

This bright morning in Paris the boulevards are crowded with a passing throng which is gazed at for hours by those who fill the terraces of the cafes to linger over a morning aperitif. At one cafe a party of commercants are transacting business. It is the fat cognac merchant now who is gesticulating to the rest of the group, pausing at intervals to wipe the perspiration from his oily neck. Near them, four Arabs, swathed in spotless burnouses, their bare feet encased in sandals, sip in silence their steaming petites tasses of cafe Maure. Omnibuses lumber by. The air is vibrant with strident cries and the cracking of whips. An automobile passes, sputtering and growling through the melee of the broad boulevard, taking advantage of every chance space as it threads its way out to the green country beyond with its begoggled occupants to dejeuner at Poissy or perchance to dash farther on at a devilish pace to the sea and Trouville. At another table on the terrace is a pretty blonde, her dainty feet resting in high-heeled slippers upon the little wooden footstool which the garcon has so thoughtfully tucked under them, and her eyes shaded by the brim of the reddest of hats. She is engrossed in writing a note, which she finally slips in its envelope. Then this dainty Parisienne calls the chasseur, that invaluable messenger attached to every big cafe, and gives him a few cautionary parting instructions. He springs upon his bicycle and in half an hour returns with another envelope, this one plain and unaddressed and containing a hastily scribbled line in pencil. The corners of the pretty mouth curl upward in a little satisfied smile as the answer is read. "Madame was in," explains the chasseur in a low voice. "It was madame's maid who wrote it for monsieur!" An hour later, in quite a different cafe, in a jewel-box of a Louis XVI. room, a well-groomed monsieur gazes in adoration across the snow-white cloth of a breakfast table at a wealth of golden hair, a pair of blue eyes and what is now the sauciest of little mouths. The scarlet hat has been tenderly laid upon the Louis XVI. clock, its brim discreetly covering the dial. The aged garcon allotted to these indiscreet people has just served the hors-d'oeuvre. There are many other just such dejeuner particuliers in Paris over which no one bothers oneself. A long line of carriages is ascending the Champs-Elysees. Here and there among them you will see the glitter of smart turnouts. In the cool Bois nearby, the deer from their noon-day hiding-places hear the trot of equestrians passing in the feathery alleys. Upon some grassy corner of the wood a family party have spread themselves and laid out their bread, cheese and wine for a day's outing. Like a yellow pearl shimmering far up in the azure, a balloon sails briskly toward Vincennes. All these things happen when the sun shines. When it rains, Paris is in mourning. Cozy corners of cafe interiors are sought. Here, at least, one can forget for the time the chill, rain-swept city. Somber fiacres, drawn by dejected steeds, splash along the glistening wood pavements, with hoods up, their occupants stowed under huge waterproof aprons, the cocher muffled in his coat to the edge of his yellow, glazed hat. Susanne, she of the madonna-like eyes, and the painter's small stove, with its pipe traversing the ceiling, having failed dismally to warm even the cat beneath it have come from their apartment across the Seine to the cafe, and are snug in a corner over a game of dominoes. The cafe is a refuge in raw, dreary weather. Only the wretchedly poor must needs pass by its welcome door. Now and then one does pass: an outcast, pale and hopeless, wrapping her soaking skirts about her shrunken hips with something of her old-time grace; or a man with matted hair, hungry and bitterly cold.

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