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THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BASTILLE

It is hard to imagine what the Bastille represented to the Paris mob. It was originally a fortress built on the banks of the Seine for the defence of Paris. It was a massive affair, built of cut stone and designed to house a garrison. As time went on it became evident to all that a fortress on the banks of the Seine couldn't defend Paris, so it became a prison. Today Paris sprawls over the plain, up the hills, and down the Seine, enveloping in its embrace the few stones that are left of that old fortress.

It was, perhaps, the most unique prison in the world. One day some nobleman, or writer, would receive a letter from the King's secretary directing him to take up his residence there and to remain there during his Majesty's pleasure. Life was far from unpleasant, if you had enough money. You could have your own furniture in; your food could be sent in from a restaurant. You could entertain your friends, write letters, or read books. The only thing you couldn't do was to walk out. It had all the amenities of an hotel, and some of the prisoners enjoyed life enormously. There was a military governor to look after the place.

Somehow or another it attracted the unbridled fury of the Paris mob in the heyday of the French Revolution. They besieged the Bastille. The governor locked himself in his quarters, but he knew that he couldn't hold out for long. After about three days he decided to surrender to some guardsmen he saw among the mob. They accepted his surrender; but it

didn't save his life. He was brutally murdered and a Paris cook chopped him up in small bits and distributed him to the crowd. They certainly were not a squeamish lot.

Then the mob went round the Bastille liberating the prisoners and the capture of the prison was hailed as a victory for the Revolution. In fact the anniversary of its surrender is now celebrated as a National Bank Holiday. Then the mob actually tore the place down stone by stone. It took a couple of years to do it. Men, women and children banded together to erase it from the ground. I think that one of the bridges over the Seine was built from the huge cut stone blocks that formed the ramparts. Then the site was turned into a park and today, all that remains of the Bastille, with the exception of the bridge, are a few stones heaped in a rough wall rather like a rockery. They look as dark and forbidding now as ever they looked in the days when the mob howled its hatred against the symbol of kingly power.

Paris is a city of history. Napoleon built the Church of the Madeleine, or in other words St. Mary Magdelene, as a tribute to the armies of Republican France. He built the Arc de Triomphe as a tribute to himself. The church, which is one of the most famous churches in the world, is almost pure Greek in its classical outline, and it looks what it is, a monument to the armies of France. Inside it is the most unholy looking church you could imagine. The only light that penetrates it comes from a few

round glass panels in the roof. Around the sides two tiers of columns arise to give a balcony overlooking it all. The altar is magnificent. Plain, but rich. It seems more like a military academy than a church, yet it is a parochial church in the full sense of the word with clergy resident nearby. Down in the side chapel for Baptisms is a notice indicating the priest on call and his name. It provides a marvellous setting for State occasions and sumptuous weddings, and yet you cannot go into it at any time without finding a dozen or so people kneeling in prayer, or just sitting and thinking. I don't suppose I will ever have the courage to climb those steps again and survey the huge fluted columns that form the entrance.

If the **Madeleine** is a monument to the armies of Napoleon, the Arc de Triomphe is a monument to himself. It is magnificent. Floodlit at night it has a grandeur all its own. Beneath the arch lies the tomb of the unknown soldier with the flame that is never allowed to go out. You can stand beside it and see it flickering in the wind. Hardly a day passes that some delegation from the French Provinces doesn't attend to place a wreath upon

the tomb of the unknown soldier. The traffic circles around it unceasingly. You cannot walk across the street today, you must go by a sub-way that leads from the Champs Elysées on either side. You can even go by a stairway up to the top and walk around the roof to survey the twelve magnificent avenues that lead from it spreading out to the four quarters of Paris. Those magnificent tree-lined avenues. The Triumpal Arch forms the centre of what is called the Etoile (or the Star). They say that it was designed to defend the new centre of Paris. Revolutionaries who have gained power usually make quite sure that they will have no imitators. A dozen cannon mounted round the Arc de Triomphe could rake the main boulevards of the City with grapeshot and discourage any attempt to capture the whole of the City. Nevertheless, cities don't change. Not even a Napoleon can shift the heart of a city from one place to another. Paris is a city of many towns, each has its separate individuality. Each district, as it were, has its own peculiar flavour. It would be hard to say even today where the heart of Paris is, because it seems to have so many hearts in so many places.

WALKING OUT IN PARIS

I have a friend who is an agnostic. The difference between an agnostic and an atheist is that the atheist believes that there is no God; the agnostic says, "there may, or may not be a God, and I have heard no convincing argument that there is". The agnostic is usually a benevolent sort of chap. Sometimes the agnostic receives the gift of Faith before he dies, and very often it depends upon the sort of wife that he has married. So, my advice to wives who have unbelieving husbands is to clearly demonstrate in the conduct of their lives and in the government of their tempers that their belief in God does mean something to them.

This agnostic friend of mine has two enthusiasms. One is cricket and the other is St. Bernard of Clairvaux. He has read every book written about

the great St. Bernard and he is never happier than when he can quote from the life of that great Saint of the Middle Ages; and a great man he was too. My friend once told me a story about St. Bernard—that a really notorious and blackhearted soldier of fortune claimed sanctuary in Clairvaux. St. Bernard, at that time, was perhaps the most powerful man in Europe next to the Pope. He ended his talk with St. Bernard by saying, "I just don't want to get my head chopped off". Bernard replied, "There is sometimes a lot to be said for having your head chopped off".

Did you know that the guillotine was invented by an Irishman and perfected by a French physician by the name of Dr. Guillotine? The thing was named after him and has since remained as the instrument of

execution in France. Dr. Guillotine's head was chopped off by the instrument he had perfected, which served him jolly well right.

During his lifetime he was asked what it felt like to be guillotined and he said, "All you feel is a slight tickle at the back of your neck. On the whole, a pleasant experience". I hope he found it so himself. It is the waiting that matters.

The last time I was in Paris I went round to the Palace of Justice, in other words, the High Court. I saw the archway through which Marie Antoinette and her husband climbed the tumbrel that carried them to the guillotine in what was then the magnificent square that is now the Place de la Concorde. It would be wrong to call it the Square of Peace because it is shaped like a melon cut in half. The Republicans had erected a statue of Liberty and the guillotine stood near by. One aristocratic lady as she was ascending the steps saluted the Statue of Liberty by saying, "Oh Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!" It was a sentence that made her name immortal. It is always a very good thing to say something remarkable as you depart from this world.

When eventually the Terror ended Napoleon decided that the place should be renamed the Place de la Concorde, which means the Place of Peace. In the middle of it he erected an obelisk brought as a prize from his campaign in Egypt. There it proudly stands, like a needle pointing to the sky, with its Egyptian carvings (hieroglyphics) as plainly visible in the French sunshine today as ever they were in the Egyptian dawn. Napoleon never foresaw the day when you couldn't stop to look at it because it is forbidden to traffic to stop. It must go on turning round and round. That is the impression that one gets of Paris that you just can't stop anywhere. You must keep on, keeping on.

I never go to Paris without paying a visit to the statue of Clemenceau which is erected on a green sward on the verge of the Champs-Élysées. To me it is one of the most vital statues in the world. Clemenceau was an unbeliever and anti cleric, he was a half Mongol; one of the most ruthless

premiers in the history of France. One Division of the French Army mutinied after the terrible battle of Verdun and the old savage wanted to shoot the lot. After much argument he consented to shoot only one in ten. Finally and very disagreeably he consented that the Division be taken out of the line and it was Marshal Foch, a famous Catholic General, who finally restored the morale of the troops and led them back to fight again. His, was the greater victory.

One day I was walking up the Champs-Élysées, and walking on either side of me were my two nieces, both of them very pretty girls; they were at school in the Marymount College at Neuilly S/Seine. As we walked along those confiding little girls linked their arms in mine and looked completely devoted to me—I knew that it was the expectation of chocolate eclairs in a restaurant half-way up to the Arc de Triomphe—and chocolate eclairs even in those days were very expensive. I think they cost about 200 francs each and the £ stood at 1,700 francs. As this sophisticated French crowd came towards me I could read their minds—"Isn't that a nice old parson with his two little girls out for a walk". Of course I didn't turn my head to see if they looked back at us. Then I noticed that somehow or other their attention was diverted and shortly I knew the reason why. An Englishman in a bowler hat, striped trousers, black coat, rolled umbrella and brief case under his arm, passed us briskly by. If an elephant had walked up the Champs-Élysées he couldn't have created a bigger impression. The French were just amazed at the sight of him. This immaculate, impeccable and entirely unselfconscious Englishman stole the show. They not merely looked at him as he came up, but they turned and gazed after him as he went by. It was one of the most startling manifestations of English stolidity I have ever seen. And it was a very hot day. Most Frenchmen were out in blazers, open necked shirts and wearing sandals. My nieces got their chocolate eclairs. I tried to show no surprise at the bill when it appeared and I paid up as an uncle should. After all, we are young only once.

I have never been able to remember dates. I have always been able to remember facts. Today my sight is failing so that I cannot read and therefore I cannot consult accurate history. I am writing from memory and off the cuff, and if I make a mistake you must forgive the failing memory of an old man.

*

Notice in a Dublin church: "There will be a procession next Sunday afternoon in the grounds of the Monastery; but if it rains in the afternoon the procession will take place in the morning."

*

THANKS

Thanksgiving for prayers answered to Our Lady, Forty Martyrs and St. Jude. B.A.P.

Many thanks to the Sacred Heart, Our Lady, and the Saints.

Mrs. H. Taylor.

Thanksgiving to St. Jude for cure of Nerve trouble. A. G. Offaly.

Grateful thanks to the Sacred Heart, Our Lady and St. Jude for improvement in health. C. Platt.

Grateful thanks to St. Joseph of Cupertino for success in examination. T.M.

Grateful thanks to the Sacred Heart, Our Lady, and the Saints.

B. McL.

Grateful thanksgiving to St. Francis, St. Anthony and St. Blaise for cure from illness. D.M.S.

Thanks to Sacred Heart, Our Lady, and St. Jude. Brigid Rogers.

Thanksgiving to St. Jude for favours granted. Mrs. M. McDonnell, London, S.E.1.

OUR COMING NOVENAS

SAINT JUDE - - - - -	Dec. 16th — Dec. 24th
THE DIVINE INFANT OF PRAGUE -	Dec. 24th — Jan. 2nd
THE HOLY FAMILY - - - - -	Jan. 4th — Jan. 12th

OUR BURSES

	<i>Already acknowledged</i>	<i>Increase</i>
The St. Jude Burse No. 3 ...	£317 7 0	£267 7 0
Holy Child of Prague Burse ...	885 6 0	989 6 0
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Burse ...	390 10 6	392 1 6
Our Lady of Lourdes Burse ...	99 17 6	101 17 6
Immaculate Conception B.V.M. Burse	105 13 6	110 13 6
Little Flower Burse ...	847 5 0	871 5 0
Sacred Heart Burse ...	72 1 6	73 1 6
St. Anthony Burse ...	51 12 6	58 12 6
St. Joseph Burse ...	1,047 2 6	1,047 5 0
Holy Souls Burse ...	12 1 6	12 17 6
St. Martin de Porres Burse ...	8 0 0	9 0 0
St. Martha ...	7 dollars	

A very Happy and Holy Christmas
is my wish to you all

Our Lady keep you!

Yours in Carmel

M. E. Lynch O.C.