**Notre-Dame of Paris**

The Paris of three hundred and fifty years ago—the Paris of the fifteenth century—was already a gigantic city. We Parisians generally make a mistake as to the ground which we think that we have gained, since Paris has not increased much over one-third since the time of Louis XI. It has certainly lost more in beauty than it has gained in size.

Paris had its birth, as the reader knows, in that old island of the City which has the form of a cradle. The strand of that island was its first boundary wall, the Seine its first moat. Paris remained for many centuries in its island state, with two bridges, one on the north, the other on the south; and two bridge heads, which were at the same time its gates and its fortresses—the Grand-Châtelet on the right bank, the Petit-Châtelet on the left.

Then, from the date of the kings of the first race, Paris (being too cribbed and confined in its island, and unable to return there) crossed the water. Then, beyond the Grand and Petit-Châtelet, a first circle of walls and towers began to infringe upon the country on the two sides of the Seine. Some vestiges of this ancient enclosure still remained in the last century; today, only the memory of it is left.

Little by little, the tide of houses (always thrust from the heart of the city outwards) wears away this wall. Philip Augustus makes a new dike for it. He imprisons Paris in a circular chain of great towers, both lofty and solid. For the period of more than a century, the houses press upon each other, accumulate, and raise their level in this basin, like water in a reservoir. They begin to deepen; they pile story upon story; they gush forth at the top, and there is a rivalry as to which will thrust its head above its neighbours, for the sake of getting a little air. The street grows narrower and deeper, every space is overwhelmed and disappears.

The houses finally leap the wall of Philip Augustus, and scatter joyfully over the plain, without order, and all askew, like runaways. There they plant themselves

squarely, cut themselves gardens from the fields, and take their ease. Beginning with 1367, the city spreads to such an extent into the suburbs, that a new wall becomes necessary; Charles V builds it. But a city like Paris is perpetually growing. It is only such cities that become capitals. They are funnels (into which all the geographical, political, moral, and intellectual watersheds of a country, all the natural slopes of a people, pour); wells of civilization, and also sewers, where commerce, industry, intelligence, population—all that is sap, all that is life, all that is the soul of a nation, filters and amasses unceasingly, drop by drop, century by century.

So, Charles V’s wall suffered the fate of that of Philip Augustus. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the suburb strides across it, passes beyond it, and runs farther. Thus, we have arrived at where our story begins. By that year, Paris had already outgrown the three concentric circles of walls which, from the time of Julian the Apostate, existed, so to speak, in germ in the Grand-Châtelet and the Petit-Châtelet. The mighty city had cracked, in succession, its four enclosures of walls, like a child grown too large for his garments of last year. Under Louis XI., this sea of houses was seen to be pierced at intervals by several groups of ruined towers, from the ancient wall, like the summits of hills in an inundation—like archipelagos of the old Paris submerged beneath the new. Since that time, Paris has undergone yet another transformation, unfortunately for our eyes; but it has passed only one more wall, that of Louis XV, that miserable wall of mud and spittle, worthy of the king who built it.

Questions

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Answers

1. B
2. B
3. C
4. D
5. D
6. B
7. D
8. A
9. D
10. D
11. A
12. C
13. C
14. D
15. B
16. A
17. D
18. C
19. C
20. B
21. C
22. D
23. D
24. C
25. C