



Quelle

Reports of English artisans from the Paris Universal Exhibition (1867)¹

Charles Alfred Hooper, cabinet maker London

As I pass through the wide streets, I am delighted with everything I see. The houses so lofty and clean, and white, the novel appearance of the trees planted along the pavements, the fine buildings, the massive bronze lamps, and the magnificent cafés, the tinkling of bells on the horses, so singular to my ear. [...]

Our first evening in Paris we could scarcely believe our senses. It is dark. The Boulevard is crowded. The splendid shops, the grands cafés, the magnificent buildings, the brilliant illuminations, the long lines of trees and lamps, the people sitting in the open air, at neat little marble tables, taking their wine, smoking cigars, or sipping their coffee, under the trees, the handsome French waiters, with their clean napkins and their polite attentions, the orderly conduct of the French people, the soldiers in their gay costumes, the women in their neat dresses and pretty white caps. To us it is fairyland. We remark that there cannot be anything like [this] in the world.(...) I can't say I slept well, for the excitement of the previous day made me very wakeful, it being my first night in a strange city, hundreds of miles away from home. [...]

We heard a little commotion to our right; it was the Empress of France. I was agreeably surprised to find myself close to Her Majesty, but how much more was I in noticing the admirable conduct of the visitors in the building – no pushing, no crowding, no policeman to drive us back, no shouting to clear the ways – although there were plenty of officials in all parts of the building – everyone quietly stood and formed a passage. As Her Majesty passed we raised our hats; she smiled and bowed, and conversed with two gentlemen and three ladies who accompanied her, and occasionally stopped to notice or admire some beautiful work of art. I must here notice that Her Majesty was dressed plain and neat, in black silk and lace. Had we not heard it whispered by our side that it was the Empress, we should not have known her from any other private lady. Thus on my first visit to the Exposition did I remark with surprise the contrast between the polite conduct and good sense of the French, and what I experienced among my own countrymen in London. [...] [pp. 1-3]

Rue St Antoine:

It is a busy street. I note the passers-by; two women with barrows are below, crying fruit, grapes, etc., their heads bound in handkerchiefs, but they are clean, and wear strong shoes, and their clothes, though poor and patched are not in rags. How strange everything looks to me – porters with their loads in frames on their backs, so constructed as to carry with ease; a woman carrying six feet of bread on her arm; soldiers on horseback or on foot; how smart they look, and how important, with their hands in baggy trousers and showy coats; they walk so easy, as though they felt in an honour and not a disgrace to be a military man; priests also, in twos and fours, walking, chatting, laughing in their peculiar costume, oftentimes carrying their large, curiously-shaped hats in their hands, because of the heat; nuns carrying bags and baskets; and women, neatly dressed, wearing every variety of the clean, white, starched caps. In this street live a number of workmen who occupy floors and do their work at home. [...]

They evidently take life easier, appear more gay in manner, and are livelier in their work; there seemed to be more freedom, more equality in manners between men and foremen and their em-

1 Auszüge aus: Reports of artisans selected by a committee appointed by the Council of the Society of Arts to visit the Paris Universal Exhibition, London 1867.

ployers. I noticed this difference between the men in the workshops of Paris and London. Here we have foremen and overlookers who wear fine cloth, and decorate their persons with jewellery, and to whom we are expected to look up as to some one very superior to ourselves, because they carry a pen behind their ear, although they oftentimes know no more of the practical part of work than the cloth they wear. In Paris the foreman appeared in the same garb as the men – the blue blouse common to both; each one treated the other with proper respect, as became the office fulfilled; you were not disgusted with either the pride of the one or the degrading servility of the other; each man knew his place and kept it. Oh! I many times while in Paris blushed for my countrymen! The boys serve three or four years in the trade and have better advantages for getting an art education than we have. [...] the art galleries and museums are all open free to them, Sundays and week days, so that they imbibe a taste for art and refined behaviour, before they can read or write. [...] [p.7]

[In London] how much more were they separated from the educated and refined. We both agreed that the great fault must be in the training of the people. In our country, unhappily, there is a bigoted set of unenlightened enthusiasts predominant, who exclaim against all kind of innocent amusement. They do not aim at, or endeavour to get rid of, vicious pursuits alone, but they cry out against and condemn all what they call wordly vanities. They do not see that man must have some change to cheer and lighten his toils. Hence harmless recreation is not encouraged, and men fly from the workshop to something exciting, maddening, low, and therefore vicious, and which finds greater encouragement from a certain class on account of the money made through it by those who are chiefly interested in its existence. [...]

I found that, taking the average of wage, rent, and living, it was much the same as in London; but then they were not so crowded, their families not so large, and the population not so great in Paris as in London. [...] [p. 15]

William Bramhall, saw maker Sheffield, saws and tools

The general domestic condition of the French ouvrier is greatly inferior to that of the British workman. [...]

France is degenerating in her procreative faculty; the flower of the land are sacrificed to military glory. All suffer conscription and the authorities reject the feeble and ailing, and retain the strong and florid to perish by the multiplicity of avenues that beset a soldier's carrier. [...]

Many ouvriers live beyond the fortifications, in order to live more cheaply; and there are numerous instances where they walk six miles to their work and back each day; and at early mornings all roads running citywards are seen with men, women and girls, like trickling streams at first, increase to the dimensions of tidal rivers until they debouch on the ocean of Paris, and then it is slack water, the tides mingle, currents running everywhere. [...]

In England the government is the servant of the people; in France it is their master. England has universal suffrage in a free press. France has universal suffering by the contrary. Of all the heavily-taxed things in France there is nothing equal to the taxes and embarrassments on thought and diffusion of knowledge. In England a man may say what, where, when he pleases, for or against the government, in the journal or in public meeting assembled, none daring to make him afraid. In France a poet, patriot, and scholar must consume his soul but meditating on ideas which, if uttered, would shed a lustre on his name, and bless the present and succeeding generations; but he must not breathe them to hopeful listeners at a trades meeting, oddfellow's society, or club feast, nor sing the patriotic song which every child knows «La Marseillaise» without the presence of a government agent, who must report to his superior the result of each assembly. [pp. 46-49]

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Die originalsprachliche Version dieses Dokuments ist unter der Rubrik Essays im Themenportal Europäische Geschichte (www.europa.clio-online.de) zu finden.