoughts and acts.

"Must we mount again the hill?" sighed the poor count, as we started off for the Phares de la Hève.

"Then you do not like the mounting?" queried the Frenchman, with perfect *naïveté*. "The mounting is good for the health, *mon cher*. Is it possible that you do not mount the mountains in Italy?"

"Oh, of course, I do my possible," replied the gallant Pomponi; "but then, when one is so fat and the sun all in the head. Ah! the day is hot. La, la, la, la!" And it was not long before the stout count had ceased to walk.

The charms of St. Adresse have been extolled by Alphonse Karr, and he surely had

In Search of an Inn

some reason to do so. But the view from the heights of La Hève is far beyond that below. It did not take us long to reach the top in the automobiles. But we paused, half-way up, to observe a monument to the French admiral Lefèvre-Desnouettes, who died in 1824.

"I don't think it is interesting at all," said Mrs. Wilton. "We have much better monuments in Central Park in New York! Go on, chauffeur. But the view certainly is lovely, even here. What a pity it is that James can't bear an automobile. But he does hate goggles so. He says they tickle the eyelashes. And I don't know that I blame him."

"Oh, mamma, do ask Count di Pomponi to come to our automobile," called out Miss Wilton from behind. "Monsieur de B—— is getting so cross we can't do anything with him back here." The ardent Romeo was more than desirous, and the change was accordingly made.

The truth was that the Frenchman was showing signs of being decidedly irritable, — "a very irritable man," as the count expressed it, — and the fair Miss Gladys was tired of trying to keep the peace. He was inclined to manage every one, and to attempt,

Among French Inns

when once on French soil, even to twist the British Lion's tail. The Englishman, being very calm and impassive, was impervious to the pin-pricks with which the French so frequently enliven their conversation. But at times even he would show inclinations to object, inclinations which it was impossible to disregard; hence the change of passengers in the different automobiles.

From the Phares de la Hève we again looked down upon a beautiful view of the town and the brilliant waters of the English Channel, dotted with steamers and sails, and sparkling with the rays of the sun, reflecting always the glorious, indescribable, almost mystical atmosphere of France. The "patron" of the hotel was a funny old Norman, shrewd, suspicious, and disinclined to believe any one to be either a friend or an honest person. We queried him in regard to the inns of the neighbouring country, but got little satisfaction from his cautious answers.

"What are the best inns near here?" asked Mrs. Wilton, in her direct, commanding fashion.

The old Norman eyed her with sage 'disapproval, and finally answered:

In Search of an Inn

"Awh — *ils sont point bon, madame — point bon.*"

"I didn't ask you whether they were good or not," said Mrs. Wilton, "I simply inquired what the best ones were. Don't you know? You're in the hotel business; you ought to."

"Awh — *ma foi, je n'en sais rien, madame*; they may be good; they may be bad."

"Oh, what an aggravating man!" exclaimed our hostess, exasperated with him.

"Do see if you can get something out of him, Monsieur de B——. I never can get along with these country hotel-keepers. They are perfectly impossible. Come, count, let us have another look at the view before we start. And, oh, Gladys, do pin up your back hair! It's all loose behind." So saying, Mrs. Wilton vanished, and we were left to decide whether or not to go back to Harfleur, a picturesque place, by way of Gravelle, and then take a circuitous route to Étretat. As this would give us a chance to visit Montivilliers, Lillebonne, Beuzeville, and Fécamp on the coast, we settled upon this itinerary, and were soon on the way back to Gravelle.

"It is rather flat and uninteresting near the coast, is it not?" said the Englishman to

Among French Inns

Miss Wilton, as they sped along the smooth road.

"Yes," said she, "but it is very pretty, I think. The red-tiled roofs of the cottages, with their white walls, and the quaint farms and village churches, are so different from England or America, that they are always new, and I find something very fascinating about them. France is to me a sort of dream-land, never quite real, and full of fanciful people and things. I love it, and especially the rural places that we visit sometimes, when mamma is tired of entertaining in Paris."

Miss Wilton's face was really beautiful while she was speaking, and it was impossible for the Englishman not to be aware of it. Her deep violet eyes, shaded by long lashes, her fresh colouring, enhanced by the morning air, her hair of a light sunny brown, half-curling, — the whole effect was a picture of the finest type of what America can produce in feminine beauty. No wonder the men were inclined to admire, and the adorers of the Latin nations to flatter and desire her hand. The Englishman, however, seemed strangely indifferent to all such things. The Briton, as a rule, is, to be sure, more self-con-

In Search of an Inn

tained, more phlegmatic than his American cousin. The Latin is, of course, not to be compared, being always at fever-heat and unable to contain himself in any wise, whenever aroused to the least sense of feeling. The Englishman is by nature inclined to receive impressions and retain them. When feeling the most he frequently displays the least to those about him. But he feels more deeply, more simply, and in a more lasting way, as a rule.

Though frequently credited with a purely practical character, the English are in reality a romantic race. Their sentiments are born of a mental attitude that is free and unaffected by anything complex or contrary in its action. With the Frenchman, a thousand furies possess him; a hundred thoughts fly through his brain. He lives through a multitude of impressions and passions, and forgets them all, while the Englishman receives a single, simple thought which he retains in perfect truth, and sometimes acts upon through life. The Frenchman fills the air with sighs, expressions, words, in wild effusion. The Englishman never utters a word which does not convey some real or permanent meaning, to himself at least, if to

Among French Inns

no one else. The Frenchman, unrestrained, moves through heaven to hell in the twinkling of an eye. The Englishman remains upon the earth until he dies.

Our particular Englishman was one of this type, and while he seemed to like Miss Gladys Wilton, he was the least moved toward her of any of the party. Indeed, she appeared to mean nothing to him whatever. The Wiltons, in fact, made only a dim impression upon his mind. They were rich Americans. In a London season one met many rich Americans. The American millionaire formed part of the season's incidents, like the Derby, the Trooping of the Colours, or the opera. They came and went, and one thought no more about them — and here they were again, after a year or so. It was all part of the kaleidoscope which made up his life, and to which he was more or less indifferent. His experience of either French or American ways was limited. He simply did not take them in.

Being calm, and ready to be pleased, he found Miss Wilton a pretty girl, in whose society he was willing to be thrown, and was rather entertained than otherwise by her mother's evident adoration for his position

In Search of an Inn

in life. For he was no less a person than the son of an English marquis, and as such was a distinct unit in Mrs. Blodget Wilton's social horizon. England was to her a yet unconquered field, and such units were, therefore, not to be lightly passed over.

"Your life must be delightful in England," said she, as they paused at a little hamlet to inquire the way. "Everything is so carefully thought out. Every one seems to be ticketed, just like some kind of a cloak in a coat-room, and to be set out in regular order. What a pity it is we don't have a court in America. Of course we should all be dukes if we did." As nobody undertook to deny this statement, it was allowed to remain unchallenged.

The road was becoming more wooded and picturesque, and as we reached the little town of Graille, near Havre, the effect was attractive in the extreme. Situated on high ground to the left, was an interesting Norman church of the eleventh century, which we paused to visit. This church, which is called the Abbey of Graille, is interesting chiefly as being one of the oldest in this region. Its earliest portions date from the last half of the eleventh century, and its later portions

Among French Inns

from the thirteenth. It is reached by steep steps of a mediæval character, and on the left of the entrance is a picturesque and partly ruined tower, which for many years has been crowned by a covering of green, wild companions to its age, those shrouds with which nature drapes the stones that have been raised by man. A great cross rises in front of it, which we were told was the original of the one used in the opera of "Robert le Diable," at its first representations in France. The gravestones remaining in the churchyard about it speak in silent eloquence of the place—a worthy inspiration for some unwritten elegy. A terrace on the right of the church commands a fine view of the country.

For a moment the shadow of the Roman tower, the story of the cross, and the view from the stone terrace, wafted the imagination back to the simplicity of early mediæval France when the Norman conquered races and gave the Conqueror to England.

Mrs. Blodget Wilton, however, lost no time in bringing us back to the present.

"Come, the chauffeur says we shall never reach Étretat at this rate; we must start at once. Moreover, I'm sure we never shall find an inn unless we go right through the

In Search of an Inn

country and hunt one up for ourselves. These people here wouldn't give us the least idea if we questioned them till doomsday. I have been talking with an old woman while you have been poking around that musty old church. She doesn't seem to know anything; at least, she won't tell me if she does, so it all amounts to the same thing."

"Oh, the mediæval France, it is nothing compared to Italy," sighed the count, as he was bundled into his automobile and squeezed down beside Mrs. Wilton.

"*Allons, chauffeur!*" and off we go again in a cloud of dust.

It is about four kilometres to Harfleur, and we were soon there. The town is charmingly picturesque in many ways, and well situated upon the Seine. Its former commercial glory has long since been absorbed by the proximity of Havre, and its harbour has been filled up with the mud, sand, and stones washed into it by the Lézard, a tributary at this point. A beautiful tower, belonging to the Gothic church, supposed to have been founded by Henry V. of England, rises from among a quaint tangle of houses. Their uneven roofs, covered with deep red tiles, follow one another in delightful irregu-

Among French Inns

larity. A flight of steps leads down into the tributary stream, with a high stone bridge beyond. The scene might well be that of some stage setting, drawn by an artist's hand.

Harfleur was at one time a place of great importance, owing to its position near the mouth of the Seine, and was, in fact, the chief port of Normandy. In the part which it played in the ancient wars of France, this place was a worthy companion to Rouen itself. The names of many historical personages are connected with it, for it was the centre of commerce, the theatre of early struggles, and the point from which many important expeditions to foreign countries departed.

During the Hundred Years' War Harfleur was besieged, taken, and retaken many times. In 1415 it was attacked by Henry V., and with only a small garrison under the Sire d'Estouteville held out for forty days. Visions of the warlike spirit of mediæval France arise to the mind as we tread these narrow, picturesque streets, with overhanging gables made of beams and plaster, blackened with the age of centuries. Edward the Confessor, Marguerite d'Anjou, Henry II., and Éléanore de Guyenne have passed through

In Search of an Inn

Harfleur on their way to England; and others hardly less famous have arrived, tossed by the angry waves of the Channel.

What a change from the France of those days is the quiet life of Harfleur to-day! It is little more than a picturesque remembrance of the past, a shadow of its former greatness. And yet it possesses for the visitor a rare charm and an enduring quality which cling to those who make it a place of pilgrimage to-day, in the sunny quietness of a July morning.

"Now don't let's trouble to visit the church this time," said Mrs. Wilton, who was still in a hurry to proceed.

"By example!" exclaimed the Frenchman in horror. For him the first duty was to visit the church at every stopping-place, examine everything, and usually offer up prayers for our safe deliverance from the dangers of the automobile.

"Well, you may go if you like," replied Mrs. Wilton, in despair, "but the count and I shall remain where we are, in our places, and talk to these children. Perhaps they may know more than their parents, who certainly are very peculiar with strangers. I never saw anything like these peasants.

Among French Inns

They seem to think we are going to murder them all, or blow the towns up with dynamite. We certainly look harmless; don't you think so, count?" And Mrs. Wilton settled herself down in her seat like a huge hen going to roost, all surrounded with feathers and fluff, making a picture which, if not entirely rural, was at least worthy of study and contemplation.

The count was wiping the dust from his face, and endeavouring to extract fragments of rock or gravel which had embedded themselves in the deep mysteries of his eyelids, and was too busy to answer. The rest of the party explored the church, and found it a charming example of early sixteenth-century architecture. The tower is now the chief glory of Harfleur. The façade is profusely sculptured, the carving being freely interspersed with quaint figures of animals, whose smooth outlines the artists of that period delighted to represent in stone. Lizards, squirrels, rats even, appear between the branches of vines or thistles according to the fancy of the sculptor. The interior contains one or two interesting memorials richly carved in Gothic detail, and one especially,

In Search of an Inn

of a woman dressed in the costume worn at the time of the Valois.

Every one was loath to leave the church and its beautiful Gothic tower, and return to the automobiles, which were waiting outside the best café of the place.

"I'm glad to see you have not been too long this time," said Mrs. Wilton, with a sigh of relief as the party reappeared. "Count di Pomponi has had another glass of absinthe, and I think he really needs the motion of the automobile to clear his brain. And then if we are ever to find an inn, we may as well begin, for I can't see a sign of one here."

"Oh, madame, the thought of the tavern makes me feel so rural. Ah, but the inns of Italy! You must come and see them one day. Ah, *la belle Italie!*" And the count's rhapsody was lost in the buzzing of the machine as it darted off on the road to Lillebonne.

The Frenchman was sure there was an inn at Lillebonne, and at all events there were two old châteaux in the neighbourhood; so to Lillebonne we accordingly went, with the most immoderate and uncomfortable haste. As we rounded a curve in the road, with a high wall on the right, the chauffeur gave

Among French Inns

a violent turn to his wheel and came to a standstill, wiping the cold beads of perspiration from his brow. The count was thrown violently against Mrs. Blodget Wilton, who screamed and pushed him from her. In the midst of the confusion and babel of frightened voices, a pony-cart, containing a jovial-looking curé and two comfortable-looking Frenchmen, passed serenely by, as if nothing were out of the way and they were not on the wrong side of the road. Not in the least realizing that they had just escaped being killed, they smiled politely, raised their hats, and trotted off in perfect serenity.

The canton of Montivilliers, in which Harfleur is situated, was soon left behind, and we entered that of Lillebonne. The scenery became more rural and picturesque at every kilometre. The small, rolling hills, covered with green grass, and orchards of tiny apple-trees; the farms dotted in among them; the hedges and neatly trimmed roadsides; all bespoke the characteristic country of Normandy. Ideas of cheese and cider filled the brain of the Frenchman, for he was eternally referring to them and telling us how good these indigenous products of the country were, and insisting upon our trying them.

In Search of an Inn

Nothing would induce Mrs. Wilton, however, to think of indulging in either cheese or cider. She could enjoy only the richest of French dishes, and anything simple was to her abhorrent, to be avoided if possible. Still, the rest of the party were willing to lend themselves to the Frenchman's enthusiasm, and to look forward to these pleasures at Lillebonne.

We drew up, on our arrival, at the Hôtel de France, which is a good, clean, and reasonable little hostelry, and the only one worthy of the name in the place. The patron eyed us with interest, and ushered us into a neat dining-room, where we took *déjeuner*. Of course it included cheese and cider, much to the delight of the Frenchman and the disgust of Mrs. Wilton, who would not touch either.

"But the cider is the wine of the country," said he in argument. "Drink, count; it will do you good after the ride."

We found it, however, rather hard, and on the whole not so good as the sparkling cider, almost like champagne, that is sold in America. The madame of the establishment made herself very attentive to our wants, and served a delicious little Norman breakfast,

Among French Inns

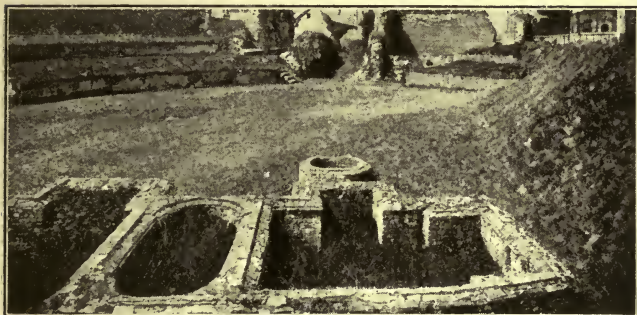
with all the delicacies of the season. How good everything tasted after our ride in the fresh country air, the soft scent of summer everywhere, the gentle greens of the foliage, the brilliant sunshine; everything contributing to the joy of living!

Lillebonne is one of the most ancient towns of Normandy, and is charmingly situated among thickly wooded hills, cut by a verdant valley and babbling stream winding through its half-hidden mysteries. An iron railing opposite the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville screens the remains of an old Roman theatre and baths, now dressed with the green canopy of nature. Above these ruins, and in the garden of a modern château, are the half-ruined remains of an older castle built by William the Conqueror. They include a tower of the thirteenth century and some picturesque walls.

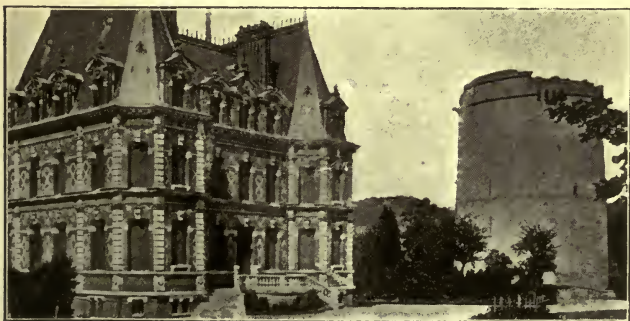
Long before the Roman invasion, Lillebonne, under the name of Calet, or Caletum, was the capital of the Caletes. In fact, it was one of the cities of Gaul, until destroyed by Julius Cæsar. In the time of Augustus it was named Juliobona, after his daughter Julia, and to him was due its reconstruction. In the eleventh century, the feudal castle



GENERAL VIEW OF LILLEBONNE



REMAINS OF OLD ROMAN THEATRE, LILLEBONNE



MODERN CHÂTEAU AND TOWER OF OLD CASTLE, LILLEBONNE

In Search of an Inn

was the scene of many a court held by the Duchy of Normandy, and it was here that plans for the conquest of England were discussed and formulated.

The significance of the history which clings to these ancient remains of Norman greatness, these places which are to-day insignificant in themselves, is indeed great, and it is interesting to observe them in travelling through this country. The world at large would hardly realize their existence, were not an occasional pilgrimage made to these shrines of ancient power, in the spirit of research and antiquarian pursuit. Lillebonne is one of the most interesting, in point of age, and well repays a visit.

The ages have left each some remembrance of their time, some gift to this haunt of ancient days. The Roman civilization gave a theatre; the middle ages, a fortress; the Renaissance, its church; and the more recent period, industrial establishments. These, in their various functions, combine to give it a curious interest, half-picturesque, half-practical, and nature has done the rest, and contributed the magic touch which —

“ . . . gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.”

Among French Inns

The Church of Notre Dame, which is of the sixteenth century, deserves a passing word of praise. Its spire is richly carved in Gothic details, and rises gracefully to the left of the picture formed by the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, as we stand upon the ruins of the Roman theatre. Its portal is worthy of mention, and its interior contains some interesting stalls which were originally built for the Abbey of Valasse.

We left the Hôtel de France with some regret and attended by all the members of the establishment, the patron, the madame, — always, or nearly always, the ruling spirit of the hotel or café in France, — and the various other functionaries of the place, including a cat and a dog. We departed, leaving madame counting the money, and the patron taking a glass of cider, — characteristic occupations throughout Normandy. Indeed, it is strange in France how the spirit of thrift and finance will predominate in the female sex, especially in the lower classes. In the hotel it is the madame who keeps a sharp lookout on the books and storeroom. In the restaurant the madame is always behind the desk counting the money and the cheques, at the end of the day's business. On



CHURCH OF NOTRE DAME, LILLEBONNE

In Search of an Inn

the farm she is in the field, and is, ten to one, the financial head of the family. She is here, there, and everywhere, has a finger in every pie and a word in every transaction, from the moment the marriage contract is signed, which ties her to her spouse for better or for worse.

The character of the Norman is an interesting one to study. He is shrewd, suspicious, and cautious. He is the Yankee of France. He never commits himself if he can possibly avoid it, and never tells anything if he can keep it a secret. He is keen, retentive, and a good business man. In a word, he is in character what his country is in geographical position,—the link between France and England, the stepping-stone from the Latin to the Anglo-Saxon; and as such he is extremely interesting to study.

“How much would you take for that cow?” said the Frenchman, as he stopped in the road near an old peasant who was slowly prodding his animal with a conscious sense of ownership.

“How much would I take for that cow?” repeated the old fellow, looking volumes of suspicion and wisdom, and putting his head

Among French Inns

on one side as if the fate of a nation depended upon his answer.

"Awh, well — *ces messieurs* are *Anglais?*" And then there was evidently a complete change in his ideas, and he shut up like a snail or a hedgehog, and would not commit himself to anything.

"Well, I could not say," he finally answered. "It would depend on what the messieurs were willing to pay for it. But that would depend; if the messieurs were English, or if the messieurs were French. And it would depend on the time of year and how many cows were in the market." The old peasant looked so wise that it seemed as if his quaint form could hardly contain all the wisdom there was locked up in him. So we left him still wondering if we had found out anything from him which could interfere with the sale of his cow.

"You see the character," said the Frenchman, in triumph, always desirous of demonstrating the characteristics of the Norman people. "You see the suspicion. He would not have given me a figure on that cow if I had talked all the afternoon, without making him an offer first."

"I am not so sure of the man. He makey

In Search of an Inn

the price to suit the people when the time come," said Pomponi, with a sudden attempt at argument.

"I buy the cow in Italy the same way; I makey the price, and he makey the yes or no. And there!"

The Frenchman could only exclaim "By example!" with an expression of perfect disbelief on his face and his eyes flashing catlike shafts through the air.

It was felt advisable to drop the subject of the cow, and the conversation was steered upon some different topic. We crossed some green meadows and passed high steepes of chalk, and soon covered the eleven kilometres which was the distance to the village (little more than a hamlet) of Tancarville. It lies in a hollow between two hills, or rocks, rising directly above the Seine. On one of these the towers and walls of the Château de Tancarville itself arise against tall trees, and stand in majestic ruggedness above the quiet waters of the river. The picture is one of sudden charm and contrast to the wooded depths below.

The foundations, ancient fortifications, formed of half-ruined buttresses and arches against the stone, lift it still higher in the

Among French Inns

air and lend imagination to its effect. They are in strange contrast to the more modern château above them, and show at once the work of different centuries in creating what is left to-day. The castle dates back as early as the twelfth century, though it is chiefly of the thirteenth. Some authorities ascribe its birth to the time of Henry I., the last of the sons of William the Conqueror; and indeed the feudal character of the ancient fortress would incline us to believe this to be so.

It has had a considerable history, the original feudal stronghold having been the almost inaccessible abode of the famous family of the Tancarvilles. Up to 1320 it remained in their possession, and was the theatre of many mediæval events, situated as it was on the borders of the river and commanding so advantageous a position. In later years it was owned by the houses of Harcourt and Longueville, as well as the De la Tour d'Auvergues and the De Montmorencies.

The tower at the southern angle of the château is the most ancient portion of this interesting ruin, and was originally ornamented with the armorial bearings of the Tancarvilles. These have long since been

In Search of an Inn

effaced by time, and the hand of man, ever eager to destroy that which his predecessor has created. The newer château, which rises above the mediæval fortifications, is to-day also crumbling into ruin and decay.

We were all naturally interested in this picturesque pile, as it was the first Norman château, with any pretension of being something more than ruins, that we had seen, and we stopped at the Hôtel du Havre, in the hamlet, only long enough to brush the dust—or part of it—from our shoulders before we investigated it in detail.

“We seem to be working backward,” said the Englishman, as he assisted the count and Mrs. Wilton to mount the steep incline.

“Rather hard to find anything that is not a ruin, this morning, isn’t it?”

“Perhaps if we look long enough we shall find a real live château, all full of people and kept as it should be,” replied Miss Wilton, with a charming smile, which sent shivers of delight and rhapsody down the fat back of Pomponi, and left apparently no impression upon the impregnable Briton.

“He is like the Rock of Gibraltar,” whispered Mrs. Wilton, as we pushed her up the hill.

Among French Inns

"They are all like Gibaltars, detached from the mainland and completely surrounded by water."

"It seems they have a wonderful character, the English," whispered back the count in French, "only so difficult to understand; always silent, always composed. The fire is always within, never without. One never knows what they feel."

"That is like the Norman," said the Frenchman.

Some of us had our doubts, and these brought us to the court of the château and the thoughts of its beauty. There is nothing to cause one to remember the present at Tancarville; there is everything to recall the past. Pictures of the days of chivalry arise to the mind on viewing this historic débris of other centuries. Visions of Raoul, son of Gerald, and grand chamberlain to William the Conqueror, who was the founder of the house of Tancarville, pass before the eye. It was here that William de Tancarville, the last of his race, died in the early part of the fourteenth century; and here, likewise, passed the heroine of the Fronde.

We might linger too long were we to write the history of this place in its entirety. But

In Search of an Inn

we are here only for a passing glance into the past. The view of the Seine, its blue waters dotted with yellow shallows of sand, the sail of a passing boat, the life of the hamlet below, all distract the eye and the imagination, and we must away.

"Is it not lovely?" said Miss Wilton, softly. "I hate to leave it, and yet I suppose we must."

"I am afraid so," said the Englishman; and they followed the others back to the inn.

"But it really isn't an inn," said Mrs. Wilton, in despair. "And what is more, they tell me it is not always open. My opinion is, that they only take people when they feel like it at these places in Normandy. What do you think, count?"

The count did not think. He was too hot and out of breath to do anything but call for a glass of white wine.

"*C'est le cidre, que son Excellence devrait buaire,*" said mine host in his funny accent.

"Oh, the cider, it is too hard for the head," replied his Excellency; "I must have something that is light and quenches the thirst."

And so the thirst was quenched, and he was again packed into his tonneau with his

Among French Inns

indulgent hostess, and off we all went toward the Château d'Etelan, not very far away.

A little distance from Tancarville is the steamboat landing of Quillebœuf, where the steamers stop on their way from Havre to Rouen.

"We might take one and go on to Rouen, and telegraph Blodget to meet us there with the trunks," suggested Mrs. Wilton; but the count was not anxious to try the river, and we proceeded on our way.

There is a certain difficulty in any form of very rapid locomotion over the roads of Normandy, and that is the succession of short, steep hills that are to be encountered wherever one goes. The country being always hilly, these will be found a continual objection to the tourist who is fond of speeding. However, if not so inclined, the pleasure of passing through the country, to any one who is fond of picturesque and rural scenery, is, and always must be, great.

The small hills succeed one another in a series of undulations; to use the words of Anacreon, like "rolling persuasion," ever enticing the eye to look beyond. In spring the innumerable apple-orchards make the whole province a continuous bouquet of

In Search of an Inn

blossoms, varying from deep pink to white, and interspersed with green. In its natural characteristics Normandy suggests the county of Kent in England, only here the orchards take the place of the hop-vines that are everywhere to be seen on the other side of the Channel.

The journey from Havre to Rouen by rail is a delightful series of views, at any time between the months of March and November. The quaint villages, the green hillsides clothed with verdure, the moss-like ravines, the streams and murmuring brooks, the plaster-covered walls crowned with green or flowers, the spires of the churches — all contribute in effect to delight the senses with their charm and rural simplicity. For everything is domestic rather than grandiose, picturesque rather than imaginative, quaint rather than attired in glory. It is utterly different from Touraine or Brittany, and possesses a character and fascination entirely its own. To those who seek a restful moment or a picture to delight the soul, no better place can draw the weary worker than this lovely country. No haunts of man can have a sound more glad than Nature's call to Normandy.

Among French Inns

Normandy! What a wealth of significance the word possesses, and yet how genial is the sound! It has been sung of in the ages. It has produced its heroes and its kings, and has shared in the councils of the nation of which it forms so notable a part.

Let all the world make holiday with thee,
And hie, in summer's smiles, to Normandy !

And yet it is surprising how few the tourists that disturb our path, and how little the inns and hotels are crowded by the throngs that flock to Switzerland or elsewhere in the warmer months. Perhaps it is one of the greatest advantages in travelling through this part of France. There is no place where the herd of sightseers tramples upon one's sensibilities, or disturbs the even tenor of one's temper. The visitor is free to roam at will and find the joy of living and of keeping holiday in peace.

As we speed onward, our thoughts recur involuntarily to the winding road that leads from the hamlet to the Château of Tancarville, to the three towers named, respectively, Carrée, Coquesart, and L'Aigle, to its white walls (defying our knowledge of its age) in such striking contrast to the green about it.

In Search of an Inn

We see again in the mind's eye the newer château built by Louis de la Tour d'Auvergne, Comte d'Evreux, and the forms of Jean d'Orleans, son of the Duc de Longueville, and his wife, Louise de Bourbon-Soissons, seeking solitude in its hidden depths.

There are, however, other places to interest us, and one of these is now at hand. It is the Château d'Etelan, also on the borders of the Seine and near Norville. It is situated at a point where the river makes its last turn, before widening to meet the Channel. It is a veritable gem of the Renaissance, and well merits a visit.

"Oh, how charming!" exclaimed Miss Wilton as it came into view. "How I should like to live there!"

"Yes, my dear," said her more practical mother, "but you would find it fearfully cold in winter, without any furnace or modern conveniences. Think of it, my dear Gladys; why, you would die of rheumatism and tonsilitis. You know how delicate your throat is."

"Of course there is no chance of my doing so, mamma," said her daughter; "so there is little need to worry."

"In the winter you will be roasting to

Among French Inns

death in the American house," exclaimed Count Romeo in deep concern. He had been brought up in the cold palaces of Italy, and being stout, had been unable to receive any real comfort from the extreme warmth of the American houses and buildings. Steam-heat was to him a source of unutterable discomfort, and the very mention of a furnace set him thinking of past sufferings.

"Oh, the heat! it gives the apoplexy to the head, and the heart, he jumps and beats in the side like a polichinelle. I can do, in the hot room," meaning thereby, that he was more at his ease with the temperature between forty and fifty degrees.

"You see, count, young blood is warm," said the Englishman. "We like cold rooms in England, also. So much more healthy, you know. I always take a cold tub, with the window wide open, winter or summer."

"Ah, you are the wisdom," shouted Pomponi, in ecstasy at the thought; for the mid-day sun was very warm, and he longed for a white cotton parasol lined with green, lest the rays should cause him to regret his ride.

"Come, now, Count di Pomponi," said Mrs. Wilton, persuasively, "you know you like to be warm in winter, and not frozen

In Search of an Inn

to death in a room like an ice-box; don't you? "

By this time we were in front of the château, and the conversation turned toward this charming and picturesque monument of the Renaissance, dressed in Gothic details. The square tower of the building has some ornamented buttresses and other carving to enrich it, while the two windows of the roof on the left are beautiful examples of sculpture. On the end of the building is the chapel, forming part of the main construction, with long Gothic windows to denote its presence. It is, on the whole, a pleasing exterior, and one bearing a certain element of the picturesque with it, the mixture of Gothic and Renaissance detail, especially in the ornamentation of the roof, making an agreeable combination.

The party was not allowed to remain too long in contemplation of the picturesque and rural surroundings of the Château d'Etelan. Time was an object, and Mrs. Blodget Wilton was not a woman to ignore time, even when immersed in the pleasures of such places as this. As she had assumed complete control of the movements of the company, and relegated the Frenchman to a subservient

Among French Inns

position, the wheels of the automobiles were soon in motion, and the trees and grass went flying past the bewildered eyes of the poor count in a manner that fairly terrified that eminently comfortable personage.

"Santo Domingo! What a wizz —" And in another instant his Excellency's best white sombrero was wafted from his head over the summer zephyrs and deposited, many rods behind, in a muddy stream beside the road. As the chauffeur was unable to leave the machine, the gallant Count Romeo was obliged to waddle back to it and dig it out with some difficulty, aided by the efforts of two children who had run from a cottage near by.

"Oi, oi, oi, oi!" shouted the gallant Romeo.

"*Tiens!* It is the hat of Pomponi," cried the Frenchman, in delight at the discomfort of his Excellency. "That is what he receives for wearing a sombrero in the automobile. *Mon oncle* Hippolite always —"

"Oh, never mind about your uncle Hippolite," interrupted the commanding voice of Mrs. Wilton. "Get out at once and go to Count di Pomponi's assistance. He needs you. I know he will fall into that water in

In Search of an Inn

another minute; and then we shall have an awful time getting him dry," and she began to laugh at the idea.

The Frenchman darted to the side of Pomponi, and seizing him by the arm, endeavoured to extricate him from his perilous position on the edge of the water. For a moment the two showed evident signs of falling in together; but fate intervened to prevent so great a tragedy, and the two were at last on the road again, with the hat on the head of the count.

"Oi, oi, oi! The water drips in the back and tickles me under the collar," he moaned piteously, endeavouring to stop the tiny waterfalls with a flowered handkerchief of lavender hue.

"I do not see that we can do anything about it," said Mrs. Wilton, still laughing. "You might take it off and tie my lace veil over your head, if that would do any good."

"Oh, madame, you are too *simpatica*," sighed his bedraggled Excellency; "and the new sombrero, too, it was — So then," and he took it off, and was soon tied up in the brown veil, which covered him completely.

The next stopping-place was the little town of Bolbec, situated some distance to the

Among French Inns

northwest of Norville. It is now chiefly an industrial centre, with Lillebonne as an offshoot to its manufacturing establishments, although it dates back as far as the tenth century. The present town was built up by the Protestants after 1765, and has been, since then, a great centre of Protestantism in Normandy.

The ancient family of the seigniors of Bolbec was the parent of the great houses of Longueville and Buckingham, but the history of the town itself has little or nothing of a feudal character to interest or attract the student. The place was entirely destroyed by fire in the years of 1676 and 1696, and it is to the large number of Protestant families who settled there after the Edict of Nantes, and gave themselves up to industrial pursuits, that it owes its present position. In these hands rest its present and its future, though the following lines of a poet have been quoted by a writer of the fourteenth century in this connection:

“ Non, l'avenir n'est à personne,
Sire, l'avenir est à Dieu ! ”

Its future, however, would seem to promise more than its past has produced. Its only

In Search of an Inn

artistic possessions of interest are two fountains which originally ornamented the gardens of Marly. One represents a figure of Time supporting the Arts, the other a figure of Diana. They are beautiful examples and worth observing. Mrs. Blodget Wilton wished she could buy them and carry them back to America, and at the moment longed for her better half to enter into negotiations with the authorities, with a view to making a bargain. The Frenchman was highly amused at the idea, and was led into giving the party a delightful description of Marly itself and its original glories. The ladies were fascinated by it, and delighted with the intelligent and witty conversation of their pseudo-guide, for he possessed that quality of quick-wittedness which is a part of his race and which is always acceptable to ladies.

There was no question about it, the Frenchman could make himself a charming and agreeable companion when he wished to, and could leave the more amiable but less subtle Pomponi almost in the shade, for the time being.

A few kilometres northwest of Bolbec, and midway between it and Étretat, is the small town of Goderville, which owes its name

Among French Inns

to the ancient and illustrious family of Godard. The Godards had their origin during the Gaulic-Roman epoch, and became extinct sometime during the fourteenth century. They were at one time, according to certain authorities, allied to the ancient Kings of Yvetot, and were one of the most obscure and interesting of the historic Norman houses. The original *manoir* of the Barons of Goderville is still in existence to-day. It is a heavy construction in brick and stone, surrounded by moats, and is used as a departmental barrack.

Close to Goderville is the village and church of Bréauté, whose chief interest lies in the associations attached to the celebrated Sires de Bréauté, who were connected by marriage with the most historic and important families of Normandy. These included such names as Créqui, Bethencourt, Brezé, Aumont, and Estouteville, and the seigniories of Neville, — by an alliance with Agnes de Neville in 1282, — names less familiar to the world to-day than to the student of genealogy, but pregnant with significance in their relation to the history of Normandy.

As in its relation to the world at large the most important event in the history of this

In Search of an Inn

famous province may be said to be the Conquest of England, so we find in studying the names of those who have contributed more largely to its glory the origin of the greatest names of England itself. From Normandy they have sprung, transplanted by William the Conqueror to the opposite shores of the Channel, and there producing the natural fruits of their greatness and their blood. The chief representatives of England's glorious past find, in the decayed or dying remains of these Norman strongholds, their birthplace and their beginning. A pilgrimage to their shrine repays the pilgrim who bears a spark of ancestral or historic worship—noble in itself as in its influence upon the minds of men—and brings to light a world of hidden memories and names. Here he may pause and sing:

Awake again, thou spark of magic fire,
That causes man his fellows to inspire !
Oh, tear these mists that blind his sightless eyes,
And raise once more his efforts to the skies !

.

Here let us linger with the crownèd gods ;
To join the humble pilgrim, as he plods
The steep and thorny path that leads to fame,
And know at last the glory of a name.

Among French Inns

Each portion of France seems to possess its special figures of history belonging to different periods, and peculiarly associated with the distinct epochs which they have represented. In Touraine everything breathes the air and atmosphere of the Renaissance. François I., Catherine de Medicis, Henry III., and the Louis', are everywhere portrayed and brought before the visitor.

In Normandy it is the Conquest, with the great epic figure of the Conqueror predominant, like some majestic deity hovering over the later history of the duchy, and with the illustrious line of his predecessors as a background. Around this foundation are grouped those other personages who have so vitally associated their names with such historic events as Hastings, Courtray, Harfleur, Monthery, and a host of others. The luxurious Renaissance gives way to the stern yet chivalrous character of the feudal period. And its contemplation, like the influence of the Puritans in later centuries, gives to the heart a feeling of virile strength and manhood, which, if less easy in its touch, is yet filled with force, and potent in the significance of its results.

Such, to the Anglo-Saxon, is perhaps the

In Search of an Inn

chief comparative interest in the study of these rural haunts of Normandy, now the smiling and simple exponents of a past as great as any corner of the world may boast. To the thoughtful, it acts as an allegory upon the characters of men, teaching a silent yet eloquent lesson to the observer of its past and present life. The very domesticity of its appearance to-day adds to the feeling which it inspires in the breast, and causes its significance to sink yet deeper in the mind: France of yesterday the creator of the Anglo-Saxon races of to-day.

With these thoughts we approach the heights which bring us once more to the bare and bolder spaces of the coast, and yonder find the little seaside resort of Étretat, toward which we have been directing our energies. In a moment the scene shifts into modern life, and the mood, perforce, has changed with its approach. The automobiles drew up before the door of the Hôtel Blanquet, and the whole party alighted to investigate the town and the beach.

Étretat is a quaint little fishing village, situated in a valley between the high hills and cliffs that border upon the sea. It has become known through the writings of

Among French Inns

Alphonse Karr, who has done much to interest visitors in these seaside places near Havre. They possess a charm which well merits his praise, and have become a curious mixture of the simple life of the humblest of fishermen with the riches and fashion that are drawn to them in summer-time.

It being the season, the host of the Hôtel Blanquet made the party welcome, and the count was soon enjoying a refreshing draught, and the other members of the excursion their several favourite ingredients. Our host was ready to point out the interesting features of Étretat, which lie more in its natural advantages than in historical monuments or events.

"What a quaint little place it is, and how pretty the village is, nestling into this valley between the hills," said Miss Wilton.

"But, my dear, I do not think it would be nearly as gay as Trouville," remarked her mother, who was taking in the practical possibilities of the place at a glance. She had already made up her mind that it would never do as a place of continued residence. Her nature sought more advanced and sophisticated pleasures than the life of this peaceful resort.

"When we arrive at Trouville I will ask



HÔTEL BLANQUET, ÉTRETAT

In Search of an Inn

the Duchesse de V—— to invite you all to stay in her villa, and then we shall have a very gay time. I had a letter from her yesterday, and she said she hoped Gladys and I would come, and bring some amusing men with us."

"Oh, the duchesse! I loave the duchesse," said the enthusiastic Romeo, glad at the thought of being entertained and circulating among the ladies, and showing off his wondrous costumes and summer flannels. He was to vie with the Frenchman in the glories of eccentric Continental attire, so dear to the heart of the fashionable Latin, and so surprising to the Anglo-Saxon of good taste and breeding.

As they sauntered along the water-front, his eye caught sight of a Frenchman in the full glory of a summer bicycle outfit, parading about in perfect confidence that he was attracting the attention and admiration of his countrymen — and women.

"Ah, how well they put themselves," exclaimed Romeo, in appreciation of the sight; "how well they put themselves, in summer. That is what I would say is a *joli garçon*."

We looked and beheld the "*joli garçon*,"

Among French Inns

a man of some forty summers, his face covered with a silky, virgin beard, black and apparently moth-eaten, his form clothed in a so-called suit of knickerbockers covered with an immense black and white check, the trousers gathered at the knee by an elastic band. White cotton stockings draped his sinewy limbs. Cheap rubber-soled shoes encased his feet. A brilliant pink shirt, a large fluffy tie, and huge boutonnière of the same colour completed this singular costume. His hair, "*en brosse*," as well as the fierce black mustachios upon his upper lip, gave him a chivalrous and nonchalant air. Such was the "*joli garçon*" of Count Romeo di Pomponi's ideas. He might well have stepped out of some comic opera in America; but here he seemed perfectly at ease, and appeared to fit into the landscape as naturally as could be.

"My senses, what a man!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilton. "Why, I should call him a figure of fun. His clothes look as if they were made by a dressmaker, instead of a tailor. Count, I am surprised at your taste."

"Ah, that is what I call a '*joli garçon*,'" replied the count, and the subject was allowed to drop.

Étretat has many charming things about



THE BEACH, ÉTRETAT

In Search of an Inn

it. The sunsets are beautiful, and reflect the colours of the western sky in the water, rippling and dancing in the soft light of an afternoon. The high meadows above reach to the very edge of the cliffs, white and chalky, and unlike the American coast, yet still different from the white cliffs of England.

On either side of the bay these cliffs arise, high above the sea, which has torn great arches under them in a curious and imposing formation, like some watery cave which holds its deep and hidden mysteries. In winter the storms rage about them, but in summer all is smiling nature and a genial sight.

"I should like a whiskey and soda, if you please," said the Englishman to the waiter, as the party returned to the Hôtel Blanquet.

"*Un whiskie et soda?*" queried the waiter in amazement. "Oh, that we have not. Perhaps monsieur will take a coffee and some liqueur, or some good cider, fresh made?"

"My dear Lord F——," broke in Mrs. Wilton, "don't you know there is no such thing as a whiskey and soda in this part of

Among French Inns

the world? Why, they do not know what the word means."

"Ah, madame, we have the soda, but the *whiskie*, that is something only drunk by *les Anglais, là bas!*"

"Yes, that is right; they only have the whiskey, '*là bas!*' Take some coffee instead."

Accordingly, the Englishman took coffee, which was served in a long, tapering glass instead of a cup, which he could not seem to understand at all.

"Will madame stay over night?" asked the host, with an engaging smile.

"No, not to-day," answered Mrs. Wilton; "we have no baggage; but we will come back some other time. Send for the automobiles, and we will start for Fécamp."

"Well," said the Frenchman, "will you all come?" And we all proceeded to dress ourselves up so as to be unrecognizable by the ordinary mortal.

It is only a few kilometres to Fécamp, which, in some respects, is a more important place than Étretat, and it was not long before we were in the town itself. There are three hotels in Fécamp, the Canchy and the Chariot d'Or, both of which are good. We

In Search of an Inn

decided, however, to "descend" at the Grand Cerf, which is a curious old house opposite the abbey. Here Mr. Wilton had already arrived with the "immediate luggage," and engaged the best rooms that there were.

"I certainly thought you would all break down, somewhere, and be brought on here in pieces," said he, as we met at the door of the inn.

"No such luck," said the Englishman; and soon all had gone to their rooms to clean off the dust of the day's excursion, and prepare for another on the morrow.

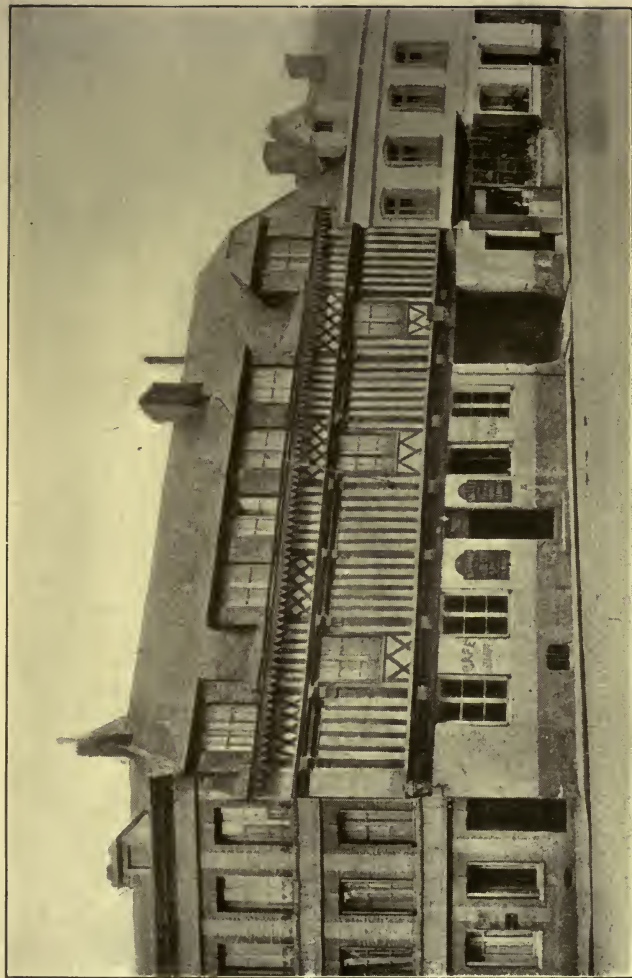
CHAPTER III

AT THE HOTEL DU GRAND CERF

Fécamp

THIS charming and picturesque old house is the oldest hotel in Fécamp, and a typical French inn. It was known originally under the name of L'Hôtellerie du Grand Cerf, and has an interesting history attached to it. It was the ancient treasury of the Benedictine monks, dating from the fourteenth century, and it was here that François I. stayed when he visited Fécamp. To-day it is a delightful old timbered building with heavy cornices and windows in the roof. The principal entrance is through the driveway into the court, like so many of the French inns and hotels. It presents a distinct contrast to the buildings on either side of it on the paved street, and, at a glance, tells of age and mellow hospitality, and quaint characters and associations.

"We must take a walk about the place and see what it is like," said Mrs. Wilton, the next morning, as we met for the day.



HÔTEL DU GRAND CERF, FÉCAMP

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

"I saw all I wanted of it yesterday," said her husband. "While you are sightseeing, I shall go in bathing. It's so warm, I would like to get cool, and the salt water will do me good. Come with me, count. It will make you feel like a king."

"What a curious old place this is," said Miss Wilton, who had just appeared, looking as fresh and lovely as a summer rose. "Good morning, papa."

"Kiss your mother, Gladys, and tell me whether my hat is on straight," interrupted Mrs. Wilton. "It was impossible to see anything in my glass, and Cécile has disappeared. I didn't know where to find anything."

Mrs. Wilton had on a wonderful creation which covered her head with lace and imitation grapes and flowers falling down behind, making her look like a veritable flower-garden.

"This certainly is a fascinating old inn," said the Frenchman. "I remember coming here years ago and having a bottle of Burgundy with the landlord. He was famous for his Burgundy, and his stories. I remember his telling me that Beau Brummel came here once, and the interesting anecdotes he

Among French Inns

told. When we arrive at the Hôtel d'Angleterre, at Caen, we shall see the apartments which he occupied there, after he had left England — like the Conqueror — to die in Normandy."

"I declare, it is a funny old place," said Mr. Wilton, "all passages and turns and quaint rooms. I rather like it. And they gave us a very good dinner last night, on the whole; didn't they?"

"I suppose we are bound to have chicken and salad twice a day, now that we are in France," said Mrs. Wilton, "but we might do worse."

"Oh, the *poulet* and the *salade* for me; that is all there is of most," exclaimed the count, who delighted in these dishes.

And here the Frenchman agreed with him for once, and they went off together to inspect the menu for *déjeuner*. They were soon off to the beach with Mr. Wilton for their bath, and Miss Wilton and the Englishman took the lead in the party that was to inspect the sights of Fécamp.

A quaint legend is told of the manner in which the place was founded, which was as early as the year 658. The seas are reported to have cast up the remains of a fig-

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

tree, in the trunk of which had been concealed the blood of Christ, bequeathed to a certain man named Isaac, by his uncle, Joseph of Arimathea. On the spot was erected a monastery for women. Richard Sans Peur, who was the grandfather of William the Conqueror, rebuilt the present important abbey, which he used as a place of residence during the latter part of his life.

As it was opposite the inn, we visited it first, and found it full of interest. The exterior is a fine example of Gothic architecture as it is found in Normandy, unaffected by the influence of later periods. It rises, like a massive monument to God, out of the valley in which the town is situated, flanked by the high, rather bleak hills, rolling up on either side, like the waves of the sea. The western façade is the only variation in the severe style of its architecture, which is strong and symmetrical, though somewhat cold to the eye.

The abbey, which, during his life, was both the palace and minster of Richard Sans Peur, was likewise his sepulchre. There he was carried at his own request, after his death at Bayeux, his remains being deposited first in a curious sarcophagus outside the

Among French Inns

church, but later interred within its walls. His example made the abbey a nucleus for those of the ducal house of Normandy who turned toward the religious life. Nicholas, the son of Richard III., and William, surnamed Longue Epée, both lived here, the latter adding a palace and a chapel. The present façade dates only from the end of the sixteenth century, the original church, which was called St. Trinité, finished in 1107, having been mostly destroyed by fire. Indeed, the churches of Normandy, especially those of Rouen, seem to have been frequently a prey to flames, while many of the châteaux shared the same fate. The energy and piety of the Normans have, however, succeeded in erecting a greater and more elaborate monument in almost every instance.

"The interior of this abbey has almost the appearance of a cathedral," said the Englishman to Miss Wilton, as they wandered through the nave inspecting the walls, which were in many places spoiled by white-wash or inferior restorations.

"Yes," said she. "How cool and solemn the place seems after the life outside, and what a contrast."

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

A mass was being repeated in one of the small chapels near the choir, and the two paused for a moment, impressed by the reverence of the scene. The mass was for the repose of the soul of some one departed this life, and was evidently upon the first anniversary of death; a custom that is prevalent in France, and not without a certain beautiful religious sentiment. A single candle burned before an image of the Virgin near the altar, and a single figure, clothed in weeds of woe, knelt devoutly in the chapel. It was that of an aged woman, bowed with grief, who had doubtless saved her humble earnings to pay for this treasured office to some dear one who had passed outward to another life.

The priest, a young abbé, was intoning the "Kyrie Eleïson," in the soft light of the chapel. The whole scene was so simple and touching in its devotion that instinctively Miss Wilton sank to her knees, and the Englishman with her.

In a moment it seemed as if the full meaning of the Roman Catholic faith, in its influence upon the emotional side of human feeling, was borne upon the fair American girl and the companion at her side, not with

Among French Inns

incense and peals of music and robes, not in the grandeur of a festival, nor attended by dignitaries of the Church, but in its intimate relation with the soul, the sentiment of human hearts, rather than its appeal to the senses.

Such is perhaps the truest individual communion with the Deity, the simplest office of religion given in this almost monastic solitude, an appeal unattended by pageantry or crowds, and given in sincerity to God.

It was impossible for the two who had thus joined the mass to believe for the moment that they were not one with it and of it. For the time, all thought of religious differences of creeds, all suggestion of man's conflict in the past with dogma or theology vanished. It was a communion of spirit, born of natural impulse and feeling—surely the truest image of the Eternal mind on earth.

As they rose, at the conclusion of the mass, Miss Wilton whispered a word of thanks to her companion for thus joining in her own sentiment and action.

"I should like to speak to this woman," said she.

"I think she would appreciate it if you

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

did," said the Englishman, who had forgotten for the moment that he was descended from a long line of the sternest supporters of the Church of England.

Miss Wilton approached the still kneeling figure, and held out her hand in sympathetic acknowledgment of their unusual meeting.

"Ah, mademoiselle, may the *bon Dieu* bless you!" said the old woman, weeping. "You bring back to me my own loved one that is gone. She was my only daughter, all that was left to me; as beautiful as the heavens, like yourself, mademoiselle. The waves had taken all the others from me, and then God called her also."

As the aged figure vanished through the doorway of the church it seemed as if something had passed between these two young people which could not be described in words, and which changed the atmosphere about them. Their thoughts were unable to shake off the impression which this incident had made upon them, and the air of the abbey seemed, as it were, sanctified by something deeper and more human than the mere stones and effigies about them.

"I am glad that we stayed for the mass,"

Among French Inns

said Miss Wilton, simply, to the Englishman, as they passed from the building.

"And I, too," said he, with something in his voice which had not been there before.

As they came out of the transept door they paused to examine the spot where Duke Richard was originally buried. The origin of the stone sarcophagus, which was placed in the very pathway leading to the entrance, has been a subject of much interest and research to historians of the abbey, and those who have been interested in its past. It stood so close to the walls of the edifice that the water, dripping from the gargoyle extending from the eaves above, moistened its surface in wet weather and baptized it with the rains of heaven.

Its original use, according to Palgrave, was not that of a tomb, but as a receptacle for wheat and grain, which was distributed, together with other alms, to the poor of Fécamp on the eve of every Sabbath. Grain was at that period a common luxury in Normandy, and appreciated by those in need of charity. It was, therefore, a beautiful idea which caused this rude stone to be used as the place of burial for the earthly remains of the ducal patron of the monastery. It

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

has been a spot of almost sacred interest ever since.

As they wandered on through the streets and byways of the town, the Englishman's thoughts returned to the incident in the abbey. In some way it had produced a strange effect upon his mind, and his opinion of the beautiful American girl at his side was undergoing a change. Was it possible that this young woman, surrounded by the irresponsible frivolities and luxuries which seemed so a part of her existence, had something deeper and more sincere in her nature than appeared upon the surface?

Hitherto he had regarded her only as a bird of feathery plumage, borne upon the current of every passing air that blows about persons of great and sudden wealth, unaccompanied by those traditions of inheritance that are so much a part of English life. What he had seen of her before had given him only the impression of a charming, but vain and careless person, ignorant of any of the duties or considerations which are shared and practised by Englishwomen of the better sort. She had appeared to him, more perhaps than to any of the young men who had met her, as a winged butterfly, enter-

Among French Inns

taining and iridescent in the sunlight, but not to be thought of seriously, nor to be considered in any sombre light, where the rays of the sun were not visible, nor in shadows through which they could not pierce.

Now all was altered, and the Englishman was obliged to rearrange his thoughts. It took time and an effort to do so, and it was not surprising that he was silent most of the way; for how could he be expected to alter his opinion of a young lady's character, and talk to her at the same time?

"I am sorry that I did not ask the name and address of the old woman when we were in the church." It was Miss Wilton's voice that roused him from his thoughts at last.

"Do you think we could find her if we returned?" he asked; "it is not too late to turn back."

"I am afraid she has gone too far by this time," returned Miss Wilton, "but I should like to have asked her some more about her daughter, and to have done something for her, if possible, for she seemed very poor."

"Perhaps we shall see her again before we leave," suggested the Englishman, hopefully. "Fécamp is not very large, you

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

know, and one is likely to meet the same people again. There is only one person, however, whom I hope we shall *not* meet again while we are here, and that is the ridiculous-looking '*joli garçon*' whom the count admired at Étretat. It was enough to make one ill to look at him."

But alas! As if the hand of Fate had attended the Englishman's remark, who should appear on the horizon at that instant but the *joli garçon* himself, strutting down the street and pluming himself, for all the world, like a turkey-cock in a barnyard!

" 'Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us,' " quoted Miss Wilton.

" 'To see oursels as ithers see us,' " added the Englishman, finishing out the line of the poet with an expression of absolute contempt on his face, — which the *joli garçon* did not see as he passed, delighted with his own appearance and oblivious of evil.

"Let us go and see the Maison de St. Waninge, who founded the original monastery," said Miss Wilton; and the two made their way toward La Retenue, at the end of which this interesting house is situated. The most attractive part of it is the doorway, which is of the thirteenth century, and is a

Among French Inns

fitting sequel to the abbey itself, associated as it is with the early history of the town.

High above the shore, and situated upon the bluff overlooking the sea, is a little chapel with a tall lighthouse near it. In the view of Fécamp it stands against the sky in almost desolate isolation, like a beacon on the hill. The chapel is that of Notre Dame de Salut, which is a place of pilgrimage. Near it, on the headland which is sometimes called Cap-Fagnet, is a fort known as Notre Dame de Bourg-Baudouin. Up the steep pathway leading to the chapel, the poor pilgrims of the place may be found climbing to the altar above; for the devotion of a pilgrimage is one of the religious characteristics of France, and in all parts it is the joy of good Catholics to repair on certain days to some shrine where they may offer their prayers and their oblations to the Almighty.

Not far from the centre of the town is the Fontaine du Précieux-Sang, where the traditional fig-tree was washed up by the sea, and in which the blood of our Lord was said to have been enclosed. The water of this fountain is believed to this day to possess certain wondrous properties and healing powers, and many children have been im-

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

mersed in it, — sometimes to their ultimate ill, be it said. For such superstitions, which are common in Normandy, are more picturesque as legends of the fancy than valuable as agencies of health and comfort to youth or early childhood.

By the time Miss Wilton and the Englishman had returned to the inn, the rest of the party had gathered for *déjeuner*, and they found plenty to discuss and gossip over. The count had found some French friends while bathing, and was full of interest and conversation, as usual. Indeed, it did not take much to set the count's tongue a-wagging, or the count's throat a-thirsting, or the count's brain a-whirling, in true Latin style, on the sea of social intercourse.

"Well, count, we had a fine bath, didn't we?" said Mr. Wilton, who was in excellent humour.

"Only the bath-suit, he was so small," added his Excellency, thinking of the time he had had squeezing into the elastic substance which he had purchased on the beach. "I put him on, and it take two men to pull him off over the head; and the legs was all filled with salt. Ah, but *ces dames*, they were lovely in the bath-suits; one all in pink

Among French Inns

and one all in green. *Dieu!* how I would like a pink suit."

"He'd look like a lobster with it on," said Mr. Wilton under his breath. "There's one thing the count can do, however," he added aloud, "and that is to float. You should have seen him, ladies; he was half out of water."

"With the swimming I can do," said the count; "but the floating, that I can manage. Oh, yes," and he made an indescribable gesture to express his pride in the accomplishment. "I lie on the back, and the water takes the body to the air."

"That's it," said Mr. Wilton, "you press the button, and the waves do the rest." (Mr. Wilton's wit was apt to be tinged with slang or local expressions, which he learned on the Exchange.) "But how about the surf? I thought you were going to kill that lady when you rolled over on top of her."

"Do not tease the count," said Mrs. Wilton to her husband. "He has had a nice bath, and I am sure looks a great deal better for it. I was really worried about him yesterday."

"So was I," said the Frenchman. "With

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

the blood in his head, I was afraid of an attack or a fit."

"Oh, *Dieu, Dieu!*" exclaimed the count in alarm. "I hope not. *Mia madre* had one when she was sixty, and was always a little light in the head after it. I hope not a fit!"

"They say one never knows when one has a fit," said the Frenchman, by way of consoling the count, "so that one has to be told after it is over."

"Come," said Mrs. Wilton, "let's talk of something pleasanter. *Déjeuner* is ready, and — think of it, count — we are to have some of the famous old Burgundy with our chicken!"

The count's eyes sparkled, and the skies were serene once more.

Later in the afternoon it was decided to take a run down to Yvetot in the automobiles, and perhaps on to Caudebec, if there were time. About two o'clock every one was ready except Mr. Wilton, who positively refused to go, so he was left behind with the luggage, to smoke his cigar with the host of the inn, to whom he seemed to have taken a great fancy. The host told Mr. Wilton wonderful stories of Fécamp and the

Among French Inns

past glories of the inn, and in return Mr. Wilton told mine host wonderful stories of American ways, and how to make money, and how he had better pack up his Burgundy and take it over to New York and start a hotel there.

As long as he was pleased and well, Mrs. Wilton did not care so much as a pin what he was up to. She had too much to do when she was abroad to bother about Mr. Wilton or what amused him, or did not. In early life she had worked and endured and slaved with him for their mutual interest and benefit, but now life was passing, and in her actual field of operations her husband could take only a minor part. So it happened that when he was dragged to Europe once every year or two, to show the great world there that Mrs. Blodget Wilton *had* a husband, and *could* produce him if she had a mind to, he was left, a good deal of the time, to his own devices, and only forced to appear on occasions which actually demanded his presence, — such as one out of every three of the princely banquets (which he paid for, be it said), during the Paris season, and every now and then a visit at some château in the country. These he



MARKET - DAY, FÉCAMP

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

hated more than anything, because he could not speak French, nor understand French wit, nor get away from the people who were staying there. He was usually bullied into going by his wife, after a good deal of arguing and prodding, and he got away if he could on almost any excuse before the end of the visit was reached.

So much for Mr. Blodget Wilton. The rest of the party were ready to enjoy the afternoon. The ladies had on their most approved automobile costumes, covered with dust-coloured gossamers, and half a hundred veils over their heads and faces. The count and the Frenchman were both in the best of humour, and the Englishman as fresh and serene as usual.

Yvetot is situated about midway between Fécamp and Rouen, in a direct line running in a southeasterly direction, and it may be reached by passing through Valmont, Ourville, and Fauville. The distance is not too great to be covered comfortably in an automobile, over the roads for which France is so noted. Even the constant hills (which are at times steep, and the roads winding) are scarcely an impediment to one of the good French machines; for the French certainly

Among French Inns

have led the world in this respect, as they have in the network of state roads which cover the country and are a model for all governments and municipalities to follow. They combine the practical and the picturesque, lined by broad borders of green well-trimmed grass, with cuttings for the water to drain through, and edged with neat hedges, not unlike some parts of England.

Not far from Fécamp, and near Ourville, is Valmont, in the midst of lovely scenery preserved in freshness and verdure by the warmth of the Norman sunshine, the constant rains, and the moisture of the sea which is wafted southward through the country. Valmont is interesting historically and architecturally. It possesses a château, a monastery, and a church. The château is associated with the name of François I. (whose influence in architecture has crept even into Normandy), and of the famous Duguesclin. Charles V. gave the château to his gallant Connetable, and François I. visited it at the time of the marriage of Adrienne d'Estouteville to the Comte de St. Paul.

The land of Valmont itself belonged in early days to the house of Estouteville, and it was the last of this celebrated Norman

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

family who allied it to the royal house of France by the marriage just referred to, the Comte de St. Paul being Charles de Bourbon. Through his daughter, this maternal domain was transferred to the house of Orleans-Longueville, so that its associations have been distinctly of a royal character.

The foundations of the château are of the twelfth century, while the upper portions, which arise out of the depths of green below them, are of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and show the more ornate and luxurious influence of the Renaissance. It is interesting to note, in such places as these, how the hand of François I., who brought the florid yet beautiful style of the Renaissance from Italy, and bequeathed it as an imperishable gift to France, shows itself even here, far from his favoured haunts of Touraine. The stern walls of the early Norman days were at once adorned for his coming with all the ornaments and achievements of his time, details which not even the ruthless and inconsiderate restorations of later owners have been able to utterly destroy or hide.

Enter, you who stand before this noble habitation of other days, and observe in

Among French Inns

truth the allegory which these cold and lifeless stones may teach, and apply it to your own less picturesque environment. Are not romances of life more deeply graven in these walls that rise to-day on all sides in France, out of the mists of the past, than are enacted in our dramas, or printed upon the pages of our volumes? Is there not poetry concealed in every corner and beneath every shadow, which breathes of chivalry and love, of passion, misery, or death? Life comes again and fills it with joy and youth. Ambitions, hopes, intrigues fill its galleries, and whisper of the ways of courts now long since overthrown and gone. The whole array of personages, as human as ourselves though born in other times, returns, as we wander through these castles of France, filling our minds with history — much of which is never to be written by man — and kindling again the old romance and action of baronial times.

Ah! There is something which touches, deep in the heart, a spark of animated fire that smoulders in the souls of many who have not trod these paths of European haunts, yet desire the very inspiration which they give, and who know it when it comes. With

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

those who feel it we would sympathize, and urge them to the effort of a pilgrimage; for surely nothing broadens the imagination more generously; nothing fills so truthfully the void; nothing satisfies more swiftly the desire.

The Hôtel du Commerce at Valmont opens its doors to the passing visitor, and the company of which we form a part stops, nothing loath, to refresh its members and pause, filled with the impressions which the château and the other monuments of the place have given them. On the opposite side of the river are the remains of the monastery, which date from the twelfth century also. The Chapelle de la Vierge, which savours of the Renaissance, like the château itself, contains the tombs of the departed Sires d'Estouteville, memorials of a famous race, now passed from view for ever.

A charming legend is told in reference to the foundation of the abbey, known as the Miracle of the Roses. Mademoiselle d'Estouteville, the daughter of the founder, was wont to conceal provisions for the poor workmen who built it, and who were ground down to poverty by the avarice of her father. One day he discovered her.

Among French Inns

"What is that which you have hidden in your dress?" said he.

"Father," said the maiden, in fear of the paternal anger, "it is only some roses." And behold, as she loosed her dress there fell from it, not the provisions which she had placed there, but a mass of scented flowers, fragrant with the perfume of summer.

Heaven had prevented one of its saints from being punished for telling a falsehood.

The party left Valmont and the Hôtel du Commerce with regret, and sped on to Ourville, which is only a short distance, — soon covered by an automobile.

"These old castles of Normandy, and in fact in France generally, are a curious contrast to ours in England," said the Englishman to Miss Wilton.

"There is an air of artistic neglect here which is hardly ever seen with you," said the latter. "Your beautiful lawns and parks are so much more neatly trimmed and cared for, that it is almost impossible to compare the two."

"France has a charm, different, and yet all its own," said the Englishman.

"And what a poetic charm!" interrupted the Frenchman. "Do you know, as we go

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

the lines of the French poet run through my head:

“ ‘ Voir, c’est avoir ;
Allons courir :
Vie errante
Est chose enivrante !
Voir, c’est avoir ;
Allons courir,
Car tout voir
C’est tout conquérir ! ’ ”

“ Oh, that is delightful,” said the count. “ I must learn the words. They are full of the life of movement and running! ”

Miss Wilton laughed. “ You do have such an amusing way of putting things, Count di Pomponi,” said she. “ I wonder why we never think of saying the things that you do.”

The Englishman thought, from his point of view, that Mrs. Blodget Wilton, to say nothing of her husband, had at times some very amusing ways of putting things, but he hardly liked to say so to their daughter.

“ The Italian, he likes to say what he think always,” said the count, graciously waving his glove until it touched his left waistcoat pocket. “ He is never afraid to say what he think. The sentiment, he expand, and the heart is always warm. Oh! signorina,

Among French Inns

I would loave to show you the Italia, and the *poesia Italiana*."

The count looked volumes of fat rapture as he spoke, and every one laughed. Poor man! No one would take him seriously, and he could never understand the reason why.

"Ah, but the loave in the boosom is true, when we wish to sacrifice the life," he added, with tragic fervour.

"Oh, dear count, I hope you are not going to kill yourself," said Miss Wilton. "That would be too dreadful. Think of it! If you did, we should have no one to show Italy to us."

"I can do," sighed the count, in an agony of romantic fervour, allowing his arms to hang listlessly in the air, as if they were entirely independent of his body.

"Come, come," said his fair tormentor, indulgently. "You must not feel so badly. Look at this lovely view; we are losing it all."

"I can see," answered the count, wistfully. "He go by so fast the trees is all in the air, and the grass up on top with the eyes."

"You might shut them," suggested the Englishman, "and then you would not get so much dust in them."

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

Finally the count did close his lustrous orbs, and sank into a semi-slumber, while his generous form bounced about on the seat like so much jelly when taken out of its mould.

Passing through Ourville and Fauville, picturesque villages nestling in lovely scenery, the party pursued its way to Yvetot, the ancient capital of the Pays du Calètes. The chief interest that centres about Yvetot is political and historical. As a sixteenth-century poet has expressed it:

“Au noble pays du Caux
Y a quatre abbaies royaux,
Six prieurez conventuaux,
Et six barons de grand arroi,
Quatre comtes, trois ducs, un roi.”

In truth the “kingdom of Yvetot” was one of those tiny independent states, more in name than in space, which are to be found more frequently in the history of other centuries than to-day. Although historians have failed to discover satisfactorily the real origin of this petty kingdom, it arose to suzerain power sometime between the reigns of William the Conqueror and John Lackland. The seigneurs of Yvetot appear upon

Among French Inns

the stage of history in the train of the Norman Conquest, and we hear of a transaction in 1203 between Richard d'Yvetot and the Abbey of St. Wandrille, through which the former was granted an independent sovereignty.

Various evidences appear through successive centuries, showing that the Sires d'Yvetot were wont to style themselves as other rulers, that their wives assumed the titles of queens and princesses, and that they were apparently recognized as such by the Kings of France. The existence, however, of this so-called "kingdom," which was a unique exception to the common right in France, has been more or less the object of mockery or satire. The poetry which is associated with Yvetot is that of Berenger, which savours of the humourous yet philosophic spirit of the materialist and the hoary son of toil. It breathes the atmosphere of the Norman peasant, the scent of the apple, the intoxication of cider, and the song of the public house at the end of the village street. Here is an example, which has been quoted by other writers, of this interesting phase of sovereignty:

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

“ Il était un roi d'Yvetot

Peu connu dans l'histoire.

Oh ! Oh ! Oh ! Oh ! Ah ! Ah ! Ah ! Ah !

Quel bon petit roi c'était la ! ”

But though seemingly insignificant as monarchs, the Kings of Yvetot held their prerogatives for several centuries. They assembled their miniature courts, made terms with the powers with whom they came in contact, and defended their integrity in the wars which threatened their possessions and their independence. They have left a curious, historical, and almost mythical interest behind them, which has attracted the antiquaries of France and elsewhere. The mists which hover over the country of Normandy seem to have enveloped in their folds the early days of the rise and creation of Yvetot as a separate kingdom. Possibly for this very reason speculation is rife, and the curiosity of historians more keenly alive. In any case, to the student of political history, this one example of independent sovereignty among the early dependencies and provinces of France must always clothe the capital of its past power with a romantic and picturesque quality which is worthy of investigation and study.

Among French Inns

To-day the town is the proud possessor of manufactures and an immense market which at times is the great centre of business, gossip, intrigue, and the life in general of the inhabitants of this departed kingdom. Here they arrive, in all manner of equipages, clothed in all manner of quaint attire, and here barter their souls for a pig, a cow, or a barrel of apples. The price of eggs, the quality of butter, or the laying powers of the domesticated hen,—these are the latter-day topics of the kingdom of Yvetot, founded upon the aftermath of the Conqueror of England, and created by the ambitions of its puissant sires. Oh, crown! Where is thine end? Oh, greatness! Where was thy beginning?

Rested and refreshed by a draught of delicious cider at the Hôtel des Victoires, our party went on for a few kilometres, in order to visit the famous oak, known throughout this part of the country as the “Chêne d’Allouville.” This remarkable tree, which is one of the most curious examples of its kind in France, is situated in the churchyard of the village church of Allouville, and is considered to be at least nine hundred years old.

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

It is so large in circumference that it has been possible to build two rustic chapels in its trunk, one above the other. Around this picturesque shrine the patriarchal branches of the tree twine themselves in a religious embrace which lends to it a quaint and rural dignity. Behind it the tower of the church rises above its gnarled and tangled form, watching over its destiny as if to protect it by the hand of God. The humble villagers kneel before it in devout respect, offering up a prayer to the Almighty for that which they hold most dear in life—the repose of a soul, the protection of a relative, the preservation of some family possession, or strength to bear the burden of their years.

It is another picture of the noticeable influence of religious feeling in the every-day existence of the Latin countries, which is to be observed so frequently in France; more even in the rural districts than in larger towns or cities. The circumference of the tree at its base is thirteen metres, and as it is entirely hollow, the lower chapel is almost the same size. It dates from the seventeenth century, and is dedicated to Notre Dame de la Paix. Above it is a second chamber, reached by an exterior staircase.

Among French Inns

The Frenchman, as soon as the party had alighted, tore off his cap and darted into the chapel, where he was discovered in a few moments saying his prayers.

"What a wonderful old tree!" said Mrs. Wilton. "I declare, it is like one of our large trees in California. What a pity it is one could not buy it and carry it back to America! It would be such a surprise to have it at our place on Long Island."

"Ah, madame," exclaimed the count, "if you come to Roma you would want to buy the Arch of Titus; but they would not sell it;" and Mrs. Wilton looked almost angry.

"Come, count," said she, "you must get out of the automobile and climb up here in the tree."

"But are the stairs safe? And will they hold the weight of the body?" inquired the intrepid Romeo, sagaciously. It was not his desire to be led into any pitfalls or dangers if they could be avoided.

"Oh, mamma, pray do not urge Count Romeo to go up those stairs. Think how awkward it would be if he slipped and broke his leg."

"Oh, yes, if the leg was broke the whole

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

body would be agonizing me with the pain," answered his Excellency, in alarm.

But Mrs. Wilton was bent upon the count's entering the tree, and so up the poor count was obliged to go, his hostess pulling him before, and the Englishman assisting his ascent from behind. By their united efforts he was pushed up the stairs and squeezed through the narrow door into the chamber of the famous oak. There he could be heard shouting for joy, and flattering Mrs. Wilton in his most chivalrous and romantic style.

"But if the floor would fall through, the bones would be all broken to pieces," said he, finally, and he was about to make his exit.

"Hush," said Mrs. Wilton, in a commanding tone. "You must not make so much noise. Remember this tree is a chapel, and I do believe Monsieur de B—— is saying his prayers down-stairs. He is always saying his prayers. I wish somebody could stop him. It does not seem to do him the least good."

"Oh, but it is hot in the tree," said Count Romeo, unable to support the heat any longer. "It is like the Inferno of Dante, instead of the house of God," and he began quoting a line of the Divine Poet to himself. Yet fate had greater trials in store for his

Among French Inns

Excellency than the warmth of the weather or the atmosphere of the chapel. As he started down the open stairs, without thinking of the dangers before him, behold, his Excellency's foot slipped and went through one of the openings of the steps, and oh, *miser cordia!* his Excellency's heavy frame rolled down the whole length to the ground. There he lay in a bewildered heap, moaning and muttering in broken English and Italian, and evidently bruised and shaken up.

Mrs. Wilton, in alarm, hurried after him. Her daughter and the Englishman, who could not help smiling at the ridiculous figure of the count rolling over and over on the ground at the foot of the oak, soon followed and endeavoured to assist him. The Frenchman, whose devotions had been interrupted by the clatter of the fall, darted out of the chapel below, his eyes flashing with excitement. A small crowd was soon gathered about the fallen Romeo, all offering suggestions and restoratives.

"Quickly, Gladys, get my smelling-salts," cried Mrs. Wilton, who had assumed charge of the operation of restoring the count to himself.

"Oi, oi, oi! give me air, give me time,"

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

groaned his Excellency, not knowing whether he was dead or alive. He was sputtering and talking, calling upon "*mio padre*," and "*mia madre*," — both of whom had died some years previously, — and summoning all the saints in the calendar to witness his misfortune.

"We must send for *un médecin* at once. The blood is all in the head. Lift the body. Lift the limbs. If he were to have an attack!" The Frenchman was in a delirium of excitement.

"Do be quiet," said Mrs. Wilton, who by this time was ordering the chauffeurs to prop up the count with pillows.

"I think there is really no serious trouble," said the Englishman, who had been calmly feeling of the count during all the turmoil and hubbub which the accident had occasioned.

"*Tiens! Il respire!*" exclaimed the Frenchman. "Breathe gently, count; take matters calmly. Remember the blood in the head and how warm the day is."

By this time the count was coming to himself a little, and felt some reassurance and a slight desire to get upon his feet again. This

Among French Inns

was accomplished with the aid of the assembled company.

"If the bones are broken I cannot feel it," said his Excellency.

"You must wait; the pain comes later. You may be in the agony. Step gently. Move cautiously. Cover your head with a wet handkerchief," exclaimed the Frenchman, in comforting and sympathetic tones. And so the count was moved to the automobile, and there deposited in state beside his hostess once more, and the cavalcade was allowed to proceed, at an easy pace, to Caudebec.

"It certainly is a mercy that no bones were broken," said Mrs. Wilton, in relief.

"You must look before you leap, count," said the Englishman, philosophically; and the remainder of the conversation was smothered in a cloud of dust.

CHAPTER IV

CAUDEBEC TO ROUEN

CAUDEBEC is a delightful place, and an excellent centre for excursions to rural places of interest in the neighbourhood. The town itself is picturesque in the extreme, suggesting, as other writers have before mentioned, a combination of the Italian and the Norman.

Situated on the banks of the Seine, and surrounded by ideal scenery, it possesses a view over an extensive horizon, including Villequier on one side, and St. Wandrille, with its beautiful monastery, on the other, while in the centre of the picture arise in the distance the trees of the forest of Brotonne, the towers of Jumiéges, as well as the magnificent park and château of la Maille-raie.

The name of Caudebec is said to come from the old name *Caletensium Beccus*, meaning the River of Caux. The basin of water which has given its name to the town

Among French Inns

is to-day drawn from the little stream of St. Gertrude. Opposite the town itself there existed in a remote period an island formed by the river Seine, on which some Celtic druids once established one of their mysterious colleges. The town, with its prehistoric associations, is in its way a gem. Its view, which is one of those that are at once the glory and the joy of the French country, is as worthy of the study of an artist's pen or brush as are the quaint streets, the ancient houses, of at least four centuries, and the overhanging gables and beams, which make each corner and each turn a picture in itself.

The automobiles, bearing the almost lifeless body of the count, paused at the door of the Hôtel de la Marine, and their occupants entered the establishment, and being pleased with its appearance, assured of its comforts by the host, and tired after the exertion of the afternoon, concluded to remain and rest themselves after their journey. In the soft afternoon light the whole place was aglow with mellow tones, and the dim, departing sunshine, which gives to everything in France a magic touch of fancy. Here we are no longer troubled by the cares of



HÔTEL DE LA MARINE, CAUDEBEC

Caudebec to Rouen

life, the duties of the ever busy world, the worries of ill-natured thoughts, the sorrows of desires unfulfilled. The time is one of holiday, forgetfulness, and rest, surrounded by pictures and thoughts so alien to man's viler moods that it is impossible to resist the influence, or to deny the hand that leads us to forget ourselves and to enjoy the scene.

"It would be too late to go back to Fécamp to-night," said Mrs. Wilton. "We may as well stay here, and give Count di Pomponi a chance to rest and recover. He certainly needs it, for he has hardly said a word since we left the tree at Allouville."

So it was decided to remain at Caudebec, and the gentlemen were kept busy sending "*des télégrammes*" and "*des communications*" to Mr. Blodget Wilton at Fécamp.

"Tell him to come here, or go on to Rouen, whichever he likes the best," said his thoughtful wife, realizing that Mr. Wilton might take it into his head to dislike the Hôtel de la Marine as much as she and her companions liked it—and realizing also, in her thoughtfulness and masterful intelligence, that she might also wish to go on to Rouen in the morning.

There was a scene at the Postes et Télé-

Among French Inns

graphes while arranging some suitable words in French that Mr. Wilton would be able to understand.

"*Ces messieurs* do not wish *ce* Monsieur Wilton to know that the madame remains here alone?" queried the operator, ready to aid in an intrigue, if need be.

"Good gracious, no," said Mrs. Wilton, horrified at the idea.

"Oh, I only thought the madame might not wish the monsieur to know," added the lady operator, soothingly. "Madame has so many messieurs with her, no doubt one more will make no difference."

"Do I look respectable, or do I not? Tell me, Monsieur de B——?" demanded Mrs. Wilton, in great concern.

"I do not think anybody would desire to '*enlever*' Madame Wilton," said the Frenchman, with great gallantry. It would indeed have been a dangerous undertaking for any one to have attempted such a thing if they could have seen Mrs. Blodget Wilton in all her matronly dignity at that moment, her feathers bristling with virtue, her nose more like the beak of a hen than ever, her whole figure commanding respect and submission to her nobility of purpose. At length a

Caudebec to Rouen

suitable telegram was framed, and the party returned to the hotel by the way it had come.

The streets of Caudebec present a most interesting appearance to the visitor who passes through them. Their narrow, winding features are in every sense a study for the artist. The old beams and carving on the houses have an air of age in keeping with the atmosphere of Normandy. The churches are of rare beauty. The quay, with its hotels, its life, its houses, suggests, as we have said, a town of Italy. In short, the whole place is surrounded by a charm not easily to be surpassed in France.

In the ninth century Caudebec was a simple abode of fishermen, and its foundation may be really ascribed to the inhabitants of the island of Balcinac, which was subsequently engulfed by the river Seine. Fearful of its future, they repaired to the mainland, and the monks, who were all-powerful in those days, received certain grants and privileges from Charles le Chauve. The Benedictines of Fontenelle received from Richard II. a confirmation of their rights, as possessors of Caudebec and its surroundings, and William the Conqueror gave to them those of Balcinac. In the

Among French Inns

reign of Henry I., the market which was held at St. Wandrille was transferred to Caudebec, and thus the town grew slowly in size and prosperity.

In the fifteenth century the place was deemed worthy of a military fortification, and possessed walls flanked by towers and donjons. In 1419, during the invasion of Normandy by the English, Caudebec endured a six months' siege, at the end of which it was forced to surrender to Warwick and Talbot, the generals whom Henry V. had placed in command of his forces. Caudebec is associated with a considerable number of events in history during the fifteenth century, which was its period of greatest military activity. Were we permitted the time or space, in so short a study as this, to trace the several occasions upon which its inhabitants have attacked their enemies, both by the sword and by the pen, we might find much that was of interest in the pages of their history. So frequently, however, have the defenders of Caudebec resorted to the poignant use of words in verse, which have been parried between them and their enemies, that we may not inappropriately add a line of query to the adage of the poet, and ask:

Caudebec to Rouen

“What wound lies deeper than a word ?

‘The pen is mightier than the sword.’”

The events, which characterized the history of Caudebec prior to the reign of Louis XII. were more of a martial than an industrial nature. Charles VII. and Louis XI. have both figured in the scenes which have been enacted here. Charles le Téméraire appeared in warlike array before the town, but did not succeed in taking it. The Huguenots followed, and the name of Henry IV. also appears upon this page of its history. Here also the Prince de Parme in his attack upon Caudebec received the wound from whose effects he subsequently died. Thus, through the early centuries of its existence, this picturesque and interesting place fought for its identity and its preservation. Later, in the more peaceful days which followed, the Norman tendency toward industry, so noticeable upon all sides to-day, found opportunity to assert itself and prosper.

Such, then, is the history of Caudebec in a few words, one which stirs the imagination to its review of chivalry and valour, and brings it to the natural pursuits of peace. Through its varied fortunes it was enabled

Among French Inns

to grow into a well-worn picture of the past, which now draws to it the worship of the passing pilgrims. Each shade seems laden with a hundred recollections; each sunlit spot the object of a quaint renown brought into one whole composite form, that still possesses something of the touch of time.

The morning after the arrival of the automobilists at the Hôtel de la Marine was cold and cloudy, and the Englishman had indulged in a fire in his room before *déjeuner*. After having finished some letters, he descended to the office and sought the head of the establishment, and gave orders to have the fire kept up in his chamber. His French, alas, left something still to be desired, and his choice of words was at times embarrassing in its results.

"Ne laissez pas ce fou s'en aller, dans cette chambre," said he to the good host at the office, never thinking what effect his mistake in pronouncing the word "fire" would produce.

The astonished host, hearing the word "*fou*," immediately supposed that there was a crazy man in the room above, and communicated at once with the madame. The word flew like wild-fire through the lower regions

of the establishment that there was "*un fou*" shut up in one of the rooms of the Hôtel de la Marine at Caudebec. The Englishman, meanwhile, had gone forth for a morning walk, little dreaming of the mischief that he had unwittingly created.

The employees of the hotel, after the news had once spread among them, with the necessary exaggeration and embellishment (which we will leave for the imagination), were in a perfect frenzy of excitement. It was decided to reconnoitre through the upper regions, and discover, if possible, in which room the wild man, the madman, the maniac—for such he had now become in the minds of these simple Norman folk—was then enclosed.

"Think of their bringing a maniac with them," said the waiter to the maid.

"Oh, these English! What tricks they play us, taking our hotel by storm in such a fashion. Do they think we are a lunatic asylum, that they bring their fools with them?" said another.

"Perhaps he went mad on the road," suggested the madame. "One might well go crazy, riding in those infernal machines all day long, with the rattle and buzzing in the

Among French Inns

ears, and the dust in the eyes. *Le bon Dieu nous protège*. I hope he will not try to kill any one."

"Calm yourself," said the host to his wife. "Let us see where he is, and if he will be violent, or easy to bind and tie down to a chair. Dominic, bring a stout cord to bind him if he kicks and tries to jump at us. Ah, we will manage him if he jumps at our throats!"

So saying, they came to the door of the unsuspecting count, who was singing a popular Neapolitan air to himself while completing his toilet. He, too, had had a fire in his room, and at once the people outside, crouching stealthily in the passage, decided that this was the "*fou*" whom the Englishman had cautioned them not to allow to go out. In a twinkling of the eye — in a shorter space of time even than it has taken to write down these words — the *maître d'hôtel* had turned the handle of the door, poked in his head, snatched the key from the inside, and locked the poor count securely from the outside.

"The robbers are in the house!" exclaimed his Excellency, who had turned his head in time to see this sudden performance, and was

Caudebec to Rouen

convinced that he was then and there the victim of "foul play."

"Oh, the robbers! The rascals! They seek to keep me in the room, perhaps to murder me! Oh, *misericordia!* *Au secours!* Help! Murder! *Où suis-je? Que faire?*" And with this he threw his heavy frame against the old and trembling door with a violence that nearly broke it through.

Those in the hall were preparing for the emergency, and were planning to scale the outside of the house with ladders and extract the maniac from a window, when Mrs. Wilton, attracted by the clatter and noise, came forth to discover the cause. Her surprise was great when she beheld most of the servants of the place assembled outside the door of the Count di Pomponi, and heard the cries of his Excellency from within.

"Good gracious! What is the matter?" she exclaimed. "Has his Excellency gone mad? Or is he in a delirium from the effects of his accident?"

"Oh, madame, he certainly has gone mad; and the English monsieur has given strict orders for him to be carefully guarded while he has gone for the doctor or the police, who can tell which? Oh, madame, this is

Among French Inns

a terrible affliction that you have brought on our quiet hotel! Oh, oh, oh!" And the madame went off into violent hysterics on the spot.

The count was still crying out and kicking at the door and shouting "Murder" from within, and for the moment Mrs. Wilton really thought he had lost his reason. Still, she waited and eventually held parley with the suspected lunatic.

"Do calm yourself, count. What is the matter? Is your head disordered from your fall yesterday? Pray sit down and let us come in and talk to you. No one is going to murder you."

"Oh, *chère madame*, the head is all bewildered," cried the count, getting hopelessly muddled with his English. "The rascalated thieves would have murdered me. Ah, they would. But you save me. Wait until I tie the neckties under the neck and you shall coame in and let me free. Oh, the shock! Oh, the agony of fear! The heart he is thumping and thumping in the boosom. He is — There — now," and the count subsided within.

"But the madame must *not* go into the room. The monsieur is *complètement fou*.

Caudebec to Rouen

It is not safe. No, no! Madame must stay where she is until the police come to investigate," said the *maître d'hôtel*.

There was nothing to do but to wait until the Englishman returned, to unravel the tangle of affairs and clear the situation.

This he mercifully did in a short time. The mistake was explained. The count was set free. The host apologized to his Excellency in wonderful language, and every one went down-stairs and drank his health in a glass of cider.

The inns of Normandy are not expensive as a rule. The rooms and furnishings may be simple or primitive, but the food is usually excellent, and the atmosphere both quaint and genial. The visitor, when once admitted, is made to feel at home, and enjoys his stay. He is regaled with anecdotes and stories by those whom he meets, and finds plenty to amuse him while he remains.

The stay at Caudebec was no exception to this rule, when once the painful effects of the above incident had worn away, and our friends found themselves more than pleased with the atmosphere of the place and its surroundings. The principal church is a beautiful example of architecture, and is

Among French Inns

pleasing both to the senses and the eye. It is known as L'Église de Caudebec. The open space, in front of it, has been used as a market, and it is here that the people of the neighbourhood gather on certain days to form that scene so typical of Continental life and so indicative of this locality.

In France the "*jour du marché*" is one of the events of the week, and is attended by an activity on the part of the country people which is both picturesque and entertaining. It is here that pigs and cows find their price, and the peasants the reward for their labours in the field. Here, on the tables or the booths erected for the day, are to be found all the local produce, fruits, vegetables, and all forms of food-stuffs, as well as garments, trinkets, and every conceivable article which could be sold. Here we hear the cackle of the hen, and observe the young calf elongate his soft, pink tongue in gentle endearment. Here is the bargaining and the gossip, the barter and the sale, and here the meeting of the worthy farmers in their quaint costume.

To the "*marché*" repair, you who would observe the Norman peasant in his element, and study his desires and his ways. He is



MARKET - PLACE, CAUDEBEC

Caudebec to Rouen

distinctive and striking, and invites more than a passing glance. He is a shrewd fellow at a bargain, and knows the value of his wares.

After a visit to the interior of the church, which possesses many interesting points, the party was constrained to visit the "Couvent des Capucins," an ancient establishment overlooking the Seine. Situated on the side of a high, rocky elevation, its terraces descend toward the river and afford a magnificent view over the beautiful scenery, unsurpassed in this part of Normandy. It is an appropriate place for meditation and religious inspiration, in the halo of the sunlight, and resting beneath the clear blue heaven and the beauty of its surroundings.

"Have you ever thought that you would like to be a nun?" asked the Frenchman of Miss Wilton, as they stood near the convent, overlooking the view before them.

"I must confess that I never have," said she; "but what has made you think of such a thing? Do I look as if I were inclined to take the veil? To begin with, I am not a Roman Catholic, and then I fear there is nothing in the life that I lead which would fit me for such a vocation."

Among French Inns

"Oh, in France, our young women of position are frequently drawn to this, even those who have led a life of pure frivolity and pleasure, without much previous study or preparation. They find in it a peace and rest from the vanity of existence, a tranquillity to the soul, which it is impossible to obtain in the evils of Paris, or by the persons who inhabit it. You know we are people of extreme feeling, and we frequently have strong reactions in our sentiments."

"I have sometimes thought that my time was spent rather aimlessly," said Miss Wilton, "but I do not think that I should really be happy in a convent. The way in which we are brought up in America is very different from France. We have much more freedom there, and are able to enjoy it in a more healthy way than young girls on the Continent of Europe."

"That is because your men have no temperament," remarked the Frenchman. "They go to their office in the morning and think of nothing but business all day, and in the evening are too tired to care to do much of anything but read the newspaper. The women must be free to fill up their time as they please."

Caudebec to Rouen

"That may be partly true," said Miss Wilton, "but though the foreigners are more entertaining to talk to, I think our American men inspire more confidence in us when it comes to anything that is really of importance. It is more possible for us to be friends than it is with you."

"Ah, yes," said the Frenchman, who did not entirely fancy the trend which the conversation was taking, "Ah, yes. But how much more pleasure we have in our lives! And how much more brilliant is the life of an American who marries a Frenchman! Think of the beauty of our country and the charm of our life in it. We have time to enjoy, and to spend what we have in enjoyment, rather than seeking always to increase our fortunes. Ah, Miss Wilton, you would be happier over here, much happier," and the Frenchman glowed with enthusiasm at the idea.

"Your picture is very attractive, Monsieur de B——," replied Miss Wilton, drooping her eyes, "but I do not think that I know my own mind yet, and papa says I must marry an American business man who has made his own way in the world, like himself. Still, I do not think that I have

Among French Inns

seen one whom I should care to marry, as yet."

The Frenchman saw hopeful signs in Miss Wilton's mood, and was about to follow up the impression he had made, but the Englishman suddenly joined them, the conversation became general, and the moment was lost.

"I have ordered carriages to be ready on our return to take us to St. Wandrille," said Mrs. Wilton, as they started for the hotel. "There is something the matter with one of the automobiles, and I think a drive will soothe the count's nerves. What say you, count?"

"Oh, advantageous, advantageous!" exclaimed his Excellency, delighted at the thought of a more reposeful method of locomotion. "We will pass in quiet over the road, and my poor bones will be less jolted."

The drive to St. Wandrille was a beautiful one, through the glorious domestic country of Upper Normandy, so genial and smiling that each turn presents a picture, and each grove some fairylike creation of nature. The Abbaye de St. Wandrille itself is one of the glories of this region, and is one of the most picturesque and beautiful in existence. It was founded about the middle of the

Caudebec to Rouen

seventh century by Wandrille, or Wandregisilus, a member of the court belonging to the Merovingian king.

The pious Wandrille, whom posterity has created a saint, was joined by several hundred monks, whose influence upon the history of this region, both ecclesiastic and secular, became great and lasting. A number of churches were built about the abbey, whose cloisters are of rare beauty and grace of architecture. They should be visited by all who are interested in the historic monuments of Normandy.

As it is not the province of this book to describe in detail the religious edifices of this province, we may not do more than give a passing word of comment to so beautiful a place, filled with the atmosphere of sanctity, which God alone can give to his sanctuaries, and surrounded by its mantle of age and history. The air seems filled with something of a holier order, and the visitor breathes in the meaning of these ancient monasteries, which have done so much to mould the spiritual, as well as temporal, life of France, through the pages of her history and development.

That they should be so nearly done away

Among French Inns

with by the exigencies of modern times, must ever be a regret to those who visit such places as the Abbaye de St. Wandrille, near Caudebec, and that the cloistered life which they contain should be no more, seems sad to contemplate. However necessary may have been the change, the pilgrim must feel regret at their departure, and mourn, when worshipping at their shrine, the dead or dying past which was so glorious a sacrifice to God.

Normandy has ever been foremost in religious history. From the days of the Conqueror to Jeanne d'Arc, the enthusiasm, which belief in sacred things brought forth, was uppermost. In peace, as in war, it held sway, and guided the Normans to deeds of glory and achievement, making an earnest of their lives and an example of their characters. We cannot but recognize and applaud this quality, however frequently it may have erred on the side of fanatic zeal, or ambition that was misguided or devoid of better judgment. The marks of its existence remain imprinted upon its people, and have stamped themselves upon its history. It is not to be ignored, nor passed lightly by, in any study of this country or its people.

Caudebec to Rouen

"I should like to spend days wandering in and out of these old cloisters," said Miss Wilton to the Frenchman, who was pointing out to her the beauties of the abbey. "There is something exquisitely peaceful and serene in the atmosphere which pervades the place, that seems to hold one here."

"Why should it not hold you here?" asked the Frenchman, suddenly. "You would certainly be happier than in America, where you find so little to inspire or lift you above the commercial elements of everyday life. What have you there, out of all the luxury and the striving, that is really satisfying to your soul? Ah, mademoiselle, I know your feelings better than you do yourself. You may not dare to acknowledge it, but France holds out more to you than America. Why not recognize it and stay?"

But Miss Wilton said nothing, and somehow the Frenchman was constrained to silence also, though he knew that he had produced an effect upon the mind of the fair American heiress who was beside him, in the cloisters of the Abbaye de St. Wandrille, in the soft light of the afternoon.

On their return to Caudebec, Mrs. Wilton went to her daughter's room before retiring.

Among French Inns

She was sure that something had occurred during the excursion of the afternoon, to make Gladys so absorbed in her thoughts during the evening, for she had scarcely spoken after dinner.

"What was Monsieur de B—— saying to you in the cloisters of St. Wandrille this afternoon?" she asked, abruptly, hoping to gain some clue to her daughter's mysterious silence. "He seemed to be very much interested in something."

"I hardly remember, mamma," her daughter answered; "he was speaking about the abbey and the effect that it produced on people — and different things."

Mrs. Wilton saw that her daughter was not inclined to go into the details of the conversation, and, very wisely, did not question her. She was far too experienced in the ways of the world not to realize that something had been said in the cloisters, and, womanlike, she set herself to consider what the consequences of that something might be to the fortunes of the house of Wilton.

She fell asleep, however, without having reached any satisfactory conclusion. But she decided that it would be best to be on the alert, and to observe carefully the signs of

the times, and the direction in which the wind might be blowing, before talking the matter over with her husband.

Prudent mother! Cautious wife! Can we blame her for a natural interest in her only daughter's welfare, and a desire that it should be so moulded as to bring greatness and honour to her family, and guard the integrity of her vast fortune? She would indeed have been lacking in maternal duty had she failed to do so. Still, there were many human beings in the world, many marriageable bachelors, and much time ahead. Perhaps it would be well to wait and see what the future might bring forth. And so night fell over the reflections of Mrs. Blodget Wilton, and sleep enfolded her senses in its restful embrace.

CHAPTER V

ROUEN

THE following day the whole party embarked on one of the pleasure-steamers which ply their way up the Seine from Havre to Rouen. They stepped on board with feelings that increased in expectation as they left Caudebec and glided up the river toward the ancient capital of Normandy.

There are, perhaps, few sensations more agreeable than the pleasurable anticipation of visiting an old town that has been the scene of innumerable events in history, and contains a world of traditions behind its crumbling stones. If we know something of this history, or have already seen pictures of those monuments that still remain, it adds tenfold to the pleasure of our visit. Still more, if we approach it amid attractive surroundings, our idle thoughts assume a character all the more pleasing to ourselves.

Rouen

As we wind our way up the river, which turns upon itself at least three times during the journey, a misty picture of Rouen rises to the mind, out of the green orchards and rolling fields. The spire of its beautiful cathedral, the details of the Churches of St. Ouen and St. Maclou, the halls of the Palais de Justice, the faces of William the Conqueror, of Jeanne d'Arc, of many heroes of romantic history who have figured in past events of this capital of ancient Norman power, succeed one another in a strange and wondrous mass. They give to us a glimpse into the past, through these images portrayed upon the mind.

As we have said, the banks of the river twist in such quaint fashion that the scene is altered at every turn. The very hills would seem to change places one with another. They might well be playing at hide and seek, appearing suddenly and vanishing again before the eye. At another time the scene gives place to tiny valleys, filled with diminutive trees, so small and green that they look like tufts of moss or grass in the landscape. In the midst of this the thatched roof of a farm bobs up its head, and seems to ask what right we have thus to disturb its

Among French Inns

sweet tranquillity. Everything is dressed in rustic charms, that wave off the rude comer from this quiet life and bid him only welcome who knows and loves its simple tastes.

Normandy is the land of apples, as we have observed before, if we are not mistaken. There are, indeed, few places in this charming country where the truth of this saying could be doubted. Every hillside and valley is furnished with an orchard of apple-trees, which, by some mystic arrangement with Nature, seem always to be young and of a peculiarly delicate character. We are tempted to dwell upon these orchards of Normandy with more than a passing word, for so associated are they with its scenery that without them we should hardly recognize the country as itself.

The wine of the country being cider, we hear a typical remark on the deck of the steamer as we wind our way on toward Rouen.

"*Hola, garçon!* Another bottle of cider there!" shouts the Englishman.

"Me, also," says the count, dreamily, who is dozing on the deck in the sun. "We will drink to the health of these ladies. Oh, *ces*



APPLE - ORCHARD, NEAR ROUEN

Rouen

dames!" And the gallant Romeo is all aflame at the thought.

Still, he is not entirely satisfied with the turn that affairs seem to be taking, nor with the headway he has been making of late in the affections of the fair Miss Gladys. Somehow his accident at the tree has affected him, and then that unfortunate mistake of the Englishman, and the subsequent incident at the hotel at Caudebec, have all left their impression on him. But was it entirely a mistake on the part of the Englishman? Could it have been a trick? One never knows with these English. And at times Pomponi is almost inclined to think that, after all, he may have been the victim of a love intrigue, too deep and villainous even to be thought of without a shudder.

The morning wore on, and his Excellency was still immersed in thought, without reaching any very satisfactory conclusion. That he had been made to appear ridiculous he was well aware; just how far the disadvantage under which he now laboured had been allowed to go, he was at a loss to decide. And thus Rouen was reached, — Rouen, the grand theatre of events, the centre of Norman power and greatness in the past, that jewel-

Among French Inns

box in which lie even to-day some of the rarest gems of architecture that have been preserved from mediæval France.

On landing we may not do better than to quote the words of a French author, who seems to have duly appreciated the importance and history of this interesting place. He says:

“The history of Normandy, that province which has been the mother of several kingdoms, is not less interesting or worthy of remembrance than that of the greatest empires. Its capital, Rouen, the witness of so many important events, the theatre of so many celebrated dramas of history, the cradle of a civilization as active as it has been industrious, merits above all others to be the object of the attention and study of those minds which are stimulated by an intelligent curiosity.”¹

Like this admirable writer, we, too, are stimulated by a desire to know something of a place that is so laden with the picturesque memorials of history. “It is indeed a city of traditions and souvenirs.” As we wander through its streets, each corner seems to con-

¹ Translation from “*La Normandie Illustrée*,” page 6, Vol. I. Text by M. Raymond Bordeaux and Mlle. Amelie Bosquet.

Rouen

tain some new trace or vestige of the revolutions and sieges that have rent the city in the past. Monuments arise out of the dust of ages and tell us stories of heroic deeds. The remembrance of yesterday, the business of to-day, seem oddly mingled into one life, while the air of everything betrays the passage of a thousand years.

Churches, towers, chapels, civic buildings, follow one another in a succession of architectural performances which bear testimony to the traditions that lie buried within and around them. At one moment the eye is caught by the beauty of the flamboyant Gothic in the details of some church window, in the carving of a flying buttress, or in the groining of some vaulted roof. At another, the eye is distracted from these objects, and is carried away by the historical significance of a monument or tombstone, that bears one back to the middle ages.

The impression which Rouen produces upon the visitor, through its architectural side alone, in such that, did not its superior age make such a title seem inappropriate, we should at once describe it as the Oxford of France. Though Oxford is more correctly the Rouen of England, we may be permitted

Among French Inns

in this case the change. Each city displays, in its limited area and number of inhabitants, a collection of historic masterpieces of architecture, religious, civic, and educational, which are unequalled in like manner by any others of the countries in which they exist. They stand like rich treasure-houses of stone made sacred by time, significance, and events, bringing to those who study them something of the higher and better field of man's accomplishment. They are, indeed, shrines to which the devout pilgrim may well repair in reverence and esteem.

It is impossible for a single pen to convey an adequate idea of such a wealth-laden past as that of Rouen, a past that is so embodied in these impressive witnesses of its history. The task is one which the most accomplished may well shrink from undertaking. Yet it would tempt even the most fleeting worshipper at this famous shrine to portray something of its wonders and its glory. The air lifts him to labours that are too great for him to seriously attempt, yet hold him with a sense of willingness to fail. If only he may give to some one a single feeling of the many that possess his soul in admiration, he may rest

Rouen

contented with his task. So truly would the scene impress his heart with wonder and respect!

It would be useless to trace the steps by which the primitive name of Rothomagus ended finally in that of Rouen. Such an occupation belongs rather to those more skilled in etymology than ourselves. As far back as the fourth century we hear of this historic city of Normandy. As early as the sixth century those religious and artistic instincts, which at all times have moved the people of Rouen, made themselves felt, and their subsequent results have been the monuments, or their successors, which are to-day so notable and so remarkable. By the time the ninth century was reached it had already taken an important place among the cities of France.

The feelings of religion and patriotism, which in other parts of Normandy are secondary to personal interest, seem here to have been above all others. They have continued to the present day in the characters of the inhabitants, and have left their imprint upon the stages of the city's development and life.

"It is sacred ground that we tread," whis-

Among French Inns

pered the Frenchman, as they passed through the narrow streets, darkened with the tall gables of time-stained houses.

"It is the city of La Pucelle," said the count, as the thought of Jeanne d'Arc rose uppermost in his mind. "Ah, here is the home of the Normandy, the history and the art."

"Wonderful place," added the Englishman, laconically; but he felt deeply the effect of his surroundings, although, as usual, he thought more than he expressed in words.

"I really do not know what hotel James said he was going to," said Mrs. Wilton, as the party proceeded on their way through the city. "We might as well walk about a little and see something first, and then meet at the Hôtel d'Angleterre. If he is not there, the servants can go and hunt him up at one of the other hotels. He must have arrived yesterday; if he has not taken it into his head to go to Paris and attend to something."

So saying, the party wandered on through the streets of Rouen, enchanted with what they saw and appreciative of the mediæval aspect of the city. It may have been the recognition of those qualities of religion and

Rouen

patriotism, to which we have already alluded, that brought in early days such men as St. Mellon, St. Ouen, and St. Avitien to Rouen, to preach the gospel and lay the first foundations of its greatest churches. It was doubtless the feeling of their existence, and the trust which he had in this belief, which brought the Conqueror of England once more to his deserted capital of Normandy to die.

So constant were the labours which these strong instincts of the people of Rouen inspired, that as the centuries rolled by, the number of churches in the city increased to an extent almost unprecedented in history. During the seventeenth century there were some forty of them in all. The hand of Time, the misfortunes of fate, the passions of men, were alike incapable of arresting their growth. In spite of the invasions, sieges, wars, through which the city suffered pillage and desecration, the indomitable spirit of its inhabitants was ever uppermost. If they were driven from their houses, or if their churches were destroyed, their first thought on regaining possession of them was to rebuild and rebeautify these monuments.

But if the religious edifices of Rouen have so notable a place in the history of this re-

Among French Inns

markable city, what shall we say of the others, which are of a more civic or secular character? Truly they are of an order too high to be lightly passed over. For the Palais de Justice, with its beautiful architecture and its historic significance; the Tour de la Grosse-Horloge, with its arch over the street; the famous Hôtel du Bourgtheroulde, as well as the Fontaine de Jeanne d'Arc, in the Place de la Pucelle; the Maison de Diane de Poitiers, and other monuments, we have only the highest admiration and praise. They emphasize, in their glories, the history of Rouen and the phases of its past, in the life of France and Normandy. They delight the eye and appeal to the senses, while stimulating the imagination with pictures of other centuries and the persons who filled them with their figures and actions. They are remarkable, in their age and aspect, as well by themselves as in conjunction with the wonderful collection of churches which rear their ornamental spires above the city, and mark the landscape at a distant view.

The first in importance of these religious monuments is the cathedral. Let us view it from its western façade. In 1063 Maurile, Archbishop of Rouen, completed the prin-



TOUR DE LA GROSSE - HORLOGE



THE CATHEDRAL

ROUEN

Rouen

cial parts of this great work. But it became almost immediately a prey to one of those fires which have done much to impede the construction of many of the churches of Rouen. The façade, though otherwise beautiful, is to-day blackened and charred in a manner which time has been unable to efface or even partially disguise.

The cathedral is remarkable for the variety of its architecture and for the extraordinary lack of symmetry in its towers. That on the right, known as the Tour de Beurre, is the most beautiful, and is a fine example of the Norman period, embellished with Gothic details. The spire is chiefly interesting as being constructed of cast iron and having a height of 465 feet. It was built in the middle of the nineteenth century to replace a former one that had been burnt as a result of having been struck by lightning. The Tour de Beurre once contained one of the largest bells in the world, which was melted during the Revolution, and from which medals were struck off commemorating its demolition. Its name was curiously derived from the fact of its having been built with money which was paid by persons for indulgences granted them to eat butter

Among French Inns

during Lent. It is higher and more imposing in every way than its companion, which, though ornate in design, is entirely different both in size and shape.

The carving about the doors of the cathedral is some of the most elegant work of its kind to be found in Normandy. It is lamentable that the flames should have impaired so much of its beauty. A curious example of the disorder which is frequently to be found in the older cities of Europe, exists here, where a small dwelling-house has been built directly against the larger tower of the cathedral. Its picturesque appearance serves partially to excuse its presence there, though it is with something of a shock that we observe it.

The most beautiful example of the many beautiful churches of Rouen is undoubtedly that of St. Ouen. Though much of its exterior is comparatively modern through restoration, it is one of the most perfect and symmetrical ecclesiastical structures in existence. The exquisiteness of its details, the perfection of its contour, the delicacy and grace of its towers, make it a religious inspiration, as it is an architectural triumph. We dare not trust ourselves to enter, lest

we chronicle at too great length the admiration and delight of the band of pilgrims who are with us. We must leave them, with others, to wander by themselves through its noble and sanctified interior, and find those treasures which embellish and furnish it with significance.

Next to the wonderful Church of St. Ouen, which might well have been a cathedral had it been placed elsewhere, stands, in its beauty and position among the religious monuments of Rouen, the really lovely Church of St. Maclou. It is one of the most complete specimens in existence of the prismatic architecture of the fifteenth century. After having been destroyed several times, the entire church was rebuilt in 1480 as it now stands. Since that date it has scarcely been altered in any of its details. Apart from being the most beautiful church in Rouen, after that of St. Ouen, it is remarkable for its western façade. This has been developed in the form of an immense porch with five separate arches carved and decorated in an elaborate and intricate manner.

The visit of the party to St. Maclou was enlivened by the conversation of a pompous beadle who was awaiting their arrival at

Among French Inns

the door of the church. He was dressed in a superb uniform of dark blue and silver, and wore a large cocked hat, sidewise, after the manner of Napoleon I.

"But why blue and silver?" queried the Englishman, who always liked to know the reason for things.

The Frenchman was unable to offer any suitable reason, and the beadle looked so important that no one dared to interrogate him on this point.

"What a nice way to dress the sexton up," said Mrs. Wilton. "Oh, how I wish we could do that with our sexton in New York! I'm sure he would add tremendously to the effect. Gladys, dear, we must have one at the little church in Long Island."

"But, mamma dear, the church there is Unitarian, you know, and they never would allow such a looking person to go anywhere near it."

"Oh that is true," said Mrs. Wilton. "Well, we might have one at the Roman Catholic Church instead, and go every now and then, if only to take a good look at him. I'm sure that nice old Irish priest would love it if I gave him one for his church."

As she spoke, the beadle stepped forward

and asked the ladies and gentlemen if they would like to see the inside of the church, and the invitation was promptly accepted.

"He seems to have a very good opinion of himself," said Miss Wilton to the Frenchman, as the beadle went flourishing on before them, stamping his great staff on the resounding stones of the church floor, and boasting fearfully of his discovery of the ancient frescoes behind the half-covered walls.

"Oh, he is at his ease, he is at his ease," replied the Frenchman, repeating his assurance (which every one, by the way, was perfectly aware of all the time). "He is at his ease. He will show the church as he wishes."

"My dear Gladys, if we could only get him to Long Island, what a sensation he would make," exclaimed Mrs. Wilton, who was lost in admiration of this clerical Malvolio, who, in turn, was delighted with the effect he was producing.

"Oh, in Italy we have them everywhere," exclaimed Count Romeo, piqued that France should receive so much undue attention. "And in St. Peter's! Oh, madame, you should see them. On the Easter! What

Among French Inns

show, what magnification! Oh, madame, this is nothing to it!" And the count waved his hand majestically in the air with one of his sweeping Italian gestures.

It was fortunate that the Frenchman was too far in front to overhear this sally on the part of his Excellency, or an international argument might have ensued. He was, however, too much occupied in drawing Miss Wilton's attention to the fragments of frescoes to give any attention to conversation other than their own.

"And are these really as old as that?" said Miss Gladys, as the Frenchman pointed out the great age of the bits of painting that still remained to bear witness to a former work of art.

"They undoubtedly are, and were some fine examples of the decorative art before they were ruthlessly covered over by an inferior hand. Ah, mademoiselle, I see you have the feeling for art which we all share in France. You should really live over here, where you can breathe it and become part of it. How you would grace a salon of the Faubourg in Paris and a château in the country!"

Miss Wilton almost began to give way

beneath the fire of the Frenchman and the pictures which he so successfully painted. She became infused with the effect of such suggestions and the charmed atmosphere which they brought with them, and felt herself rapidly falling before their subtle magic. Unfortunately for the Frenchman's intentions, Mrs. Wilton and the count and the Englishman were close on their heels, and now joined the two, and the party moved toward the door of the church.

"Give him a five-franc piece, will you, Monsieur de B——?" said Mrs. Wilton, in her definite, practical way, as they were being bowed out by the portentous beadle; and the coin was accordingly proffered. The beadle, however, was far too much of a grand seigneur to stoop to anything so menial as a tip, and waved it aside contemptuously.

"Put it in the box for the poor of the parish," said Mrs. Wilton, a little taken aback; and the party wandered off to visit the Palais de Justice.

The walls of this beautiful and famous building, which is situated in the Rue Jeanne d'Arc, arise from three sides of a broad paved court. The structure dates back as far as 1499, and was built on the site of an

Among French Inns

ancient market-place which, still earlier in the middle ages, was used as a pasture for cattle. To those who look at the delicate carving of the façade to-day, it seems difficult to believe that the early chapters of a city so famous in history, and so laden with monuments and glories, should have been enacted in a scene as primitive as a village market or a rural pasture.

The Palais de Justice was built originally by Louis XII., who left so many monuments to posterity. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it was used by the Parliament of Normandy as its place of meeting. Its earlier use was as the court of the Échiquier de Normandie, which possessed many and considerable powers, and which was accepted by François I. as a parliament. The beautiful architectural details extend from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and, though covering so great a period of time, are in perfect harmony of design and style. The symmetry of their arrangement and proportions, the grace of their delicate Gothic decorations, lifting their needle-points above the high roofs on three sides of the court, are at once an inspiration and glory to behold.

Rouen

The Palais de Justice of Rouen must always be a perfect example of this type; a shrine for the lover of the beautiful, and appropriate to worship at and to offer tribute, something to see and to remember in after-years when far from these scenes and separated from their elevating atmosphere. It is lamentable that the wonderful remains of mediæval Rouen, which in the smaller houses so lavishly arrayed the streets of the city not long since, have been largely done away with by the modern improvements of the citizens. Boulevards, in imitation of Paris, have too often in later years replaced the quaint streets with their picturesque and almost sacred architectural possessions.

In spite of the inroads upon this portion of Rouen, there yet remain many quaint corners and picturesque groups of houses that delight the eye of the artist and in which the antiquarian may revel. Beyond the Palais de Justice, in the Rue Jeanne d'Arc, arises the famous Tour de la Grosse-Horloge, which is said to have been built in 1389. It has a picturesque arch over the street, on the left of the one in which we stand, which dates from the fourteenth century. The strangeness of its position, as well as the

Among French Inns

beautiful decorations upon it, make it unusually interesting to look upon.

"What a place for the clock to be put!" exclaimed the count in wonder. "He look as if he would lose the equilibrium up there!"

"Count di Pomponi, what are you trying to say?" said Mrs. Wilton, who delighted in the gallant Romeo's strange use of English. "You mean its equilibrium, do you not?"

"I said 'the equilibrium,'" replied his Excellency, perfectly contented with the word. "He is all up in the hair there. *Dieu, que c'est drôle!*" And he began to laugh genially and waddle around underneath it.

"Oh, dear, count, you never will learn to speak English," said Mrs. Wilton, in despair. "You must say 'up in the *air*.' Hair is what you have on your head."

"I had the 'air on the 'ead," sighed Romeo, imperviously, "but he all dropped out and so now I wear *un toupet*. But do not say, madame, oh, do not say it to your daughter! She would never learn to loave me if you should."

Mrs. Wilton half-promised not to, and of course did tell her daughter that very evening, and forbade her ever to marry the

Count Romeo di Pomponi. Her daughter assured her that she never would, and later kept her word, without breaking her heart.

"Really, my dear," said Mrs. Wilton, "if you married an Italian with a wig, I think your father would be almost capable of stopping your allowance."

"But, mamma dear, nothing would tempt me to marry Count di Pomponi. I like him, and think him very amusing. So do we all. But I should no more think of being his wife than I should of flying."

"Well, I'm glad to hear you say so, Gladys," said Mrs. Wilton. "I want you to marry well and be happy, dear, and be a pride to your father and mother. You know it is all for your own good that we are so much concerned about your future. Do take time and think things over before you ever say 'yes' to any man. God knows, one may regret it later on, and it pays to think twice," and Mrs. Wilton thought of herself, and of some of her friends, perhaps, who have nothing to do with this story.

Beyond the Tour de la Grosse-Horloge, near the street of the same name, is situated the famous Hôtel du Bourgtheroulde, which is one of the historical monuments of Rouen.

Among French Inns

It dates from the fifteenth century, and was completed by François I. Like so many buildings of its kind, it is built around a court. Two of its façades are rich in sculptures and highly ornamented in Renaissance and Gothic details. There is a tower and staircase in one corner, beautifully sculptured, as are the two windows in the roof, alive with figures and emblems of their period.

The exterior, however, shows the result of having been begun by one man of genius and completed by another, and its interest architecturally lies more in the beauty and richness of its details than in the symmetry of its ensemble. It is, however, a notable figure in the group of monuments that stand out above many others of rare beauty and distinction in Rouen, and that give to it the glorious title which it has assumed among the cities of France, as a treasure-house of ornamented stones.

Who shall say that there is no life in brick and wood and stone, after living for a time amongst such creations as we have already endeavoured to describe in passing? Or who shall deny the grandeur and the charm that they possess? Did not Ruskin

Rouen

find in Venice something more than mere inanimate piles of hardened substance to inspire his soul and cause his inmost being to respond and speak? Are there not here living expressions of man's noblest handiwork, fashioned out of the dust of ages, as God created man himself, and breathing life and its experiences to those who see them?

We must needs bow in homage, and exhort our workers in a newer land to stir themselves still further in their efforts to produce something approaching these old-world beauties, in their artistic conceptions. Nature does her utmost, and produces but unseemly substances below the earth. Then comes man, the most glorious creation of his Maker, and here and there a genius touches with his magic wand some spot upon the earth, and there arises something that is beautiful, and lives, to lend its inspiring presence to the centuries through which it remains. One may well bow to these venerable marks, and tend them with assiduous care, lest they fall and be no more.

That something of these sentiments was shared in the thoughts of our friends on that memorable day at Rouen, we may not utterly deny. They were impressed, each in his

Among French Inns

or her own way, with the significance of what they saw, and though they may have been in some sense light and frivolous in their conception of life, they were, nevertheless, prone to appreciate the value of the truest things that are found worthy to be valued.

By the time they had completed their inspection of the Hôtel du Bourgtheroulde they were ready to go to the Hôtel d'Angleterre, in search of Mr. Wilton. No word had been heard from him, and every one had been so occupied in seeing the sights of Rouen that the day had passed by, and it was now late in the afternoon.

On arriving at the Hôtel d'Angleterre, they found him waiting, and peacefully reading his letters, which had been forwarded from Paris.

"Well, I thought you were all lost," said he, as he shook hands with every one, his cigar in his mouth, while he held a pile of correspondence in his left hand. "I got your telegram from Caudebec, but as I had no idea where you had gone when you left there, I came on here and settled down to wait. This is quite a hotel, but so noisy after the jolly little inn at Fécamp, that I

moved over to the Hôtel du Nord. I couldn't sleep a wink last night. There seemed to be something going on every minute," and Mr. Wilton took his cigar out of his mouth and sat down.

"I told them to reserve some rooms in case you all turned up, and I think you will like them. The hotel is close to the big clock-tower, so you might just as well get into cabs and go right back from where you started. How's the count? Had an accident? Well, well, I declare! I hope no bones are broken." And then Mr. Wilton was told of the unfortunate incident at Caudebec, and laughed heartily and enjoyed the joke hugely.

He poked fun at the crestfallen Romeo until that worthy gentleman was entirely crushed by the onslaught, and had no words left for repartee. Mr. Wilton was always breezy, blustering, and businesslike, and never left one a leg to stand upon when he once set out to have his joke — with the possible exception of his better half, before whose commanding brain even he was at times forced to bow in submission.

The party found the Hôtel du Nord very comfortable indeed, and not at all expensive, which latter quality was highly appreciated

Among French Inns

by the European members of the party. The count and the Frenchman, especially, were averse to throwing away their money in what they termed unwise expenditure, and were always pleased when the prices were low and the accommodations comfortable.

The count had a servant rejoicing in the name of Dante Galante, who ministered to his many wants and kept a sharp lookout on his innumerable pieces of luggage, which were almost as curious-looking as their master. Mr. Wilton, who could not pronounce either French or Italian names, insisted upon calling the count's valet "the gallant Dante," which greatly disconcerted the latter.

"What have you done with Dante Galante?" queried his Excellency, on arriving at the Hôtel du Nord.

"Oh, I told him he could go out and see the town," said Mr. Wilton. "I knew you would be too busy beauing the ladies to need him." But luckily, Dante Galante came in sight at that moment, and the count retired to have his ankle rubbed with oil, for the fatigues of the day had made his Excellency's foot very lame.

The following day our friends made a

visit to the Church of St. Gervais, which is situated in the western corner of the city, for it is here that the remains of St. Mellon, the first and perhaps the most famous bishop of Rouen, were buried. A priory adjoins the church, which possesses a historical significance second to no spot in Rouen, for it was here that the Conqueror of England breathed his last.

To those who stand in the sanctified atmosphere of the priory, it seems difficult to believe that it was the final scene of the last act of a drama so portentous in its effect upon history as the life of William the Conqueror, or that nearly a thousand years have passed by since these walls enclosed the dying form of this remarkable king. Pregnant with significance is the spot, and many the reflections which force themselves upon the pilgrim at this shrine of past suffering and detachment of a repentant soul from its earthly habitation. There is something awe-inspiring in the feeling that we tread the very stones where the Conqueror lay in deathly stillness, when the last battle had been fought, and he the victim of the strife.

It was to this place that he was removed from the palace during his last illness, in

Among French Inns

order that he might be quieter during his fast numbering days. Here he repented him of his sins, and made his final offerings to God, and sought forgiveness from his Maker. William Rufus bade him good-bye, and repaired, at his command, to England, to assume his duties there. Filled with a desire to die at peace with God and man, the Conqueror, whose life had been spent in war and ravage, fraught with the passion of conquest and ruthless power, decided to leave his private treasures to the Church; and in this chamber his last will was drawn up and executed.

We may pass over the revolting scenes which followed the demise of this great heroic figure in early mediæval history, whose influence upon the centuries has been so powerful and lasting. The plunder and desertion of his body by his attendants has been recorded by historians, and his burial at Caen has been described in all its horrible details. We must allow the curtain to fall at this spot, made sacred as the place where his soul was turned from earthly to celestial desires, and where the better thoughts of his life found utterance and effect. As he passed, history lost one of its most remarkable figures.

Rouen

There is no place more appropriate upon which to take leave of Rouen than this, the scene of the last earthly acts of William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy and King of England.

CHAPTER VI

AMONG THE INNS OF BRITTANY

"Do you know," said the Englishman to Mrs. Wilton, "I feel as if I should like to make a visit to Brittany, and I think I shall go at once, and leave you for a few days, or a week, and meet you again, here or elsewhere."

"Do not go alone. We will all come also," said Mrs. Wilton, with that quick decision which was so a part of her nature. As they were speaking, Count Romeo appeared in the hall of the hotel, fresh from the attentive hands of Dante Galante, and thought he would like to go to Brittany exceedingly. Little by little the party assembled, and each in turn obeyed the dictum of that most capable of women, Mrs. Blodget Wilton.

To Brittany we were then definitely going; but how, when, and to what portion of this interesting province? The distance from

Among the Inns of Brittany

Rouen being great, it would necessitate a long journey in the automobiles, and arrangements would have to be made in advance. But the difficulty was that none of the party had ever been in Brittany, and no one, therefore, knew anything about it. What, then, should be done? Inquiries of our host brought forth no very definite information, and we finally decided to risk inconvenience and to start, with no one but the chauffeurs to direct us. When we were tired we would stop at the first town we came to and put up with the best accommodations we could find.

"It's a crazy undertaking, I think," said Mr. Wilton. "I'll just buy a Baedeker and bring it along with me in case of need, for it has maps in it, and gives the names of the hotels.

"That's a good idea," said his wife. "I'll take my guide-book, too, so we shall have something to refer to." With this the whole party proceeded to bundle into the automobiles, and set out from Rouen.

"The best thing we can do is to go straight to the Mont St. Michel," said Mr. Wilton, who had been studying his Baedeker. "It is just between Normandy and Brittany,

Among French Inns

and we can stop there and then decide where we want to go to."

"I think it is a good idea," said the Englishman. And so we proceeded to the famous Mont St. Michel, by way of Elbeuf, Bernay, Lisieux, Caen, St. Lo, and Coutances, to Avranches, which is at the southeastern corner of Normandy. St. Lo is the capital of the Département de La Manche, and is a picturesque little town. The church known as the cathedral of St. Lo is a superb religious monument, and is chiefly of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Its most remarkable features are its towers and spires, and its exterior pulpit, which has attracted artists and painters at all times.

Southwest of St. Lo is Coutances, where our party spent a night at the Hôtel d'Angleterre, which is very good. The view of Coutances from the railway is distinctly imposing, the apple-orchard in the foreground, the thick lines of trees beyond, and the lofty towers of its cathedral and church rising from the picturesque houses of the town itself. The episcopal palace, with its terrace and row of orange-trees, rises boldly to the right of the picture. The more distant view of Coutances, however, is the most artistic.



COUTANCES, FROM THE RAILWAY

Among the Inns of Brittany

Here, from one of the hills beyond the town, the beautiful proportions of the Norman architecture, which characterizes the Cathedral de Notre Dame de Coutances, are visible. Nearer they are half-hidden by the bishop's palace. The gray town, the plum-coloured tiles to the roofs, the green-clad ramparts, all lend their charm to the scene. The cathedral dates from the thirteenth century, and followed an earlier church of the eleventh, whose remains are still in existence.

It was with regret that we left Coutances, which is a characteristic town of Western Normandy, and took the road which leads to Avranches.

"The churches are certainly superb," said the Englishman, who was rarely enthusiastic over anything. "It is very remarkable to find such a wealth of church architecture in these small towns of Normandy."

"It makes them appear in stronger contrast," said Mrs. Wilton, who had studied up her cathedrals and really knew a good deal about ecclesiastical architecture.

Our road led through Folligny and La Haye-Pesnel, which are near together and south of Coutances. A little southeast of

Among French Inns

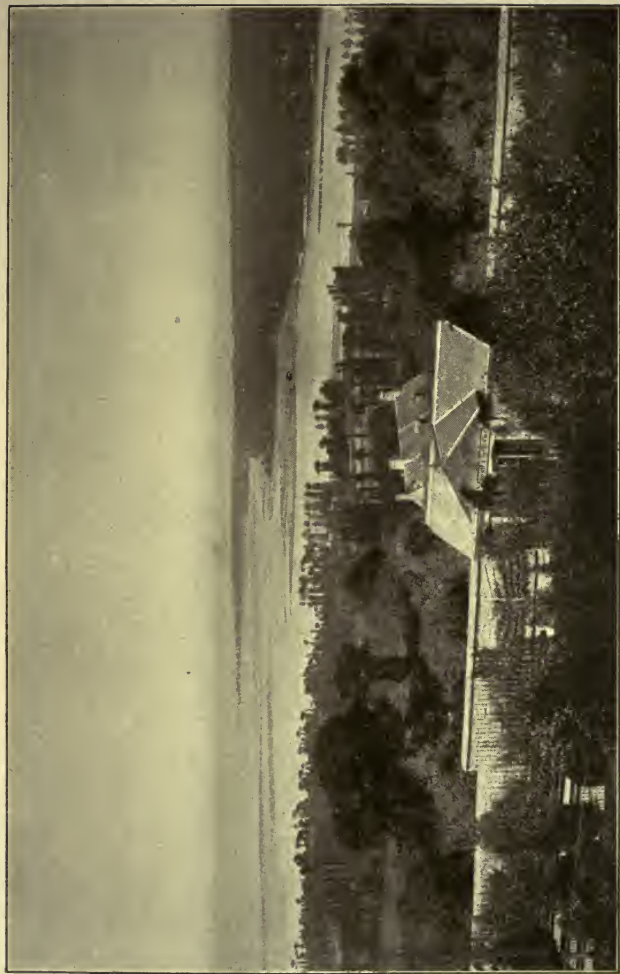
these lies Avranches, with its wonderful view of the Mont St. Michel, and the expanse of flats that are left bare by the receding tides of the Channel. The view from Avranches is unique in its extent. In the centre of it arises the wonderful island abbey, surmounting the rock on which it stands, while in the distance we may observe the coast of Brittany. We arrived at Avranches in the afternoon, and, as we stood upon the terrace of its gardens, the effect of sunset over these wonderful sands which separate Normandy from Brittany was something to be remembered, but not easily to be described. For who shall say, in truth, what depths of meaning lies in the art with which the Almighty has enveloped the sinking of the sun to rest? Behind it arises an aftermath of reflection which covers

“Earth and air,
Land and sea,”¹

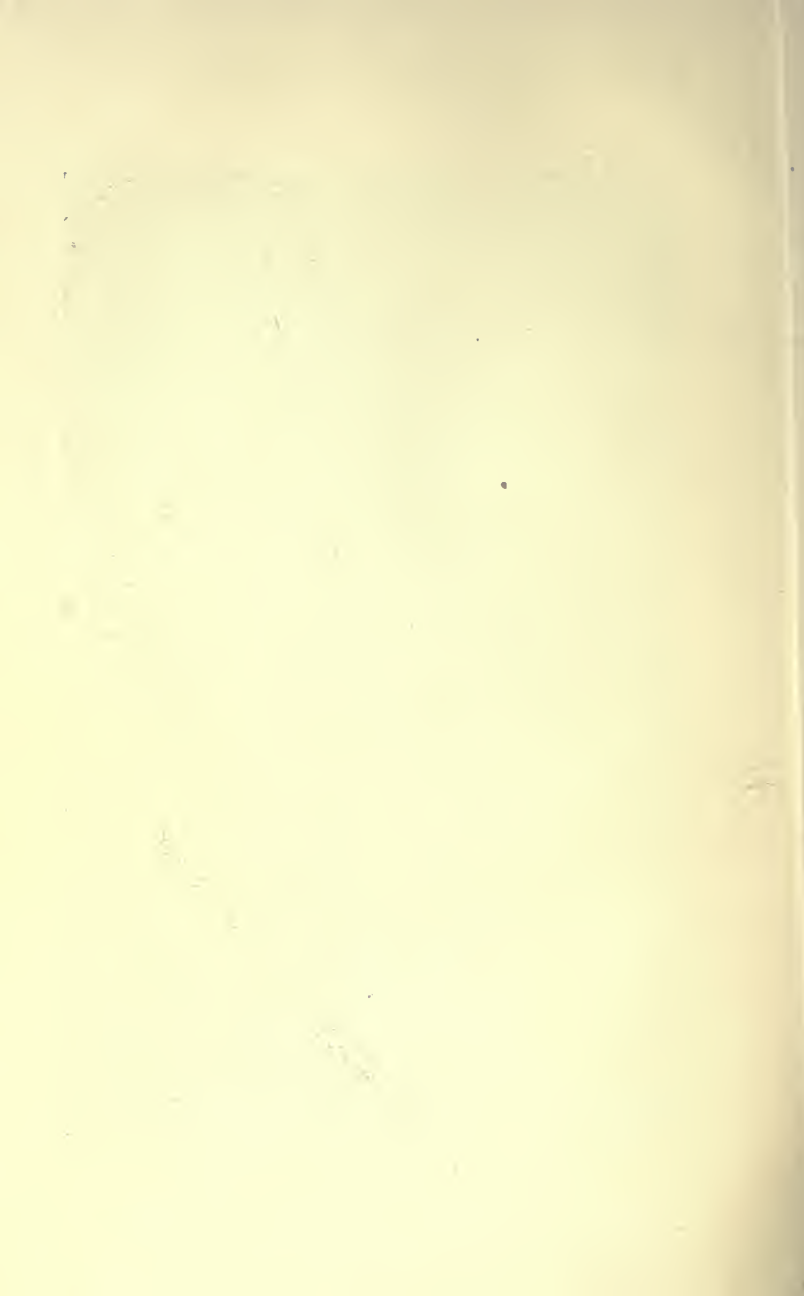
and lights everything with a myriad of hues, and covers life with a golden tinge of colour, resembling at times the depicted glories of paradise.

If what has once been said is true, that
“art is nature seen through a man’s soul,”²

¹ Wordsworth. “Ode on Immortality.” ² Ruskin.



BAY OF MONT ST. MICHEL, FROM AVRANCHES



Among the Inns of Brittany

then truly the highest art of Claude and Turner was in their matchless impressions of the effect of sunsets. They endeavoured to depict the deep, unfathomable beams which radiate from the sun, and expand in glory as they cover the scene. How well they succeeded time has amply proved. When we see the wealth of colour which such men as these employed to convey what they observed, we may begin to realize the deep feeling and the sense of art that rests within a beautiful sunset.

But how these moods of the atmosphere vary! Now all is dark, melancholy, and filled with the stern sadness of life. Steel gray clouds fill the heavens and cover the earth with a canopy of leaden gloom. They tell of the sorrows, the tragedies of mankind, and speak to us in a minor key. Suddenly a light bursts through the threatening passion of the heavens. A deep red streak pierces through the gray, and gradually the whole sky is softened into rose-coloured shades and tones that spread their sense of beauty, tranquillity, and peace after the storm. From lavender to purple, and from gray to blue, the reflection of the orb, now sinking in majesty beneath the horizon, is varied in

Among French Inns

a multitude of shades, and gives to those who view it all the splendour of God as well as the supreme art of nature itself.

Over artists who feel something divine in form and colour, the magnificence of a beautiful sunset has a hypnotic influence, and causes them to create and do things which otherwise they would not. Here in France we have seen what they could produce, and as the sun sinks down in the distance behind the Mont St. Michel, we ourselves are moved to feel something of what others have experienced. To the creator of imaginative work, the beauty and grandeur of a real sunset over the sands that cover the spaces about Avranches, that separate the Norman from the Breton coast, must always appeal. To the poet, they should be an inspiration for verses and thoughts before unwritten; to the artist they should act as a study for some beautiful picture.

As we turned from the gardens at Avranches to enter our hotel, we were filled with the sense of beauty and art that there is everywhere in France. The Hôtel d'Angleterre is a pleasant place to remain in. It is frequented by English, who come there

Among the Inns of Brittany

for the summer. Its *table d'hôte* is typical of Normandy, and is usually patronized by some agreeable people.

The Englishman was naturally pleased with Avranches, and it was with difficulty that he could be dragged away from the hotel the following day to visit the Mont St. Michel with its famous inn, known the world over as the Hôtel Poulard. It is a pleasant ride from Avranches, descending the height upon which the town is situated. We pass the remains of the cathedral, which collapsed in 1790, and follow the line of the bay to the causeway which has been built from the mainland to the Mont St. Michel.

The island rock rises out of the sandy flats, now left bare by the low tide, which stretch for miles around, tempting the venturesome fishermen to dangerous distances, and the washerwomen who perform their duties in the streams or pools that are near at hand. Woe to those who stray too far afield, for suddenly the sound of rushing waters is heard, in the distance and dimly at first, then near at hand. A mighty wave is seen upon the horizon, dashing forward like a flood, at the rate of a galloping horse, and swallowing everything in its path. As

Among French Inns

if by magic the whole expanse of desert sand and waste is covered by the sea, and Mont St. Michel is once more girdled by the waves.

Such is the extraordinary geographical characteristic of this island mount, whose fame has spread abroad through the centuries that have beheld the abbey which still crowns its summit. The hand of man has performed a feat in building upon and fortifying this island home of religious exiles from the mainland. The high walls rise in irregular and mediæval sternness from the water's edge, and have protected it from foes since they were built at a remote period.

The Hôtel Poulard, with its delightful and efficient hostess, is one of the most original and attractive inns in France. Here we all, to use the French phrase, descended, or rather ascended the steep and tortuous street which winds its narrow way up the side of the rock. The street is so narrow that one is obliged to walk, and the houses appear almost to be hanging in mid-air. On the left is the entrance to the Hôtel Poulard Ainé.

In spite of the crowds that fill this interesting inn in summer, the table and wines are excellent, and the *poulet* is deservedly famous throughout this region. We dine upon a ter-



HÔTEL POULARD MONT ST. MICHEL

Among the Inns of Brittany

race, if so inclined, with the view of the bay, and the stars twinkling above us, and the effect is very much like that of some stage. Only it is the stage of life, and the actors are real, instead of impersonations by others.

The two *dépendances* of the hotel are reached by stone steps hewn out of the rock, and enclose the overflow of guests from the hotel itself. Summer-houses and overhanging flowers and plants overlook the terrace and make the place attractive in the extreme. Madame Poulard herself is the spirit and life of the hotel, and has made it the centre which it is.

"I declare, this is a curious place," said Mrs. Wilton.

"It is like the streets in the Naples," said Pomponi, the scene reminding him of his native city.

"We must mount the rock and see the abbey above by moonlight," said the Frenchman, and the whole party climbed the steep footway leading to the top, where the entrance to this half-ruined monastery of other centuries is reached.

The original name of Mont St. Michel was Mons Tomba, on account of its early usage as a tomb. It was in the eighth

Among French Inns

century that St. Michel founded the Abbey of Aubert, which was increased and beautified by succeeding Dukes of Normandy until it became an important sanctuary, lifting its beautiful Gothic pinnacles above the rock and marking their outlines against the sky. William the Conqueror, on his return from the Conquest, took special pains to enrich and add to the Abbey of Mont St. Michel, and to him was due much of its grandeur and importance.

Pilgrims have dutifully climbed the rock-bound steps that lead to the sacred spot for many hundred years, and there the monks collected the wonderful manuscripts which gave it the name "La Cité des Livres." In the thirteenth century the Mont was besieged by Philippe-Auguste during his war against King John of England, and most of its abbey was destroyed by fire, but later restored by the very monarch who consigned it to the flames. It was again attacked, this time by the English, during the fifteenth century. During the same period of its history the Order of St. Michel was founded and held its first chapter under Louis XI., and here the original knights assembled to receive the emblems of their office. It is

Among the Inns of Brittany

difficult to picture a more romantic setting to so interesting a scene.

Our party spent two days wandering through the dungeons beneath the abbey, leading down to subterranean depths through the solid rock, now enclosing only such temporary prisoners as artists seeking the advantage of the stray beams of light that wander through the iron gratings, which once enclosed those who were condemned to solitude or death. We might allow ourselves to linger here indefinitely, and describe at length the interesting history which clusters about this romantic and artistic spot, were we not accompanied by others more energetic than ourselves, with automobiles awaiting our coming at the foot of the Mont St. Michel. Still, we must leave it with regret, and remember, with its many attractions, the hospitality of the Hôtel Poulard.

To the westward, on the coast of Brittany, is the little seacoast town of St. Malo, whence steamers ply their way to Dinard, a fashionable little resort much frequented by French, Americans, and English. The one is directly across the bay from the other, but St. Malo is much the more interesting of the two historically. It is one of the doorways

Among French Inns

to Brittany, and possessed of much that is attractive to the traveller. It was not a great distance from Mont St. Michel for the automobiles to cover, and we arrived at the Hôtel de l'Univers, St. Malo, between *déjeuner* and dinner. The town is situated upon a promontory of rock that gives it a picturesque quality which the seacoast towns of Brittany possess more often than those of Normandy.

The rock upon which St. Malo stands became an island during the eighteenth century by the receding of the land and the overflow of the sea. It is now, like Mont St. Michel, united to the mainland by a causeway or road, built for the convenience of its inhabitants. It stands, in bold and bluff relief, above the blue waters of the ocean, and is a suitable associate for the island mount arising in the distant view.

On one side of the causeway, or *sillon* as it is called, is the harbour, which is left dry at low tide. On the other are outlying islands and forts which have been charmingly described by Chateaubriand and others who were natives of St. Malo. The former, however, was perhaps her most distinguished son. Born in the house which is now the

Among the Inns of Brittany

Hôtel de France, he delighted in the solitude which he sought in this island home, and he has written of it with all the fervent depth of his nature. On the island known as La Grande Bé, he appropriately but unknowingly, as he tells us, chose his final resting-place. For in the Breton language Bé signifies a tomb. And there to-day a granite cross marks his sepulchre. The loneliness of the spot is in keeping with the desire of his heart.

Chateaubriand loved St. Malo with its sea-girt crags and rocks, and from its smiling countenance in summer, as from its tempests in winter, he drew inspiration, and with them fed the cravings of his genius. Among them he found repose and calm for his care-burdened soul, and in them he desired that his bones should be buried. They lie upon the deserted but lovely island that is covered by wild flowers, that alone keep guard around the grave of one of the immortals.

La Bourdonnais, Maupertuis, and Broussais, were all born at St. Malo, and have contributed to its renown. Its history has been one of hardihood and tenacity on the part of its people, and its two most distin-

Among French Inns

guished sons, Lamennais and Chateaubriand, have immortalized it in the minds of men. Such is a passing glimpse of St. Malo; nor should we omit to mention, before we leave it, the château, built in the period of François II., rising upon the rocks which lift it above the hungry waves, that would seem to devour everything within their reach, as they did the land about the very town itself.

On leaving St. Malo we returned a little upon our journey to visit the picturesque old town of Dol, separated from the coast by a plain known as the Marais de Dol. This great marsh, for it was little else, has been reclaimed from the sea like the land about Dives, and is protected from the incursions of the sea itself by a huge dike fully twenty-five miles in length. It is extremely interesting as a triumph of man in the early ages, — for the dike was begun, it is said, during the eleventh century, — and the plain contains many fossils that are archæologically interesting.

Dol has little human interest or animation. Its houses, however, are particularly picturesque, with high tiled roofs and overhanging eaves, and porticoes in the lower stories. There was originally a cathedral at Dol,

Among the Inns of Brittany

which is now reduced to the rank of a church. It was made a see in the middle of the ninth century by one of the ancient Breton kings.

The character of Brittany and its people is distinctive and interesting to study. It is the Wales of France and the Bretons are the Celts of the French nation. Their language, their race, their character, all bear traces of resemblance, as well as their geographical position. We find in them the same hardihood and simplicity of life, about their homes the same rocky coast, in contrast to the chalky cliffs of England or Northern France. The ancient costumes of the Bretons are picturesque in the extreme, but, we regret to say, are fast dying out, and less often to be observed in travelling through the country.

The inn at Dol is the Hôtel de la Grande Maison, and in its quaint interior we remained for a night and then proceeded on our way to Combourg.

"They say the château there is very picturesque," said the Frenchman.

"Well, we must stop and see it then," said Mr. Wilton, who was becoming reconciled to these rapid excursions, and endeavouring to take an interest in Brittany.

It is a short run to the Château de Com-

Among French Inns

bourg, which is on the railway line running from Dol to Rennes. The architecture is of the fifteenth century, a typical mediæval castle with stern walls dotted with windows, and four high towers with pointed roofs capped by iron pinnacles. The Château de Combours was inherited by François René de Chateaubriand during the Revolution, and a great-nephew of the author is still in possession of it. The little village clustering at the foot of the château is a charming and picturesque group of cottages reflected in the water beside it.

“Chateaubriand speaks of Combours in the ‘Mémoires d’Outre Tombe,’” said the Frenchman to Miss Wilton, as they were wandering about the place, “only he is so sad in his mood that I hate almost to recall his words. The sadness of the Revolution, of course, left its imprint upon his sensitive mind, and his writings show it.”

The party again mounted to the comfortable cushions of the automobiles, and the count and Mrs. Wilton led the cavalcade toward Dinan, which is west of Combours and Dol. There we remained for a night at the Hôtel d’Angleterre, which is a delightful place, and where the Englishman was,

Among the Inns of Brittany

of course, happy and seemingly at home. Dinan is a most interesting old town, and should not be confused with the watering-place Dinard, opposite St. Malo, and on the northwestern corner of the long bay which runs southward to Dinan. The one is a fashionable seaside resort, the other a quaint Breton town, filled with the history and associations of the past rather more than with the affairs of to-day.

Being tired on our arrival at the Hôtel d'Angleterre, we retired early to rest, and on the morrow went forth to investigate the town, which is separated a little from both the hotels of the place. Dinan itself stands upon a height of land above the Rance, and the country about it is full of wild and characteristic charm. There is not the domestic quality which we find in Normandy, but a more rugged effect here, with gorges and ramparts rising about the town, ancient fortifications that have remained through the ages, and are to-day clothed with green and moss.

The ancient castle of Dinan, around which the town grew up, owes its existence to the Vicomte Hamon, and dates from the tenth century. Harold took part in a siege of

Among French Inns

the town under William the Conqueror, and was knighted by him. The heart of Du-guesclin is said to lie beneath the tomb of black marble in the Church of St. Sauveur, where his wife also was buried. Behind the church are some gardens which overlook a pleasing view.

A few kilometres distant are the ruins of the Château de la Garaye, picturesque remains with an octagonal tower dressed with Gothic decorations. It is of the fifteenth century, and is known to the world through "The Lady of La Garaye," written by Mrs. Norton. The story is that of the last owners of the château, the Comte Claude Marot and his wife. A few lines of the poem may not be inappropriate here, as we take leave of Dinan and its delightful neighbourhood:

"Go forth in snow-white cap and sable gown,
Tending the sick and hungry in the town,
And show dim pictures on their quiet walls
Of those who dwelt in Garaye's ruined halls."

Leaving Dinan, our party betook themselves westward to Lamballe, pausing at the Hôtel de France.

"I wonder how many Hôtels de France

Among the Inns of Brittany

there are in Normandy and Brittany," said Mrs. Wilton derisively.

"I should hate to have to count them," said the Englishman.

"We are certainly getting a liberal education in country inns and their names," put in Mr. Wilton, as we left the automobiles to wander through the town.

Lamballe was owned by the house of Penthièvre from the eleventh century, and has a good church of the thirteenth century and earlier, which was once the chapel of the château. It is Notre Dame. The smaller Church of St. Martin belonged to the Abbey of Marmoutiers, established in the eleventh century by the Comte de Lamballe. The famous Princesse de Lamballe, who was the friend of Marie Antoinette, married a member of this family, and the place must have an added interest, if only on account of the association of its name.

Farther west is St. Briec, a cathedral town, of age and historical interest, but of exceeding dullness. The Hôtel de la Croix Blanche was our stopping-place, and there we spent the night.

"I declare," said Mr. Wilton, "I feel so tired of bouncing over the roads in the Mer-

Among French Inns

cedes that I've a great mind to go back to Rouen."

"Oh, please do not desert us," said a chorus of voices, and after some persuasion Mr. Blodget Wilton was packed off to bed with a nice glass of rum and water and sugar, to which, we must confess, he had taken a passing fancy.

After visiting the Cathedral of St. Etienne, at St. Brieuc, our party were ready to move on to the next destination, through the wild and picturesque scenery of Brittany, peopled by the simple Breton folk in their characteristic costumes.

"I never saw such a place as France," said Miss Wilton; "everything seems to be named after a saint."

"That is because it is a sainted country," said Count Romeo, chuckling to himself as he was jounced off on the road that runs to Plouaret. About midway between it and St. Brieuc is Guingamp, a bright and lively place. The Hôtel de l'Ouest was inclined to receive the party with joyous hospitality, and we all entered and partook thereof.

The town was, like Lamballe, part of the possessions of the house of Penthievre, and has some interesting churches and the re-

Among the Inns of Brittany

mains of an abbey founded in the twelfth century. The lanes and roadsides about this part of Brittany are quaint and rural in the extreme, suggesting at times certain portions of England or Wales. But how the sense of age is brought before such travellers as Americans, to whom a hundred years is a historic period of time! Here the centuries pile one upon another until a thousand years are added to the sum of their amount, and often more than mere crumbling remains bear witness to the hardihood and works of man.

We cannot leave Guingamp without a passing mention of its quaint mill, often painted by artists, with its background of poplar-trees. To Morlaix we proceed at full speed, and alight at the delightful Hôtel de l'Europe. From Morlaix many delightful excursions may be made. We find in the town that usual old-world quaintness which pervades Brittany, but little that is remarkable. Its position upon an estuary of the sea, that runs for several kilometres to the coast, part stream, part canal, is in a deep valley or ravine between steep hills that are crossed by the railroad in a bold and picturesque manner. The Château du Taureau, which

Among French Inns

stood upon an island, now, alas, serves the purpose of a prison.

We are now in Finistère and may proceed toward Brest, the most western town in France of any importance. There the full ruggedness of the coast of Brittany shows itself in its wild beauty and attraction as we turn our steps homeward. Before going southward, however, we cannot refrain from mentioning, for those who are so inclined, the delightful excursions which may be made from Lannion, a town situated a little north of Plouaret.

There the Hôtel de l'Europe may be used as headquarters, with its pretty garden, and visits may be made to the ruins of the Château de Tonquedec on its wooded hill above a pond, from which rise the voices of innumerable frogs. There are a number of châteaux in the environs of Lannion, among them Coëtirec, Kergrist, and Runfas. The strange Breton names are in contrast to those in other parts of France, and the châteaux likewise are characteristic of Brittany.

It is impossible, in so short a sketch as this, to give anything like an adequate description of this interesting part of France, so distinctive in itself, almost Dutch or Ger-

Among the Inns of Brittany

man, in its contrast to the rest of the country. We can only indicate a few places to which the visitor may well repair with advantage, and leave him to continue on his road.

Our own party returned to Normandy and Rouen once more, after visiting Châteaulin, Quimper, and Lorient, on the south coast of Brittany. From there we turned northward to Pontivy, an interesting place, renamed Napoleonville by the Emperor. The return journey may be made by way of Rennes and Fougères, Mayenne, Prés en Pail, to Normandy once more.

On our return trip we visited the famous stones of Carnac, which, though smaller than those at Stonehenge in England, are still wild, and intensely interesting relics of the druid rites that have been celebrated in Brittany. They arise like sentinels of stone, soft gray-green in colour, guarding the mystery of their past that lies buried in the heather around them. Near them is the Château de Kercado. As the roofs of the château and the silent stones fade in the distance, let us bid farewell to Brittany and its quaint character and history, and return again to more familiar regions, though better for our glimpse into its scenery and life.

CHAPTER VII

AT THE HOTEL DU GRAND CERF

Les Andelys

THERE is a delightful old château, not very far from Rouen, known as the Château de Martinville. It is a fine example of Norman architecture of the sixteenth century, symmetrical in design, and set amid charming surroundings.

Our party decided to visit it, and found that it well repaid them for the excursion. The château has the proverbial high roofs, ornamented with the graceful iron points which are always a delicate and necessary finish to its walls. The latter are flanked by four round towers in the same style. Above the door, in the centre of the façade, is a bow window, highly ornamented, which ends in an angular tower in the roof, and adds greatly to the charm of the building.

On the left of the château is one of those

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

delightful walls, so frequently to be found in Normandy, as in other parts of France, enclosing the gardens or courts around which stables are built in large estates. Here, however, they assume a more mellow hue, and a picturesqueness of appearance which gives to them a truer expression of age than in the central or southern provinces of France. On their inner sides are usually to be found wall-fruits and vines that dress them with a mantle of friendly green, and give forth odours, and bear grapes and other delicacies in summer-time. The gardens contain delightful tangles of vegetables and flowers and alleys in which to walk and enjoy the scented atmosphere and soft airs that blow across the face and breathe of fanciful desires.

The Frenchman would have liked to entice Miss Wilton into one of these charmed enclosures, had the time permitted, during their excursions, and had the other members of the party been more often absent than they were. However, the time must surely present itself sooner or later, and so he waited, watchful, hopeful, on the alert, as Frenchmen are apt to do, his mind intent upon his subject, and his keen wit ever ready to be used when

Among French Inns

necessary to attract the desired object of its chase. There being little opportunity at Martinville, he was forced to content himself with whispering nothings of an amatory or flattering character into her exquisitely shaped ears, and to hope for assistance from his friend the duchess when they should arrive at Trouville. The duchess was always ready for a little romance or intrigue, and nothing delighted her so much as to encourage flirtations, and, if possible, arrange a match against the wishes of the parents of either interested party.

So the Frenchman hoped and waited, and viewed with regret the arrangement which placed Miss Wilton in the automobile with the Englishman as they started from the château. It must be said here that Mr. Wilton had engaged two new machines of the latest model to come from Paris to Rouen and take this cosmopolitan party of tourists whither they would go, and where they would remain, and that the machines had arrived at the Hôtel du Nord the day previous.

It was now decided to go to the Hôtel du Grand Cerf, at Les Andelys, for the next few days. This ancient inn was known to the

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

Frenchman and recommended by him in the most laudatory terms, and there the whole party repaired with all possible speed. Before doing so, however, a rapid trip was made to the picturesque Château de Clères, which is some little distance north of Rouen. After visiting this delightful place, which dates from the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, the party again set forth for Les Andelys.

The day was beautiful, and the undulating country, smiling in its fair and fragrant beauty, seemed as if made to be admired.

The count was in rhapsodies of poetic joy at the scenery and the air of everything about him. The soft zephyrs passed over his Excellency's face and cooled his Excellency's brow. The clouds in the heavens were not enough to hide the rays of sunlight that poured down upon this glorious portion of the earth and touched its beauties with a magic hand.

The count's bosom heaved sighs of delight and pleasure, and his great eyes rolled about in their sockets like orbs of living Italian fire. His soul was filled with love and longing, and he thought of the amorous people of his native land, and finally of the

Among French Inns

fair Miss Gladys Wilton before him, beautiful as the lilies of the field and arrayed like one of them.

"What are you thinking of, count?" said she, as she turned her lovely head and perceived his pensive expression.

"Oh, mademoiselle, it is of you — the loave is in the boosom, and fills it all up to the mouth. Ah, you are divine this morning! I worship in the shrine. If I had the guitar I would serenade the fair signorina. *Con amore! Con amore!*" and the count cast languishing eyes at the object of his affection.

"Do you really play on the guitar, Count di Pomponi?" said Miss Wilton. "You never told me that you did."

"In the Italy I sing to the guitar in the garden, or under the windows of the ladies. Ah, that is the way we do in the home," answered Count Romeo, aglow at the thought of his past peccadilloes and attachments.

"How romantic!" exclaimed Miss Wilton. "And do you sing also?"

For answer the count opened his mouth and let loose all the fervour of his soul in a burst of song that nearly deafened the occupants of the automobile, and went resounding

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

over the hills and dales through which they were passing.

Miss Wilton was convulsed with laughter, but the count was well pleased with his efforts. His methods of love-making were spontaneous and direct, and untrammelled by conventions or other impediments to his purpose. Had he been young and handsome, his advances would not have been received so tolerantly, but as it was, he was only a figure of fun, too humourous to take seriously, and too animated to ignore.

Thus Les Andelys were reached. These twin towns are situated on and near the banks of the Seine. The road crosses a plain before we reach Le Petit Andely, a pretty village, above which rises a pile of beautiful ruins that compose the Château Gaillard. Opposite is an island on which rises the remains of a ruined tower built by Richard Cœur de Lion.

Amid these picturesque surroundings we reach Le Grand Andely, and draw up at the door of an ancient hostelry, the delightful old Hôtel du Grand Cerf. The building is a picturesque house of the sixteenth century. It is built of white plaster and black beams, richly carved, with a heavy cornice, which

Among French Inns

divides the second story from the roof. It is situated directly upon the street, like most of the French inns, without the grounds and gardens that so frequently surround those in England. A smiling host greets us, and we pass on into a quaint old courtyard that delights the artistic eye.

The Hôtel du Grand Cerf is one of the most interesting inns of France, as well as one of the oldest. It is well known to antiquarians, and dates back as far as the thirteenth century. It has been the abode of princes and illustrious personages from the days of the English invasions to our own times, and has traditions of a historical and literary character, of which a more important place might well be proud.

The original building was partly ruined by fire, and was rebuilt in 1515 by Nicholas Duval, Seigneur du Viennois and a counselor of the Parliament of Rouen, one of the favourites of François I. In the interior of the inn the familiar salamander and the fleur-de-lys of the Roi Chevalier appear in profusion. There is a beautiful carved "tambour" in the corner of one of the rooms, forming a sort of circular closet. The great chimneypiece, also of the Renaissance, is



CHIMNEYPiece, HÔTEL DU GRAND CERF, GRAND ANDELY

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

most interesting, and is worthy of one of the châteaux of Touraine.

In October, 1847, Victor Hugo visited the inn and dedicated the following couplet to the chimneypiece:

“La vaste cheminée, à l’écusson altier,
Dévore en nous chauffant une chêne tout entier.”

Nicholas Poussin also stayed here, as well as les Corneilles, Pigault-Lebrun, Walter Scott, Horace Vernet, Chateaubriand, Viollet-le-Duc, and Rosa Bonheur. Antoine de Bourbon, father of Henry IV., is said to have died in one of the rooms on the first story as a result of a wound received during the siege of Rouen in 1552. Later this interesting house was used as a summer residence by the Archbishop of Rouen, seigneur of Les Andelys.

In October, 1749, the executors of Marie Catherine Duval sold the Hôtel du Viennois to a Monsieur Lefèvre, who was the first to make it into a public hostelry. Its present host is the hospitable Monsieur J. Duval.

“This certainly is a real inn,” said Mrs. Wilton, who had been rather quiet during the ride. “I declare, it looks a thousand years old, but I do not see how we are ever

Among French Inns

to squeeze into it, with Cécile and Henry and your Dante Galante, count. I think they will have to sleep on the roof."

"He is so high we never reach them if they did," said his Excellency, referring at once to the roof and the servants.

"I can do without Dante Galante, and madame can do without her maid, but then," he added, meaning thereby that they could not do without them. The count was as helpless as a baby when his servant was absent. He was unable to handle either himself or his wardrobe without the assistance of this faithful attendant. He could neither shave nor dress alone, and was unable to stoop comfortably in order to unpack his clothes, owing to the singular character of his figure. However, the travellers were successfully stowed away in the various rooms of the inn, and gathered, the next day, to see the sights of the neighbourhood.

As they were about to set forth on foot an unusual commotion was observed to be in progress in the courtyard, and on looking out, it appeared that Dante Galante was the centre of attraction. He had got into some argument over an iron which he wished to

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

heat in order to press one of his master's wondrous suits of clothes, and, we blush to acknowledge, he had used rather ungallant language to one of the maids. The race feeling made itself felt, below stairs, and the gallant Dante found himself suddenly in the courtyard, sprawling unceremoniously on the ground with one of the men servants of the inn.

Many were the outcries, and great the ire of the Italian. He rose and made an onslaught upon his enemy, and both of them were soon the centre of an excited group, some urging bloodshed and others endeavouring to secure "peace with honour." The count was much concerned at the disturbance, and fearful of the future, not only of his servant, but of his costume, which, needless to say, had completely disappeared.

"Dante Galante is always in the trouble," he exclaimed in agitation. "If I go out he is flirting with the girls; or he is hot, or he is cold," meaning presumably that Dante Galante was inclined to live up to the latter part of his name.

After a great deal of talking and discussion, the quarrel was made up between the fiery Italian and the inhabitants of the inn,

Among French Inns

and everything ran smoothly once more. It was proposed to walk through the quaint old town and visit the monument erected to the painter Nicholas Poussin, who was born at Villers, a small hamlet two or three kilometres from Le Grand Andely. The statue is situated in the Place du Marché, and commemorates this great master of landscape painting, whose works, with those of Claude, so nobly depict the beauties of the French country. The work of Poussin is deeper in colouring and feeling than that of Claude, his pastures more fertile and his groves more thickly wooded. Still we find in his landscapes the same classic touch, the murky pools and streams, the graceful figures bathing or reclining upon their banks. They remind us of the lines of Thomas Gray when we look upon them:

“Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
A broader, browner shade,
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'ercanopies the glade,
Beside some water's rushy brink
With me the Muse shall sit and think
(At ease reclined in rustic state)
How vain the ardour of the crowd,
How low, how little, are the proud,
How indigent the great !”

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

It is impossible, in looking upon the figure of so great an imaginative artist as was Poussin, not to recall his admirable scenes and his truthful portrayal of such thoughts as these. That the woody dells and graceful ruins of his native country brought inspiration to his genius is scarcely to be doubted, and that Le Grand Andely should honour his memory is fitting and natural.

The relations of Les Andelys are interesting to observe. Le Grand Andely, removed from the Seine, and on a tributary of this river, arose out of the depths of the valley, where it could neither observe the waters of the fruitful stream nor increase its importance by the commerce which might be derived from it. Still, it grew and thrived long before Le Petit Andely, a little village on the borders of the greater river, came into existence. It possesses a church, called Notre Dame, with some magnificent carving about its windows and portal.

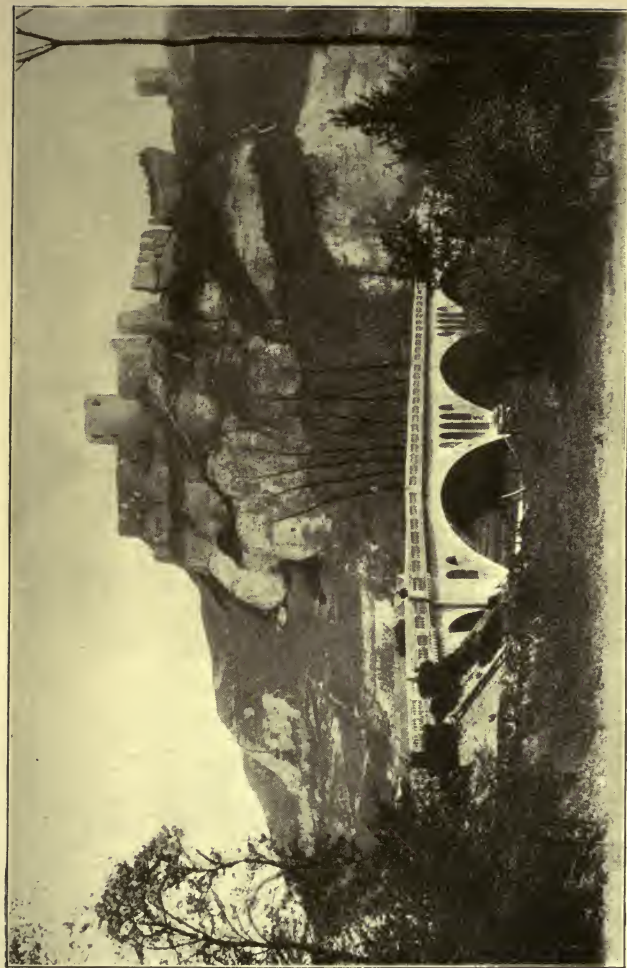
The chief portions of the history of the town centre around this church, whose earliest foundation is ascribed to St. Clotilde, wife of King Clovis, who established a monastery for young girls in the early part of the sixth century. A miracle is told of St.

Among French Inns

Clotilde incident to the building of her monastery. Taking pity on the poor workmen, who had had nothing to drink but water, owing to the absence of vineyards (a circumstance which in France is considered a hardship), she changed the water of a spring near by to wine, which wondrous act has ever since been extolled to her glory and honour.

On the heights above Le Petit Andely rises the picturesque pile of ruins that form the remains of the Château Gaillard. It was built by Richard Cœur de Lion toward the middle of the twelfth century, for the purpose of having a formidable fortress from which to defend the integrity of the Duchy of Normandy from its enemies. At the same time the village was founded. Prior to this, an earlier château had been built on the island opposite, the remains of which are still in existence.

As the history of Le Grand Andely centres about its church, so that of Le Petit Andely is associated with its château, whose noble ruins are such a landmark in the scene. It is remarkable that this great citadel was built in a single year. Richard Cœur de



CHÂTEAU GAILLARD



At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

Lion, on viewing its grandeur, exclaimed, "*Qu'elle est belle, ma fille d'un an!*"

Both the fortress of Gaillard and that on the island were besieged by Philippe-Auguste, who, after the mysterious death of Prince Arthur at Rouen (attributed to his uncle, King John of England), decided to confiscate the Duchy of Normandy. The siege of the Château Gaillard was a horrible one. Its details have been described by William le Breton, a poet of the period.

Many are the dramas and tragedies of history that have been enacted around the walls of this early mediæval fortress. We are enabled to touch upon them only in passing, and suggest to the visitor the wealth of interest that clusters about these falling and weather-beaten stones. They are to-day the picturesque and silent witnesses of the events that have taken place in the centuries passed.

The half-ruined towers rise, like ghostly phantoms crowning the steepnesses on which they stand. They seem like spirits of a past existence lifting themselves out of the soft light of the summer evening. The village nestles beneath them, and the waters of the river reflect the dim forms of the boats that pass over them. It is all fascinating and

Among French Inns

suggestive to the imagination, breathing the subtle atmosphere of the chivalric, historic Normandy of the past and of its present rural simplicity.

"What could one see more delightful to the eye?" said the Frenchman to Miss Wilton, as they stood together on the bank of the river, looking up at the rugged remains of the castle beetling against the sky.

"It makes me feel glad that I live in the twentieth century, and not in the days of donjons and tortures, when women were imprisoned and poisoned whenever they offended their lords and masters," said Miss Wilton, half-shuddering at the thoughts of the dark deeds which those towers had enclosed. "It must have been terrible for the poor people who were starved to death during the siege you have described," for the Frenchman had been regaling his companion with a detailed history of the fortress.

"I would like to see you crown one of the more recent châteaux of France as chatelaine," said the Frenchman, "and to restore it with you as it should be. How beautiful we could make it!"

"It would be charming," whispered his fair companion, carried away by the idea.

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

Then, half-checking herself, as if some new thought had crossed her mind, she added, "I think we should join the others now. It is getting late, and we must return to the inn."

"As you will," replied the Frenchman, and they left the scene and its possible dangers. Somehow, the Frenchman felt that his task was more difficult than he had realized, and that this beautiful winged butterfly was more difficult to capture than he had calculated or bargained for. Yet he comforted himself with the assurance that the duchess would help him when he confided to her his troubles and his desires.

The host of the inn was full of good humour and anxious to please his guests. The dinner was everything that could be desired, and the count consequently in the fairest of moods and the most agreeable of humours. He had discovered that Dante Galante was really not the chief offender in the dispute of the morning, and, in fact, that one of the visitors in the kitchen, angered at his intrusion, had taken the liberty of pulling his nose, which was in itself cause for any retaliation short of manslaughter.

"I think you had better keep a sharp lookout on him, count," said Mr. Wilton. "You

Among French Inns

know that we might have some international complications if any blood was spilt. And I should have a nice time getting things settled, down here in the country," he added to the Englishman, as every one parted for the night and proceeded to stow themselves away in the various apartments of the inn.

There are many delightful places to visit from Les Andelys, and our party made several attractive excursions from there. The places are all in the neighbourhood, and may be seen with considerable advantage by visitors at the Hôtel du Grand Cerf. The ruins of the Abbaye de Fontaine-Guerard, in the Parc de Radepont (Canton de Fleury-sur-Andelle), are beautiful remains, situated among ideal surroundings. The Abbaye de Mortemer, at Lisors, near Lyons-la-Forêt, is another of equal charm and beauty.

The château and church of Gisors are also two principal objective points of pilgrimage. The château is in ruins, but the church is a superb bit of richly sculptured architecture.

Were our space sufficient we might describe these lovely haunts in the Department of Eure — for we are now there — in detail, and illustrate in some way their attractions

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

and their history. There are, however, many other places that call upon our attention, and it is to these that we must beg the reader to accompany us. They are farther from the inn in which we are staying, and in some cases necessitate a journey by rail; but they may all be visited in an automobile, when time is no particular object.

Were he so inclined, the visitor might even push farther north, and, reëntering Seine Inférieure, visit Dieppe and its surroundings, and also the delightful vicinity of Neufchâtel, made familiar to us by its cheese. These portions of Normandy are rich in historic monuments, châteaux, *manoirs*, churches, civic buildings, dating back hundreds of years, and bearing all the evidences of their age. We have left them, however, for others to describe, and are inclined to push farther afield in our excursions through the country of France.

One of the most attractive trips to be taken is to Louviers and Pont de l'Arche. Louviers is situated on the river Eure, and the latter place is at the point where it empties into the Seine. The party set forth one morning, crossing the river at Le Petit Andely, and passing through the country that divides it

Among French Inns

from the smaller river, reached Louviers in time for *déjeuner*.

"This seems a nice old place," said Mr. Wilton, who had been induced to join the company on this occasion. "I notice they haven't got their trolley-lines down in this part of the country, though. I should think some one might have enterprise enough to start one up. There ought to be a nice little business between here and Evreux. A sort of county town, isn't it?"

The Englishman at once inquired into the population of the two towns, and Mr. Wilton thought they sounded decidedly promising, and was amusing himself, in a harmless fashion, by figuring out fares and profits, until he was pounced upon by his wife and forced to stop.

"My dear James, can't you ever get away from business? The idea of thinking of trolley-lines in Louviers! Why, it would ruin the place absolutely."

"Well, I guess I could make a line pay here inside of a year," replied Mr. Blodget Wilton, with an air of bravado. He was, however, deterred for the time being from any further calculations, and contented himself with following the rest of the party

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

about with a bored expression and his hands in his pockets.

"What a superb bit of carving there is on the porch of that church," said Mrs. Wilton. "Look, James, do you see it?" Mr. Blodget Wilton looked obediently, but remained unimpressed by its grandeur and richness.

"It is finer, almost, than the south portal of Canterbury Cathedral," said the Englishman, after a careful survey of this beautiful portal. The Englishman never spoke unnecessarily, and never made a statement that was not carefully weighed and considered beforehand.

"Well, I should smile," said Mr. Wilton, not to be outdone in appreciation. "I'm not much on architecture, but I should say Canterbury couldn't hold a candle to this place. Suppose we just look inside and see what they've got there. I'd like to bet it's full of wax statues and imitation gold flowers and dripping candles. Never could stand them, even in New York. Never could!" And Mr. Wilton disappeared into the solemn stillness of the church.

"'Fools rush in where angels fear to tread,'" muttered the Frenchman to himself, in resentment at Mr. Wilton's way of speak-

Among French Inns

ing of his country's famous shrines. To him, perhaps, there was more feeling of reverence for the letter than the spirit of his religion and his life. Still, who are we, that we should inquire into the depths of his character? Or who was Mr. Blodget Wilton, that he should burst into the church with so much levity? We are always ready to judge, always ready to pick flaws before perfecting ourselves, in this world, and the characters of this book, being, after all, only poor human beings, are possessed of all or rather most of the frailties common to mankind. Let us take them as they are, and not expect too much from them, lest we be disappointed. Ideals are soon broken, and gods soon become men, when closely examined.

Mr. Blodget Wilton did not like the church any better than he had expected, but his wife was determined that he should give himself over to an appreciation of the history and artistic elements of Louviers.

"There's no use in telling me a lot of dates and names. I can tell you just what it is before you begin. They're all the same, these old Normandy towns. I found that out before we left Fécamp. And I wish to goodness I was back there." (Mr. Blodget

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

Wilton was, we fear, recollecting the several good glasses of Burgundy he had sipped with mine host of the Hôtel du Grand Cerf.)

“Come, now, Mr. de B——,” he continued, addressing the Frenchman, “isn’t this just about it? William the Conqueror, Richard Cœur de Lion, Joan of Arc, and one or two others, got together here, had a little fun, a fight or two, or something like that, founded a monastery for unmarried daughters, — poor creatures, I pity ’em, — and all that sort of thing. Oh, I forgot Philip Augustus; he ought to be here somewhere or other. He usually is. Come, now, don’t talk to me about history, because I know it all, my boy,” and Mr. Blodget Wilton gave the Frenchman a rousing slap on the back, which made that worthy gentleman jump with sudden emotion.

Nothing daunted, Mr. Wilton continued his harangue.

“How’s that for history? Eh, count?” and his Excellency received a vigorous dig in the flesh that so generously covered his ribs. “I guess you feel about the same way as I do, don’t you, count?” Mr. Blodget Wilton was always informal, and liked nothing better than breaking up any semblance

Among French Inns

of dignity or formality in others. At times, it must be said, he really gave his wife considerable trouble and annoyance, and very often caused her agonies of mortification in polite society.

One of his habits on formal occasions was to address personages of importance by wrong titles, sometimes calling duchesses by the appellation "Mrs.," and mixing up people and names generally, to the distraction of his wife and the occasional offence of those with whom he conversed. When entering a drawing-room of the Faubourg St. Germain, Mrs. Wilton usually gave him some special instructions, which he invariably forgot as soon as occasion required that they be followed.

"Now remember *not* to call people by their names this evening," said she, on one remarkable occasion. "You know you always get them wrong, and strangers do not like it." But we dare not disclose the lamentable failure of Mr. Wilton to comply with these instructions.

In spite of his lack of appreciation of Louviers, the party enjoyed their visit there, though without hearing much of the history of the town, we fear. There is a Hôtel du Grand Cerf there also; but the party stopped

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

at the Hôtel du Mouton, and found it sufficiently comfortable for their passing needs.

"All the towns has a hotel called the Great Boar," said the count, pensively.

"The Great Stag," said the Englishman, correcting him. "I suppose the name came from the old custom of stag-hunting, which is so prevalent in France."

"But we never eat the stag in the hotel," said the count, still pensively.

"Or the pig either, for that matter," said I.

"Only in the *boudin*," said the Frenchman.

"Is *boudin* that sort of black sausage that they sell by the yard in the butcher-shops?" asked Mrs. Wilton.

"Yes; you must try some," said the Frenchman. "It is delicious. I will get a piece to-morrow, and we will have it for dinner."

"And I will cook some spaghetti à l'*Italien*," added the count, whose eyes twinkled, and whose mouth watered at the thought of eating his native dish once more, in the full glory of its flavours and subtle attributes.

"If it's a success, count, I'll take the receipt and put it into my list of canned

Among French Inns

food-stuffs," said Mr. Wilton. "We'll work it into the trust. We'll pay you a royalty on every can that is sold, and you'll be a millionaire before you know it."

"Ah, there is the fortune, after all!" exclaimed his Excellency, in joy — his wildest dreams of American dollars about to be realized at last.

"I only hope we sha'n't all be poisoned," said Mrs. Wilton; and the party proceeded to put on their goggles and gossamers and start northward to Pont de l'Arche.

The road from Louviers is a delightful one, and a *détour* may be taken through the forest, which reaches to the ruins of the Abbaye de Bon-Port, near the Seine. The village is charmingly situated on the banks of the river, its unfinished church, with beautiful stained-glass windows, and gargoyles extending from the roof above them, rising high above the Roman ruins which surround the town. Over the broad stream extends the bridge, with a series of twenty-four arches, and standing against it is a picturesque house built upon tall piles.

The original bridge, of which only the foundations have remained, was built by Charles le Chauve, but its chief portions

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Early in the thirteenth century John Lackland destroyed the fortifications of the town and probably most of the early bridge also. It has had numerous restorations, and is, in fact, one of the most remarkable examples now existing in France.

The village, which to-day contains less than two thousand inhabitants, has endured, during its interesting history, some terrible sieges and hardships. It is, indeed, one of the most ancient villages of Normandy. In 862 Charles le Chauve built the first bridge and castle, with fortifications on either side, to arrest the invasions of the Normans and their use of the river Seine. It is said that so terrible was the effect produced upon the minds of the inhabitants of La Neustrie by these inroads, that they inserted in their litanies the famous supplication, "From the Normans deliver us, O Lord!"

A short walk along the bank of the Seine brings us to the remains of the Abbaye de Bon-Port, before mentioned, which was founded by Richard Cœur de Lion, who figured so conspicuously in Norman history. An interesting story is told of its foundation. The king, while hunting a boar on the fourth

Among French Inns

of October, in the year 1190, near Maresdans, was nearly killed in his pursuit of the animal, which had thrown itself into the waters of the river. His horse was drawn down by the current of the stream, and the royal huntsman might have perished in the watery chase. Realizing his danger, he vowed that he would erect a monastery to the Virgin Mary, if he should escape.

He kept his promise, and for centuries an immense church stood near the spot, commemorating the event. It was destroyed toward the early part of the nineteenth century. The ruined walls of the abbey, half-covered with ivy, have remained to tell of its past glories, and add another spectre to the monastic life of Normandy.

In 1352 King John held his council at the abbey, and Charles le Mauvais was also present. Here, likewise, in later years, the Cardinal de Polignac composed the greater portion of his "Anti-Lucrèce."

The return from Pont de l'Arche to Le Grand Andely may be made through a beautiful stretch of country north of the Seine, thus making a complete circuit of this delightful excursion.

The following evening at the inn was set

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

aside as the occasion for the feast of the *boudin* and the spaghetti. The Frenchman had purchased, during the afternoon, the choicest quality of this stimulating dish, well-seasoned with rich ingredients and spices, and the count had laid in a store of spaghetti that would have sent joy to the heart of any Italian, were he prince or peasant.

At the appointed time the table was set, and the *boudin* placed in the hands of the cook. Then it was that the Count Romeo di Pomponi, attended by the faithful Dante Galante, descended in all his glory into the kitchen of the Hôtel du Grand Cerf to prepare and cook the spaghetti. To those waiting above, it seemed a wondrous time that it took to prepare the savoury and succulent dish.

Odours were wafted from the region of the culinary department, and brought tidings of the strenuous labours that were in progress. Once the Englishman went to the door with the Frenchman to reconnoitre, and returned, bearing news of great doings in the kitchen. A curious sizzling sound was reported to have issued from the mysterious depths of the stove, as the *boudin* and the spaghetti

Among French Inns

fought for the upper hand. It was a battle royal as to which should be ready the first.

A little later Dante Galante came dashing into the presence of the expectant company in search of a fan, and reported the count to be very red in the face, and evidently much overheated.

"Ah, he will have an apoplexy; I knew it," exclaimed the Frenchman, ever ready to cry "wolf."

"You never will be satisfied until that poor man has a stroke," said Mrs. Wilton at last. "I declare, you are always making me think he is going to have a fit."

"But think of the heat, madame," urged the Frenchman, nothing daunted. He was waiting for the triumphant moment when he could say, "I told you so," and see the poor count stretched out on the floor, all overcome and foaming at the mouth.

By and by the savoury odours of the steaming viands emanating from the centre of activity gave notice that the feast was prepared and the dishes ready to be served. The company sat down, and the count appeared from the kitchen, his face aglow with triumph and exhilaration. The *boudin* was served.

"What a curious-looking dish," said Mrs.

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

Wilton. "They look as if they were alive. I don't know that I quite like to touch them."

The count was well pleased at this, for it boded well for the success of the spaghetti.

"It is only cut in different pieces," explained the Frenchman. "*Dieu*, how good it is! *Dieu, que c'est bon!*"

"Yes, that certainly is savoury," said Mr. Wilton, evidently enjoying the dish. "What do you think of it, Marietta?"

"It really is quite good," replied Mrs. Wilton, "if it only did not look so peculiar."

The count's face fell during this conversation, and his soul was consumed with jealousy, after his labours with the spaghetti. At this portentous moment entered Dante Galante, bearing aloft the mighty dish prepared by the master. In just pride he introduced it to the company, and then handed it around.

"Oh, what a wonderful dish," said Miss Wilton.

"You certainly have worked hard," added the Englishman.

"How do you get it out?" cried Mrs. Wilton, struggling with the long pieces of spaghetti that dangled from her fork and refused to part from their companions.

Among French Inns

"Ah, you must take, so," explained the gallant Romeo, landing an immense quantity on Mrs. Wilton's plate with great dexterity.

"This is the way we eat the spaghetti in the Italy," he added, twisting a huge quantity of the stringy substance around his fork and devouring the whole in the twinkling of an eye.

"Oh, I don't see how you do it!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilton, trying unsuccessfully to do likewise. "It is most unmanageable. I must cut mine up." So saying, Mrs. Wilton proceeded to eat her spaghetti "*à l'Américaine*."

"*Dieu, que c'est bon!*" grunted the count, enjoying the success of his venture. All laughed and ate and were gay, all but the Frenchman, who sat on the wrong side of Mrs. Blodget Wilton; and his eyes flashed spite and ire lest the cuisine of Italy should overshadow that of France.

The count, on perceiving his expression, was really confused and alarmed. He began muttering and gobbling his food in such an immoderate fashion that the Frenchman soon had the best of the evening, with innumerable sharp thrusts at the gallant Romeo,

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

which ended by nearly routing that nobleman altogether.

"I tell you what, count," said Mr. Wilton, who had been studying the ingredients of the spaghetti in a businesslike manner, "I think this stuff might be made into a pretty good thing and put on the market. I'll make you a proposition on it to-morrow, if you like."

"Oh, in the pleasure, in the pleasure," exclaimed his Excellency, all smiles and affability at the idea. This was really too good to be true. The thought that his beloved dish should be the means of building up the fortunes of his ancient but decaying house was to him both joyful and unexpected.

But the Frenchman sat silent, meditating an attack on his rival if the time were propitious, and unless he should meanwhile receive some soothing attention from his hostess. This Mrs. Wilton, being quick-witted and equal to an emergency, proceeded to bestow, and the evening wore away, and finally ended without any serious mishap to either Monsieur de B—— or the count.

The next morning Mr. Wilton was discovered with a broad smile on his face, and his whole countenance expressive of amusement and mirth.

Among French Inns

"The old count certainly is a good joke," said he. "What do you think happened to him last night?"

"We can't imagine; do tell us," echoed a chorus of voices.

"Why, he had a nightmare. I suppose it was the combination of spaghetti and wine, and that sausage. At all events, he dreamt that the Frenchman threw all his spaghetti in his face. Just think of that, Mr. de B——." And Mr. Blodget Wilton exploded in one of his most boisterous fits of merriment, while the rest of the party had another good laugh at the count's expense.

It was perfectly true. The count had had a very bad dream, and so impressed had he been with the jealous vexation of the Frenchman that his visions took this form. He confided to Mrs. Wilton, later in the day, the horrors of his sleeping hours.

"Imagine! I dreamt that Monsieur de B—— threw all the spaghetti in the face," and his Excellency made a graphic gesture as he described it.

The following day the party took the train by way of Rouen, and visited Dieppe and some places in the neighbourhood, among them the famous Château d'Eu, which has

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

been for centuries the abode of the royal family of France. The château is a noble and symmetrical pile, with two dependencies that form a court, enclosed by the familiar iron railing used in the royal residences of France, painted black, and its points tipped with gold.

In front of it rises a large church of rather ungainly proportions, though with elaborate ornamentation. It fills the greater portion of the space in front of the château, and faces its court and façade, as if to remind its owners of their duty to religious service in perpetuity.

The château, with its associations and history, is the chief interest of the town, and has dominated its life and actions completely. It is now the residence of the Orleans family, and is usually occupied by the Comtesse de Paris.

The Comté d'Eu, which has been a royal title since the domain was created by Richard II., and conferred upon his natural brother Geoffroy, has been in turn the possession of the houses of Lusignan, Artois, Bourgogne, Lorraine, Orleans, Penthievre, and others no less familiar to history. The title of Comtesse d'Eu was borne by the widow of

Among French Inns

Henry I. de Guise, by Catherine de Clèves, and by Louise de Montpensier, — “La Grande Mademoiselle,” whose final marriage to Lauzun was so sad a romance of royal history.

It was the famous Duchesse de Maine, a bearer of the title, who, after her many flirtations, addressed to her husband this flattering remark: “There has remained for me, then, only the mortification of having married you.”

Many are the thoughts of historic personages figuring in the old court life of France; many are the literary remembrances and the contributions to the belles-lettres of biography and reminiscence that arise to the mind as we gaze upon the fair outlines of the Château d’Eu. Upon its brilliant walls the sun spreads its light, illuminating its ornaments and chasing despondency from its shadows. It has shone upon its glories in the past, and lights the hopes and progress of its future.

In the vicinity of Dieppe, also, are the beautiful ruins of the Château d’Arques, now little more than the crumbling remains of a feudal fortress rising upon the crest of a hill like an effigy of its former power. They speak in silent eloquence of the days of Will-

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

iam the Conqueror, in whose reign it was built, and of the ancient Comté d'Arques, which William conferred upon his uncle to satisfy his pretensions to the ducal throne. The little bourg beneath was once the capital of the original Pays de Talon, one of the early divisions of this part of Normandy.

The way from Dieppe to D'Arques is a charming one, leading through the Vallée d'Eaulne, the villages of Martin-Eglise and Ancourt, the forest of Arques, and finally Archelles, or Le Petit Arques. Each of these is pleasing and interesting to pass through, and makes an agreeable excursion on a summer's day. Leading, as they do, to the noble Château d'Arques, they form a sequence at once genial and inspiring.

Mr. Wilton was well pleased with his visit to this place. He preferred to travel by railway or behind a horse, and this excursion being free from automobiles, the day a fair one, — and the stock-market in New York in good condition, — he was disposed to enjoy himself.

"Well, you dear girl," said he to his daughter, "give your old father a kiss, and tell him how much you love him; on the nose, please; my cheek is so hot." Miss

Among French Inns

Gladys accordingly kissed her father's nose dutifully and charmingly.

"Oh, *mia madre*, if the kiss had only been for me!" sighed the lovelorn Romeo to himself, his bosom heaving with the deep love that lay beneath it.

"Ah, *ciel!* if it had been for me!" thought the Frenchman, as he beheld the charming act on the part of the daughter. But the Englishman said nothing either to himself or to any one else, and no one could have told by the immovable expression of his face what his ideas might be on the subject of the kiss, though Mrs. Blodget Wilton watched him narrowly all the while, and observed without difficulty what was going on in the minds of the two Continentals standing opposite.

"Ah, now, that is the real charming loave for the father," said the count to Miss Wilton, as she emerged smiling from the paternal embrace.

"You're a dear, good girl, aren't you, Gladys?" said her father, beaming with fondness. "And you love your old daddy, don't you? Even though he doesn't see you any too often."

"Oh, yes, papa, I do, indeed," said Gladys, and she gave him another kiss, this

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

time on the top of his weather-beaten forehead.

"Now, James, I think you might get those '*cochers*,' and we can go on to that other place you wanted to see," said Mrs. Wilton, in her most practical fashion. "Let me see, what was the name of it?"

"The Manoir d'Ango, at Varengueville," said the Frenchman, very precisely.

"Yes, that was it," returned Mrs. Wilton. "I knew it sounded something like '*argot*,' but I could not remember. Come, James, do hurry. What are you picking there? I declare, I hope it isn't any kind of a cactus. Mr. Wilton is always stopping to pick something," she added to the count, who was cooling himself with a palm-leaf fan, and indulging in a cigar.

And so the party set forth for Varengueville, and visited the old Manoir d'Ango, which is a delightful and picturesque place, typical of Normandy and its characteristics. The *manoir* is to be found here as in no other province of France, and is essentially indigenous to the soil and associated with Norman ideas. It is not a château, and yet not an ordinary house. The *manoirs* of Normandy are usually constructed of brick

Among French Inns

and stone, with tiled roofs, and are sometimes composed of beams and plaster. They are set in picturesque and domestic surroundings, and more frequently nestle among trees and farm buildings instead of standing boldly against the rocks and precipices that characterize the sites of the feudal fortresses and castles.

The Manoir d'Ango is one possessing these characteristics. It is a picturesque collection of buildings grouped around a court, and dressed in almost rural attire. A large, round tower with a domed roof stands in the centre, curiously decorated with a sort of network of ornament. Above it pigeons and other birds hover and find shelter.

"This is a charming place," said Miss Wilton and the Englishman, almost in the same breath; but they were hardly able to do more than make a cursory visit to the place before they were hustled away by Mrs. Wilton, who had always an eye to the time and the next place to be visited.

That night was spent at the Hôtel Royal at Dieppe, facing the shore. The view of the sea again in the morning was pleasant, after the days spent in the country. By the next afternoon the whole party was once



DIEPPE CATHEDRAL



At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

more at the inn at Le Grand Andely, planning an excursion to Evreux the following day. So well pleased was Mr. Blodget Wilton with this little visit to Dieppe and its surroundings, that he decided to risk a ride in the automobile to the capital of Eure and a château in the neighbourhood.

They set forth early and with every anticipation of joy, in the full glory of a summer's morning and the sweet fragrance of the odours wafted from hedge and tree by the soft airs that play against the face. Miss Wilton was radiantly beautiful. Her eyes sparkled with merriment, and the count was unable in any way to disguise his admiration for her, while as for the others perhaps the least said the better. Yet with what magic does the hand of Cupid play mischief with the hearts of men, and hold them captive when they least expect it! Happy magic! Joyous state! With all the sorrows born upon its train:

“’Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.”

The road from the Seine to Evreux is a delightful one to pass over, leading through the heart of Norman beauty and its rustic

Among French Inns

enchantment, making every visitor a votary of its charm. Evreux itself is an ancient cathedral town, as well as being the capital of the Department, and has much that is interesting in it. The ancient Comté d'Evreux was one of the royal possessions of the Dukes of Normandy. The first Comte d'Evreux was Robert, Archbishop of Rouen, and second son of Richard I., Duke of Normandy.

The cathedral is a beautiful piece of architecture, dating chiefly from the sixteenth century. Its delicate carvings and lace-work are mostly Gothic, though the towers show the influence of the Renaissance. The streets are more often tortuous and picturesque, lined by ancient timbered houses and quaint corners, bearing evidences of ancient France. The clock-tower, known as the Beffroi d'Evreux, presents a delightful view at the end of one of these quaint and time-worn streets, its simple Norman lines being in severe contrast to the more delicate magnificence of the cathedral.

Much history and many of the great names of Normandy are associated with Evreux, but our space forbids more than a passing word, a look, a glance, at what there is; and

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

then away once more into the heart of the country, to the lovely valley of the river Iton, flowing through the Arrondissement d'Evreux.

Here the objective point was the Château de Condé-sur-Iton, an ancient summer residence of the Bishops of Evreux, situated upon the very banks of the river. Its design suggests, in its high castellated walls and towers, the character of some of the Scotch castles, and may well have inspired some of the architects who built them. It is, like every Norman dwelling, surrounded by picturesque additions of trees and green, softening its harsher outlines and blending the colder walls and expanses of stone with the landscape.

The great round tower near the river must have served in ancient times as a place of watch for the protectors of the bishops during their holiday retreat in this pleasing abode.

Mrs. Wilton liked the château, and was inclined to investigate it within and without, and to wander through the park and grounds, which invited further visits to their hidden mysteries. A delightful afternoon was spent, therefore, in wandering about this charming

Among French Inns

spot and absorbing something of its quality and atmosphere.

The village of Condé, though containing little more than one thousand souls, is one of extreme antiquity, and boasts an age greater than any of its neighbours. It dates, in fact, to the time of the Romans, and was, according to the best authorities, mentioned under the name of Condate in the itinerary of Antonine. Condé is close to Breteuil, and from there an interesting trip may be made to the Château of Beaumesnil, situated midway between Conches and Bernay, one of the towns of the Department of Eure. In this arrondissement are also the Château de Thevray, and farther to the northeast the ruins of Beaumont-le-Roger.

Still farther to the north, and near Brionne, is the Château d'Harcourt, the ancient relic of one of the great houses of France, a name that has rung in the annals of its history, and is synonymous with its valour and esteem. This is a delightful part of Normandy in which to wander, visiting the picturesque monuments that so generously furnish the country with historic interest, and stopping at the simple, primitive places that offer hospitality to the pilgrim.

At the Hotel du Grand Cerf

The road from Condé to Beaumesnil may be taken through one of those beautiful forests that cover France with a constant series of fairylike enchantments, bringing to the mind of the poet the scenes of a "Midsummer Night's Dream," and peopling their shady mysteries with winged forms and dancing elves that charm the senses into dreamland.

The Château de Beaumesnil itself is a high symmetrical construction of pink brick and white stone, rising gracefully from a broad moat and approached by a draw-bridge. Its heavy window-caps and imposing decorations would suggest a town residence rather than a château. It is, however, effective and interesting to look at across the expanse of glasslike water that mirrors its outlines in shadowy semblance of itself, a veritable palace rising out of its watery reflection and surrounded by its park.

The place was built in the reign of Henry IV. by the Seigneur of Beaumesnil, whose house, during the twelfth century, was connected by marriage with that of Harcourt. Beaumesnil was originally a part of the famous domain of Beaumont-le-Roger, whose history is so associated with the events of this

Among French Inns

part of Normandy that it must ever possess an interest to the antiquarian.

Still another place deserves our mention in this region — the ruins of the Abbaye du Bec, near Brionne. They are an equal distance on the north to the Château d'Har-court on the south, from Beaumesnil, and well merit a visit. The great tower of the castle rises out of a cluster of small houses and rears its lofty buttresses above them toward the heavens, its belfry windows showing the evening light that already fills the sky and calls the weary pilgrim home to rest and sleep.

CHAPTER VIII

WITH THE DUCHESS AT TROUVILLE

BERNAY is a picturesque old town in spite of its manufactures, of which it boasts a number, and has many timbered houses and quaint bits of architecture, besides a charming tower which stands in the centre of the picture. We were fortunate in having a view of the Procession de la Fête Dieu at Bernay, one of the great religious festivals of rural France.

From Bernay to Lisieux is only a short ride on the railway line, running from Paris to Caen and Cherbourg, and the party set out for this town on their way to visit the duchess at Trouville. Earlier in the week a cordial invitation, skilfully engineered by Mrs. Wilton, had been received by the latter for the entire party, and had been promptly accepted, even to the unwilling inclusion of Mr. Blodget Wilton himself,

Among French Inns

who had tried to beg off from going, but had not been excused by his wife.

On arriving at Lisieux he became almost petulant, and Mrs. Wilton, being fearful lest he slip through her fingers after all, as he had been known to do on previous occasions, decided to hurry forward to Trouville. A branch line runs through Pont l'Evêque and Honfleur, and the party were soon seated in a special carriage, with the servants and dressing-cases in an adjoining one; and, after a pleasant trip, during which Mr. Wilton was kept continually pleased and amused, the station of Trouville was reached.

Servants of the ducal establishment met our party at the "*gare*" and escorted us to equipages in waiting outside. We were soon driven to the delightful villa of the duchess, situated in exquisite grounds a little inland from the beach and the town. The villa itself was a modern structure, large and commodious in aspect, and surrounded by gardens filled with rare flowering plants arranged in tasteful profusion.

Indeed, though Trouville has little that is historically or architecturally important, it has much that is pleasing and attractive to



CHURCH OF NOTRE DAME, TROUVILLE

With the Duchess at Trouville

the eye. It is a town of villas, chiefly modern and used only in summer. Facing the beach are the rows of restaurants, cafés, and other establishments that are always to be found at a French watering-place.

The twin town, Deauville, is separated from Trouville by the Touques. Three kilometres distant is Touques itself, where William Rufus set out for England after the death of the Conqueror at Rouen. Here there is a charming old Manoir de Meautrix, built in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The ruins of the ancient fortress of Bonneville-sur-Touques arise upon the banks of the river. It dates from the early thirteenth century, and has five round towers remaining from the days of William the Conqueror, who used it as a favourite residence. In the Tour du Serment we are told he received the oath of allegiance from Harold, though it is not certain this was the actual place. The tower is an interesting spot historically, lighted by a window known as the Fenêtre de la Reine Mathilde, presumably on account of its association with the wife of William the Conqueror.

There are three hotels in Trouville which

Among French Inns

it may be well to mention for those travellers who do not chance to know the Duchesse de V—— and the pleasure of her hospitality. They are the Hôtels des Roches Noires, the De Bellevue, and the De Paris. Their representatives meet the visitor at the station with the familiar hotel omnibus of the Continent and urge him to accompany them to their respective establishments.

In the Rue des Rosiers there is an interesting house, No. 5. It was here that Louis Philippe stayed over night at the time he fled from France. What country, within the more recent periods of history, has had so many rulers and pretenders to its throne as fugitives from the anger of its people or exiled from its borders? It would seem that since the Revolution, history has seen a succession of royalty divested of or prevented from assuming its rights.

But we digress from our narrative.

It being the month of August, everything was in the full dress of the season's gaieties, at this gayest of French seaside resorts. Mrs. and Miss Wilton's most wonderful costumes were packed in the trunks which accompanied them, and Mrs. Wilton's most gorgeous jewels were enclosed in the dressing-

With the Duchess at Trouville

case which was jealously guarded by the valet and maid. Even Mr. Wilton was made to spruce himself up to an unusual extent, and as for the count and the Frenchman, we may leave their costumes to the wildest imagination of our readers. The Englishman was always well clad, and made no special difference in his dress for the occasion.

The duchess received her guests with much grace and affability, and tea was immediately served by a number of servants in livery on a fairylike terrace overlooking the gardens and a distant view of the sea. All the taste and refinement of luxury, which are the accompaniments of the great houses of France to-day, lacking often their old political importance but still holding their positions in the world of society, were in evidence.

In these surroundings Mrs. Blodget Wilton positively revelled, and drank in the sweet perfume of their atmosphere with enjoyment made more delicious by her long absence from them in America. Oh, the joy that comes to womanhood with the attainment of such goals of her ambition, the balm that soothes her spirit after the labour and the warfare!

To strive, to conquer, and achieve.

Among French Inns

Who would deny Mrs. Blodget Wilton the motto of her existence, or the flush of happiness accompanying its accomplishment? Who would be so heartless or so bold as to question her right of eminent domain in these regions of the gods, won by her own labours and strengthened by American dollars? She played her part. She paved her way with gold; gold, the glittering, the alluring medium of exchange for all mankind. Europe loves gold, and Europeans love its results, as well as other peoples of other climes. Who shall chide them for it, in the face of every-day existence in America? Mrs. Blodget Wilton knew all this — knew the hearts of men and women of two continents, catered to their wants, and succeeded in her campaign of enjoyment.

Mr. Blodget Wilton, on the contrary, cared not so much as a fig for all this nonsense. He conducted his life on strictly business lines, and had never taken the time to expand his interests to other spheres. Pork and lard were the shrines at which he worshipped. His cohorts were wagons, workmen, and live stock. Their activities were in the slaughter-house and the stock-yard rather than in drawing-rooms and

With the Duchess at Trouville

casinos. The click of the typewriter and the stock-exchange ticker were music to his ears — more satisfying than the melodies of Verdi or the harmonies of Wagner. His battles were fought in Wall Street, not Fifth Avenue, and his triumphs were in the field of finance rather than in society. Who shall deny him his glory, or his title to esteem? Surely not so humble a pen as that which traces this passing history of his exploits.

"Be seated on the sofa; let's take it easy; it's warm," said he to the duchess, while eating a delicate piece of sponge-cake. "My wife looks well, don't she? You have to speak distinctly, though; she's a bit hard of hearing. Grows on her," he added, almost whispering in the duchess's ear, for fear lest his wife should know what he was saying; for he realized the truth of the maxim, that when occasion least suspects, there are none so long-eared as the deaf.

"Madame Wilton is looking very well," said the duchess, a little taken aback by this sortie, though she had had some previous experience of Mr. Wilton's peculiar manners.

"Your daughter has grown prettier than ever," she added with meaning, for the Frenchman had written to her before their

Among French Inns

arrival, and she was already aware which way the wind was blowing.

In a few moments the ladies Wilton retired to their rooms, and the duchess was left alone with the Frenchman.

"Well, *mon ami*, so you love Miss Wilton," said she, without any further prelude. "I saw, without any difficulty, from your letter what you were thinking of. You never could conceal anything, you know."

"Oh, duchess, I am *fou d'amour*, *fou*, *fou*, *fou*!" exclaimed the Frenchman. "But they are so hard to please, these Americans. One never knows what they feel, whether they love or not. Ah, it is different in America from *la France*. There we have to do all the asking, and the parents do nothing. They marry with or without *dots*, just as they feel inclined. It is most perplexing."

"But surely Monsieur Wilton will give his daughter a *dot*," said the duchess. "That I know very well. He has no other children."

The duchess was the greatest match-maker in France, and knew all the fine points of the game. It was even hinted that she had been the cause of more marriages than any other woman in Europe. She did not care a pin

With the Duchess at Trouville

whether they turned out well or not, so long as they were advantageous from a worldly point of view; for the pleasure of making a match was sufficient excitement in itself, and she did not hesitate to launch her protégés upon the sea of matrimony without the necessary time to think the matter over.

“Do they like one another?” she said to the Marquis de St. Suffit, on one occasion. “Do they *like* one another? I am sure I do not know. I never asked them. But you will agree with me that it is an excellent match for both of them, and the wedding is to be at St. Clotilde in April. Of course I made the match. My cousin Antoine is delighted that his son is so well placed.”

Such was the character of the arch-conspirator whom the Frenchman sought out to aid him in his quest for the hand of the lovely Miss Gladys Wilton of Wisconsin and New York. Oh, mothers, you who take your fair innocents to Europe to finish their education, or refine their manners, beware! Look well into the character of those with whom you may allow them to associate. Unsuspecting maidens have before been sacrificed upon the altar of Hymen, for the sole purpose, on the part of their husbands, of

Among French Inns

garnishing again, with the fruits of American labour and industry, the tarnished escutcheon of some noble but dilapidated house. Men there are who will make your daughters happy, and cause the bargain to be a fair one. Others there are, however, who will bring them only misery, sorrow, and despair. Mothers, take heed, for the fathers need little counsel; guard your daughters from the intrigues, the fascinations, and the pitfalls of European life!

The lights glitter. The names are music in the ears. The play is a brilliant and entrancing one. But something lies deeper than the footlights of the theatre, and that is human character. Man is human, and his character is varied. Within these palace walls there are degrees of happiness and life. Daughters of America, pause and consider the consequences of a little word, uttered in the soft light of an arbour, in the conservatory of a villa, in the lane of some lovely retreat! All is seeming love, enchantment, and delight. But the morrow comes and the scene changes. You awake and find the dream a sad reality, too late to retrieve the happiness that might have been yours!

The duchess was a delightful and fascina-

With the Duchess at Trouville

ting woman, at whose shrine all fashionable France bowed in homage. She combined the virtues and most of the vices — but not all — of the French aristocracy. Had it not been for her inveterate love of romance and intrigue, the world about her would have been in every way a happy and desirable one. Still, even this failing had its compensations, and occasionally, in one of her match-making efforts, she aided two lovers who were suited to each other, in whose case marriage and freedom from the tyranny of their parents worked well and happily. For of all the peoples in the world, the French, while good and devoted parents in many respects beyond other nations, can torment and tyrannize over the objects of their solicitude with a success unattained elsewhere.

“Then you really think you love her,” said the duchess to the Frenchman, as she soothed the irritable little barks of her toy terrier, seated on a cushion at her feet.

“Love her?” exclaimed the Frenchman in a fever of excitement; “did I not say I was *fou, fou, fou d’amour*? Duchesse, if you could only lend me your assistance, I am sure she would consent to become my wife.”

Among French Inns

"I do not believe you are really in love with her at all," said the duchess, half-laughingly, and raised a perfumed handkerchief to her face. "You young men are all the same. You spend your last sous over in America, and then come and confide in me, to help you to do what you cannot do for yourselves. You remember it was the same last year, and it all came to nothing. You mean to say that you were with her in the Abbaye de St. Wandrille and did not propose? My dear child, we never shall succeed in arranging a marriage for you if you have no success by yourself. You know these Americans do things differently from ourselves. I never can understand their ways."

"But they take their positions in France with success, duchess," said the Frenchman, and the duchess was obliged to acknowledge that this was true. Still, she seemed to be much too engrossed with her lap-dog to really hold out a serious promise of assistance. Perhaps she had other plans for the fair young American who was her guest for the week at Trouville. Who can tell what there is in the mind of so experienced a woman as the Duchesse de V——?

"Such a touching little life," said she,

With the Duchess at Trouville

adoringly, as she glanced at the bundle of curly hair that composed her lap-dog.

"What do you call him, duchess?" asked Mr. Blodget Wilton, who had just returned to the drawing-room.

"She calls herself 'Mees,'" replied his hostess, reprovingly, stroking the little barking animal, which seemed to care nothing for the affection lavished upon it.

"Oh," said Mr. Blodget Wilton, trying to follow the idea and make some practical use of it, "it's a lady, is it? Miss who?"

"Just 'Mees,' *tout simplement*," replied the duchess, satisfied.

"Oh," said Mr. Wilton, and gave up the attempt to make anything out of such a nonsensical name for such a nonsensical dog, as he afterward remarked to the Englishman, when well out of hearing.

"My nephew," said the duchess to Miss Wilton, who entered at that moment, introducing a small, slight youth, with light yellow mustachios rising nearly to his eyebrows; and the two young people bowed and entered into conversation.

"My aunt says you will be here for the week," said he; "we shall see something of the races, I hope, before you go."

Among French Inns

Miss Wilton looked at the diminutive Comte Raoul de Bréville — for such was the name of the duchess's nephew — with something akin to mirth on her countenance.

"Are the races as early as next week?" she said. "I had no idea they were so soon. But we have been wandering about the country in automobiles, and staying at such queer inns and out-of-the-way places, that I have nearly lost all account of time."

A bell rang, and the company separated to dress for dinner. The duchess's brother-in-law, the Duc de St. Galmier, was of the party. Mrs. Blodget Wilton had the honour of being taken in to dinner by him, and Mr. Blodget Wilton escorted the duchess. The duke was so great a personage that instead of ending his letters in the manner of ordinary mortals, he considered it enough to say, "I feel well. St. Galmier." He never "proffered his distinguished salutations," nor "deposed at the feet" of his correspondents "his most profound sentiments," as did other less elevated members of the French aristocracy. It seemed sufficient, in his estimation of his friends' regard, that the Duc de St. Galmier should feel well. And so

With the Duchess at Trouville

he invariably did feel well, when writing to any one short of a reigning monarch.

"And how is Trouville this year, duc?" said Mrs. Wilton, in her most engaging manner. The duke had to be talked to, amused, and drawn out, like the stops of an organ, and, being the duke that he was, Mrs. Wilton was perfectly willing to work over him and await results; for results invariably followed everything that she really undertook to do.

"Trouville is *gai, bien gai*," replied the duke. "The Casino is crowded. Everybody plays from morning till night. Nobody seems to win, though. Does your husband play piquet?"

Mr. Wilton did play piquet, and his wife determined that he should play with the duke after dinner, and, if necessary, allow him to win the rubber. What cared they? It might make the duke a very useful friend, and was well worth a thousand francs. Such friends as the Duc de St. Galmier were usually powerful and true. And then the duke had an eldest son, a promising member of the Chamber des Députés, and heir to all the châteaux, estates, and honours of the

Among French Inns

great name of his family. Decidedly let him play piquet with Mr. Blodget Wilton.

"What is the latest move in regard to the religious orders in France?" said she, for she was well up in French politics and knew that she could twist the duke around her finger by sympathizing with him on a burning question.

"Ah, you have not seen my letter in the *Gaulois*, then," said the duke, rising immediately to the bait which was held out to him. "I have written, protesting against this exclusion of the congregations. It means they must all leave France. We shall resist the government's policy to the utmost. It is infamous, wicked, atrocious! What can we expect our children to become, if we exclude religion from their lives and prevent the congregations and religious orders from retaining their property? Ah! I do not know what we are coming to," and the Duc de St. Galmier made a tragic gesture, which denoted something of the grandeur of his feelings.

He was the head and front of the Opposition, which was then working up conservative France to a pitch of frenzy over the action of the government in regard to the religious

With the Duchess at Trouville

orders. It was said that, incited by the general outcry on the part of the old régime, the nuns of a certain convent had barricaded the doors, and caused no end of trouble to the authorities who were charged with the duty of carrying out the provisions of the new law.

The duchess was an ally of her brother-in-law. She soon took up the trend of the conversation and delivered herself of a number of ducal sentiments, as decided as they were violent in their tone.

"I am glad you feel as you do, madame," said she to Mrs. Wilton. "It is a terrible calamity, a terrible calamity to France. I do not know what we are coming to," and the duchess consoled herself with the remains of a *soufflé*.

"And so you have been staying at the inns since you landed in Normandy," said the duchess to Mr. Wilton, who was feeling much bored, and did not care a button for the religious congregations, or whether they stayed or went. His eyes were wandering down the beautiful table to the figure of his daughter, seated between two Frenchmen, bending over her in fascinated conversation, vying with each other for her replies and

Among French Inns

the favour of her attention. Mr. Wilton sat there, thinking of the probable future of his only child, this daughter whom he loved more than his millions; and for the moment he hardly heard the duchess's remark.

"Oh, the inns, yes, nice old places, yes," said he, absently. "You see, duchess, it's just this way. I don't like automobiles and really I've no business to be in Europe, anyway. My proper place is at home, looking after my affairs. But the Mrs.," — and with this he pointed jocosely with one of his thumbs in the direction of his wife, — "she will have it that I need a vacation. So here I've been, dumped down at any old place in France they take it into their heads to visit."

The duchess looked at him in amazement.

"We must have a little music," she said, as she gave the signal to rise and return to the drawing-room.

"Mademoiselle Gladys sings, does she not?" continued the duchess; and Miss Gladys very obligingly sang several pretty songs, accompanied by Count Raoul de Bréville. The duchess liked her voice, and seemed pleased that she sang with her nephew. Judging from her manner, there were other plans in the duchess's fertile



A FARM NEAR TROUVILLE

With the Duchess at Trouville

brain than the arrangement of a match between the Frenchman and the object of his affection.

"It would be nice if you would sing a duet with Conte di Pomponi," said the duchess; but Miss Wilton was a little hoarse, and had forgotten her duets, we fear purposely, having heard the count sing on a previous occasion.

The following day was occupied with visits to the beach and the neighbouring places, with calls and entertainments of various kinds, which delighted Mrs. Wilton, and gave Count Romeo an opportunity to dress himself in flamboyant attire, and to circulate freely among the ladies.

Trouville has been a place of fashion since 1825. Its familiarity with the world which now frequents it may be said to have originated with the sea pictures painted by the artist Mozin about that time. Now it is the scene of wild gaiety during August, and almost deserted at other times of the year. The beach is one of its features, with beautifully dressed women sitting upon the sands, or promenading upon the walk, with bands of music, with bathers, and the familiar bathing-machines of France.

Among French Inns

There is a charming château, dating from the time of Louis XIII., near the forest of Touques, about fifteen kilometres from Trouville, and this the duchess and some of the party at the villa visited. It is known as the Château d'Hébertot, and well repaid them for their visit and the fatigue of the long drive, — for the duchess would not hear of an automobile!

On another day we were taken to the Château de Lassay, which is now in ruins, but which is pregnant with interest and associations of La Grande Mademoiselle, for whose arrival it was built by the famous Marquis de Lassay of that time, and which must have pleased her fastidious taste, if we may judge by accounts of its former beauty. Indeed, in those days the great nobles of France thought nothing of adding a whole wing to their châteaux, or building a new one, as in this case, for the reception — sometimes for a night only — of their sovereign or a member of his family.

Probably no greater extravagance or luxury in building has existed than among the French in the days of their monarchical splendour, save with the Romans in the days of their magnificent emperors. Such châ-

With the Duchess at Trouville

teaux as Versailles, Compiègne, Chantilly, and others remain, to tell us of what was done in the periods dating from François I. to Louis XVI., and bear witness to the truth of our assertion.

The third day of the visit was one of the days of the races, and the duchess's party went forth to attend this function, in all its glory. That France is a sporting nation may no longer be gainsaid. Since she has taken up the time-honoured sport of horse-racing she has developed it to its greatest extent. Her courses are some of the finest and most beautiful in the world. Her horses and riders are in the front rank, and her show of beauty and dresses in the favoured enclosures beyond any similar accumulations of wealth in the world.

But what shall we say of the interest that is taken in sport by the great mass of the people themselves? On a holiday every family that can afford the outing, goes to *les courses*, armed with their savings, which they risk on their favourite horse; for the pleasure and excitement of gambling is ingrained in the French nature, and the last sou goes to the betting booth, in voluntary offering to the god of chance.

Among French Inns

Les courses! Who shall adequately describe the scene, in Paris or elsewhere, the crowds that gather in the sunlight of a holiday at Longchamps or Auteuil? Whither flies this army of carriages, from the coach and four to the meanest fiacre that rolls along the Bois de Boulogne? To *les courses!* *Allez, cocher!* It is the hour of *les courses*. Fortunes are lost and won. Jockeys are injured. The game goes on. The spirit of fatality underlying the sport has little effect. To *les courses*, and haste, lest we be too late!

The races at Trouville are the climax of the season there, and all the world goes to them, in its fairest attire, and attended by all that France possesses which is most brilliant in Vanity Fair. It so happened that Miss Gladys Wilton was driven to the course by Comte Raoul de Bréville in a very pretty dog-cart (which had been waiting in the duchess's stable for just this occasion). Seated beside her escort, she looked a picture of beauty, and, of course, her other suitors were jealous, unutterably jealous; but that made little difference, for it was so arranged in the disposition of the guests that they were to escort the other ladies of the party. Mrs.

With the Duchess at Trouville

Wilton went with the Duc de St. Galmier (who had won his rubber at piquet the night before), and was in a most amiable frame of mind.

The day was a beautiful one, and the races everything that could be desired, under the circumstances. They were not Paris, of course, nor was the Trouville course the Bois de Bologne; but Auteuil is closed in August, and fashionable France disports itself at the seashore or in its châteaux dotted about this beautiful country.

Mrs. Blodget Wilton enjoyed herself exceedingly. She made distinct headway with the duke, who invited her to stay at his château for the shooting season in October. In the late afternoon every one returned to the villa for tea—every one but the Comte Raoul and the fair Miss Gladys.

“Where the deuce is Gladys?” asked Mr. Wilton, as time wore on.

“Oh, my nephew has probably taken her for a little drive,” said the duchess, unconcernedly; but Mr. Blodget Wilton had heard of these little drives before, and did not feel entirely easy in his mind. This uneasiness grew upon him as dinner-time approached and no daughter appeared. At

Among French Inns

home he would have thought nothing of it, but here it was different. He mistrusted foreigners in general, and the Comte Raoul de Bréville in particular.

He fumed with annoyance while the rest of the party amused themselves in their own way, and finally appeared for dinner. Then even Mrs. Blodget Wilton began to wonder what had happened to her daughter. The Count Raoul, though the nephew of the duchess, was almost a stranger, and it was not pleasant to think that an accident might have occurred, and that they had been stranded alone in the country near Trouville; and after the races, too, with all sorts of strange people wandering about—alone with a foreigner after dark, and in France! Mrs. Wilton was not at her ease, and was unable to be as attentive to the Duc de St. Galmier as she would have wished. There was a sense of impending evil hanging over the dinner, and Mr. Wilton clearly showed his annoyance by his expression.

The duchess alone was unconcerned, and seemed to think of the matter as an everyday occurrence. Still, the soup, the fish, the entrées, and finally the entire dinner went by, and no Gladys, and no Comte Raoul!

With the Duchess at Trouville

"*C'est drôle, pourtant,*" said the duchess finally.

Mr. Blodget Wilton thought it was anything but droll, but succeeded in containing himself with a good deal of difficulty and considerable self-control. Finally the company left the table, and coffee and liqueurs appeared on the terrace. The evening was a beautiful one, but there was no moon (and it must have been very dark on the country roads and hedge-lined lanes at that hour.)

"I cannot help feeling that they must have had an accident," said Mrs. Wilton.

The Count Romeo di Pomponi was thoroughly worked up over the disappearance, and was much flustered at the occurrence. Where could they be? What could have happened? He was for instituting a searching-party in automobiles. All sorts of ideas flew through his romantic brain, and filled him with a wild desire to rush forth into the night in pursuit of Comte Raoul de Bréville and in deliverance of his fair one. What if she did not reciprocate his passion! Was not love in itself strong enough for any sacrifice short of actual death? And then, to save her from a possible danger would be at once to make himself a hero, and as such,

Among French Inns

entitled to her consideration and esteem, perhaps her love, who could tell?

In the midst of these deliberations voices were heard in the hall, and in another minute the fair Gladys herself appeared in the doorway, and behind her Comte Raoul de Bréville.

"Well, at last!" we all exclaimed in a chorus of voices.

"Why, Gladys, where have you been? We really were getting anxious," said Mrs. Wilton, much relieved to see her alive and well.

"Give me a kiss, my little girl. Are you all right?" said her father, and sat down to light a cigar, now that he saw she was safe and sound.

"But what did happen? Was there an accident?" said every one at once, and in great excitement.

Miss Wilton looked serious, and the Comte Raoul rather frightened.

"Yes, there was an accident," said he. "There was something the matter with one of the wheels of the carriage, and we had to walk most of the way home."

"Oh!" said every one, much concerned; and the Comte Raoul proceeded, hastily, to go into further details. But Miss Wilton

With the Duchess at Trouville

complained that she was tired, and retired almost immediately to her room, followed by her mother.

"Mamma," said she, "you must make some excuse to the duchess, and either take me away, or let me go away with papa to-morrow. I do not feel that I care to see Comte Raoul de Bréville again."

"Why, my dear, do you mean what you say? What has happened? Consider how very awkward it would be," said Mrs. Wilton, in one breath and much agitated.

"Something has occurred, mamma, which was not agreeable to me at all, and I am sure you would not wish me to stay any longer. I am sure papa would not wish it, either."

Mrs. Wilton knew that her daughter was probably right, and, knowing her temperament, wisely desisted from going into any further details; so she proceeded to give orders to have her daughter's clothes packed, and then sat down to think the matter over. It would be very awkward, not to say impossible, for the whole Wilton family to leave the duchess's roof suddenly on the morrow. The consequence of such a step would be too serious to Mrs. Wilton's care-

Among French Inns

fully guarded position in France, for her to entertain the thought for a moment. So she decided to send Gladys away with her father. His excuse would be business, and her daughter's, an indisposition, subsequent to the accident which Comte Raoul had described with so much detail, but which Mrs. Blodget Wilton knew in her own heart to have been either a myth or a carefully planned incident in a definitely arranged programme on the part of the duchess and her nephew.

So it was decided, and the following day Mr. Blodget Wilton and his daughter departed from Trouville — ostensibly for Paris but in reality for the Department of Orne in Southern Normandy. With them went also the American historian of these pages. The duchess was *désolée* to have them go, and, indeed, seemed a little disconcerted at losing them, but hoped to see them again. They must come back and stay at Trouville, or at the Hôtel de Guillaume le Conquérant at Dives, when they could all meet for *déjeuner*. They must come. They would come.

That something had occurred was evident to the mind of every member of the house party of the Duchesse de V——'s villa the

With the Duchess at Trouville

following day. But what that something was no one was able to discover from any word or deed on the part of those who knew what the occurrence had been. Nobody ever has been able to find out to this day, and probably no one ever will know, if they should live to be a hundred years old.

The duchess and Mrs. Wilton were as silent as the grave. The Duc de St. Galmier tried to find out that something, but failed absolutely. The Comte Raoul de Bréville said there had been an accident to the left wheel, but when the Count Romeo di Pomponi and the Frenchman visited the stables to inspect the vehicle, having crept there quite by accident at different times when no one knew what they were about, they were informed that it had gone to be repaired. Presumably its owner had given orders that it should not be shown to any one, not even to the duchess herself. So the matter rested there, and it was tacitly accepted by every one concerned that something had occurred which they could not find out, and that that something must for ever remain a secret, an unravelled mystery, too deep even for the subtle wit of the Frenchman to discover.

Mrs. Wilton, it must be said, behaved with

Among French Inns

rare tact and discretion all through the trying period which followed the departure of her husband and daughter. She acted, indeed, just as if nothing had occurred, and even went so far as to play piquet with both the duke and the duchess once in the afternoon and once in the evening, losing a thousand or two francs each time, but winning back a few hundred from the duchess on the last day of her visit, just to show that she could play the game when she wished to.

She made herself so indispensable to every one present, that Trouville felt it really needed Mrs. Blodget Wilton to make itself enjoy the season's pleasures to the utmost. Before leaving, she gave a grand dinner at one of the most expensive restaurants, which was attended by several dukes and duchesses, by three princes, and many notabilities in all branches of life. The diamonds sparkled. The conversation was brilliant. Fruits and flowers out of season embellished the table. A whole suite of apartments was reserved for the guests, and rare dishes containing priceless foods delighted their appetites and their souls.

Mrs. Blodget Wilton's dinner became one of the incidents of the season that year.

With the Duchess at Trouville

The dinner was talked of. Mrs. Wilton was talked of.

The count and the Frenchman were as much in the dark and as anxious to find out what had occurred as any one. Something had happened; one could depend on that. Did Raoul de Bréville propose, or did he not? Or was it something else? They had not, of course, been enlightened in any way. Why should they? The count was most injudicious, and always told everything to everybody as soon as he heard it. If he had known the smallest detail, all Trouville would have been the wiser within twelve hours. Every one heard how they had gone to the stables to see the injured dog-cart, and found it hidden away. Every place where it could have been sent for repairs in Trouville was hastily searched, but nobody ever found it, and nobody ever saw the broken wheel, or knew whether it had been really broken at all.

What *was* it that Raoul de Bréville had done, and that Miss Gladys Wilton had not done, on the now famous evening of the return from the races in the dog-cart? Anybody coming to Trouville at this time would have found society divided up into an im-

Among French Inns

promptu detective agency, with old Made-moiselle de Rossignol, who had known all the *somethings* that had occurred at Trouville for twenty years, as the *chef de bureau*.

The strangest part of it all was the indifference which the Englishman displayed toward the affair. He did not seem to take in the situation at all. Could it have been that — But no; that would have been impossible. Every one knew that it would have been impossible. He was with the duchess and the count and the Frenchman all the time before and after the races.

Still, it was very strange that he always changed the subject when it was brought up before him, and seemed indifferent to the whole question. The English are so reserved it is impossible to get them to disclose anything of this nature.

Suddenly the Frenchman disappeared, and no one knew where he had gone. It was said that he had gone to La Sarthe, but there was no evidence to that effect, and he might have dropped through the centre of the earth, for all that any one knew of his whereabouts. He had never left Trouville so early in the season before. There *must* be some reason.

Soon after this there came another sudden

With the Duchess at Trouville

surprise. It was announced one lovely morning in the month of August that Mr. Blodget Wilton, his daughter, the Frenchman, and the American, were all staying at the famous old Hôtel de Guillaume le Conquérant at Dives. Wonders would never cease.

It was not long before all Trouville had heard the news, and had thrown itself into the wildest delirium of excitement. Gossip had reached the fever point, and nothing could hold back the people now. Steam and electricity, horses, carriages, every mode of conveyance at hand bore Trouville to the Hôtel de Guillaume le Conquérant, at Dives. Never has so much business been done there as that season. The hosts were submerged with guests and the place became a centre of excursions from Trouville and its surroundings.

Could it be wondered at? When an incident as mysterious and interesting as the something which had occurred at Trouville actually does occur, and when the heroine is a beautiful girl, the heiress to countless millions, safely stowed away in a great American business, and in the most conservative of American securities, is it to be wondered at that society takes an interest and

Among French Inns

desires to be enlightened? Society would not be human if it sat by and did not.

No one was more rejoiced to learn of the arrival of Mr. and Miss Wilton than Count Romeo di Pomponi. The weeks that they had been away were like months to him. Life without the delightful presence of the fair Miss Gladys, even though she loved him not, seemed but an idle affair, lacking all the joy and brightness of living. For though his appearance was not romantic, still his soul was youthful and ardent. Count Romeo delighted to think of love as something coming from the gods, a heavenly possession, and he saw no reason for concealing it, having never concealed anything in his life, and being then nearly fifty years of age.

Be it said, however, in defence of his character, that no matter how often he might be touched by the tender passion, nor how fleeting might be its stay, it left behind it a pleasant aftermath of friendship or friendly feeling. His desire was to serve and to make happy his present or his past divinities. He would travel miles to see them, send flowers, cards, missives of every sort, on all occasions, spend his last sou in their enter-

With the Duchess at Trouville

tainment, and remain faithful in his attentions long after the fierce storm of love had spent itself, and left only a kindly sentiment behind it.

In this way he made many real friends, for, besides the ladies themselves, there were frequently their mothers, fathers, and families, as well as the various other confidants whom he sought on these occasions. On this occasion he had poured out his heart to the Frenchman, who, of course, had listened to every word, and retained his own opinions in regard to the romance. And so it happened that the count also went to the Hôtel de Guillaume le Conquérant.

But the historian is digressing a little from his narrative, and must ask his readers to go back with him to the weeks previous, and to follow Mr. Wilton and his daughter in that little excursion which they took so suddenly into the Department of Orne in Southern Normandy, and visit with them some of the interesting places which they saw by themselves, and with one or two other friends whom they chanced to meet on their way.

We shall then be prepared to take up in detail some of the events which clustered around the occupants of the hotel at Dives,

Among French Inns

and observe whether or not Mademoiselle de Rossignol and the rest of the gossips learned anything in regard to what had occurred at Trouville.

CHAPTER IX

IN AND OUT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ORNE

WHEN Mr. Wilton and his daughter left the duchess's villa, they had no very settled plan of action. As we drove to the station, Gladys suggested our going to Chartres, but we finally ended by taking the train to Argentan. As we continued, however, the idea of going a little farther afield grew upon us. We changed cars at the latter place, and took a lovely journey through the Department of Orne (by way of St. Gaubourge, Laigle, and Verneuil), to Dreux.

Verneuil is a quaint old place containing the remains of a fortified castle, built by Henry I. and Henry II. "La Tour Grise" is the only tower that is left of the château. There are several churches and picturesque houses that well repay a visit. Laigle possesses a château associated with the name of William Rufus. The town itself is famous as having been the first to experience a veri-

Among French Inns

table shower of stones, which are reported to have fallen in the year 1830.

On arriving at Dreux the three travellers were driven to the Hôtel du Paradis, which they found very comfortable, and where they were glad to rest after their journey across country (usually tedious and slow at best), and there to recover from the events of the last twenty-four hours. During the day Gladys had hardly referred to the incident at Trouville the evening before. She knew her father's prejudice against foreigners, and was aware that the less said about them the better.

"Gladys," he had once said, "I hope when you do marry that you will marry an American. It is much better to do so than to waste your life on one of these foreigners, who are only after your money, and do not know what it means to give a true, unselfish love to a woman. You deserve to be happy, and I have seen too much unhappiness resulting from foreign marriages to make me believe in them. Think of me, my dear, when you are tempted to do anything of the kind, and try to resist the temptation for my sake."

Gladys often thought of her father's re-

The Department of Orne

quest, and it produced, perhaps, a greater influence on her actions than anything he had ever said to her.

"I could never marry a man unless I loved him, papa," she had replied, "and I hope, for your sake, that I shall love an American."

Mr. Blodget Wilton knew her mother's ambitions, and the influence which hereditary tastes play in the lives of young people. He was vexed, very vexed, at what had occurred at Trouville, but he said nothing during the journey, feeling sure that he had no cause to be angry with Gladys. In her all the better side of his nature was centred. His love was true and sincere. He wished her to have all that the world could give her, which he had not, and never could have, — taste, refinement, culture; and, first of all, happiness.

It was a real satisfaction for him to be with her for a little, with only their American friend the historian in the party, and to enjoy her sweet nature in peace and comfort, without the interference of others, for whom he cared little or nothing. It was pleasant to see the gentleness of this rough diamond in his relations with his daughter,

Among French Inns

this man whose life was given up to the accumulation of wealth, and spent in the daily fight for millions, in the destruction of others less shrewd than himself, and in the hard-hearted turmoil of the every-day battles of business.

"How much pleasanter this is than Trouville, papa," said Gladys, one day, as we were on our way to visit the beautiful Church of St. Pierre.

"I am glad you enjoy being with your old father, dear," he replied. "I was afraid you would find it rather dull without all your other friends. By the way, I have received word from your mother that she has decided to stay on with the duchess at Trouville for another week. So we may as well wander about for a little, and, if you like, go to Maintenon and Chartres. They are a little out of our way, but we can return at any time, if we feel like it."

So we stayed on a few days longer at the Hôtel du Paradis, and wandered in and out of the churches and other places of interest at Dreux. The town is an ancient and delightful one, and legend has it that it dates back far through the ages, even to the time of Agrippa. The old clock-tower is



HÔTEL DE VILLE, DREUX

The Department of Orne

interesting and beautiful, and the Hôtel de Ville, which is one of the architectural features of the town, is of the Renaissance. But it is as a sepulchre for the Orleans family that Dreux has its chief interest, and as we mount the hill at the end of the principal street, we may see the chapel built by the Dowager Duchesse d'Orleans, in 1813. In this sanctuary repose the bones of the departed members of this royal family, visited by the living only when another is to be added to that sanctified and silent company. Dreux has its elegiac side as well as its charm for the visitor, and serves to bring to him thoughts of a more serious and peaceful nature than are commonly to be met with in this portion of France.

From Dreux our friends journeyed to Maintenon, with its charming château, around which cluster traditions and history. The station is about a mile from the town, and it is a pretty drive to the Hôtel St. Pierre. The town is situated on the river Eure, though, like Dreux and Chartres, it is in the Department of Eure et Loire, and not in Normandy. The entrance to the château is near the bridge over the river, and is adorned with the arms of Jean Cottereau,

Among French Inns

who built it. He was the royal treasurer during the reigns of Louis XI. and François I. Louis XIV. bought the château in 1685 from its owner the Marquis de Viller-nay, and gave it to Françoise d'Aubigné, whom he had secretly married.

It is thus that this interesting place became the abode of the famous Madame de Maintenon, and associated with her and the history of her times. It was she who, stronger than the mistresses who had hitherto held the fancy of the fastidious Louis XIV., refused his gallantries until he should have made her his wife.

Every phase of this intensely interesting period of the court life of France comes back to the visitor who treads the stones that still retain the glory of the Château de Maintenon. It savours of beauty and romance, of days when the spirit of monarchy and magnificence prevailed. It brings us nearer to the character of Madame de Maintenon herself, and the influence which she exerted over Louis XIV., than does Versailles. There is here, something more intimate and personal, which brings her individuality vividly to view, and shows the true associations of her home.



CHÂTEAU DE MAINTENON

The Department of Orne

At her death she bequeathed the château, made historic through her possession of it, to her nephew by marriage, the Duc de Noailles. It has since been owned by successive bearers of this distinguished title, and is to-day courteously opened to the pilgrims that visit this shrine of royal favour.

The château itself is of the fifteenth century, and has been considerably restored from time to time, but it is both picturesque and beautiful to behold, covered with delicate carving, and ornamented windows rising against the roof. In some respects it is not unlike the Louis XII. wing of the Château de Blois, being in a similar style of architecture. Strangers are allowed to visit the buildings, looking like stables or *dépendances*, on the left of the courtyard, but which in reality contain a superb gallery of pictures. Here the ancestors of the present Duc de Noailles look down from their ornamented surroundings upon those who pay them homage.

In the château itself are the bedroom and dining-room which were used by Madame de Maintenon. Here we are shown her portrait by Mignard, full of force and interest, and portraying those features so familiar

Among French Inns

to history. Near it is the sedan-chair used by her during her residence at Maintenon.

The gardens near the château are delightful examples of the art of Lenôtre, who laid them out. The French gardens have an atmosphere and beauty all their own. They possess lovely statues of white marble, parterres and tunnels of green, profusions of flowers and straight, formal lines, though less shaded by trees and shrubs than those of Italy or England.

Mr. Wilton and his daughter were delighted with what they saw at Maintenon, and enjoyed a drive in the park, where they found the Avenue Racine, named after the poet, who made long visits to this delightful abode. Indeed, to Racine the charm of Maintenon was both a pleasure and an inspiration, and from it he drew thoughts which appear in his tragedies of "Esther" and "Athalie," composed for the young ladies of St. Cyr.

One of the features of the park at Maintenon is the ruin of the great aqueduct built by Louis XIV. for the purpose of bringing the water from the river Eure to Versailles, used in the famous fountains known as "Les Grands Eaux."

The Department of Orne

It chanced at Maintenon that Mr. Wilton and his daughter met two old friends, who added considerably to the pleasure of their visit. As we are likely to see something more of them, we may as well disclose their names in this history. They were Mr. George Van Cortland and his sister Mary. They were both good-looking, well bred, and members of an old New York family. They had left their father and mother at Aix-les-Bains, and were taking a pleasure-trip together.

They were well known to the Wiltons and the American, and Gladys was delighted to see them.

"Why, Mary, where did you come from?" said Gladys. "Think of our meeting here! It is most amusing. I had no idea that you were abroad, George. How well George is looking since his illness! I should never know that you had had typhoid fever, George." And Gladys gave a little laugh, which brought the colour to her cheek, and made her look like a young goddess descended to the park of Maintenon from some region above the earth. At least George thought so as he looked at her in the sunlight.

Among French Inns

"Where are you going, when you leave here?" asked Mary, after the four had exchanged greetings and recovered from their unexpected meeting.

"We are going on to Chartres in a day or two," said Mr. Wilton. "Why don't you come along with us? We could make a very jolly little party, couldn't we?" he added, turning to his daughter.

"Oh, yes, do come," said Gladys. "It would be so nice to have you both, and then we can go back to Argentan together."

"Shall we, George?" said Mary.

"I see no reason why we should not," said George. "I think it would be delightful."

Mr. Wilton liked George Van Cortland. He was the kind of young man that he approved of. The family to which he belonged was regarded by Mr. Wilton as one of the best that there was in America, and he venerated the best there was in America, much more than the best there was in Europe. George was athletic, well built, and handsome. He was thoroughly strenuous, and as clean in character as he was well made in physique.

Mr. Wilton liked this kind of young man, and then George was a member of the firm

The Department of Orne

of Van Cortland and Company, bankers, Wall Street, and a very active young member at that. Mr. Wilton did business with this firm, and liked their junior partner. He was genuinely glad to see him, and to have him and his sister as travelling companions.

They set out from Maintenon the next day, and journeyed together to Chartres. Mr. Wilton talked stocks with George, who was abroad on a short vacation, and the rest of the party had plenty to chat about. They were taken up with Paris fashions and private gossip most of the time, and it was not long before they arrived at the station at Chartres.

Maintenon is to the northeast, in the country of Epernon and Rambouillet, where the President of the Republic has an official residence, with shooting-preserves. It is an attractive part of France, different in character from Normandy, and filled with interesting places and associations. The towers of its magnificent cathedral dominate Chartres from the far distant view. The railway line from Le Mans to Paris passes over a broad plain before reaching the town, and the towers appear at first like tiny specks upon the horizon, and grow larger as we approach, rising finally to their actual height.

Among French Inns

We have reason to remember the impression which is to be received from this distant view of the cathedral of Chartres, from many journeys over this wind-swept plain, in strong contrast with the domestic hills and rolling scenery of Orne or Seine Inférieure. It possesses a grandeur and eloquence in keeping with so great a monument to the Almighty.

At Chartres we were driven to the Hôtel du Duc de Chartres, appropriately named after a member of the royal family of France who bears this title. It so happened, that with our friends arrived a travelling circus, which pitched its tents in close proximity to the windows of the hotel, in every other way desirable.

In the middle of the night the ladies were aroused by a fearful uproar and shouting. Mr. Wilton was aroused. Gladys was aroused. All the occupants of the Hôtel du Duc de Chartres were aroused. Mr. Wilton hurried to his daughter's room, clothed in light attire, to see if anything were wrong. The hall was filled with frightened guests.

"Oh, monsieur!" said one of the men servants, who was on his return from the lower regions, "Oh, monsieur! Lock your-

The Department of Orne

self into your room. It is not safe to be up. One of the lions of the travelling circus has got loose. He is hungry, and for all we know, may have eaten up a little girl."

Why the man should imagine that the hungry lion might have eaten up a little girl at that hour of the night, Mr. Blodget Wilton did not know, nor did George, whom he met in the hallway, know either; so, after assuring themselves that the ladies were safe, they returned to their own rooms to see the fun.

Below the window a fearful racket and hubbub was taking place. Terrified Gauls were rushing wildly about, calling upon the saints to save them, and endeavouring to escape from the lion, and to catch him, all at the same time. Some were carrying lassoes, others guns. One had even armed himself with a long carving-knife, with which he hoped to pierce to the heart the angry king of beasts. All, be it said, were in a complete state of panic, and no one knew exactly where the lion was at the moment when our friends looked out of their windows.

Finally one of the keepers succeeded in caging the wild animal in his rightful abode, and the people came forth once more, first in fear and trembling, then courageously, at

Among French Inns

last with assurance and relief. They gathered about the cage and poked the lion through the bars, while he, fatigued with his excursion to the town, contented himself with growling and showing his teeth whilst pacing up and down the limited area allotted to him. To show his anger at being thus confined, he and his brethren of the circus roared all night, to the distraction of Mr. Wilton and the other guests of the hotel, who were vainly endeavouring to snatch forty winks before daylight.

"I can't stand this," said Mr. Wilton the next morning. "Either that circus must leave town, or I do. How much will you take to get out?" said he, later in the day through an interpreter, to the manager of the circus. The manager named a certain sum.

"Too large," said Mr. Wilton, whose instinct always led him to negotiate for things under the market price. "I'll give you so much," he added, naming a figure which was large enough to make the manager open his eyes. "It is a rainy day, and your show isn't worth nearly as much to you as the sum I have offered, with your seating capacity," and Mr. Wilton emphasized his

The Department of Orne

remark by slapping his cheque-book down on the table.

The manager, perceiving the truth of the argument, decided to accept, and having been duly informed of the greatness of Mr. Wilton's fortune and power, the bargain was struck, and the circus left town that very morning, to the astonishment and relief of the citizens of Chartres.

Mr. Wilton became at once the object of public curiosity and concern. The local paper published an article. The inhabitants talked of nothing else. The man in the street knew of "*ce Monsieur Wilton*" and his wonderful power of gold. He had bought up the entire circus, some said, and given it as a present to the President of the Republic. Was there anything these rich Americans would not do? They were more remarkable than the "*Lor's Anglais*," who would come sometimes and take every room in the hotel. Mr. Wilton was a hero, *pro tem.*, and the idol of the Hôtel du Duc de Chartres. The mayor called upon him, and invited him to attend a banquet and subscribe to a number of local charities. Mr. Wilton, nothing loath, subscribed, and became in a

Among French Inns

few days little short of a dictator in the affairs of Chartres.

But we digress from our narrative. The cathedral, of course, dominates the town. We will forego a description of this magnificent religious monument, for so familiar is it to the world at large that any further mention here would be superfluous. It is rightly considered by many to be the most beautiful cathedral in existence. Gladys and the Van Cortlands spent ideal days in wandering through its interior and beneath its noble vaultings.

"It is wonderfully impressive," said Gladys.

"I think I like it better than any church I have been in," said George, looking at Gladys as she smiled. Somehow Gladys had never seemed to smile in just that way before.

"I cannot tell you how nice it is to be with Americans again," said she; "you are so different from the foreigners, George. Somehow I never feel that they are sincere when they speak, and when *we* are talking we always understand just what the other feels, and we know that it is real. Still, they are fascinating, are they not, Mary?"

"They certainly are," replied Mary; "but



FIFTEENTH CENTURY HOUSE, CHARTRES

The Department of Orne

good gracious, Gladys, fancy marrying one of them!"

"Let us go and see the Maison de Loëns," said Gladys, turning the conversation to another topic. "It is the old chapter-house, I believe." So they visited it, and found it a most interesting place, full of the atmosphere that pervades the sanctified life of the cathedral.

Gladys seemed to enjoy being with George Van Cortland, and Mr. Wilton observed with pleasure their conversation and companionship. He took occasion to enlarge upon George's fine characteristics that evening, and to say how much he liked him.

There is an interesting Hôtel de Ville at Chartres, in which there is a museum. George and Gladys visited it one afternoon together. As they passed through some of the streets on their expedition, they found a number of delightful houses of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that brought back all the mediæval character which the more modern buildings served to do away with.

"Do you remember, Gladys, how we used to play in Central Park as children?" said George. "I do not think we have really been to walk alone together since."

Among French Inns

"Why, that is true, I do not think we have," said Gladys, softly; and George felt that he had not realized before how much he had missed by not making better use of his opportunities.

"How did you enjoy your winter last year in New York?" he asked.

"Oh, very much," answered his companion. "But you know I had really been out in France before. It was hardly a novelty. But I missed you at the dances, George. We felt so sorry that you were ill all winter. You look wonderfully strong now, however. I cannot realize that we were ever anxious about you."

Gladys looked shyly up at the face of her stalwart escort, and he looked down into hers, and a thrill passed through his frame akin to ecstasy. Was it that love possessed his soul in a moment, after years of simple, friendly acquaintance with Gladys Wilton? It is difficult for us to say, it was so strange and sudden a sensation.

These moments come to men unexpectedly, and take them so unawares that it is not possible to pause and analyze the thought which holds them spellbound and enslaves their being in a holy rapture, lifting them

The Department of Orne

from the common light of day into the atmosphere of heaven. For love cometh from heaven, and is a gift of the gods. And suddenly life is changed into a miracle of joy.

Thus, in the magic air of sunny France, fanned by the soft winds that blow over its plains and forests and its ornamented shrines of God, did George Van Cortland realize that he loved this friend of early childhood. In the charmed atmosphere of love, unheralded, unsought, untold, he was at first as one intoxicated with unreasonable joy.

And Gladys? What was the meaning of those laughing eyes, the flashes of excitement, the colour rising to her face? It might be merely the tenderness of old acquaintance. A woman's heart is not so easy to discern. She shields her holier thoughts behind a cloak of maidenly concern, and holds him at a distance who would approach too swiftly. So it seemed wise to George to wait, and, if possible, control his natural desire to speak out, and learn what fate decreed should be his rightful end.

That they saw little of the musée and the Hôtel de Ville at Chartres, may scarcely be

Among French Inns

wondered at by those who know the secret in the hearts of these two lovers.

The following day the party of five left Chartres and took the train to Nogent, on the southeastern boundary of Normandy. Reëntering it, they passed on to Mortagne and thence to Alençon, the capital of the Department of Orne. There is a forest to the east of Mortagne, south of which is the Château de la Veve. The monastery of La Grande Trappe is also in this region, and well merits a visit. The town of Alençon is on the southern boundary of Orne, at about its centre. The best hotel is, need we say, the Hôtel du Grand Cerf, a very comfortable place to stay in. The town is historically interesting, having been taken by William the Conqueror as early as 1296. It was here that the famous incident occurred, in which the defenders beat their skins and leather garments against the walls of the town, crying, "Hides, hides for the tanner!" The Conqueror never forgave this insult to his birth, and swore "by the splendour of God" to be avenged upon the defenders. We may well imagine the punishment which was meted out to them when he took possession of their stronghold.

The Department of Orne

We find this region as rich in old traditions and legendary lore, as are those parts which we have already visited in architecture. The latter seems to bear an odd resemblance, in its character, to the country itself. There are in both the most active, the most sudden variations. At one moment we are on an arid plain, swept by the wind and dust and surrounded by brown fields. At the next, we are in a fertile valley. At one place a church appears, so overloaded with flamboyant or Renaissance ornamentation that it seems scarcely able to stand beneath its weight of riches. At the next we come upon an abbey or a château of Norman architecture, so bare of decoration that it seems desolate and dull.

These contrasts were hardly noticed by George Van Cortland during the trip from Chartres to Alençon. He was too engrossed in the revelation of love to his soul, to think of anything but its effect upon himself and the object of his passion. He realized, indeed, for the first time in his life, that he possessed a soul, and what the soul may be when once it has been touched by love.

There was, however, little chance for him to learn whether Gladys realized also the

Among French Inns

deep feeling which had so suddenly taken possession of him, and made him half-man, half-slave to this young girl, whom he had never regarded in any other light than as a passing friend. But yet how soon doth love replace the brotherly regard, and make the selfsame object hold us, in desire to obtain the heart of her who now becomes the idol of our life! How often have men scoffed at Love, and laughed away his subtle arts, and then cried out for mercy when once wounded by his dart!

There is a church at Alençon called Notre Dame, which possesses in its portal one of the most beautiful examples of the flamboyant period that has found its way as far south as this. The elaborate work characterizing this portion of the church is in striking contrast to the uneducated taste displayed in its tower and its choir. Here that strange and sudden variance, of which we have spoken, is concentrated in a single monument.

George and Gladys made a visit to the church the day after their arrival at Alençon. Mr. Wilton was busy over some correspondence, and Mary had a convenient headache, so that the two were left alone.

The Department of Orne

It was the first opportunity George had had since they were at Chartres, and when once they were together, he found himself almost abashed in the presence of his love. To pour out his heart's desire, and clasp her in his arms, was his first thought, but when he wished to do so something seemed to hold him back and forbid his speaking.

"Is not this a beautiful piece of carving?" said Gladys. "It is almost like lace in its elaborate delicacy. By the way, we must visit the lace establishment here, and get some of the famous 'point d'Alençon.'"

They were driven to the place where this beautiful lace is made, and where thousands of women are employed. Gladys was interested in the details of the lace-making and in the lives of the women who were thus employed, while George found comfort and pleasure in buying a superb veil and presenting it to her.

Perhaps he wondered, if some day she might not wear it to adorn her hair, as he led her in bridal robes to the altar, to become his wife. How can we tell, who are only half-admitted to the confidence of these two lovers? The hours thus spent were exquisite to George. He seemed to be half in dream-

Among French Inns

land and half on earth, and Gladys the goddess of some Olympian grove.

Her smiles, her confidences to him of herself, were treasures that he held in after-years, and looked back upon with joy. We have even heard him say, in later life, that France has been for him since then a sort of fairy-land that held a sentiment which nothing could destroy, whatever else went from him in his life.

What is there on earth more satisfying than romantic love, made manifest in youth, and consummated in the union of two souls? Nothing takes its place. No pain can dim its joys. No sorrow or despair destroy the fragrance of its truth.

And Gladys? How was she impressed by these unfettered signs of love in the spirit of her childhood's friend, now met in early womanhood? As she looked up into those eyes, that showed only too plainly the truth and honesty of the affection in the man behind them, all the inclination of her nature to flirt and temporize with those who sought her hand was taken from her. Love, in a moment, transformed the wayward, frivolous girl into a woman. And she realized what affection of this kind might be.

The Department of Orne

George had certainly been fascinating to her during the last days. It must be that he cared for her. But how did he care for her? Was it really love? That she cared for him she knew; but how? Such were the questions which came to the mind of Gladys Wilton during this day which they spent enjoying the sights of Alençon.

Two great towers arise near the Hôtel de Ville, remains of the ancient château; and they paused to admire and remark upon them. George stood beside her, so close that he nearly touched her, and as the two looked up at the stern, circular walls of the tower, she began to realize how great a place this man had taken in her heart. Still, she doubted herself, so uncertain was she of her own love and the knowledge of her true feelings.

Suddenly George spoke. "I hope you are not tired, Gladys."

"How could I be, George, with you here?"

The words fell so unexpectedly she hardly realized what was said, and when she had said them, wished she had not. But it was too late. George had caught the spirit of the remark, and, borne by the fire of his love,

Among French Inns

exclaimed, "Gladys, do you really mean it? Is it true, or am I dreaming? Gladys, I love you, I adore you. I cannot keep it back. You have taken me out of myself, my love! Say that you are not angry with me, and tell me, oh, tell me, that you love me also."

There was not time to hesitate or retreat. Had she not called it upon herself? Gladys felt that she was being carried away and overwhelmed by the current of love, which swept these two toward one another.

"George," she said, softly, half-daring to say the words, "George, I love you."

They were in the shadow of the great tower now, unseen by any one, and with an exclamation of joy, George Van Cortland clasped his loved one in his arms. But one word sealed the kiss which he imprinted on her brow — "Sweetheart!" — yet, echoing a thousand times in her soul, it told more than we can ever tell of true love, nobly crowned and won.

Oh, that all lovers might be so blessed of the gods as to achieve without more grief the consummation of their great desire!

Oh, that the world were made of hearts entwined as these, and free from sorrows,

The Department of Orne

that tear in twain the lives of men and women worthy of a happier end! Let us write of them in our books, and sing congratulations in our verse, and exhort the world to follow in their train. Yet nature holds the sceptre, governing this kingdom of the heart, and bears with her the travesty of love when lovers disagree, or love in man is unreciprocated by a like passion in woman.

The feeling of an infinite happiness so possessed George and Gladys, that they cared little what they saw or did. To be, was enough for them, and to bathe in the beauty of each other's love gave life, for them, its full completion and accord. They decided to keep their love a secret for a few days, in order to enjoy, in freedom from the stir its knowledge would create, the full enjoyment of their happiness; and so they returned to the hotel, apparently the same, but yet how different at heart! So Love doth metamorphose the soul of man, or woman, with his coming!

The following day they all left Alençon and made a beautiful excursion to the Château de Carrouges, passing through a forest, fairylike in its growth and appropriate to the mood of lovers. Carrouges is one of the

Among French Inns

most important as well as one of the largest châteaux in Orne. It is a notable example of the less ornate monuments of this portion of France. Although almost every century from the fourteenth to the eighteenth has left something to add to the vast proportions of the mass of buildings, the result is rather sad and bare. The chief ornamentation is toward the roofs and on the towers at the corners. Moats surround its walls, and a bridge leads to the doorway of the château. The first view which the party obtained, through a beautiful Renaissance iron gate, is one of the most agreeable.

Mr. Wilton thought Carrouges rather gloomy, and Mary shared this view; but to George and Gladys everything, seen through lovers' eyes, was roseate in hue and touched with beauty. One of the most attractive portions of the château is the pavilion over the entrance, separated from the building itself. This is of great beauty of design, and is crowned by gracefully pointed towers and roofs; its delicate points, its windows with ornamented caps, its differently coloured bricks, recall the graceful style of the fifteenth century.

The apartments in the interior of the châ-

The Department of Orne

teau have little left of their former splendour. That where Louis XI. must have slept when on his way to Alençon, is remarkable only for a vast chimneypiece and some gilded woodwork. Marie de Medici is reported to have used this room also, some centuries later. The Seigneurs of Carrouges, of Veneur, and of Blosset, who have successively owned the château, have figured in the most prominent affairs of both Church and state. But we regret that time does not permit us to enter into the histories of these interesting families.

On leaving Carrouges, our friends took a long and beautiful drive toward the north-east, to the famous Château d'O, near Montrée. The whole country seemed tinged with the atmosphere of romance. Mr. Wilton and the rest of the party suspected that some understanding had been reached by George and Gladys, and were more than delighted at the subtle evidences, which they were unable to hide during the drive, of an attachment so natural and healthy that there was no concealing from these sympathetic companions what was taking place.

At the Château d'O they were allowed to wander off by themselves, and to enjoy

Among French Inns

those exquisite and treasured moments, of which lovers alone know the value. In these ideal surroundings how can the affections be restrained when they have once been allowed to venture upon the sea of love? As if made for love are these gardens and parks surrounding the châteaux of France. The French give themselves over to the tender passion with a willingness and enthusiasm almost unknown elsewhere. Their mental attitude is full of poetry, and so are the pleasure-grounds which they have created as a setting to it in past centuries.

The Château d'O, which is one of the large and important places of Orne, arises out of watery moats in the centre of a magnificent park. Its graceful exterior, its loftiness and dignity, make it almost ecclesiastical in effect. The oldest and the most noticeable portion of the château is said to have been built by Isabeau de Bavière, upon land given her by the King of England; but it is probably of the fifteenth century. There is an irregularity in the arrangement of the windows, nay, an absence of them almost in some places, which gives to the exterior a curious effect. It is a combination of sternness and delicacy, of lightness and force, at

The Department of Orne

once engaging and impressive. It was for long the possession of the famous family of the individual O. The last D'O was director of finances to Henry III. and Henry IV., and was one of the *mignons* of the former.

George and Gladys wandered in and around the walls of the château, bending over the stone balustrade above the moat in ideal and blissful happiness. Once he bent down, in the shadows of the park, and whispered in her ear, "My love!" — and kissed her, — and she, looking at him, felt that she must surely love this man who so embodied everything that was to her ideal.

How the thought of Trouville, and all those there, seemed far away and uninteresting to her, now that she had found in happiness an ideal too beautiful to describe. The thought of Count Raoul de Bréville was to her almost revolting, and she could think of the duchess only as associated with that incident. Then her mind recurred to the ardent Count Romeo, to the spaghetti party at the Hôtel du Grand Cerf, Les Andelys, and it all seemed so ridiculous, so much the travesty of love, when compared to this ideal hour.

"My angel," whispered George, as he

Among French Inns

bent down toward her, "tell me once more that you love me, — again, Gladys, once again. It is almost too much happiness for one man to possess. I hardly feel worthy of so great a prize. It seems almost holy in its wonderful impression upon me."

"George," said Gladys, leaning against his arm and holding his hand in hers, "you are to me all the world and every one in it. Everything falls before the greatness of your power to make me happy. To have you with me is enough. Why should I not acknowledge it, now that we are engaged to each other? It is true, and I should not be true to myself if I denied it."

And thus they wandered back to the others through the shadowy alleys of the park, while George kept repeating in his mind the refrain:

Let all the world keep holiday with thee,
And hie in summer's smiles to Normandy.

It seemed to have become the love-motif of his stay here, and to typify the spirit of his mood. He repeated it to Gladys, and she kept it in her heart and treasured it. Love seemed suddenly to develop hidden mysteries in her nature hitherto unknown to

The Department of Orne

herself, and the romantic atmosphere of France brought them to the surface. Words and thoughts that to the uninitiated seem but follies, become natural expressions when love takes complete possession of the heart.

Men and women, under the cardinal influence of love, are not as others, and may not be judged as they are. They are subject to different laws and impulses. When all goes well, they are lifted to the skies and breathe the air of the gods. When love is baffled or disturbed, they pass through "the valley of the shadow of death," and torture holds them in her painful embrace. They are maddened with desire, with ideals unfulfilled, a promise of happiness held out by Nature, and revoked. They are, indeed, to be pitied.

Mercifully these two lovers had not fallen into this category. Why they should have been so favoured by fate and blessed of the gods, we may not explain. But such they were, and as such, we have been privileged to accompany them, and to portray something of their joy and blessedness.

The country near Montrée and Almenèches is rich in beautiful places and châteaux. Besides those already described, there are

Among French Inns

the superb Château de Sacy, the residence of the late Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier, and the fifteenth-century Château of Clerai. Sées, with its interesting cathedral, is near by, and farther to the north the famous Haras du Pin, founded as a royal stock-farm by Louis XIV. Its château and view are charming, its extensive buildings and stables interesting, and its noble avenues and trees in keeping with the magnificence of its founder. It is here that the government to-day breeds some of the finest Norman horses.

Mr. Wilton was extremely interested in the Haras, and asked no end of questions of the young officer who showed the party over it, and who could mercifully speak English; for Mr. Blodget Wilton was not an adept in French. He was thinking of his place on Long Island, and taking in a great many practical ideas, to be transplanted to American soil.

And so on to Argentan. What form of excursion more delightful than to pass through this picturesque and romantic scenery of France, in love, engaged to the object of our choice? Truly, we have no cause to complain, if the gods permit us to do likewise. It was no use keeping the thing

The Department of Orne

a secret any longer from our party. We had already found out what was going on, and as we were all to be together for some days, Gladys and George decided to tell us of their engagement.

It was hardly a surprise, but Mary affected to be very much taken off her guard, and Mr. Wilton was in the greatest excitement and spirits over the affair. He gave his unqualified blessing to both the young people, and promised to do everything to make them happy. He ordered a wonderful dinner at the Hôtel des Trois Maries, at Argentan, which kept the whole establishment in a state of preparation all the afternoon, on the day of our arrival. He toasted his daughter and future son-in-law in a wonderful bottle of vintage wine, and went off to bed in a distinct state of hilarity, kissing every one good night, including Mary.

Perhaps his greatest triumph was that he had circumvented the intrigues of the duchess and the foreigners and the tendencies of Mrs. Wilton. That he had been the means of bringing the young people together, and that the courtship and betrothal had taken place under his auspices, was to him so delightful that he never really recovered from

Among French Inns

it to his dying day. Whatever the social successes of his wife, he had always this feather in his cap, that he had been the one to settle his daughter in life.

"Go it, my boy, go it," he said to George, slapping him on the back. "You can't be young but once. Enjoy it while you can. Make the best of it. We'll have a bang-up wedding in New York in November. And I'll buy up a whole *cuvée* of '89 champagne in Paris for the occasion. We'll show 'em what we can do in the way of a wedding, I tell you!" And Mr. Blodget Wilton trotted off to bed, the happiest man in the world, after George Van Cortland, who must, of course, be excepted, being a trifle happier than any other human being at that particular moment.

They remained at Argentan, and made excursions every day to the châteaux in the neighbourhood. Argentan itself is delightful. The Hôtel des Trois Maries is very comfortable; and they were all as happy there as the day is long. The Church of St. Germain is a magnificent, flamboyant structure. It dates from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, and its Renaissance towers and portal are rich in decoration.

The Department of Orne

The old Château of Argentan is a picturesque monument, now used as public offices, and the Tour Marguerite is an interesting sentinel, remaining from the old fortifications. Northeast of Argentan, and near Fel, are the Châteaux of Chambois and Aubry. They are not far apart, and in the neighbourhood of Exmes. Chambois is of the twelfth century, and a beautiful specimen of the old feudal fortress, partly ruined. The Château d'Aubry, of the seventeenth century, rises sternly from surrounding water, but it possesses the chimneys and other attributes which denote a later period of architecture. Its surroundings are picturesque in the extreme.

Another day was spent in visiting the Château de la Saucerie, near Domfront, to the westward. It is of the sixteenth century, and of a delightfully rustic and picturesque appearance. On their return the happy party bade farewell to the Hôtel des Trois Maries and its kind hosts (who had, we fear, found out the secret of our two lovers), and journeyed toward Falaise, visiting on the way the Château de la Forêt-d'Auvray, and the Castel du Repas, beautiful abodes near

Among French Inns

Putange, and about midway between Argentan and Falaise.

With this an ideal trip, in and out of the Department of Orne, was completed, and our friends passed on into Calvados.

CHAPTER X

AT THE HOTEL DE GUILLAUME LE CONQUERANT

Dives

IN the compartment of the train on which our party journeyed to Falaise was a cultivated and interesting Frenchman, who soon entered into conversation with us. On learning that we had been to Argentan, and had seen the Church of St. Germain, he told us a legend concerning an old bell there.

The legend runs as follows: A certain Jacques Gautier Dumontel, the son of a merchant of Paris, was travelling toward Argentan one evening. It chanced to be Whitsunday, the day of the fair at Argentan. His road led through the forest of Gouffern, and while he was in the midst of it the shadowy form of a beautiful woman, half-clothed, appeared before his horse. He rode after her, but the vision, or phantom, was always the same distance in advance. At

Among French Inns

last, in the midst of his chase, a voice cried out near him: "The third merchant of Paris is in our hands." He looked in the direction of the voice and perceived the forms of three men crouching about a fire in the forest, and drinking from silver goblets. One of them bore a resemblance to the cruel Abdalla of Spain, of whom Dumontel had heard at the time that he followed Duguesclin into that country.

Thinking himself to be in the hands of some evil spirits who had entrapped him through the allurements of the beautiful vision, Dumontel was seized with a sudden fear. He gave the reins to his horse, and, urging him forward with his spurs, he rode about in the forest for a long time, endeavouring to escape.

At last a bell in the distance began to toll, and enabled him to find his way safely to Argentan. On arriving there he told his adventure to his friends, who listened to his story with interest, and endeavoured to convince him that the whole matter was due to his disordered fancy. He was, however, so affected by his experience, that when he returned to Paris his first act was to purchase the most beautiful bell that money could

Hotel de Guillaume le Conquerant

buy, and send it as a gift to the Church of St. Germain at Argentan. It remained there until 1793, when it was destroyed by the Revolution. It has been replaced since then by another bell, which, like its predecessor, rings annually upon the eve of the fair at Argentan, and doubtless directs many an honest merchant on his way through the heart of the forest.

Mr. Wilton was interested in the legend, and conversed at some length with the French gentleman, who spoke excellent English. The world is small, after all, and before arriving we discovered that our traveling acquaintance was the Vicomte de Brébis, an intimate friend of the duchess and of every one else in Trouville. Of course he had heard of the something that had occurred there, though he did not let the chief actors in this drama know it. He was inclined to tell us a great deal about Normandy and its customs.

"Although there are many points of interest in the people," said he, "perhaps their most curious characteristic is their love of lawsuits. It exists in all classes and under all conditions. To go to law is enough to make a Norman of this region happy for

Among French Inns

the rest of his natural existence. To have even the most petty excuse suffices for the opening of legal proceedings, that last for an interminable length of time, and do very little good to anybody but the lawyer or the notary.

"I once knew a lady," continued Monsieur de Brébis, "who told me with great pride that she had only two lawsuits as yet unsettled, and on inquiring about them, I discovered that one was with her father and the other with her son. I expressed surprise, but she seemed to think it was perfectly natural. The Normans are always at law. A family of peasants will quarrel over a piece of land for fifty years, and they will have the most bitter controversy and jealousy about a clause of a will or a paper, which conveys only an imaginary benefit."

Thus the whole party arrived at Falaise, the interesting town which was the birth-place of William the Conqueror. We have seen at Rouen the spot where his last hours upon earth were passed. Here was the opening of his life, the beginning of his remarkable career. Yonder, in the castle of which we now observe the picturesque remains, fortified by Richard, Duke of Normandy,

Hotel de Guillaume le Conquerant

his son Robert le Diable looked down from the heights, and fell in love with Arlette (the daughter of a tanner), who was washing in the stream below.

She was warned by her advisers not to enter the castle in response to the seductive entreaties of her royal lover, save by the great door. But though she eventually followed this good counsel, a son William was born out of wedlock. At his birth he seized the straw on which he lay with such tenacity, that it has been quoted as an omen of his life, that he never allowed to slip from him that which he had once grasped in his hands.

He was known as William the Bastard. At seven years of age he inherited the Duchy of Normandy from his father, and later became the Conqueror of England, marking the turning-point in English history.

"Ces messieurs et ces dames devraient awllez au chawteau," said an old woman, in her funny drawl, outside the Hôtel de Normandie, where we had stopped over night. And we proceeded to visit it. We were immensely interested. For it is one of the most important of the feudal castles of France, and surrounded by a history that is second to none. Its grim walls

Among French Inns

tell of the days of the Conqueror and the Dukes of Normandy, of the rise of the family of Arlette to royal favour, of Talbot, and of Henry V. of England. They stand as the silent reminders of the origin of states, the turning-point of nations, the creation of an era in history.

Below it, in the Place de la Trinité, arises the modern statue of the Conqueror upon his charger, challenging the world to combat, — truly an epic figure in the landscape! He stands out as the embodiment of action and virility, the grandeur of manhood, mastering the handicap of his birth, and leaving to mankind the greatness of his results. We may well pause and do homage to his effigy, in this, the home of his birth.

George and Gladys stood long, looking at the martial figure of the greatest of the Dukes of Normandy, and then turned into a side street and visited the Église de la Trinité. This church has a beautiful Renaissance "*portail*" and a Gothic nave, and is extremely interesting to study.

"How strange it seems," said Gladys, "to be standing here where William the Conqueror was actually born, after having been brought up on him in our history at school!"



STATUE OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR, FALAISE

Hotel de Guillaume le Conquerant

"Yes, love," answered George, "and how happy I am to be here with you! It inspires me to do things that may be worthy of you, in my own life. I only hope that I may be really worthy of your love, sweetheart. Are you sure that you love me, Gladys; are you sure?"

And Gladys told him again that she was sure, and George believed it, in the fulness of his heart's triumph.

They met Monsieur de Brébis again at Falaise. He seemed anxious to make them acquainted with anything that was interesting, and told them of the famous fair held annually there, which is known as "la Foire de Gibraye." It is perhaps one of the most historic and important in this country of rural fairs which have been held from time immemorial.

If we approach the town upon the opening of this fair, we are soon made aware of its existence by the quantity of carts and wagons that appear upon the road, filled with merry-making peasants. They join the general cavalcade *en route* to the "Foire de Gibraye." In one cart a whole family are crowded; a mass of human nature, that is, indeed, a curious study. Not only the father

Among French Inns

and mother, but the children and grandchildren are frequently included in the party. The women wear the "*bonnets de coton*," always quaint in effect, while the men disport themselves in blue blouses and sabots.

They are as happy as the day is long, and intend to be happier when they arrive at the fair. The dust flies in every direction, as a cart full of pigs (as fat as only the bucolic pig can be) rattles around the corner of a hedge, regardless of consequences. An old woman, not unlike a weasel in her facial appearance, the head of the establishment, is seated on a board above the fattest and largest pig, urging the Norman farm-horse forward, and kicking the other pigs with her wooden sabots.

At last the sounds of music and laughter, of chattering and bargaining, of buying and selling, announce that the fair is at hand, and we join the crowd and prepare to see the sights. Had we come to Falaise in the seventeenth instead of the twentieth century, we should probably have found a different state of things, and one more picturesque to the eye; but as it is, "*la Foire de Gibraye*" holds it own, and cannot but interest and divert the attention of the visitor to Falaise.

Hotel de Guillaume le Conquerant

The street is lined with booths, filled with every fabric made in the surrounding country. Groups of peasants are engaged in earnest conversation as to the merits of the various goods for sale. A whole family is thrown into a state of excitement, almost bordering on frenzy, over the purchase of a simple pair of stockings. They must be from "le Midi." Normans are more self-contained in their affairs.

At the end of the square a man is busily beating a large drum, and announcing to an admiring populace that he can extract their teeth without pain. Judging by the average peasant, his services would seem to be unnecessary, for they appear, as a class, to have few of these necessities to spare, and the fame of the American dentist has not yet reached the rural districts of France.

Beyond the gentleman who extracts teeth is a platform, on which acrobats are giving a performance to a delighted crowd. At the end of it the hat is passed around, and the enthusiastic peasants drop in their sous and cry for more. A deafening noise is kept up by an immense travelling organ, with every conceivable attachment in the way of drums, triangles, and cymbals. It sends forth a

Among French Inns

volume of sound like thunder; but it is welcomed by those at the fair as part of the show.

Farther on a play is being performed, and a clown keeps up a volley of wit before the curtain, and draws forth laughter from the audience, and finally the money from their pockets, after which the painted actors withdraw and the lights are extinguished. Such plays are partly of a comic, partly of a tragic nature, and are never of a high order; but they serve to interest the passer-by, and the little troupe of actors manages to exist from year to year, and to make its round of the country fairs, which occur at stated intervals.

The life of these theatrical companies is interesting to study. They have often their pathetic side, and could tell a tale of struggle and disappointment, of effort and failure, which might fill a page in the history of the stage. They have produced genius from the ranks of their unhonoured artists. They have been the bitter, early schooling of many an actor who has arisen to prominence. For the French are a race of actors, and in France, as in no other country, "all the world's a stage."

Hotel de Guillaume le Conquerant

In the evening the crowds who attend the fair regale themselves with wine and cider, and indulge in dancing, song, and laughter well into the night. For many, it is the event of the year, at which the wives and daughters of the peasant revel in their Sunday best, and where the daughter of a family not infrequently meets her future lord and master. After all, it is, in a sense, the parent to the County Fair of America, and to this institution in France we can trace its origin. For here, as with us, the pumpkin, the cabbage, and the apple reign in all their glory.

Such is a passing picture of Falaise and its fair. We leave it with regret, and must regard it ever as one of the most interesting points of France, representing the historic centre of Southern Calvados.

We said good-bye here to George and Mary for a few days. It was necessary for George to join his parents at Aix and inform them of his engagement, and do many things incident to so important an announcement to the world. Mrs. Wilton, it should be borne in mind, was as yet in total ignorance of the whole affair, and the only suggestion which the outside world could possibly have

Among French Inns

had was through the Vicomte de Brébis, who, we may venture to say, had formed his own opinions on the subject.

Thus George bade a fond farewell for a few days to his beloved, and repaired to Paris with his sister; and Mr. Wilton and Gladys and their friend departed for the famous Hôtel de Guillaume le Conquérant at Dives, where, as we have seen in a previous chapter, their arrival caused such consternation and concern to Trouville.

The Hostellerie de Guillaume le Conquérant is one of the most ancient and celebrated inns of France. Situated at the little village of Dives, near the seacoast, in Calvados, it looks out over the barren expanse of land reclaimed from the Channel, where William, Duke of Normandy, set forth for the conquest of England.

The ancient harbour at the mouth of the river Dives has been filled up with sand, and a pillar marks the spot where the Conqueror is supposed to have set sail. The village, once an important place on the coast, contains some interesting carved houses and a church, upon the walls of which are inscribed the names of the knights who accompanied William to England. It is, therefore,



HOSTELLERIE DE GUILLAUME LE CONQUERANT, DIVES



Hotel de Guillaume le Conquerant

a historic and almost sacred spot, this little Dives, with its famous inn, and one to which the pilgrim may well repair in the warm airs of summer, with pleasure and advantage.

The hotel itself is charmingly picturesque, a wood and plaster construction of the Norman type, built around a court, with rambling rooms and exterior staircases. The beams are blackened with age and carved in designs of the sixteenth century, and the corners of the court are softened by climbing roses, wistaria, and other vines. They advance toward the quaint balconies running around the second story, and dress them with a floral decoration at once picturesque and charming to behold.

This is, indeed, the ideal of the French inn, one so well known and appreciated that its fame has gone over the world, and pictures of it in water-colour may be found in England and in far-away America to-day, adorning drawing-rooms, and reminding us of days spent beneath its hospitable roof. It possesses an atmosphere that is all its own, and known to those who have, at one time or another, tested its hospitality or its entertainment.

“Well, I declare! What a place this is!”

Among French Inns

said Mr. Wilton, on arriving. "I feel as if I were an actor in some opera, instead of B. Wilton, travelling in France. Why, it isn't like real life at all, is it, Gladys? How your mother will cut up, though, when she comes, and we tell her all about you and George! Think of the fun we will have with the count and the Frenchman!" But Gladys begged her father not to say anything to them until the formal announcement; and he was obliged to promise not to do so until George returned, for Gladys wished to have the pleasure of writing home to her friends and announcing it herself.

So the doting father was obliged to content himself with cabling instructions to his bankers in New York to transfer two millions of dollars in American bonds to the name of Gladys Wilton, and another million, to be placed in trust, the income of which should be for the use of George Van Cortland on the day that he made her his wife.

He would have a little surprise for *them*, and make an announcement all by himself, if they would not let him announce their engagement. Why should he not? He had sixty or seventy millions, and only one child; and she, dear girl, was going to marry the

Hotel de Guillaume le Conquerant

man whom he would have picked out for her. Mr. B. Wilton would show the world how he could do things when he wished to. This would do as a beginning; but he intended it only as a beginning. He proposed that the great name of Van Cortland should be surrounded by fitting dignity, when his daughter bore it. Had not he, B. Wilton, made all this money himself, and did it not belong to him, to do with it as he wished?

He intended to build up his family influence at home. Some day titled Europe would flock to America, just as untitled America now flocked to Europe, and then they would find out the value of a great name in America and the grandeur of American institutions. Such was the patriotic turn of Mr. Blodget Wilton's business mind, and who are we that we should disagree with him?

By and by came Mrs. Wilton herself to the Hotel of William the Conqueror, fresh from her social triumphs at Trouville. She had telegraphed her husband to reserve two rooms and bath for her accommodation.

"Two rooms and bath," said Mr. Wilton, reading the telegram; "that's nonsense; she

Among French Inns

can't have that here. It's an inn. She's forgotten that it's not Trouville."

The afternoon of her arrival was an eventful one in the annals of the Wilton family. Gladys went to her mother's room, and Mr. Wilton smoked a cigar in the courtyard.

"Mamma," said Gladys, "I have something very interesting to tell you."

"Why, Gladys, what is it?" said her mother, all interest and attention, for she saw by the expression of her daughter's face that something unusual was coming.

"Mamma, you cannot guess; I'm engaged to be married!"

Tableau!

"Engaged!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilton, her eyes sparkling with excitement; "engaged to be married! And to whom, pray? Not to Count Romeo di Pomponi? Oh, Gladys, I hope not."

"No, mamma; give another guess," said Gladys, delighted at the surprise.

"Oh, my dear Gladys, do tell your mother. How do I know? You have been away with your father for weeks. How can I tell what you two have been up to, off in those out-of-the-way places? Oh, Gladys, is it Lord F——? Is it Monsieur de B——? Is it

Hotel de Guillaume le Conquerant

Comte Raoul de Bréville? Why don't you tell your mother? You naughty girl — when I ought to have known all about it! Think of your playing me such a trick!" And Mrs. Wilton nearly swooned then and there.

"Mamma, it's George Van Cortland," said Gladys, laughing and kissing her mother. "Mamma, I love him. Oh, how I love him!" And Gladys fell into her mother's arms and was clasped in her sympathetic embrace.

"George Van Cortland," said Mrs. Wilton, in bewilderment. "George Van Cortland," she repeated again, as the full significance of the alliance dawned upon her.

"But, Gladys, where under the sun have you seen him? Oh, you sly girl, not to tell your mother anything about it!"

Mrs. Wilton thought it all over, and, realizing the importance of being associated with Mrs. Van Cortland in the rôle of mother-in-law, an importance which no other arrangement short of a family alliance could possibly have given her, decided on the whole that the engagement was in every way a desirable one, and gave it her unqualified endorsement.

Among French Inns

She had no objection whatever to George Van Cortland personally. In fact, she liked him very much. The family influence was great, in every sense of the word. So Mrs. Wilton sat herself down to write to Mrs. Van Cortland, and make arrangements to announce the engagement to the world, during the following week.

There were things to do on such a momentous occasion. Cablegrams had to be sent, letters written, people notified, Trouville informed, and the duchess seen and pacified. One is not engaged nowadays without time, trouble, and expense. Conventionalities must be followed, and things take their regular and appropriate course.

But we are progressing in advance of our story. Who should appear at the Hôtel de Guillaume le Conquérant, the night of the arrival of Mr. Wilton and his daughter, but the Frenchman himself! He had followed the party from Falaise, and arrived only a few hours behind them.

After dinner he asked Gladys to take a walk to see some points of interest; and thus they were left alone, in the half-light of the fading day.

"I have followed you," said the French-

Hotel de Guillaume le Conquerant

man, "because I have wanted to tell you something, something that I did not have a chance to say at the duchess's. You know what it is, mademoiselle? Oh, I love you! Will you marry me? Will you be my wife?"

The Frenchman had been so sudden in his passionate appeal that Gladys had had no time to stop him, nor to ward off the danger before it was fairly upon her; for there was the Frenchman on his knees before her in the damp grass.

"Why, Monsieur de B——, what can you be thinking of?" she cried. "Pray get up. You will get wet, and your trousers will be covered with green stains. It is impossible — impossible. I cannot marry you. I do not love you. There has been a mistake. You must not think of such a thing. Pray get up, and take me home," she added in real alarm, for the Frenchman was still on his knees, and was endeavouring to embrace the edge of her skirt.

"Ah!" he cried, in despairing accents, still on his knees. "Ah, then you do not love me. Then you love some one else! Ah, I knew it. I am too late." And the Frenchman arose in a paroxysm of despair and grief.

Among French Inns

Gladys's one idea was to get away and put an end to this unfortunate interview, which she really had not at all expected, and which she now deeply regretted. Under other circumstances she might have enjoyed the pleasure of a proposal from the Frenchman, and even have considered it seriously. But now that her heart was so completely given to another, she felt only a sense of pain and regret.

She liked the Frenchman, and was sorry to give him any unhappiness, for she was not heartless in regard to men in general; but in this instance she had no very strong belief in the seriousness of his love, having seen Frenchmen profess the tender passion before, and knowing their manner of expressing it.

"I am very sorry, Monsieur de B——," she hastened to add, when he had finished his dramatic scene. "I appreciate your feeling for me, and hope that we shall always be friends; but it is impossible. You are right—I love some one else. In fact, I am already engaged to marry him."

"Oh, *malheur!* Alas! If I had only spoken at the duchess's!" sighed the Frenchman.

Hotel de Guillaume le Conquerant

"Who is my rival?" he continued, his eyes flashing with jealous sparks. "I know; it is Lord F——, or Pomponi."

"No, it is neither," answered Gladys, decidedly. "It is some one you have never seen. If you will promise to behave like a man, instead of going on like a crazy person, I will tell you who he is, before any of the others; and you must be your old self, and come to the wedding in New York."

Learning that it was neither of his old rivals, the Frenchman was somewhat pacified, and felt that, after all, he had better not sacrifice such valuable friends as the Wiltons, even if he could not make Miss Gladys Wilton his wife and keep her in France. So he escorted her home to the inn, and on the whole behaved pretty well, under the rather trying circumstances; and Gladys took good care that she should not be left alone with him in the near future.

The day following Mrs. Wilton's arrival, the count and the Englishman joined our party, and the travelling group, once more united, made an excursion by automobile to Caen, which is not far from Dives, and which is the capital of Calvados. There we all visited the hotel where Beau Brummel lived

Among French Inns

and died, after his retirement from the glories of the court of George IV. The rooms still remain where he received imaginary guests during the period of his insanity.

Caen is a historic town, filled with churches. It owes its greatness to William the Conqueror, who lies buried in the Abbaye aux Hommes, founded by him during his reign. His wife, Queen Matilda, is buried in the Abbaye aux Dames, which she also founded at the same period.

From Caen the party went on to Bayeux, with its Norman cathedral containing the famous tapestries, in reality, embroideries, worked by Queen Matilda to commemorate the history of the Conquest. These tapestries are some of the most interesting historical examples of needlework in existence, and have been scrupulously preserved.

Bayeux was the ancient capital of the *Vadicassess*, and was for long a residence of the Dukes of Normandy. It contains many curious old timbered houses that are extremely interesting to study and observe. Its best hotel is the Hôtel de Luxembourg, and there our party halted. Two châteaux in the neighbourhood drew us to their doors. The first, the Château de Creully, is a pic-

Hotel de Guillaume le Conquerant

turesque, castellated building of white stone. Its owners were noted in history for their inhospitality, and legend has it that they would stand upon the battlements and shoot the workmen whom they had employed to restore it, as they departed. Its present owners have mercifully dispensed with this mediæval custom.

Nearer the coast is the more extensive Château of Fontaine-Henri, which has a beautifully carved façade. It is an excellent example of the châteaux of Calvados. Mrs. Wilton liked it extremely, and wished she could hire it for a summer; but Mr. Wilton was disinclined to make any inquiries in this direction.

"Oh, James," said she, as they were returning to Dives, "I never will forgive you for keeping me in complete ignorance of George and Gladys's affair. But you certainly were clever," and Mrs. Wilton gave her happy husband a pat on the cheek, that savoured of affection, and reminded him of the days of his own courtship.

CHAPTER XI

AMONG THE INNS OF TOURAINE

OUR original party was once more gathered together at Dives, and every one was as peaceful and happy, to all outward appearances, as if Gladys Wilton had never met George Van Cortland, or given him her hand and heart. It was decided that we should leave the Hôtel de Guillaume le Conquérant, bid good-bye to Normandy and its picturesque scenery, and pursue our way southward into the more imaginative province of Touraine. Though Mrs. Wilton had made a trip there before, she was ready to return with her present congenial companions, who were anxious to wander along the banks of the Loire, and see something of the world-famous garden of France.

"I sha'n't go to any of the châteaux that we visited before, Marietta," said Mr. Wilton.

"Very well," said his wife; "we might go

Among the Inns of Touraine

to Loches and Langeais, for you know we did not have time to see these when we were in Touraine last year."

The others of the party made no opposition, and so we set forth the following morning, by way of Le Mans, where there is an interesting cathedral, with flying buttresses and stained glass windows of rare tone and colouring. It was late in the afternoon when we arrived, and the beams of the western sunlight, pouring through the coloured windows, gave to the interior an effect which was peculiarly mellow and harmonious. The cathedral of Le Mans is an ancient structure, and stands high above the town, dominating it for some distance. Near it is a quaint old house, with interesting carved timbers, which is worth visiting.

Below the cathedral, in another part of the town, are some charming public gardens, where the count was glad to rest himself in the shade of trees, and breathe in the perfume of flowers, which were now in full bloom. August is the month of gardens in France, as elsewhere, and the gardens of this beautiful country acknowledge no superiors, and bow to no rivals in beauty. In them were a number of animals, enclosed behind

Among French Inns

wire netting, and the count was aroused to interest and enjoyment at the sight of a family of guinea-pigs, who were peacefully basking in the sun. The happy nature of the Italian, like that of a child, was capable of being amused in the simplest manner, and thus it was that the gallant Romeo found himself suddenly seated on the grass, endeavouring to poke the noses of the guinea-pigs with a small stick, which he held in his hand, and to feed them with some bits of candy, which he had concealed in the mysterious depths of his pockets.

"I cannot see what pleasure you find in playing with those guinea-pigs," said Mrs. Wilton, poking the count in turn with her parasol.

"Why is he called a pig?" asked the count, who was too absorbed in the animals to answer her remark.

"I am sure I don't know," said Mrs. Wilton; "you must ask some of the gentlemen." But as none of the latter could give the inquiring count a satisfactory explanation, he was obliged to pursue his pastime unanswered.

"Come; we must be going," said Mrs. Wilton to her daughter. "Monsieur de

Among the Inns of Touraine

B——, can you not help Count di Pomponi to get up? I know he cannot do it himself."

After some persuasion Count Romeo was assisted to his feet, and we proceeded to take a drive through the town, which has really little of artistic interest apart from the portions which we had already visited. Le Mans is the capital of the Department of La Sarthe, and so possesses barracks filled with soldiers. These may be seen walking through the streets, and lending their touch of colour, in contrast to the white walls of the buildings.

The country throughout La Sarthe is beautiful, and the roads as perfect as those of other parts of France. Our party passed on through the little towns of Sablé and La Flèche. There is a race-course at the latter place, where meetings are held in summer; and not far from it are the beautiful gardens and château of Le Lude, belonging to the Marquis de Talhouët. The road beyond La Flèche crosses the river Loir, and runs directly south for a long distance, toward the larger and more famous Loire. These two rivers, on account of their similar names, are frequently confused by travellers, and not unnaturally, for they are close to each

Among French Inns

other, and their waters are mingled beyond Angers.

On the south bank of La Loire, which widens here, as it runs northwest toward La Poissonière, is situated the charming town of Saumur. Smiling in the sunshine, it is reflected in the blue waters of the river, and clusters at the foot of the ancient fortress, which looms high against the sky-line behind it. Saumur, like Le Mans, is a garrison town, and filled with officers and soldiers, which give gaiety and life to its streets.

How different is this scene from Normandy, with its rolling hills and domestic scenery! And how interesting a contrast is this beautiful view of La Loire, to that of the Seine at Rouen or elsewhere! The atmosphere of the south has begun to make itself felt, and Touraine is at hand, with all its suggestions of the Renaissance, and its luxurious splendour, following the rude customs of earlier mediæval days.

Saumur is a favourite haunt of visitors, who delight to linger upon the bridge over the river, and gaze at the extended view marked by the strong lines of the château and the slender church tower, rising like a needle-point to the sky. It bears aloft the



GENERAL VIEW OF SAUMUR



HÔTEL BUDAN, SAUMUR

Among the Inns of Touraine

cross, as if to remind its inhabitants of the origin of their town, and fill them with religious inspiration. For Saumur owes its birth to the monastery and fortress, which was begun as early as the tenth century, for the purpose of enclosing the relics of St. Florent.

At a later period the inhabitants revolted from the monasteries of St. Florent and Fontevrault, situated in the same country, and became Calvinists. From that time, Saumur, which was then a considerable town, continued to be the centre of Calvinism until the Edict of Nantes. By this decree Louis XIV. gave its growth and importance a check from which it has never recovered. Still, the well-known *École de Cavalerie*, which is situated there, has done much to make it a centre of activity.

Our party, who were delighted with the view which they had obtained during their arrival at Saumur, entered the town in the happiest mood, and drew up at the Hôtel Budan, which is an excellent hostelry, whose hosts are devoted to the interest and comfort of their guests. We remained, however, only a night, and made an excursion the following morning to the Château de Morains, situated

Among French Inns

at Dampierre, a few kilometres distant. This little château, which is of the fifteenth century, is famous as having been the abode of Marguerite d'Anjou, widow of Henry VI. of England, during her exile. Here she died, in 1480, bowed down with grief at the misfortunes of her life. She lies buried in the cathedral of Angers, by the side of her father, King René. Morains is a charming château, with a castellated tower and wall, its pointed roofs surmounted by ornaments of iron.

Gladys, who had avoided the Frenchman as much as possible during their journey southward, now found herself with him in front of the château. No reference had ever been made to the scene which had taken place on the night of his arrival at Dives, and Gladys, now that it had passed, was inclined to look upon it more in the light of a joke than as a serious proposal. She was, therefore, a little surprised when the Frenchman suddenly turned the conversation to that memorable evening.

"Ah, mademoiselle," said he, "Monsieur Van Cortland is indeed lucky to have you as a *fiancée*. But still, deeply as I am wounded by your refusal, I can forgive

Among the Inns of Touraine

everything, since it was neither the Englishman nor Count Romeo that you chose as a husband."

Gladys was on the point of remarking that she could see no cause why the Frenchman should have anything to forgive whatever, but she checked herself, knowing that he had made a great effort to control his emotions and his disappointment, and feeling that in her happiness at possessing the love of George Van Cortland she could afford to be generous to his rival.

Beyond Dampierre, about twelve kilometres distant, is Montsoreau, a château of the Renaissance, upon the banks of the Loire. Its high, rather bleak walls, rise above the river, and its outline is reflected in the waters at its feet. It is almost devoid of ornament, and is in a partially decayed condition. The little village beyond it has two ruined churches of an early century. There is little that is either ornamental or beautiful, architecturally, at Montsoreau, and we followed the banks of the river with a feeling of sadness, almost, as we pursued our way toward Fontevrault. The few kilometres of road leading from the river pass through a beautiful valley filled with vineyards and

Among French Inns

lovely views of the country. The valley runs southward, and farther on it is shaded by forest tangles and rich growths of trees, over which hang the mists of Touraine, the familiar "*brouillard de la Loire*," which lends to everything its soft and mysterious atmosphere. Here we may well agree with the poets who sing of the idealism of the French country and extol its beauty. Is it to be wondered that they have been inspired to graceful verses in these surroundings, so blessed by nature and so cultivated by man?

Our party alighted at the Hôtel de France, a nice little hotel with an attractive garden, and paused for *déjeuner*. It was warm, and the count was glad to cool himself in the shade of an arbour, and to sip a light draught of the wine of Touraine — a delicious white, sparkling wine from the coteaux de Saumur.

"No more cider, count," said Mr. Wilton, jocosely, giving his Excellency one of those facetious digs in his side, which that personage disliked so extremely, and which tickled and startled him on occasions when he least expected them. However, the fact that Mr. Wilton had made him that promised proposition after the spaghetti party, and had agreed to pay him liberally for his receipt

Among the Inns of Touraine

of this interesting foodstuff, when properly canned and placed on the market, made Count Romeo di Pomponi's heart warm toward the American financier, and inclined him to accept his jokes (and his physical violence) with philosophical composure.

"I am glad the cider is no more," said his Excellency. "He is too hard for the head. The wine here is like the Italy, and reminds me of my own vineyard. Ah, Monsieur Wilton, you should see my garden on the Lago di Como. When you coame there, you shall eat the fresh figs from the trees, and see the torrents rushing down from the mountain. Ah, *la belle Italie!*" And the count raised his glass to his lips in a long health to his native land.

"*Italia multa bella,*" said the Englishman, sedately, with a strong Anglo-Saxon accent.

The count was pleased, and the party sat down to *déjeuner*. The abbey church of Fontevrault is a most interesting historical monument. It dates back as far as the eleventh century, when it was founded by Robert d'Arbrissol. The present church was consecrated by one of the popes, and was a very important abbey of this region for many centuries. Much history has clus-

Among French Inns

tered about it, and it possesses many royal associations and tombs. The abbesses of Fontevrault have all played their part in history. One of them was the sister of Madame de Montespan. The daughters of Louis XV. were taught here as children. Its superb cloister bears traces of dating from the twelfth to the seventeenth century, while the chapter-house has a magnificent portal of the latter period. The choir and transepts, which have been restored, are now used for mass, and the atmosphere has a sanctified and glorious character which nothing can take from it.

If we allow our steps to lead us to the semi-circular chapel in one of the transepts, we shall stand before the monuments of the Plantagenets. The tombs beneath them bear the remains of these historic personages. Éléanore de Guyenne sleeps before us, with her hands crossed and an expression of beatitude upon her countenance. Her son, Richard Cœur de Lion, holding his sceptre in his hand, reposes upon a couch of stone drapery beside her. There is something almost sublime in the appearance of these graven effigies, the repose and calm upon their features conveying to us an idea of peace after

Among the Inns of Touraine

the turmoils of this life. Here also lies Henry II., holding likewise, in his hands, the symbol of his majesty. Beyond him is the wooden effigy of Isabelle d'Angoulême, who was the wife of King John.

At the end of the refectory of the abbey is the Tour d'Evrault, built in the twelfth century. It served as the kitchen for the abbey itself, and is a most peculiar and interesting building—in fact, one of the most individual in existence. It is octagonal in form, with a high, angular roof, tapering to a cupola at its apex. Curious round bulges extend between the buttresses, more for use than for ornament.

Our party wandered about Fontevrault during the afternoon, and returned to Saumur in the soft light of the fading day, well pleased with their excursion. The following day we proceeded along the southern bank of the Loire to Chinon. How shall we describe adequately the charm of these journeys through Touraine, in the warm sun of summer? The sky was laden with fleecy clouds, shaded from white to gray, that sailed over the clear, blue surface of the heavens and formed a background to the pictures which we passed continually. The graceful

Among French Inns

points of towers, the high slate roofs of châteaux rose above the verdant foliage of the landscape. Their white walls, seeming like marble in the distance, appeared in the opening of trees or upon the summit of some hill. Everything here was lofty, graceful, and decorated with a touch of fancy that inspired us with a classic note, and forced upon us at every turn the glory of the Renaissance, brought first from Italy and deposited here in France.

Our party had gained at Saumur two interesting additions in the form of George Van Cortland and his sister. They had come from Aix, where they had left their parents, to join us when we should arrive at Versailles. That the arrival of George Van Cortland was attended by interest and congratulations on the part of our travelling companions need hardly be mentioned. Mrs. Wilton's meeting with him was effusive. She kissed him on both cheeks, and told him that he was the handsomest and the nicest man she had ever known, and that she was proud to have him as a son-in-law, which was perfectly true. If Mrs. Wilton was pleased, her husband was, to say the least, puffed up with pride and satisfaction. The

Among the Inns of Touraine

Englishman, the Frenchman, the count, and the American, who was an old friend, gathered about George, showered him with congratulations, and drank his health, in what is known in France as "*un bouteille de quatrevingt-treize.*"

Gladys was looking radiantly happy, and was rivalled in appearance by Mary Van Cortland. The latter was tall and graceful, her willowy figure having an air of great distinction. She had dark eyes and hair, and when the colour came to her face and her expression became animated, she was, if not beautiful, certainly a very attractive girl. The count and the Frenchman were overheard discussing her, as Latins do whenever they see a pretty woman.

"*Mademoiselle Van Cortland est jolie.*" said the Frenchman.

"She is the Italian type," said the count. "That is what we have in the Italy more than in the America."

"She puts herself like the French, however," said the Frenchman. "She is like a Parisian — very well put, *et bien coiffée*," he added, in a tremendous whisper.

"True," said the count. "Charming

Among French Inns

miss. I like Miss Van Cortland; but she does not inspire the loave in the boosom."

There was one member of the party, however, who was perfectly contented with this state of affairs, though there was little danger of the count's being a serious rival.

Thus we proceeded on our way toward Chinon, and on arriving there, alighted at the Hôtel de la Boule d'Or. A beautiful bridge crosses the river, behind which stretch lines of poplar-trees, rearing their slender heads like sentinels in the landscape, a feature of the scenery of Touraine. The road upon the opposite bank is also lined with trees, and on the height above them rise the uneven lines of the mediæval fortress of Chinon. It is one of great age. Caino, the predecessor of Chinon, was known as far back as the Roman period, and in the time of King Clovis, was one of the chief strongholds of the kingdom.

During the eleventh century, Thibault III., who was one of the ancient Counts of Touraine, gave Chinon to Geoffroy Martel. The fortress has a long and noble history. It has been the abode of Henry II. of England, who died there in 1189. It has been the property of Philip Augustus and Charles II., and it

Among the Inns of Touraine

was here that the latter monarch assembled the States General of France. A short road leads from the town to the Pavillon de l'Horloge, which is the entrance to the château.

The fortress itself comprises a labyrinth of walls and ruined fortifications. It has, in fact, three distinct castles. The *Château de St. Georges*, the *Château de Milieu*, and the *Château de Coudray*, which is in the centre. The former was built by the Plantagenet king, and little but its walls remain to-day to tell of its former importance, or of the sieges which it sustained. The second, whose foundations arose upon the ruins of a Roman camp, contains the Grand-Logis, which was used by Henry II., Charles VII., and Louis XV. The third and central château contains the Tour de St. Martin and the chapel.

Visions of Jeanne d'Arc rise to the mind, as we stand at Chinon, for it was here that her meeting took place with Charles VII., and it was in the Château de Coudray that she remained. Here we are in the earlier mediæval history of France, that bloody period which preceded the Renaissance. Chinon is in contrast to such châteaux as Azay-le-Rideau and Chenonceaux, which

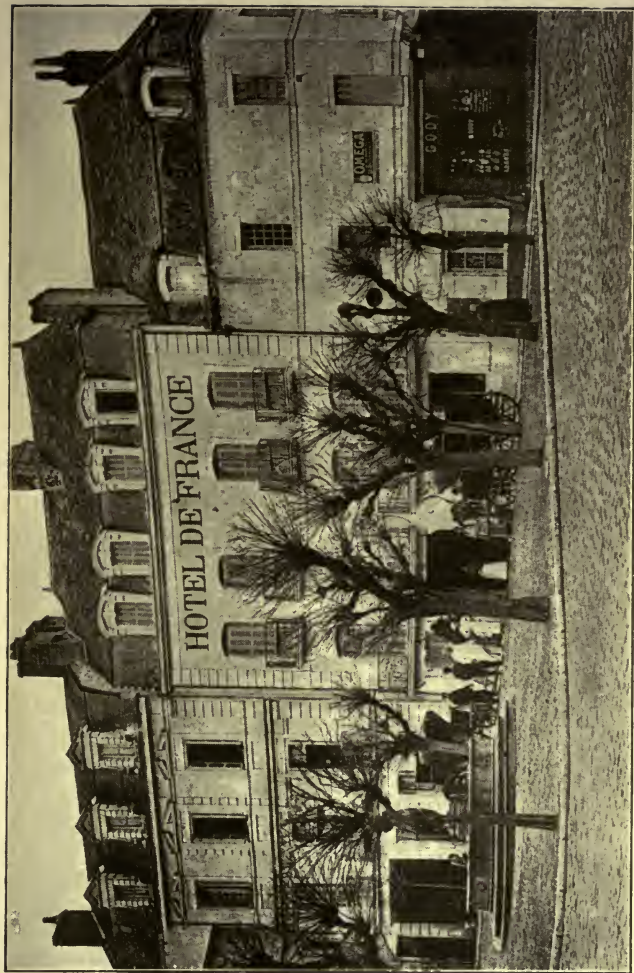
Among French Inns

breathe the luxury of later days. The stern ruggedness of life characterized its existence. Battlements and machicolations crowned its walls, and served to protect its defenders against the encroachments of enemies and the missiles of their armies.

Such was the life of this ancient fortress, whose stones surmount the height above the peaceful river. The arches of the bridge are reflected upon its surface. The whole picture is one of beauty and significance, while from the advantageous positions of the towers an extended view may be obtained over the luxuriant country which stretches beneath them.

The little town clustering at the foot of the hill, and shielded from the river by its lines of trees, has many a quaint corner and picturesque street. Here we find a timbered house, with a carving depicting the stoning of St. Stephen. The Church of St. Etienne has a beautiful portal, which is attributed to Philippe de Comines. There are other churches at Chinon, but we will leave them for others to describe.

The statue of Rabelais (who is reported to have been born here), though modern, is interesting to look upon, and brings back



HÔTEL DE FRANCE, CHINON

Among the Inns of Touraine

to us the writings of this commanding genius of French literature. Indeed, Touraine possesses a literature of its own. Balzac has written of the province at length, and in it are laid the scenes of many of his stories. Voltaire, Rousseau, and others who preceded the Revolution, and whose writings influenced the upheaval of France, were often at Chenonceaux; and other writers have immortalized this country, made dear to the hearts of those who have dwelt upon its hills or within the mysterious shadows of its valleys.

There is another hotel at Chinon besides the Boule d'Or. It is the Hôtel de France. Some of our party decided to try its hospitality, and found it a quaint little hotel, as all such places are, in the small villages which grow up about the larger châteaux of Touraine.

In the afternoon we said good-bye to Chinon, with its ancient fortress and its view above the river Vienne, upon which it is situated. Our way led through a lovely country, for about twenty-five kilometres, to the town of Azay-le-Rideau, where we spent the night at the Hôtel du Grand Monarque. As Mrs. Wilton had been there before, we

Among French Inns

were hurried on the next morning to see the Château de Rochecotte, belonging to the Marquis de Castellane, which is in this neighbourhood, and where the great Tallyrand is reported to have died. Rochecotte is close to Langeais, and it was not long before our party had drawn up before the door of the Lion d'Or, at the latter place.

Langeais is one of that wonderful group of châteaux which make Touraine a province at once rich in architecture, and sought by lovers of beauty. Unlike Chinon, it is now used as a private residence. The modern accompaniments of luxury, the parterres and flowers, the plants upon the terraces, and various other evidences of life, give to it a touch of beauty and a finish which the ruined châteaux lack. Langeais is a noble piece of architecture, dating from a more remote period than Chenonceaux or Azay-le-Rideau. It shows the evidences of the feudal period in the sternness of its walls, the rugged simplicity of its architecture, and the height of its fortifications. It was built by the famous Foulques Nerra, Comte d'Anjou, whose name is associated with both Loches and Langeais. The castle dates from the tenth century. Upon the remains of this

Among the Inns of Touraine

fortress arise the present fifteenth-century château, which still bears signs of having been built to withstand the attacks of enemies. It rises to a great height, and is mediæval in appearance. The court is reached by a gateway beneath two great towers, and is supplied with the ancient portcullis.

The present château was begun by the celebrated barber of Louis XI., Oliver le Dain, according to the historians of Langeais, but was only completed by Jean Bourré, his minister, who was the subsequent owner of this property. As to what happened to the barber, or why Langeais passed out of his hands, we must confess ourselves to be in ignorance. It matters little. The work of completing this fine domain was carried on by his successor, and is to-day one of the historical monuments of Touraine.

By the courtesy of the present owners, visitors are admitted to the court and the interior of the château. The rooms are furnished with ancient furniture, pictures, tapestries, and all the accompaniments of the luxurious beauty which was so prevalent in the Renaissance. The decorations are less

Among French Inns

fantastic than those of Chenonceaux, and for that very reason perhaps more in keeping with the character of the architecture.

The terraces of Langeais are one of its most beautiful features. We have spoken of the parterres; now we observe the orange-trees, which bloom in France in summer-time and lend their formal dignity to such places as Langeais. They are here in all their beauty, stationed like sentinels of fragrant beauty, and replacing the warlike guards which defended Langeais through the earlier centuries. The bloody days which characterized the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in France have left little trace of their existence here. As we bathe ourselves in the sunshine that warms the terraces of Langeais, and gaze over the fair view of the surrounding country, we find only such peaceful warriors as the lines of poplar-trees, which seem to be marching in martial array by the borders of streams or through the verdant tranquillity of valleys. They have replaced the soldiers of Louis XI. and other monarchs, who for a thousand years invaded and devastated this beautiful country. There were periods of peace, as there were those of war, and we must not

Among the Inns of Touraine

believe that Touraine was not allowed time to beautify her royal residences, or embellish them with the accompaniments of luxury and ease. They are, at many places, noticeable, and at Langeais we find them in all their charm and beauty.

Mrs. Wilton was more pleased with Langeais than Chinon. It conveyed to her something more in keeping with her own ambitions and tastes than the ruined walls of that earlier mediæval fortress.

"I sometimes feel that I should like to own one of these châteaux," said she. "The life here seems to be ideal, and then I could have such agreeable house-parties all summer long, and take people off for automobile trips," she added, carried away by the charm of her surroundings.

"Why do you not buy Azay-le-Rideau?" said the Frenchman. "It is the gem of the Renaissance, and I believe could be bought now, since they have sold the pictures and other works of art."

"We might go back to-morrow, and look it over more carefully than we did yesterday," said Mrs. Wilton, who seemed really enthusiastic over the idea.

"I think you will find it too far from

Among French Inns

Paris," said Mr. Wilton, throwing cold water on the plan.

But Mrs. Wilton was not to be turned aside from her intention, and in spite of Mr. Wilton's objection she returned the following day and went over the château from attic to cellar in the most practical and careful manner. During her inspection she pictured herself giving the most remarkable fêtes and entertainments since the days of Catherine de Medicis at Chenonceaux. She beheld the Duc de St. Galmier and the Duchesse de V——, with all the brilliant company which she would assemble about them, possibly headed by royalty itself, seated at her dinner-table, and viewing an evening fête from the terrace of the château.

"You know that it would be a very nice place for George and Gladys to come to for the summer, in case we did not come abroad ourselves," said she to Mr. Wilton. But the latter did not see the force of the argument, possibly because he feared that he would be forced to play host at too many house-parties, and that his wife might even cause him to take lessons in the French language, a thing which he had always positively refused to do. The possibility,

Among the Inns of Touraine

however, had always been held over him by his wife, like the "Sword of Damocles," and he feared this punishment more than anything that might happen to him during their yearly trips to Europe.

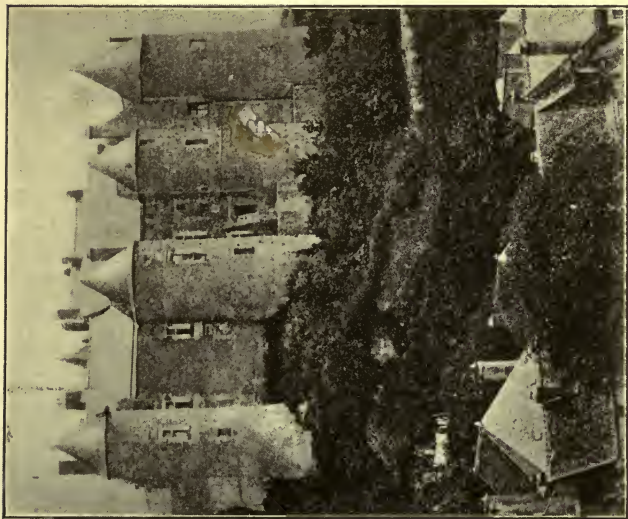
From Azay-le-Rideau our party went directly to Tours, where they stayed at the Hôtel de l'Univers, which, if not an inn, is a very comfortable hotel to stop at. For the convenience of other travellers, we may mention also the Hôtel de la Boule d'Or, which is more of a typically French hotel than the De l'Univers. It was pleasant to have the comforts of a city once more, after the primitive conveniences of the country inns and other places in which we had remained for so long. The host and hostess of the Hôtel de l'Univers made us feel that we were really welcome, and gave us every information in regard to the places to visit in the neighbourhood, as well as in Tours itself.

The city is the old capital of Touraine, and is now the capital of the Department of Indre-et-Loire, named from its two rivers. Tours is a very ancient city, dating from the Roman period, and has a long and interesting history.

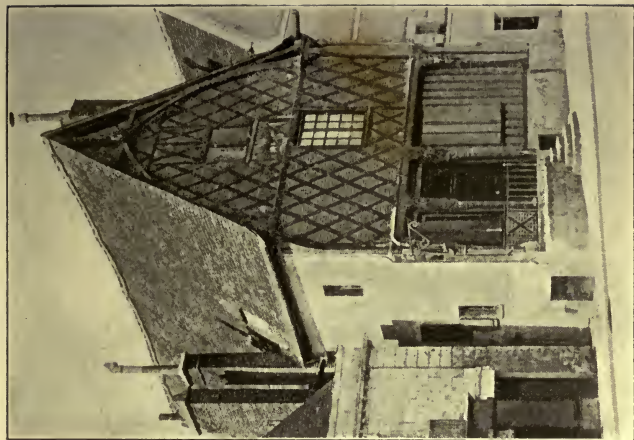
Among French Inns

The Counts of Touraine were the governors of Tours at an early period. Later it was owned by Henry II. of England. In the thirteenth century, after a series of struggles, it was incorporated as part of France. The town was fortified by François I. It has been the scene of many sieges during the religious wars which rent France through the middle ages, as well as the Renaissance. To-day it is a centre, in more respects than one, not only of Touraine, but of France. It is here that we find the purest language and accent of the French in all its beauty and richness, a language recognized by all the world as the most facile, the most musical, and the most potent for international uses. Its literature is unrivalled. Its development and growth have advanced with that of its people. It is the synonym of perfection, and the medium of the world's thought. Though English may supplant it in the future, it must always remain unequalled in certain respects.

Tours is an excellent centre for excursions, marked in the landscape by the towers of its beautiful cathedral, which we will not attempt to describe here, but which we would counsel those who visit the city to investigate.



CHÂTEAU DE LUYNES



OLD HOUSE, LUYNES



Among the Inns of Touraine

A kilometre from the town is Plessis les Tours, where Louis XI. died, and where the world was rid of one of its most perfidious rulers. In the château, which was largely destroyed during the Revolution, was one of the prisons of the famous Cardinal de Balue.

Marmoutier, Rochecourbon, and Luynes are all close to Tours, while Loches is not far distant. We visited the Château de Luynes the day after our arrival. It is a pleasant ride in an automobile from Tours, and is a picturesque and interesting place to see. The castle, though rather stern and bleak in appearance, is approached by a long flight of steps leading to a Romanesque doorway, with high walls, partly covered with vines and overhanging creepers. The castle is flanked by a number of bare, circular towers, with plain, pointed roofs, telling us at a glance that it was built originally for use more than for beauty.

In early times, Luynes was the domain of the Comté de Maillé, which was created a duchy by Louis XIII., for his favourite minister, Charles Albert de Luynes. The present Duc de Luynes still owns the château. There is nothing here to tell us of the

Among French Inns

effete and luxurious days of the Renaissance; nothing of the delicacy of beauty, the richness of carving, or the graceful outlines which characterize other châteaux of Touraine. Here we find a monument which represents the stern significance of life. The virile qualities which made the French so great a nation were uppermost when the Château de Luynes was built to defend those who upheld the sovereignty of France. Their successors have not seen fit to array this ancient fortress in that lighter dress which we find clothing other châteaux of France. It would seem that they preferred to retain in its simplicity the glorious traditions of their race, and let it stand as a silent witness to their deeds. As such, we must approach the château, and take from it that sense of ancient hardihood which characterized the origin and growth of France.

Let us descend again these ancient steps and wander through the little town, picturesque in its quaint tangle of houses, and observe a delightful example of the timbered house of the fifteenth century. It has carved pillars, with the figures of the Madonna and St. Christopher, and is one of the features of the village. Such is the general aspect

Among the Inns of Touraine

of Luynes; a clustering town, crowned by the castle upon the height above it, the usual arrangement which we find in France for the châteaux which were built primarily for defensive purposes.

Returning to Tours, we made our way on the following day to Loches. Near it is the sixteenth-century Château de Sansac, which is a pleasing example of the Renaissance. From it we may observe Loches rising before us, the towers of its church and the great dungeon lifting themselves upon the brow of the hill upon which they stand, while below in the valley are, here and there, poplar-trees, which give to the whole scene an element of romance. A mile from Loches is Beaulieu, whose streets and houses are delightfully picturesque, more so, in a sense, than those of Loches.

Beaulieu has many attractive points, among them the abbey church, part of which is now ruined, which was built by Foulques Nerra in the eleventh century, and where he lies buried. There is an interesting pulpit which stands outside of the abbot's house, which is a noticeable point for visitors to pause and admire; and the old mill beside the river has a rare charm which has at-

Among French Inns

tracted many artists in summer, and where, if we are able with our brush, we, too, may pause and draw from it a picture to keep as a souvenir of the picturesque qualities of Beaulieu.

Thus we arrive at Loches, that sinister and forbidding abode of monarchs in mediæval France, that dungeon, where the spirits of many a noble victim wore themselves out in hopeless longing for freedom while enclosed beneath the gray stone walls that served them as a prison. What memories of Charles le Chauve, of Richard Cœur de Lion, of Philippe Auguste, of Louis XI., return to us as we mount this hill and wander through the ruined citadel! It is a tale of misery, sorrow, and despair, of torture, evil-doing, and tyranny, that weaves itself into the history of Loches.

The town, starting upon the bank of the Loire, opposite Beaulieu, is a picturesque tangle of houses, many of them of great age, and rises to the hill above, where we enter the precincts of the castle. The origin of the town is said to have been coincident with that of the monastery founded in the fifth century by St. Ours. In the following century the castle made its appearance.

Among the Inns of Touraine

From the ninth to the thirteenth century Loches was the property of the Anjous. In the twelfth century it was taken by Richard Cœur de Lion. Retaken by Philippe Auguste, it was given by him to his Constable of France.

Loches has always been a combination of royal residence and prison. Many of the French kings have dwelt there, and perhaps its most sinister recollections date from the reign of Louis XI. We alighted at the Hôtel de la Promenade in the little town, and set forth almost immediately to visit the château. The donjon rises in gloomy sternness, its Romanesque architecture of the twelfth century being well suited to its uses as a prison. Here the Duc d'Alençon, the Comte de Tours, Thibault the Third, and many others, were imprisoned. The partially ruined buildings and walls of the ancient fortress cover a great space upon the crest of the hill. They form almost a miniature city in themselves, now dead, but once teeming with life, with human feeling and intrigues, with royal commands, with military accompaniments of the court of France; and beneath it all the unheard cries of prisoners enclosed in living tombs, or going

Among French Inns

to their death in the mysterious watches of the night. Such were the days of Loches at the time when Louis XI. held sway, and wore his famous cap, crowned with the images of saints, which he so poorly imitated in life.

One of the most famous portions of the castle is the Prison des Évêques. Here we find one of the most pathetic remains of the history of those royal prisons, in the simple Chemin de la Croix, fashioned by the bishops during their imprisonment. From the walls of their cell rude pictures of our Saviour's Passion looked down upon them, and aided them in the celebration of their mass. Our guide shows us the marks of their hands, which still remain, where they clung to the walls, in their endeavour to obtain some light from the narrow opening which served them as a window. How awful must have been their confinement, and how great the sufferings of these two divines, we may readily imagine, as we look upon these evidences of the past. Let us leave them and visit La Tour Ronde, where hung the iron cages in which were suspended the Cardinal de Balue and other victims of the cruelty of Louis XI. They were not more

Among the Inns of Touraine

than seven or eight feet square, and whether the cardinal was ever suspended in one of them or not,—there is a question,—they certainly held other prisoners. There was a secret passage, the remains of which still exist at Loches, where Louis XI. could come and taunt his prisoners as they hung in mid-air. He was frequently accompanied by Oliver le Dain, a fitting companion for such an errand. There the king, when not praying to the images upon his cap, would indulge himself in all the wickedness of his soul, and add insults to the injury which he was already doing to others less powerful than himself.

These are the gloomy, we might almost say repugnant, recollections of Loches, now a dignified ruin, bathed in the sunlight of heaven, and serving the peaceful ends of all historic monuments in France to-day,—the reception of visitors from other portions of the world who make their pilgrimages to such time-honoured spots.

The remains of Le Martelet, a fifteenth-century building, still exist; the upper portions have been destroyed. In it were the common prisons of Loches. One of the most interesting was that where Ludovico

Among French Inns

Sforza was incarcerated for a term of nine years. The walls are covered with half-effaced frescoes, or drawings, as well as a portrait of himself, made with the simple materials which he had at hand.

Let us leave such unhappy scenes to historians who are more inclined to dwell upon the painful passages of history, and pass on for a brief visit to the church and town, before leaving Loches behind us and proceeding farther south. The church stands upon that portion of the hill covered by the remains of the château. It was begun in 962 by the father of Foulques Nerra, and continued by the latter. If we may quote the words of Viollet-le-Duc, who has written of this church, "it is possessed of a savage beauty, a strange monument, into which are moulded the influences of Oriental art with the methods of construction that were adopted in the North at the beginning of the twelfth century." It possesses a superb portal of that period, and is, on the whole, an interesting, though rather severe, building. Its towers are uneven, but rise in majestic dignity against the sky.

Descending to the town, we may observe the Tour St. Antoine, the remains of a



HÔTEL DE LA PROMENADE AND TOUR ST. ANTOINE,
LOCHES

Among the Inns of Touraine

Renaissance church. Another feature is the Hôtel Nau, in which are some tapestries and a fine chimney, with a bust of Diane de Poitiers. The Hôtel de Ville, as well as some good houses, are all of the Renaissance.

"It is interesting and heroic," said the Englishman to Mrs. Wilton, as they walked back to the hotel, "but there is something rather bare and forbidding about it all."

"I don't know but what I agree with you," replied the latter. "Let us try and forget about the prisons at dinner, and get Count di Pomponi to tell us a story about some of his love-doings in Italy, for I feel as if I needed diversion."

"What is the plan for to-morrow?" asked George Van Cortland, as they met at the inn for dinner.

"Well, I guess we're going back to Tours, and then right down into Provence as fast as we can go," said Mr. Wilton, with a wink of his eye, "for I expect you young people will be wanting to get up to Paris pretty soon."

"Ah, signorina," said the count to Miss Wilton across the table, "what a beauti-

Among French Inns

ful ring that is upon the finger of your hand!"

"I am glad you like it," said Gladys, blushing. "It is the ring which George has given me."

CHAPTER XII

IN OLD PROVENCE

ON our return to the Hôtel de l'Univers, at Tours, we were glad of a chance to rest, and so remained a day or two before starting on our journey southward.

Thinking it would take too long to go comfortably by automobile, we took one of the good trains to Lyons, sending the machines ahead to meet us there. The journey is a pretty one, by way of Châteauroux, Montluçon, and Roanne. Lyons is a large city, in fact, the second largest in France. It is the capital of the Département du Rhône, and lies at the joining of the river Rhône with that of the Saône. On the banks of the latter rise the oldest and most picturesque portions of the city.

We were driven to the Hôtel de l'Europe, in the Rue de Bellecour, which has a fine view. After visiting the sights, which include the cathedral and the Galerie de Pein-

Among French Inns

ture, in which is a fine collection of pictures, we entered the automobiles to continue our journey through the valley of the Rhône into Provence. Our machines were certainly the perfection of art in the manufacture of automobiles, and carried us over the smooth roads with a speed and ease as unusual as it was agreeable.

As we sped southward through the Midi of France, the sun sent out a radiant quality which is only to be met with in the South, and gave to everything an almost dreamlike atmosphere. Can we wonder at the story of Tennyson's "Lotos Eaters," or at the *dolce far niente* of the Italian, when we breathe in this exotic air, that gives its languid tendency to mankind, and soothes us to fancies and dreams? There is a subtle influence in every breath, which charms us with its sense of unreality. Yet it is real, and produces a very definite reality of life, full of art, of history, of interest, to those who study it.

Provence, that ancient province in the southeastern portion of France, contains much that is architecturally and historically delightful to the traveller. The old flavour of the French, touched by the Italian influ-

In Old Provence

ence, mellow and alluring, pervades this country from the valley of the Rhône toward Northern Italy.

South of Lyons, and on the Rhône, is Vienne. The Gers empties into the larger river here, and behind the town rises Mont Salomon. We stayed at the Hôtel du Nord, and visited the ancient temple of Augustus and Livia, which has remained from the Roman days, and which possesses some beautiful fluted columns. Near it are indications of a Roman forum, long since demolished.

The cathedral of St. Maurice, which dates back as far as the eleventh century, is a picturesque church of the flamboyant Gothic style, approached by a large flight of steps at the end of a street.

In the Boulevard Pyramide is the ancient obelisk, known as l'Aiguille, standing upon a Roman arch. It formed, originally, part of a circus, which has almost entirely disappeared.

"How different all this is from Touraine," said Mrs. Wilton, as she stood looking at the cathedral.

"Yes," said the Frenchman. "You know Vienne was the ancient capital of Burgundy, and has often been a place of residence for

Among French Inns

the Dauphins of France. What a change now from the life of other days, when the younger court held sway here. Let us go and look at the old theatre. There is a picturesque gateway, which is very Italian in effect."

They wandered on and found the gateway an attractive subject for a sketch, which Mary Van Cortland took an opportunity of making, with very pleasing results.

It seemed to the writer of these pages that he had rarely seen so much taste shown in a water-colour sketch, and he was inclined to look at it with unusual appreciation; but that may have been from eyes that were prejudiced in her favour, so attractive did she seem to him. The air of the south is conducive to romance, and there is no telling what havoc it may not work in the heart when least expected.

From Vienne to Valence is a beautiful journey along the borders of the Rhône, its valley running through southeastern France to Avignon and Arles, and making the western boundary of Provence. There are many delightful places to visit between Lyons and Avignon; but we paused only at Valence, situated near the point where

In Old Provence

the river Isère empties into the Rhône, and from there pushed farther south.

We were ready to start on this trip, when it was suggested by the Frenchman that we should diverge from our course, and, striking to the eastward, visit La Grande Chartreuse. Although it was some distance out of our way, we decided that it was too good an opportunity to lose, and, changing our plans, set out for this interesting spot.

The shortest route from Vienne was by way of Chambéry, due east, and half the distance between the Rhône and the Italian frontier. We arrived at Chambéry in the evening, and put up at the Hôtel d'Angleterre, which we found comfortable enough for our purposes. The town was the ancient capital of Savoie, and has a cathedral and an old château of the thirteenth century.

The next morning we went on to La Grande Chartreuse, which is a most delightful ride of about thirty kilometres. The nearest place to the monastery is St. Laurent du Pont, about twelve kilometres distant, from which point carriages may be taken. We pushed on to the objective point through interesting mountain scenery, more like that of Switzerland than France. The Cascade

Among French Inns

de Couz, described by George Sand, is still attractive, and merits a pause in an excursion. At Les Echelles we obtained our first view of La Grande Chartreuse, nestling among the mountains dotted with evergreen trees.

At St. Laurent we follow the little mountain torrent, and pass the factory where the famous liqueur is made, which has made the name of Chartreuse famous throughout the world. Mounting the beautiful road which winds up the steep, rocky ascent, we reach the monastery. The whole character of the scene is as different as can be from those parts of France which we have been visiting, and the contrast makes it all the more interesting.

La Grande Chartreuse is one of the most important and famous of French monasteries, still keeping up its sacred work and cloistered life. It was founded by St. Bruno in the eleventh century. He repaired to the French Alps, and, accompanied by a few companions, obtained a grant of land, and there established this institution. The present buildings date from the sixteenth century, and are picturesque, with their pointed roofs and severe pinarets, as well as their

In Old Provence

double rows of small windows, in keeping with the scenery about them.

La Grande Chartreuse has been the meeting-place of the Carthusian monks for centuries. The income derived by the monks from the sale of their liqueur is large, and this they expend in good works throughout the surrounding country. The vast buildings and galleries are most interesting to visit, and so engrossed were we in our inspection that we ended by staying for luncheon, which is served to visitors at a moderate price, and we finally decided to remain overnight.

"Dear me, how strange it seems to be staying in a convent," said Mrs. Wilton. "Apparently *we* have to stay in a different place from the gentlemen, and are not even allowed to enter the monastery. There are two sisters at a building called the Infirmerie, who are very kind, and say we are to remain there."

The Frenchman was in raptures at being able to stay at La Grande Chartreuse, and the other gentlemen of the party were pleased also. We slept in cells, comfortably enough, rose early, and had a very good breakfast at half-past eight. The monks

Among French Inns

arose at five and began their devotions, which are continued at intervals throughout the day and evening. We found them most agreeable to talk to, and, on the whole, enjoyed thoroughly our visit to this interesting place. Before leaving, the next day, we all visited the little chapel of St. Bruno, a tiny shrine perched upon a rock among the trees, at the spot where the founder of the monastery established his first hermitage.

From Chambéry we journeyed to Grenoble and thence to Valence, leaving the charming scenery of the French Alps for the valley of the Rhône once more. There is an old familiar saying in French that,—

“A Valence
Le Midi commence,” —

though we are accustomed to associate it with places even farther north. It is, however, a typical town of Le Midi, and is to-day the capital of the Département de la Drôme. In the fifteenth century Louis XII. gave the Comté de Valentinois to Cæsar Borgia, and with it the capital town of Valence. It was from here that Diane de Poitiers, the beautiful mistress of the French king, derived her title of duchess, and with

In Old Provence

her name it has since been associated. The Hôtel du Louvre et de la Poste is a pleasant place to stay, in spite of its long name. There we spent a day wandering about and inspecting the cathedral, which is strongly Roman in character. In it is a bust of Pope Pius VI., whose heart reposes in a sepulchre.

The association of the Popes with Southern France was very important, and lasted for the whole period of the fourteenth century. They resided at Avignon, where their ancient capital is, and even after their return to Rome, in the fifteenth century, they still ruled through one of their representatives. This fact has added, more than most things, to the influence of the Italian spirit over this portion of France, and we observe its evidences at all points.

From Valence to Montelimar, and from there to Orange, is a delightful journey, along the banks of the Rhône, the great river running always southward to the Mediterranean. Here we reach at last the real doorway of old Provence, the land of the ancient farandola, of serenades, of romance and chivalry. We are no longer in Touraine. The courts of the French kings

Among French Inns

have lost the character which they possessed in Normandy or elsewhere. Here we may live again in the days of the troubadours, and hear the sounds of the guitar and the tambourine accompanying the legends and folk-songs of their times. The days of the Crusades have returned anew, and we are in an atmosphere as different as can be imagined from that of other portions of France.

The real character of old Provence is to be found in these places bordering upon the Rhône, or eastward toward the Alps. It is in such places as Orange, Avignon, Digne, and Aix, that we find the true temperament and feeling of this ancient province. In the southern towns of the coast, which form the Riviera of France, are to be found the activity and life of to-day. The new Provence extends from Marseilles to Toulon, Hyères, Cannes, and Nice, rather than upon the northern slopes of les Alps Maritimes. The southern coast is filled with the modern, artificial life of fashion and the world of to-day. The ancient character is elsewhere, and this we are in search of in our present pilgrimage.

Orange is a most interesting place from

In Old Provence

this point of view. Its aspect is that which we would associate with the days of the Emperor Charlemagne, or the Prince of Orange. It is the place from which that well-worn title in European history has emanated, and represents the independence of a principality, besieged by a king of France. Orange was originally the capital of the Cavares, and in the reign of Charlemagne was made a countship; but not until after the Treaty of Utrecht did it become properly a part of France.

Architecturally the town is important, and deserves the attention of every one who is interested in such monuments as the Arch of Augustus, the "Château de l'Arc" (the abode of the Princes of Orange), the cathedral, or the Roman theatre. Though the Visigoths did much damage to the ancient monuments of Orange, these still remain, to remind us of the days of Gaul and the later Emperors of Rome.

"It is almost like being in Italy, is it not, George?" said Gladys, as they stopped at the Hôtel de la Poste to rest, after a walk through the town and a view of its sights.

"Yes," said George. "I wonder, dear, if you really would like to go there on our

Among French Inns

wedding-tour. I think it would be ideal myself."

"What are you two talking about there?" queried Mrs. Wilton, as she joined them. "But, then, I suppose I should not ask. Of course you are making love and deciding on plans for the wedding. There is only one thing I pray, though, Gladys, and that is that you will not do anything *more* without consulting your mother. It was bad enough to have you run off from Trouville with your father and get engaged; but if you make any private arrangements about the wedding, I do not think I could bear it."

That was a field in which Mrs. Wilton felt herself rightfully entitled to display her powers and her energy. She intended to make the Van Cortland-Wilton wedding one long to be remembered in the glorious annals of Hymen. With this in view, she was already beginning to make preparations. Hardly a day passed that she did not despatch letters to her daughter's dressmakers in Paris to prepare for their coming. For, once there, not a moment could be lost; every day would be filled to overflowing before they left for America.

With these thoughts in her mind, Mrs.

In Old Provence

Wilton set out the following day, with the rest of her party, for Avignon and Tarascon. There is a charmingly picturesque place near by called Vaison, with an old inn, where we paused upon our way. The inn is the Hôtel de la Commerce. The place dates from the early centuries, and is said to have been founded by the Greeks, and to have been a rich and flourishing city, after the Romans overran the country.

Thus, on to Avignon, which seems, as it were, the centre of the thoughts which are associated with Provence. We alighted at the Hôtel de l'Europe, which may be recommended in many ways, and where the traveller is likely to be comfortable during his stay. The town of Avignon has had a long and notable history, out of which arise the majestic figures of the several Popes, who, for a century, made it the seat of the Holy See.

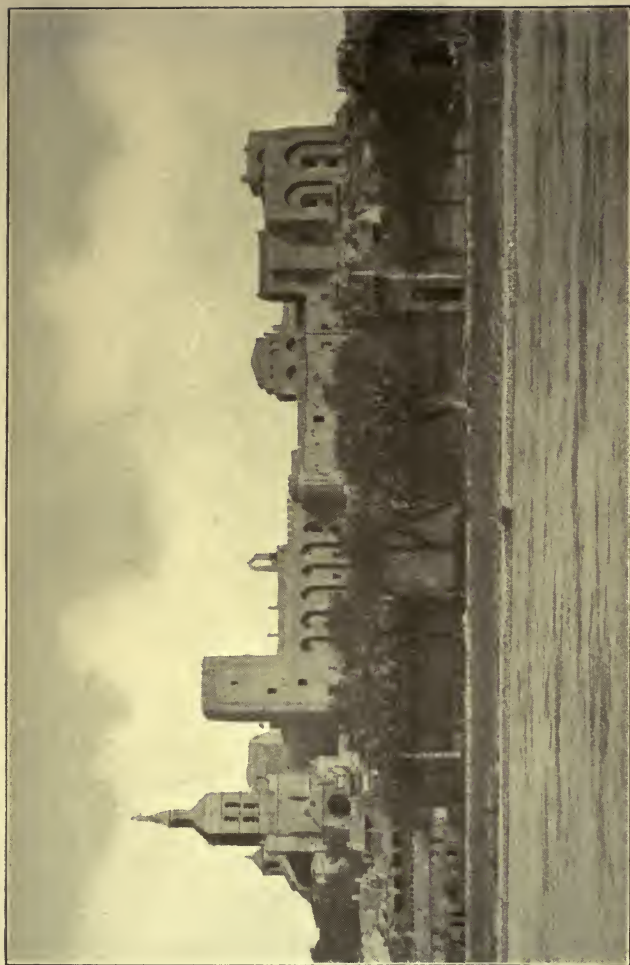
Its situation is picturesque, sublime almost, as it rises upon the hill above the waters of the river, that lies in beautiful stillness in the evening light. As the capital of the Département de Vaucluse, it still holds an important place in this portion of Provence. The great Gothic palace of the Popes re-

Among French Inns

mains in stern and warlike grandeur within the town. It is rather the fortified relic of a temporal than of a spiritual sovereign. Still, in those days the temporal power held sway, and men were filled with the wild passions and religious controversies that distressed the middle ages, and made such places necessary.

We might remain long at Avignon and describe with pleasure its churches, its palaces, its convents, and its museum; but we must away, and leave behind us the beautiful bridge of St. Benezet, which, in other centuries, joined Provence to Languedoc. Tarascon and Arles lie before, and beckon us toward their gates. We leave the ancient capital of the Popes with a genuine regret, to follow still farther the course of the Rhône to Tarascon.

If we turn a little from our path we shall have an opportunity to visit, in the direction of Nîmes, the famous Pont du Gard, perhaps the finest aqueduct in existence. It was built, in a series of immense arches over the river, in the reign of Agrippa, to carry the waters to Nîmes. The arches have been rightly compared to those upon the sides of a cathedral. It is, in effect, a grand and



AVIGNON



In Old Provence

picturesque sight, in every way Roman in character, and bearing the dignity of a score of centuries.

A little northwest of Avignon is Uzès, the seat of the premier Duc de France. The Château of La Duchè is a superb palace, opened to visitors in the absence of the Duchesse d'Uzès, who is distinguished for her charities. The Duc d'Uzès became the first of the French ducs under Louis XIII., taking precedence of the Duc de Luynes, on account of arriving first at the palace, having, according to the historical anecdote, overturned the latter's carriage in his haste to be first before the king to verify his title.

After leaving Uzès, where there is a good inn known as the Hôtel Ferdinand Béchard, we proceeded to Tarascon, which is to the south and upon the banks of the Rhône. The Hôtel des Empereurs opened its arms to us, and we alighted and proceeded to wander about the town, as was our usual custom. Tarascon has all the flavour of Provence, having been one of the cities of Gaul under the Romans. In later centuries it was part of the domain of the Counts of Provence.

There is a beautiful Gothic church at Tarascon, with a delicate spire rising behind

Among French Inns

the view of the square fourteenth-century castle, which stands beside the river, and seems almost to rise out of it. Its rocky foundation is at one end of a large suspension-bridge across the river, and upon the opposite side is the ancient castle of Beaucaire. Its square towers, with mediæval battlements, stand high against the hill behind the town, and are reflected in the waters at their feet. It is a fitting companion to the castle of Tarascon, now unfortunately used as a prison.

From Tarascon to Arles, still on the Rhône, is not a long ride. There the Hôtel du Nord is good, and graced by a delightful hostess, which adds to the comfort of her guests. The town is full of interesting things, not least of which are its women, who are noted for their beauty. The cloisters of St. Trophime, its Roman theatre, its Arènes, are all grand and imposing, and a delight to see. We spent several days in studying the wonderful archæologic treasures of this greater city of Gaul, with its relics of Roman days.

From Arles to Aix via Rognac is an interesting trip. We may mention Manosque, with its pleasant inn, the Hôtel

In Old Provence

Pascal, as well as Riez, with its beautiful Corinthian columns, like those of the Forum at Rome, in passing. They are both worthy of a visit for those who are able to make a digression in their journey through this corner of France.

Aix itself was the ancient capital of Provence, and as such demands our attention and study. At the Hôtel Nègre-Coste we ensconced ourselves and enjoyed a few days' visit to the town. It was here that the Counts of Provence held their courts and reigned supreme. The original Roman camp, from which Aix has sprung, was entirely destroyed by the Saracens, who besieged Provence, and traces of whose attacks appear in the history of Riez. To-day the town is neat and attractive, with an avenue known as the Cours Mirabeau in its centre. The thirteenth-century church of St. Jean de Malte contains tombs of some of the old reigning Counts of Provence. The cathedral, the Hôtel de Ville, and the Tour de l'Horloge, are all interesting and worthy of a visit. The houses of the old Provençal nobles still remain, and denote the luxury of their day.

From Aix we journeyed to Meyrargues,

Among French Inns

Les Arcs, and Grasse; thence to Digne, Sisteron, Veynes, and Grenoble, from which place we took the train north, and sent the automobiles to meet us near Fontainebleau, where our next pilgrimage was to be made.

CHAPTER XIII

AT THE HOTEL DE LA FORET

Barbizon

ON entering the Department of Seine et Marne we proceeded, by way of Fontainebleau, to Barbizon, a charming place much frequented by artists, who gather there in summer and make studies of the country round about.

Nothing can be more conducive to the inspiration of an artist than the imaginative atmosphere of the forest of Fontainebleau, with its fairylike foliage, its brooks and rocky streams, whispering melodies in summer, and giving a refreshing sound of murmuring waters. It takes the visitor by the hand and leads him, willing or not, into that enchanted atmosphere which pervades at once all France, as well as the environs of Paris.

In Normandy and Brittany nature holds sway, and we follow it in its picturesque

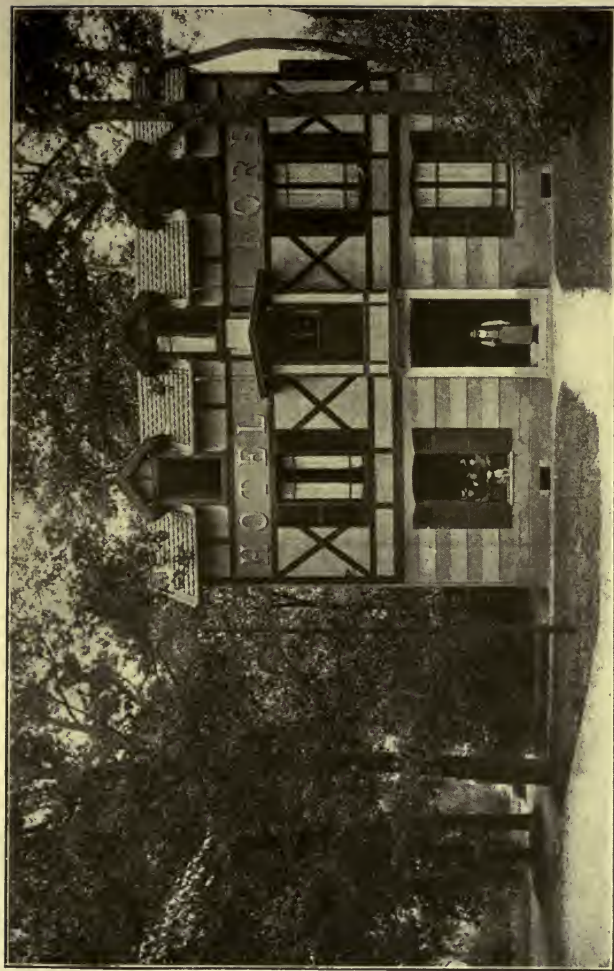
Among French Inns

pageantry, but here the hands of man, inspired by successive Kings of France,—monarchs whose conceptions were as magnificent as the power which enabled them to be gratified,—have trained and utilized the beauties of nature into a more careful and distinctive form. This, time has mellowed, and the result may well be termed an enchanted paradise, as ideal as it is alluring.

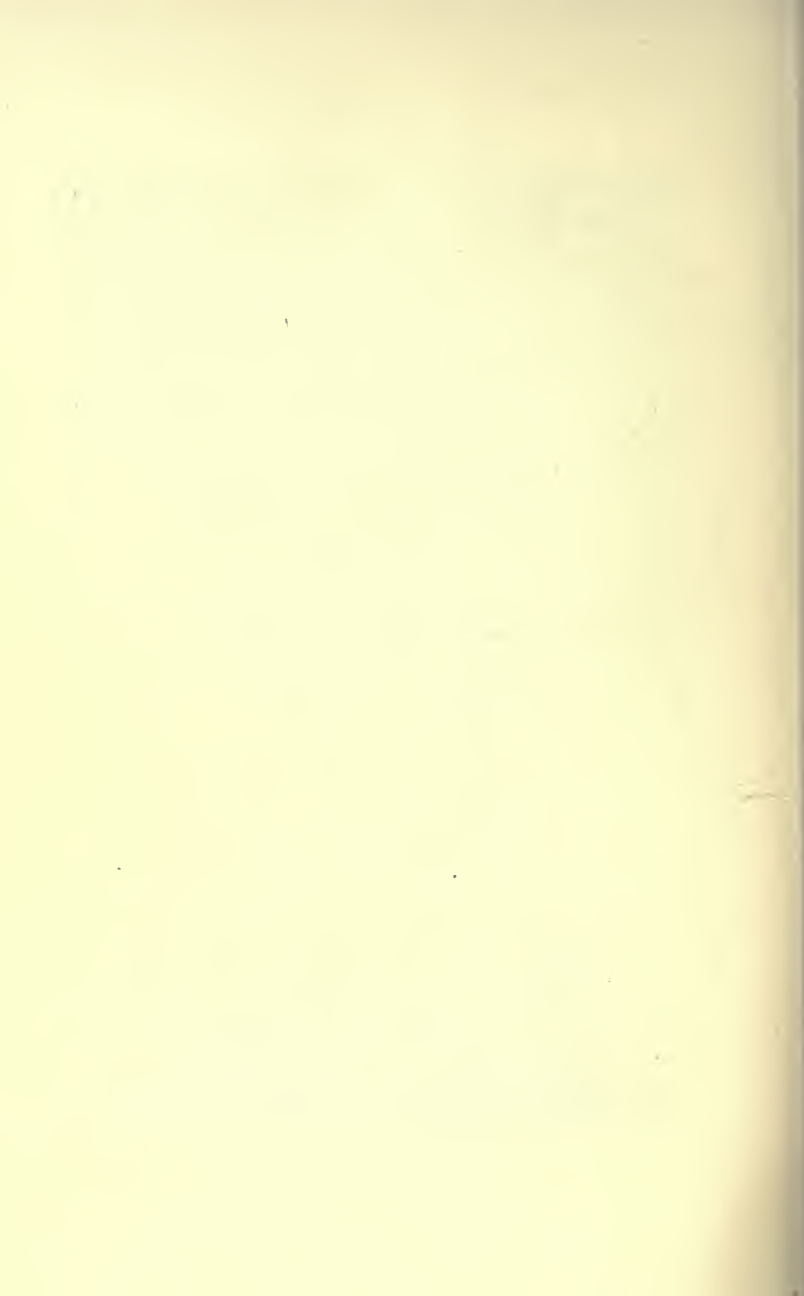
The Hôtel de la Forêt, at Barbizon, is truly a rural abode, and one well fitted to conclude a pilgrimage to rustic France,—one which we are loath to leave, and which we must always remember with pleasure. Its picturesque exterior is only equalled by the attraction of its hospitality and the kindness of its hosts, who received our party with every evidence of friendliness and affection.

George and Gladys were too deeply in love to care very much where they were. But the Hôtel de la Forêt was for them a pleasing setting to their mood. Here, and in the forest, they could, as Mr. Wilton put it, “bill and coo,” as much as they liked, and no one would think it extraordinary.

“Ah, he is lucky, *ce* Monsieur Van Cortland,” said the Frenchman to Count Romeo, the evening they arrived.



HÔTEL DE LA FORÊT, BARBIZON



At the Hotel de la Foret

"Yes," said the latter, "yes, it is the loave that he has, not we, *mon cher*; we must look on and pretend we are pleased. Ah, *misericordia*! If it had been one of us! But —" and the count gave a shrug of his shoulders, and the Frenchman gave a shrug of *his* shoulders, and they both cast up their eyes to heaven in an expression that spoke volumes.

Such was the decree of fate; poor, rejected suitors! There was no accounting for tastes. Yet what could they do but accept it, and look about for suitable wedding-gifts when they reached Paris, for they were both indebted to the Wiltons, and must show their appreciation even if their future happiness was ruined, and their lives henceforward made dark by the marriage of Miss Gladys Wilton to *ce* Monsieur George Van Cortland.

The Englishman confided his feelings to no one, but Mrs. Wilton observed that he did feel something, deep down in his heart; and his wedding-present, a superb necklace, was, perhaps, handsomer than the occasion might have been supposed to warrant.

Thus the party settled themselves in the Hôtel de la Forêt, and proceeded to make

Among French Inns

daily excursions through the forest, to the Château de Fontainebleau, and to many places of interest in its environs. There are few spots more happily situated than Barbizon for such little journeys; and were we to chronicle all the doings of this agreeable party, we should be writing till doomsday, and, we fear, wearing out our readers' patience. We can only follow them to a few of the more favoured spots, and bid them godspeed on their way to Paris and America, and to that famous wedding which was to startle all New York — and the rest of the world into the bargain — in November.

The ride to the Château de Fontainebleau, through the forest, is one of those enchanted experiences with which France delights to surprise her visitors.

This is the land of Corôt and Millet, the modern French painters who touched their canvases with a subtle art that nothing has approached in the treatment of these woodland scenes. Their creative genius has portrayed this stretch of country in all its rural beauty.

The Château de Fontainebleau is one of the most magnificent, the most famous of

At the Hotel de la Foret

France. With Versailles, with Chantilly, with Marly, it ranks among the most beautiful and extensive of the great royal domains, that are to-day filled with treasures, religiously preserved by the state, and showing all the glory of the ancient monarchy of France. The richness of the Renaissance, as encouraged by François I.; the magnificence of the Louis', as portrayed in the beautiful sequence of styles, of Louis XIV., Louis XV., and Louis XVI.; the Empire brought by Napoleon, are all represented in this wonderful ensemble, which is one of the glories of France.

We arrived at the Hôtel de France et d'Angleterre, opposite the château, its noble proportions rising in symmetrical richness before us. The square towers, the pilasters, the cornices, the pointed roofs, so universal in France until Mansard cut them short in his innovation of style (more suitable to *dépendances* than to central buildings), are almost suggestive of the Louvre; but the effect is lighter and more in keeping with the country.

The château has five courts, of which the largest is the Cour du Cheval-Blanche, named from a copy of the horse of Marcus

Among French Inns

Aurelius brought from Rome. Later its name was changed to that of the Cour des Adieux, for it was here that Napoleon bade his impressive farewell to the famous Vieille Garde on his departure for the island of Elba. It must have been an impressive scene, when the great soldier, the conqueror of nations and creator of kingdoms, left his favourite guard, who had followed him through his campaigns and conquests, to become a prisoner of the powers who had at last checked his career.

But if the memories of Napoleon cluster around the Cour des Adieux, what shall we say of the associations that are linked with the *pavillons* of the Château de Fontainebleau, with its buildings and its history? As early as the twelfth century Louis le Jeune, King of France, lived here. After him, many other kings used it as a residence. Several of them were born and died there, and from it were dated acts and incidents of their lives that have contributed to history.

After the death of Philippe V. came François I., bringing with him all the rich glory of the Renaissance. This was a period of greatness for Fontainebleau which has never

At the Hotel de la Foret

been surpassed, and from it date the architectural and artistic beauties of the château. The fêtes which were given by François I. were presided over by his mistress, La Duchesse d'Étampes, than whom, we are told by historians, there was no one more brilliant or learned. If the fêtes of Catherine de Medicis in Touraine were magnificent, those of François I. at Fontainebleau were equally so, and his residence there has been rightly called the golden age of the château.

Succeeding this reign was that of Henry II., who brought with him Diane de Poitiers, the beautiful mistress who has figured so conspicuously in French history, and whose emblems and monogram are carved with that of the king upon the walls of the château. Indeed, the history of Fontainebleau is, in a way, written upon its walls. Each sovereign has added his distinctive character of decoration, and impressed his personality upon the wonderful apartments of the interior. These noble apartments show the early traces of the decorations of the Renaissance in their gilding and pilasters upon the walls, as well as by the heavy beams of the ceilings. Upon this has been grafted, in an artistic manner, the rococo and circular

Among French Inns

forms of the style of Louis XIV., conceptions well suited to the character of so grand a monarch. Here and there, in the same apartment often, we find interwoven with these, portions of Louis XV. and Louis XVI. decorations as well as furniture.

It was the ambition of François I. to make of Fontainebleau one of the glories of the world. Here he succeeded better than at his other hunting château of Chambord, in Touraine. Artists from Italy embellished its walls and ceilings. Il Rosso, the pupil of Michelangelo, came first; later he was supplanted by Primaticcio, and ended by taking poison in 1541, overcome by the fury of his jealous disposition. None of his frescoes have survived the hand of "Le Primatice," as Primaticcio was called in France.

In those days the Italian influence was everywhere at Fontainebleau, as well as in Touraine. Under François II., who succeeded Henry II., Catherine de Medicis held sway, and here took place the famous reception of the embassy of the Catholic monarchs, that came to demand the carrying out of the articles of the Council of Trent. Around the queen were grouped more than a hundred beautiful maids of honour, mak-

At the Hotel de la Foret

ing the scene a glory of loveliness, as well as a national occasion.

Were we to write the history of Fontainebleau, we should fill a bulky volume with the incidents that have been witnessed by its ornamented walls. We are only visiting it in passing, and must, perforce, abstain from much that would be interesting to mention. Louis XIII. was born in the château, but did not often occupy it in his reign. But Henry IV., who preceded Louis XIII., did much to beautify it, and the remains of his work still appear.

Louis XIV. came every year for a periodic residence, and dragged hither his unwilling family and court. We cannot greatly sympathize with those who were not anxious to accompany the king, for there were worse places in France in those days than the fair proportions of Fontainebleau, with its gardens and its matchless forest.

Neither the Englishman nor Count Romeo had ever visited this remarkable palace before, and they were both absorbed, in going through it and observing everything to be seen.

"I like the Italian influence," said the count. "He is always full of colour. Ah,

Among French Inns

we knew how to paint *la bas!*" And he pointed southward to Italy.

"You have led the world in art," said the Englishman, thoughtfully. "And you have served as a model for architecture also. Most of our ducal homes, as well as a number of the greater houses in London, are taken directly from Italian palaces or villas."

"We must go to Italy on our wedding-tour, George," said Gladys, "and then we will visit Count di Pomponi, and he shall show us some of his wonderful things."

"Ah, that would be the next best thing to having you as *la contessa*," exclaimed the exuberant Romeo; and every one laughed, including George Van Cortland himself. He could afford to be generous to the rejected suitors, having won such a prize.

During the visit to Fontainebleau Miss Mary Van Cortland had seemed more and more fascinating to the historian of this pilgrimage. In fact, there began to be no doubt—or at least very little—in his mind that they were mutually agreeable to one another. But there—if we allow ourselves to go on, we shall be telling the secret to all the world; and when all the world knows a thing it is no longer a secret, and this little

At the Hotel de la Foret

confidence *is* a secret, for the present at least.

As we wandered through the Napoleonic rooms, the Frenchman dilated upon the beauty of the Empire furniture, which serves as an example to copyists of this style the world over. The Louis XV. and Louis XVI. furnitures of Fontainebleau are equally if not more beautiful in grace and contour. They are some of the best examples of French furniture in existence, and well deserve the fame which they have won.

As we stood in the bedroom of Napoleon I., which contains his bed as well as the cradle of the King of Rome, the Frenchman told the story of the emperor's attempt at suicide in 1814, at Fontainebleau. It was the custom of Napoleon to carry with him a phial of poison, to be used at a moment's notice, if need be. Feeling that the time had arrived, he took the poison; but it being old, its properties had lost their deadly power, and, instead of their expected effect, they made him violently sick. We may imagine the annoyance of the great hero, when awaiting his end in epic grandeur, to find himself foiled in his intention, and, in a short time, as much alive as ever.

Among French Inns

The Cabinet de l'Abdication, the room where he finally renounced his power, is an impressive apartment, pregnant with memories and associations of the Empire. The Salon du Conseil is decorated by Bouchier, and is one of the most interesting rooms of the château. It was used by Louis Philippe when he resided there. Beyond it is the throne-room, which contains a splendid portrait of Louis XIII., by Philippe de Champaigne, in his best style. It was originally used as the bedroom of the Bourbons, and dates from the reign of Charles IX.

Leading from this apartment is the exquisite Boudoir de Marie Antoinette, decorated by Barthèlemy. All the rooms associated with Marie Antoinette are of great beauty, and characterized by that delicacy of taste which was so a part of all her surroundings. The Chambre à Coucher de la Reine, the Salon de Musique, and other rooms, are included among these apartments.

What wonders there are in these suites of royal chambers, following one another in bewildering succession, and filled with all the memories and traditions of France! From the Grands Appartements and the Salon des Tapisseries, to the Galerie de

At the Hotel de la Foret

Diane, all the periods of the French kings are represented in a superb memorial to their taste and power. We might spend days, even weeks, in their study, and still find much that had escaped our attention.

Without are the gardens, the fountains, the terraces, and the magnificent staircase, with ornamental balustrades, winding down from the first story to the ground, in the centre of the château, in graceful curves. The Chapelle de la St. Trinité, built under François I., and embellished with paintings by Fréminet, under Henry IV., has witnessed the marriage of Louis XV. to Marie Lezczinska, and other royal marriages.

The gardens and parterre, as arranged by Lenôtre, remain as they were at the time of Louis XIV. The parterre is a beautiful example of this form of French garden, like a carpet of flowers in formal arrangement. The Jardin Anglais, after the manner of that at Versailles, is a delightful contrast, and it is a pleasure to loiter there during the warmer hours of the day.

We lingered over the basin in which are the famous carp, the descendants of those placed there by Le Grand Monarque. Count Romeo, who was fond of those animals

Among French Inns

which inhabit the waters under the earth, as well as those upon the earth itself, was soon engaged in feeding the fish. They could be seen beneath the surface of the water, eagerly rising for the pieces of bread which his Excellency threw to them. The pastime is one often indulged in by visitors to Fontainebleau.

This brings us to the origin of the name itself, which is said to come from the Fontaine Bleau, which stood in the centre of the Jardin Anglais. It is a pleasing idea, and one which we are inclined to believe.

"Let us go and take *déjeuner* at the Hôtel de France et d'Angleterre," said Mrs. Wilton. "It is so good, we might almost have stayed *there*, except that Barbizon is more rural, and you know we are determined to be rural this summer, aren't we, count?" she added, with a laugh. Mrs. Wilton looked anything but rural, or in keeping with the artist life of Barbizon, with its colony of painters and its simplicity; but the count agreed, and we repaired to the hotel.

After *déjeuner* Mrs. Wilton insisted upon having a table outside, and playing bridge-whist under the shade of a tree, with champagne served during the game. The count

At the Hotel de la Foret

was "*bien gai*," as he expressed it, and of course lost his game; but that mattered little, since he was to become a millionaire, as the result of the spaghetti. The people of the hotel were in a state of commotion over the Wiltons and their party. But when they found that it was *ce riche Monsieur et Madame Wilton d'Amérique*, they were in a still greater commotion, and we departed in a cloud of dust, mingled with the glory which accompanies American dollars, after a delightful day at Fontainebleau.

The ride through the forest, on our way back to Barbizon, was full of beauty, and the association of the artists, to whom it is practically given over in summer. The lives of Corôt and Millet seem linked with this spot; and real pictures, which must have inspired them in life, appeared to us as we sped homeward at sunset, through the long alleys, in which the Kings of France used for centuries to hunt.

Posts indicate the way to those who are not familiar with the forest. They were placed there by Napoleon III. Following one of them, we came to the Rochers d'Avon, which are lovely to behold, and retain the visitor in the embrace of their

Among French Inns

enchantment. La Mare de Franchard is another beautiful and artistic spot, as well as the Vallée de la Salle and the Fontaines Sanguinède et du Mont Chauvet. These excursions may be made with ease, and are sure to be a pleasure to any one in summer.

At last we returned to the charming Hôtel de la Forêt at Barbizon. Its situation is delightful, between the forest and the Seine, upon which this little artist colony is situated. Here and there little farms and houses are dotted about, with miniature gardens and quaint bits of colour that are dear to the artistic eye. Many are the hopes and ambitions of budding geniuses, of lesser lights, of those even who strive and fail, who live and work at Barbizon. Many are the anecdotes and stories told of the great masters who have dwelt and toiled for greatness in this inspiring haunt.

We lingered several days at the hotel, whose artistic surrounding and quaint charm added much to our enjoyment of its hospitality. One day an excursion was made to the beautiful Château de Vaux-Praslin, near Melun, which was built by the famous Fouquet, in the days of Cardinal Mazarin and La Fronde. Its decorations, by Mi-

At the Hotel de la Foret

gnard and Charles Lebrun, are superb, and its gardens by Lenôtre most beautiful.

At last the time came to leave our pleasant quarters and go to Versailles, where, at the Hôtel des Reservoirs, was to take place the meeting of the Van Cortland and Wilton families. And here we fear that we must draw the curtain upon the scene; for our pilgrimage is at an end, and the summer is fast turning into autumn.

The Englishman must return to Scotland for the shooting season. The Frenchman leaves us for a visit to his family at a château in Seine et Oise. The count must turn his steps to his villa upon the Lake of Como, there to dream, in the shadows of his mountain scenes, of what might have been, if only his love had been reciprocated. We part, dear friends, with deep regret, and may we meet again.

And find in rural France a joy that comes
To those who linger near fair Nature's homes.
Seek something hidden 'neath its sun-kissed soil,
Nor think again of sorrow, care, and toil.
Lead us, fair land, to these thy treasured haunts,
That bless thy name — the magic name of France !

THE END.



INDEX

- Abbaye aux Dames (Caen), 334.
 Abbaye aux Hommes (Caen), 334.
 Abbaye de Bon-Port, 218, 219.
 Abbaye de Fontaine-Guerard, Parc de Radepont, 210.
 Abbaye de Marmoutiers (Lamballe), 189.
 Abbaye de Mortemer (Lisors), 210.
 Abbaye du Bec, 238.
 Abbaye of Graville, 43.
 Abbeys (*See* under individual names).
 Abdalla of Spain, 314.
 Agrippa, 278, 384.
 Aix, 323, 348, 380, 386, 387;
 Cours Mirabeau, 387;
 Hôtel de Ville, 387; St.
 Jean de Malte Church, 387;
 Hôtel Nègre-Coste, 387;
 Tour de l'Horloge, 387.
 Alençon, 294, 295, 296, 299,
 301, 303; Hôtel du Grand
 Cerf, 294; Notre Dame
 Church, 296.
 Allouville, 110.
 Almenèches, 307.
 Ancourt, 229.
 Angers, 340; Cathedral, 342.
 "Anti-Lucrèce," 220.
 Arch of Augustus (Orange),
 381.
 Archelles (Le Petit Arques),
 229.
 Argentan, 275, 308, 310, 312,
 313, 314; Château of, 311;
 Hôtel des Trois Margue-
 rites, 309, 310, 311; St.
 Germain Church, 310, 313,
 315; Tour Marguerite, 311.
 Arles, 374, 384, 386; Hôtel du
 Nord, 386.
 Arlette, 317, 318.
 Arthur, Prince, 207.
 Artois family, 227.
 "Athalie," 282.
 Aubert, Abbey of (*See* Mont
 St. Michael).
 Aubry, Château, 311.
 Augustus, 52.
 Aumont family, 72.
 Auteuil, 260, 261.
 Avignon, 374, 379, 380, 383,
 384, 385; Hôtel de l'Europe,
 383.
 Avranches, 172, 173, 174, 176,
 177; Hôtel d'Angleterre,
 176.
 Azay-le-Rideau, 353, 359;
 Château, 354; Hôtel du
 Grand Monarque, 353.
 Balcinac, 121.
 Balzac, 353.
 Barbizon, 389, 392, 403, 404.
 Barthélemy, 400.

Index

- Bayeux, 85, 334; Château de Creuilly, 334; Hôtel de Luxembourg, 334.
 Beaucaire, Castle of, 386.
 Beaulieu, 363, 364.
 Beaumesnil, Château of, 236, 237, 238; Seigneur of, 237.
 Beaumont-le-Roger, 236, 237.
 Béchard, Ferdinand, 385.
 Beffroi d'Evreux, 234.
 Berenger, 108.
 Bernay, 172, 236, 239.
 Bethencourt family, 72.
 Blosset, 303.
 Bois de Boulogne, 260, 261.
 Bolbec, 69, 71; Family, 90.
 Bonheur, Rosa, 201.
 Bonneville-sur-Touques, 241.
 Borgia, Cæsar, 378.
 Bouchier, 400.
 Boulevard Pyramide (Lyons), 373.
 Bourgogne family, 227.
 Bourré, Jean, 355.
 Bréauté, 72; Sires de, 72.
 Brest, 192.
 Breteuil, 236.
 Brezé family, 72.
 Brionne, 236, 238.
 Brotonne, 117.
 Broussais, 183.
 Brummel, Beau, 333.
 Buckingham family, 70.
 Caen, 168, 172, 239, 333, 334; Abbaye aux Dames, 334; Abbaye aux Hommes, 334; Hôtel d'Angleterre, 84.
 Cæsar, Julius, 52.
 Caino, 350.
 Calet (or Caletum), *See* Lillebonne.
 Calvados, 312, 324, 333, 335.
 Cannes, 380.
 Canterbury Cathedral, 213.
 Cap-Faguet, 94.
 Carée Tower (Tancarville), 64.
 Carnac, 193.
 Carrouges, 301, 302, 303; Château of, 301.
 Carthusian Monks, 377.
 Cascade de Couz, 376.
 Castel du Repas, 311.
 Castellane, Marquis, 354.
 Caudebec, 97, 117, 119, 121, 122, 123, 129, 137, 140, 143, 164; Hôtel de la Marine, 118, 124, 125; L'Église du Caudebec, 130.
 Caux River, 117.
 Cavares, 381.
 Chambéry, 375, 378; Hôtel d'Angleterre, 375.
 Chambois, Château of, 311.
 Chambord, Château of, 396.
 Chantilly, 259, 393.
 Chapelle de la Trinité (Fontainebleau), 401.
 Chapelle de la Vierge (Valmont), 103.
 Charlemagne, Emperor, 381.
 Charles I. (Le Chauve), 121, 218, 219, 364.
 Charles II., 350.
 Charles IV., 9.
 Charles V., 100.
 Charles VIII. (Le Ténéraire), 123, 351.
 Charles IX., 400.
 Charles le Mauvais, 220.
 Chartres, 275, 279, 285, 286, 289, 290, 294, 295, 297; Hôtel de Ville, 291; 293, 299; Hôtel Duc de Chartres, 286, 289.
 Chateaubriand, 182, 183, 184, 201; François René de, 186.
 Château de Rochecotte, 351, 354.
 Châteaulin, 193.
 Châteauroux, 371.
 Châteaux (*See* under individual names).
 Chemin de la Croix (Loches), 366.

Index

- "Chêne d'Allouville," 110.
 Chenonceaux, 351, 353, 354, 356, 358.
 Cherbourg, 239.
 Chinon, 347, 350, 353; Château, 351-352, 354, 357; Château de Coudray, 351; Château de Milieu, 351; Château de St. Georges, 351; Grand-Logis, 351; Hôtel de France, 353; Hôtel de la Boule d'Or, 350; Pavillon de l'Horloge, 351; Tour de St. Martin, 351.
 Churches (*See* under individual names).
 Claude, Mons., 175, 204.
 Clerai, Château of, 308.
 Cleres, Château of, 197.
 Clovis, King, 205, 350.
 Coëtirec, 192.
 Colbert, 9.
 Combourg, 185, 186; Château de, 185, 186.
 Compiègne, 259.
 Conches, 236.
 Condate (*See* Condé).
 Condé, Prince, 236, 237.
 Connetable, 100.
 Conti, Prince, 9.
 Coquesart Tower (Tancarville), 64.
 Cordé-sur-Itton, Château (Evreux), 235.
 Corneille, 201.
 Corot, 392, 403.
 Cottereau, Jean, 279.
 Council of Trent, 396.
 Cour de la République, 34.
 Cour des Adieux (Fontainebleau), 394.
 Cour du Cheval-Blanche (Fontainebleau), 393.
 Cours Mirabeau (Aix), 387.
 Courtray, 74.
 Coutances, 172, 173; Hôtel d'Angleterre, 172; Notre Dame Cathedral, 173.
 "Couvent des Capucins," 131.
 Créqui family, 72.
 Dampierre, 343; Château Morains, 342.
 Deauville, 241.
 D'Alençon, Duc, 365.
 D'Angoulême, Isabelle, 347.
 D'Anjou, Comte, 354; Duc, 9; Marguerite, 46, 342.
 D'Arbrissol, Robert, 345.
 D'Arc, Jeanne, 136, 141, 351.
 D'Arques, Comté, 229; Château, 228, 229.
 D'Aubigné, Françoise, 280.
 D'Audiffret-Pasquier, Duc, 308.
 De Balué, Cardinal, 361, 366.
 De Bavière, Isabeau, 304.
 De Blois, Château, 281.
 De Bourbon, Antoine, 201.
 De Bourbon, Charles, 100, 101.
 De Bourbon-Soissons, Louise, 65.
 De Champagne, Philippe, 400.
 De Choiseul, Duc, 14.
 De Clèves, Catherine, 228.
 De Comines, Philippe, 352.
 De Creuilly, Château, 334.
 D'Estouteville, Sire, 46.
 D'Étampes, Duchesse, 395.
 D'Etelan, Château, 62, 65, 67.
 D'Eu, Château, 226, 228; Comté, 227.
 D'Evreux, Comte, 65.
 De Guyenne, Eleanor, 46, 346.
 D'Harcourt, Château, 236, 238; Duc, 9; Family, 58, 237.
 D'Hébertot, Château, 258.
 De l'Arc, Château (Orange), 381.
 De la Duchè (Uzes), 385.
 De la Forêt-d'Auvray, Château, 311.

Index

- De la Garaye, Château (Dinan), 188.
 De la Saucerie, Château, 311.
 De la Tour d'Auvergne family, 58; Louis, 65.
 De la Trinité Church (Falaïse), 318.
 De la Veve, Château, 294.
 De Lassay, Château, 258; Marquis, 258.
 De Luynes, Charles Albert, 361; Duc, 385.
 De Maillé, Comté, 361.
 De Maine, Duchesse, 228.
 De Maintenon, Mme., 280, 281.
 De Medicis, Catherine, 9, 14, 74, 358, 395, 396; Marie, 303.
 De Montespan, Mme., 346.
 De Montmorencies, The, 58.
 De Montpensier, Louise (La Grande Mademoiselle), 228, 258.
 De Noailles, Duc, 281.
 D'O, Château, 303, 304.
 D'Orleans, Jean, 65.
 De Paris, Comtesse, 227.
 De Parme, Prince, 123.
 De Poitiers, Diane, 369, 378, 395; Maison, 150.
 De Polignac, Cardinal, 220.
 De St. Paul, Comte (*See* Charles de Bourbon).
 De Talhouët, Marquis, 339.
 De Thevray, Château, 236.
 De Valentinois, Comte, 378.
 De Villars, Duc, 14.
 De Villernay, Marquis, 280.
 Dieppe, 211, 226, 228, 229, 233; Château d'Arques, 228, 229; Château d'Eu, 226, 228; Hôtel Royal, 232.
 Digne, 380, 388.
 Dinan, 186, 187, 188; Château de la Garaye, 188; Hôtel d'Angleterre, 186, 187; St. Sauveur Church, 188.
 Dinard, 181.
 Dives, 184, 324, 325, 333, 335, 336, 342; Hôtel de Guillaume le Conquérant, 266, 271, 273, 324, 327, 330, 336.
 Dol, 184, 186; Hôtel de la Grande Maison, 185.
 Domfront, 311.
 Dreux, 275, 276, 278, 279; Hôtel de Ville, 279; Hôtel du Paradis, 276, 278.
 Duguesclin, 100, 188, 314.
 Dumontel, Jacques Gautier, 313, 314.
 Duval, 201; Marie Catherine, 201; Nicolas, 200.
 Échiquier de Normandie, 158.
 École de Cavaliere (Saurmur), 341.
 Edict of Nantes, 70, 341.
 Edward the Conqueror, 46.
 Elbeuf, 172.
 English Channel, 1, 2, 3, 13, 17, 34, 38, 47, 65, 73, 174.
 Epernon, 285.
 "Esther," 282.
 Estouteville, Adrienne, 100, 103; Family, 72, 100.
 Étretat, 27, 28, 32, 39, 71, 75, 78, 80; Hôtel Blanquet, 75, 76.
 Eure River, 211, 279, 282.
 Evreux, 233, 234, 235; Bishops of, 235; Château Condé-sur-Iton, 235.
 Exmes, 311.
 Falaïse, 312, 313, 316, 319, 320, 323; De la Trinité Church, 318; Foire de Gibraye, 319, 320; Hôtel de Normandie, 317; Place de la Trinité, 318.
 Fauville, 99, 107.
 Fécamp, 80, 82, 90, 92, 94,

Index

- 97, 99, 100, 119, 164, 214;
 Abbey of, 85, 90; Fontaine du Precieux-Sang, 94; Hôtel Canchy, 80; Hôtel Chariot d'Or, 80; Hôtel du Grand Cerf, 81; La Retenue, 93; Notre Dame de Salut, 94; St. Trinité, 86.
- Fel, 311.
- "Fenêtre de la Reine Mathilde," 241.
- Finistère, 192.
- "Foire de Gibraye" (Falaïse), 319, 320.
- Folligny, 173.
- Fontaine Bleau, 402.
- Fontainebleau, 388, 389; Chapelle de la Trinité, 401; Château, 392, 393-402; Hôtel de France et d'Angleterre, 393; Cour des Adieux, 394; Cour du Cheval-Blanche, 393.
- Fontaine de Jeanne d'Arc (Rouen), 150.
- Fontaine du Précieux-Sang (Fécamp), 94.
- Fontaine-Henri, Château, 335.
- Fontaines Sanguinède et du Mont Chauvet, 404.
- Fontevrault, 341, 343, 347; Church of, 345; Hôtel de France, 344; Tour d'Ev-rault, 374.
- Fougères, 193.
- Foulques, 354.
- Fouquet, 404.
- François I., 13, 16, 74, 82, 100, 101, 158, 162, 200, 259, 280, 360, 393, 394, 395, 396, 401; François II., 184, 396.
- Fréminet, 401.
- Gaillard, Château (Le Petit Andely), 199, 206, 207.
- Galerie du Peinture (Lyons), 371.
- Geoffroy, 227.
- George IV., 334.
- Gerald, 60.
- Gers River, 373.
- Gisors, 210.
- Godard family, 72.
- Goderville, 71, 72; Barons of, 72.
- Gouffern, 313.
- Grand Chartreuse Monastery, 375, 376, 377.
- Grand-Logis, The (Chinon), 351.
- Grasse, 388.
- Graville, 28, 39, 43; Abbey of, 43.
- Gray, Thomas, 204.
- Grenoble, 378, 388.
- Guingamp, 190, 191; Hôtel de l'Ouest, 190.
- Hamon, Vicomte, 187.
- Haras du Pin, 308.
- Harfleur, 39, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50; Church of, 47-49; Family 74.
- Harold, 187, 241.
- Hastings, 74.
- Havre, 1-31, 32-43, 62, 76, 140; Hôtel d'Angleterre, 5; Hôtel de l'Europe, 5; Hôtel Frascati, 5, 10, 20; Notre Dame Church, 15; Notre Dame de Grace Chapel, 13; Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, 15; St. François Church, 15; Tower of François I., 15, 16.
- Havre de Grâce (*See* Havre, 13).
- Henry I., 58, 122, 275.
- Henry I. (de Guise), 228.
- Henry II., 46, 275, 347, 350, 351, 360, 395, 396.
- Henry III., 74.
- Henry IV., 14, 16, 123, 200, 397, 401.

Index

- Henry V., 45, 46, 122, 318.
 Henry VI., 342.
 Honfleur, 240.
 Hôtel Blanquet (Étretat), 75, 76.
 Hôtel Budan (Saumur), 341.
 Hôtel Canchy (Fécamp), 80.
 Hôtel Chariot d'Or (Fécamp), 80.
 Hôtel Ferdinand B é c h a r d (Uzes), 385.
 Hôtel Frascati (Havre), 5, 10, 20.
 Hôtel Lion d'Or (Langeais), 354.
 Hôtel Nau (Loches), 369.
 Hôtel Nègre-Coste, Aix, 387.
 Hôtel Pascal (Manosque), 386.
 Hôtel Poulard (Mont St. Michel), 177, 178, 181.
 Hôtel Royal (Dieppe), 232.
 Hôtel St. Pierre (Maintenon), 279.
 Hôtel d'Angleterre (Avranches), 176; (Coutances), 172; (Caen), 84; Chambéry, 375; (Dinan), 186, 187; (Havre), 5; (Rouen), 164.
 Hôtel de Bellevue (Trouville), 242.
 Hôtel de France (Chinon), 353; (Fontevault), 344; (Lamballe), 188; (Lillebonne), 51, 54.
 Hôtel de France et d'Angleterre (Fontainebleau), 393.
 Hôtel de Guillaume le Conquérant (Dives), 266, 271, 273, 324, 327, 330, 336.
 Hôtel de la Boule d'Or (A z a y-l e-Rideau), 359; (Chinon), 350.
 Hôtel de la Commerce (Vaison), 383.
 Hôtel de la Croix Blanche (St. Brieuc), 189.
 Hôtel de l'Europe (Avignon), 383; (Havre), 5; (Lannion), 192; (Lyons), 371; (Morlaix), 191.
 Hôtel de la Forêt (Barbizon), 390, 391, 404.
 Hôtel de la Grande Maison (Dol), 185.
 Hôtel de la Marine (Caudebec), 118, 124, 125.
 Hôtel de l'Ouest (Guinecamp), 190.
 Hôtel de la Promenade, (Loches), 365.
 Hôtel de l'Univers (St. Malo), 182; (Tours), 359, 371.
 Hôtel de Luxembourg (Bayeux), 334.
 Hôtel de Normandie (Falaize), 317.
 Hôtel de Paris (Trouville), 242.
 Hôtel de Ville (Aix), 387; (Chartres), 291, 293, 299; (Dreux), 279; (Loches), 369.
 Hôtel des Empereurs (Tarascon), 385.
 Hôtel des Trois Maries (Argentan), 309, 310, 311.
 Hôtel des Reservoirs (Versailles), 405.
 Hôtel des Roches Noires (Trouville), 242.
 Hôtel des Victoires (Yvetot), 110.
 Hôtel du Bourgtheroulde (Rouen), 150, 161, 164.
 Hôtel Duc de Chartres (Chartres), 286, 289.
 Hôtel du Commerce (Valmont), 103.
 Hôtel du Grand Cerf (Alençon), 294; (Fécamp), 81; (Le Grand Andely), 199, 200, 210, 305; (Louviers), 216, 221.

Index

- Hôtel du Grand Monarque (Azay-le-Rideau), 353.
 Hôtel du Havre (Tancarville), 59.
 Hôtel du Louvre et de la Poste (Valence), 379.
 Hôtel du Mouton (Louviers), 217.
 Hôtel du Nord (Arles), 386; (Rouen), 165; (Vienne), 373.
 Hôtel du Paradis (Dreux), 276, 278.
 Hôtel du Viennois (*See* Hôtel du Grand Cerf, Les Andelys).
 Hugo, Victor, 201.
 Hundred Years' War, 46.
 Hyères, 380.
 Ingouville, 28.
 Isère River, 375.
 Iton River, 235.
 Jardin Anglais, Fontainebleau, 401, 402; Versailles, 401.
 John, King, 180, 220, 347.
 Juliobona (*See* Lillebonne).
 Jumièges, 117.
 Karr, Alphonse, 36, 76.
 Kercado, Château de, 193.
 Kergrist, 192.
 King of Rome, 399.
 La Bourdonnais, 183.
 Lackland, John, 107, 219.
 La Flèche, 339.
 La Fronde, 9, 60, 404.
 "La Grande Bé," 183.
 La Grande Trappe Monastery, 294.
 La Haye-Pesnel, 173.
 La Hève, 34, 37.
 Laigle, 275.
 Lamballe, 188, 189, 190; Abbaye de Marmoutiers, 189; Comte de, 189; Hôtel de France, 188; Notre Dame Church, 189; Princesse de, 189; St. Martin Church, 189.
 Lamennais, 184.
 Langeais, 354; Château, 354, 355, 356, 357; Lion d'Or, 354.
 Lannion, 192; Hôtel de l'Europe, 192.
 La Poissonnière, 340.
 La Retenue (Fécamp), 93.
 La Sarthe, 270, 339.
 "La Tour Grise," 275.
 Lauzun, 228.
 L'Aigle Tower (Tancarville), 64.
 L'Aiguille (Vienne), 373.
 Le Breton, William, 207.
 Lebrun, Charles, 405.
 Leczinska, Marie, 401.
 Le Dain, Oliver, 355, 367.
 L'Eglise de Caudebec, 130.
 Lefèvre, Mon., 201.
 Lefèvre-Desnouettes, Adm., 37.
 Le Grand Andely, 199, 204, 205, 206, 220, 233; Hôtel du Grand Cerf, 199, 200, 210, 305; Notre Dame Church, 205; Place du Marche, 204.
 Le Lude, Château, 339.
 Le Mans, 285, 337, 339.
 Lenôtre, 282.
 Le Petit Andely, 199, 205, 206, 211; Château Gaillard, 199, 206, 207.
 Les Andelys, 196, 197, 199, 201, 205, 210.
 Les Arcs, 388.
 Les Echelles, 376.
 "Les Grands Eaux," 282.
 Lézard River, 45.
 Lillebonne, 49, 50, 51, 52-54, 70; Abbey of Valasse, 54;

Index

- Hôtel de France, 51, 54;
 Notre Dame Church, 54;
 Place de l'Hôtel de Ville,
 52, 54.
 Lisieux, 172, 239, 240.
 Lisors, Abbaye de Mortemer,
 210.
 Loches, Hôtel de la Prome-
 nade, 365; Hôtel de Ville,
 369; Hôtel Nau, 369; Le
 Martelet, 367; Prison des
 Évêques, 366; Tour Ronde,
 366; Tour St. Antoine, 368;
 Town of, 364, 368; Châ-
 teau of, 354, 363, 364, 365,
 367; Chemin de la Croix,
 366.
 Loir River, 339.
 Loire River, 336, 339, 340,
 343, 347, 364.
 Longchamps, 260.
 Longueville, Prince, 9; Duc,
 65; Family, 58, 70.
 Lorient, 193.
 Lorraine family, 227.
 Louis XI., 123, 180, 280, 303,
 355, 356, 361, 364, 365, 366,
 367.
 Louis XII., 13, 123, 158, 281,
 378.
 Louis XIII., 258, 361, 385,
 397, 400.
 Louis XIV., 280, 282, 308,
 341, 393, 396, 397, 401.
 Louis XV., 16, 346, 351, 393,
 396, 401.
 Louis XVI., 17, 259, 393,
 396.
 Louis le Jeune, 394.
 Louis Philippe, 8, 17, 242,
 400.
 Louviers, 211, 212, 214, 216,
 218; Hôtel du Grand Cerf,
 216, 221; Hôtel du Mouton,
 217.
 Lusignan family, 227.
 Luynes, 361, 362, 363; Châ-
 teau de, 361, 362; Duc de,
 361; Charles Albert de,
 361.
 Lyons-la-Forêt, 210.
 Lyons, 371, 373; Hôtel de
 l'Europe, 371; Galerie de
 Peinture, 371; Rue de
 Bellecour, 371.
 Maillerais, 117.
 Maintenon, 279, 282, 283, 285;
 Château of, 280; Hôtel St.
 Pierre, 279.
 Manoir d'Ango (Varenge-
 ville), 231, 232.
 Manoir de Meautrix
 (Touques), 241.
 Manosque, Hôtel Pascal,
 386.
 "Marais de Dol," 184.
 Mare de Franchard, 404.
 Maresdans, 220.
 Marie Antoinette, 189, 400.
 Marly, 393; Gardens of, 71.
 Marmoutier, 361.
 Marot, Comte Claude, 188.
 Marseilles, 380.
 Martel, Geoffrey, 350.
 Martelet (Loches), 367.
 Martin-Eglise, 229.
 Matilda, Queen, 334.
 Maupertuis, 183.
 Maurile, Archbishop of
 Rouen, 150.
 Mayenne, 193.
 Mazarin, Cardinal, 9, 404.
 Melun, 404.
 Meyrargues, 387.
 Michelangelo, 396.
 Mignard, 281, 404.
 Millet, 392, 403.
 Mons Tomba (*See* Mont St.
 Michel).
 Montelimar, 379.
 Monthery, 74.
 Montivilliers, 50.
 Montluçon, 371.
 Montréal, 303, 307.
 Mont Salomon, 373.

Index

- Mont St. Michel, 172, 174, 176, 177, 178, 181, 182; Hôtel Poulard, 177, 178, 181.
 Montsoreau, Château, 343.
 Morains, Château (Dampierre), 342.
 Morlaix, 191; Hôtel de l'Europe, 191.
 Mortagne, 294.
 Mozin, 257.
 Musée-Bibliothèque (Havre), 15.
 Napoleon I., 17, 393, 399.
 Napoleon III., 8, 403.
 Nerra, Foulques, 354, 363, 368.
 Neufchâtel, 211.
 Neville, Agnes de, 72; Family, 72.
 Nice, 380.
 Nicolas, 86.
 Nîmes, 384.
 Nogent, 294.
 Norville, 65, 70.
 Notre Dame Cathedral (Coutances), 173.
 Notre Dame Church (Alençon), 296; Havre, 15; Lamballe, 189; Le Grand Andely, 205; Lillebonne, 54.
 Notre Dame de Bourg-Baudouin (Fécamp), 94.
 Notre Dame de Grâce, Chapel of (Havre), 13.
 Notre Dame de Salut (Fécamp), 94.
 Notre Dame des Flots, Chapel of (St. Adresse), 35.
 Orange, 379, 380, 381; Château de l'Arc, 381.
 Orleans family, 227-279.
 Orleans-Longueville family, 101.
 Ourville, 99, 100, 107.
 Palais de Justice (Rouen), 141, 150, 157, 158, 159.
 Palgrave, 90.
 Parc de Radepont (Canton de Fleury-sur-Andelle), 210.
 Paris, 9, 31, 160, 239, 260, 261, 266, 285, 313, 314, 324.
 Parliament of Rouen, 200.
 Pavillon de l'Horloge, 351.
 Pays de Talon, 229.
 Penthievre, House of, 189, 190, 227.
 Phares de la Hève, 36, 38.
 Philippe V., 394.
 Philippe-Auguste, 180, 207, 350, 364, 365.
 Pigault-Lebrun, 201.
 Place de l'Hôtel de Ville (Havre), 15; (Lillebonne), 52, 54.
 Place de la Pucelle (Rouen), 150.
 Place de la Trinité (Falaise), 318.
 Place du Marché (Le Grand Andely), 204.
 Plessis les Tours, 361.
 Plouaret, 190, 192.
 Pont de l'Arche, 211, 218, 220.
 Pont du Gard, 384.
 Pontivy, 193.
 Pont l'Evêque, 240.
 Poussin, Nicolas, 201, 204, 205.
 Prés en Pail, 193.
 Primaticcio, 396.
 "Prison des Evêques" (Loches), 366.
 Putange, 312.
 Quillebœuf, 62.
 Quimper, 193.
 Rabelais, 352.
 Racine, 282.
 Rambouillet, 285.
 Rance River, 187.

Index

- Raoul, 60.
 René, King, 342.
 Rennes, 186, 193.
 Rhône River, 371, 372, 373,
 374, 375, 378, 379, 380, 384,
 385, 386.
 Richard I., Duke of Nor-
 mandy, 234.
 Richard II., 121, 227.
 Richard III., 86.
 Richard (Cœur de Lion), 199,
 206, 219, 346, 364, 365.
 Richard, Duke of Normandy,
 316.
 Richard Sans Peur, 85, 90.
 Richelieu, 9.
 Riez, 387.
 Roanne, 371.
 Robert, Archbishop of
 Rouen, 234.
 "Robert le Diable," 44, 317.
 Rochecotte, Château of, 354.
 Rochecourbon, 361.
 Rochers d'Avon, 403.
 Rognac, 386.
 Rosso, 396.
 Rothomagus, 147.
 Rouen, 9, 46, 62, 63, 86, 99,
 140-169, 171, 193, 197, 201,
 207, 226, 241, 316, 340;
 Fontaine de Jean d'Arc,
 150; Hôtel d'Angleterre,
 164; Hôtel du Bourgthe-
 roulde, 150, 161, 164; Hôtel
 du Nord, 165; Maison de
 Diane de Poitiers, 150;
 Palais du Justice, 141, 150,
 157, 158, 159; Parliament
 of, 200; Place de la Pu-
 celle, 150; Rue Jeanne
 d'Arc, 157, 159; St. Ger-
 vais Church, 167; St. Ma-
 clou Church, 141, 153; St.
 Ouen Church, 141, 152-153;
 Tour de Beurre, 151;
 Tour de la Grosse-Hor-
 loge, 150, 159, 161.
 Rousseau, 353.
 Rue de Bellecour (Lyons),
 371.
 Rue des Rosiers (Trouville),
 242.
 Rue Jeanne d'Arc (Rouen),
 157, 159.
 Runfas, 192.
 Sablé, 339.
 Sacy, Château of, 308.
 Sand, George, 376.
 Sansac, Château de, 363.
 Saône River, 371.
 Saumur, 340, 341, 347, 348;
 Hôtel Budan, 341.
 Scott, Sir Walter, 201.
 Seine, 13, 17, 45, 46, 57, 61,
 65, 117, 118, 121, 140, 199,
 205, 211, 218, 219, 220, 233.
 Sforza, Ludovico, 367.
 Sisteron, 388.
 St. Adresse, 34, 36; Notre
 Dame des Flots, 35.
 St. Avitien, 149.
 St. Benezet, Bridge of, 384.
 St. Briec, 189, 190; Hôtel de
 la Croix Blanche, 189; St.
 Etienne Cathedral, 190.
 St. Bruno, 376; Chapel of,
 378.
 St. Clotilde, 205.
 St. Cyr, 282.
 St. Etienne Cathedral (St.
 Briec), 190.
 St. Florent, 341.
 St. François, Church of
 (Havre), 15.
 St. François de Paule, 15.
 St. Gaubourge, 275.
 St. Germain, Church of (Ar-
 gentan), 310, 313, 315.
 St. Gertrude, River of, 118.
 St. Gervais, Church of
 (Rouen), 167.
 St. Jean de Malte Church
 (Aix), 387.
 St. Laurent du Pont, 375,
 376, 377.

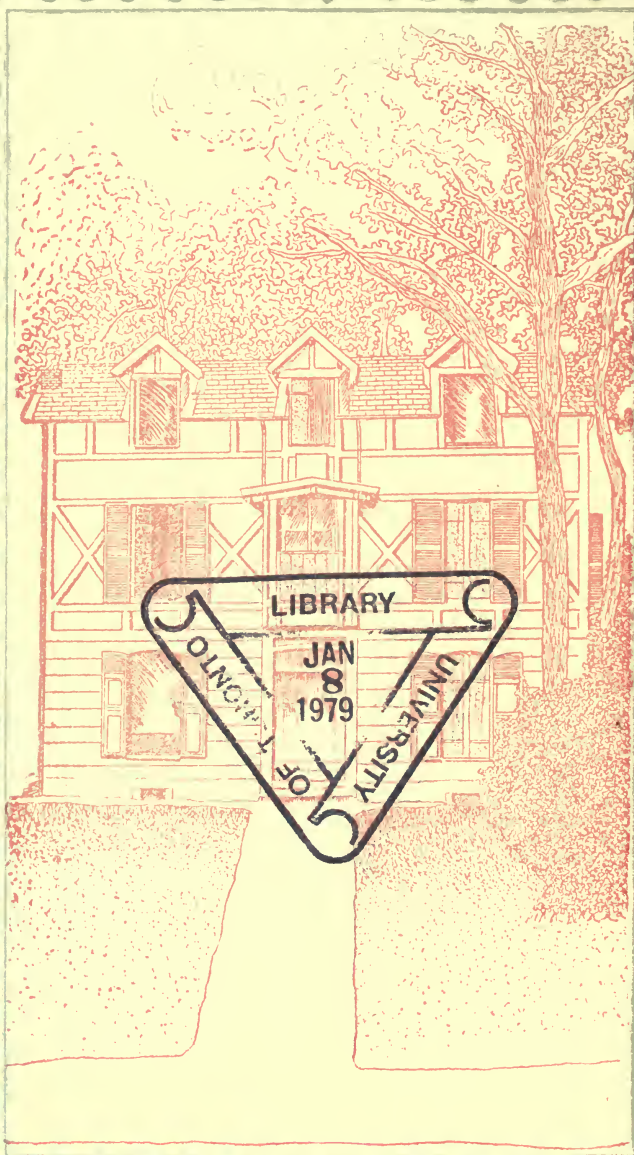
Index

- St. Lo, 172.
 St. Maclou Church (Rouen), 141, 153.
 St. Malo, 181-184, 187; Hôtel de l'Univers, 182.
 St. Martin Church (Lamballe), 189.
 St. Maurice Cathedral (Vienne), 373.
 St. Mellon, 149.
 St. Ouen, 149; Church of (Rouen), 141, 152-153.
 St. Ours, 364.
 St. Sauveur Church (Dinan), 188.
 St. Trinité (Fécamp), 86.
 St. Trophime Theatre (Arles), 386.
 St. Wandrille, 117, 122, 134; Abbaye de, 108, 134, 135, 137.
 St. Waninge, Maison de (Fécamp), 93.
 Stonehenge, Eng., 193.
 Talbot, Gen., 122, 318.
 Talleyrand, 354.
 Tancarville, 57-62; Château of, 57, 59, 64; Family of, 58; Hôtel du Havre, 59; Towers of, 64; William de, 60.
 Tarascon, 383, 384, 385, 386; Hôtel des Empereurs, 385.
 Taureau, Château of, 191.
 Temple to Augustus and Livia (Vienne), 373.
 Thibaut III., 350, 365.
 Tonquedec, 192.
 Toulon, 380.
 Touques, 241, 258; Manoir de Meautrix, 241.
 Touques River, 241.
 Tour de Beurre (Rouen), 151.
 Tour d'Evrault (Fontevrault), 347.
 Tour de l'Horloge (Aix), 387.
 Tour de la Grosse-Horloge (Rouen), 150, 159, 161.
 Tour de St. Martin (Chinon), 351.
 Tour du Serment, 241.
 Tour Marguerite (Argentan), 311.
 "Tour Ronde" (Loches), 366.
 Tour St. Antoine (Loches), 368.
 Tours, 359, 360, 361, 363; Comte de, 365; Hôtel de l'Univers, 359, 371; Hôtel de la Boule d'Or, 359.
 Tower of François I. (Havre), 15, 16.
 Treaty of Utrecht, 381.
 Trouville, 239, 240, 241, 257, 258, 260, 262, 266, 268, 269, 270, 271, 276, 277, 305, 328, 330; Hôtel de Bellevue, 242; Hôtel de Paris, 242; Hôtel des Roches Noires, 242; Rue des Rosiers, 242.
 Turner, 175.
 Uzès, 385; Château de la Duchè, 385; Duc de, 385; Hôtel Ferdinand Béchar, 385.
 "Vadicassess," The, 334.
 Vaison, 383; Hôtel de Commerce, 383.
 Valasse, Abbey of (Lillebonne), 54.
 Valence, 374, 378, 379; Hôtel du Louvre et de la Poste, 379.
 Vallée Ancourt, 229.
 Vallée de la Salle, 404.
 Valmont, 99, 100; Chapelle de la Vierge, 103; Hôtel du Commerce, 103.

Index

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Varengueville, 231; Manoir d'Ango, 231, 232.
 Vaux-Praslin, Château of, 404.
 Veneur, 303.
 Vernet, Horace, 201.
 Verneuil, 275.
 Versailles, 259, 280, 282, 348, 393.
 Veynes, 388.
 Vieille Garde, 394.
 Vienne, 373, 374, 375; Hôtel du Nord, 373; L'Aiguille, 373; St. Maurice Cathedral, 373; Temple to Augustus and Livia, 373.
 Vienne River, 353.</p> | <p>Villers, 204.
 Viollet-le-Duc, 201, 368.
 Voltaire, 353.</p> <p>William (Longue Epée), 86.
 William the Conqueror, 44, 52, 58, 60, 73, 85, 107, 110, 121, 136, 141, 149, 167, 168, 169, 180, 188, 229, 241, 294, 315, 317, 318, 324, 334.
 William Rufus, 168, 241, 275.
 Warwick, Earl of, 14.
 Warwick, Gen., 122.</p> <p>Yvetot, 97, 99, 107, 109, 110; Hôtel des Victoires, 110; Kings of, 72; Richard, 108.</p> |
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