

On a recent trip to Paris I was able to locate all of my belongings. With the exception of a couple of Caraceni suits that Frank Arthur had to sell in a very straightened moment; everything is intact, although somewhat scattered.

The return to the city was even more dreamlike than I had expected. Strangely enough, from Pijon over, I had been unable to locate a single recognizable town or landscape feature, and the airfield itself, which turned out later to be Orly, bore no resemblance to anything I had ever known before. Even the busride into town passed through unfamiliar streets and boulevards. It was evening; the hour between sunset and the turning on of headlights. After a shorter time than seemed possible to get us into the center of town, the bus gave a sudden turn and Notre Dame loomed up just beside us, silver in the evening light, more beautiful, it seemed to me, than ever before. From there on in to the Place Vandome, and, as a matter of fact, for most of the rest of the evening, I was flooded with tears.

It was something of a trial to have a very officious little Mac who couldn't even pronounce the name of the street we were on, assign me to a room in an absolutely unknown hotel on an absolutely unknown street near the Palais Royal. It turned out to be not too bad, with a comfortable bed and hot running water, a thing which one has Saturdays and Sundays only at the Maurice and Crillon!

After a very good dinner with Tommy Emmett (of all people) at the transient officers mess near St. Augustin, I started off alone for the Rue St. Simon, through the dark streets. This was a completely new experience. First of all, one could see stars in the sky. Paris before had always had a rosy glow that dimmed out everything except the fullest of moons. And then the streets were relatively empty, an occasional bicycle, a darkened jeep, and then suddenly a truck with powerful headlights illumining the facade of a building one had never noticed before, -- one's shadow, for a moment, covered the whole collonade before the Chambre des Deputes. The little islands or refuges have been removed from the boulevards, (presumably to facilitate the movement of German war machines) and consequently certain squares seem like wide rivers of pavement, whose remote tree-lined shores offer in the dark only a relative security. I used Dad's old trick of dangling a white handkerchief from the hand so as not to be clipped off by a passing vehicle. The Seine was calm and reflected the stars. Distant monuments were visible and lined up where one didn't expect them. One was conscious of a characteristic silhouette at the end of every perspective. When no vehicles were in evidence I practiced walking like a Seeing Eye candidate, - bold stride, head up, arms swinging. To avoid curbs altogether, I kept to the pavements, having been assured there were no bomb craters. In Marseille, you know, there are so many bullet holes in the shutters that the streets are dappled with pinpoint of light, but here one has only the faintest sense of

well lighted interiors, blotted from the outer darkness by curtains and shades and persiennes. The sixth floor at 16 Rue de St. Simon was aglow. The light was pink. I had forgotten that I had ordered the linen curtains dyed that summer of '39, and had been visualizing them all along as white! My mind couldn't recall where the bell was, but my hand found it automatically.

The concierge and her husband were at home putting up apple jelly, and we had a delightful visit. The apartment had been sublet for several years to a French couple. Neither of them was in Paris. It was the cook who had the lights on. The French couple worked in the Resistance and were often away. They are nice people, apparently. I called the next day and they were still out, but I went in and looked around and could tell they had taste and culture. Their library so nearly resembled mine that I wondered if maybe Frank Arthur had left some books behind. The piano was well cared for and in tune. There were flowers about and a crackling wood fire in the Salamander. The rug was theirs, a huge oriental affair that covered the whole floor. My beds were missing. So were several lamps. (These all turned out later to be in safekeeping in the locataire's store hours.) Frank Arthur had done a very smart thing. Had this stuff been in my name, it would all have been seized. He took books, cameras, films, linen, clothing, porcelain, bronze, etc., to his home and office, and declared them as belonging to his French wife. He then sublet the apartment, furnished, to these French people whom he knew, and they declared the contents as theirs, (with an agreement of responsibility between them and Arthur). With the rent they paid him, he was able to pay my rent, taxes, and also back pay for Constance. Poor Constance; she stepped out of the picture way back when a couple moved in. They couldn't stand her gabbing. The feeling was mutual. Frank Arthur somehow accomplished the impossible and eased Constance out. She even worked for him for awhile. The barber at the Ritz told me she had been ill, but is now in good health and awaits the return of "Monthieu". Needless to say, I didn't tramp all the way out to Levallois Perret to see her!

I was able to round up a suitcase of negatives that Kodak had hidden somewhere in a cellar, and took it to Frank Arthur to keep with my other effects. He is in fine shape, Mr. Arthur; looks several years younger. He never left Paris and apparently was given quite a run-a-round. The welcome I got was really touching. I spent an evening with him in his very nineteenth century apartment with his very charming white-haired wife, done up in shawls and fur slippers before a tiny stove. We drank kirsch and toasted the liberation; he gave me hair raising accounts of his scrapes with the Gestapo. He kept saying, "I don't know why I did all of this for you, I certainly didn't do it for any of my other clients", - and in effect his room was almost completely filled with my books and knickknacks. Not the least touching detail was a very beautiful framed water color of the port of Cassis inscribed "En reconnaissance a Frank Arthur, Jeanne Daour". Little Jeanne is apparently all right. I read letters she had written him as late as May. She had been able to sell a rug and a commode from my

Cassia house, (on my instructions) for 25000 francs (Lilly Pastre had helped her to locate a proper antiquaire) and with this she and her mother had taken to the interior two years ago. Although she has written every six months or so she has never asked for money. He is undertaking to give her all my news, as arrangements for military communication with civilians are still very confused. In the absence of any other news it is reasonable to believe that she is all right and has not suffered any special trials.

So much for these rather personal matters, - how to begin on the rest?

First, people I saw; Jeanne Bucher, - still in her house, looking exactly the same, dressed in a deep blue wool suit. "Jerome par exemple, on parait de vous hier!" She asked about everyone and glowed over the news of Tony and Willie, Maudie, Mima, Jack, John and Bob. How she loves us all! It almost like Madame Audrian. And as I was leaving she made this very astute remark: "The impression made by the American soldier is exactly the reverse of the German. Some of the Boche, you know, from the front, were rather handsome, - but the back! The back was always impossible!"

Marguerite Robert; I called on her once and found her out. After a short conversation with Kimi through the door, I left a note and came back next day. Marguerite has lost pounds, but is as sweet as ever. I was implored to stay for dinner and did. We ate deliciously in a candle-lit kitchen, toast and butter, spread with a pre-war American lobster paste that she treated as we would fresh caviar, - corned beef, from Madagascar, very fine fettucini with butter and cheese, coeur a la creme and apple sauce, - washed down with Georges Robert's best champagne. Poor Georges is really a confounded boy, although he is the salt of the earth and quite intelligent. She kept gently but firmly shutting him up all evening so we (or rather I) could talk. She wanted to hear all about everyone. She cross-stitched an American flag in coarse wool the night before the army entered Paris, and it hangs in the window. She had no word from Ophelia. She had almost never left the house for five years, and has worked hard at her piano and plays beautifully now "so she can accompany Jeanne when we are all together again in Cassia" she says. Kimi lay like a houri enveloped in old scarves and sweaters in a squashy armchair all evening, coming to life only when she heard a new bottle of champagne being uncorked or a bit of bread turning in the toaster.

Benoit the bookbinder, looks as sickly as ever, and so does his frowsy wife, - he was a prisoner of war for three years in Germany, but was lucky enough to be returned a year ago because of ulcers. He is working hard, although there is some difficulty getting leather. He has moved from Rue Bonaparte to Rue de Verneuil.

Pierre and his wife at Elsa's house are fine and so is the house. There had been a German civilian and his wife living there

and the stories about them are incredible. Except for the top of the piano, I can't see any other damage that they did, but Madame Pierre flies into a rage when she talks about the dirt and squalor of "ces boches". They are sorry that there is no one in the house now (no one responsible, that is) so I spoke with Elsa's secretary, Mme. Souquieres, thinking maybe Col. Ervin could move in. But she tells me she has been able to have a seal put on the house because it was occupied, and that Elsa is expected in the near future. I hope this is true; otherwise, they may get a lot of refugees or an indifferent G.I. outfit. (Frank Arthur very strongly advises me to leave the French people in my place until I am ready to move in. I guess he is right.)

At the bank I found Felix and all the old employees (I still have a fairly hefty balance). Bill Cousins is expected back soon. Julian Allen I met, but not there. I found myself being introduced to Col. Allen one evening when I was playing billiards at Gen Spaatz's chateau in the environs of Paris. Not only is Julian out there but so is Charlie Blumenthal. Tiili is back in her house at Neuilly with her two lovely daughters. She has been of course in hiding, but managed not only to keep well but saved the business and the family belongings as well, by farming them out as Arthur did for me. She is terribly disturbed about her aged mother who was taken to a concentration camp. I was sorry I didn't see her, but Neuilly is awfully far out when visits have to be made mostly on foot.

No further news of Ophelia. Stella and Jean de Limir are in the country (this from their concierge) and are well. So is Marina, although no one knows where she is. The Lavi Alvarez family ("Lilly Albatross" as Dick used to call them) who ran the Boite a Musique are still in their hide-out but are expected back any day, - the older ones, that is. The two sons are in concentration camps in Germany. I read cards from them. They are apparently O.K. Everyone by the way, speaks of the Red Cross prisoner packages as having been the one bright spot of those years.

In the street I saw Lifar (rumored in jail), and at another time Andre Dubonnet. Neither of them looked very much the worse for wear. I had a charming visit with Andre de Fouquieres, an uncle of one of my friends of the one-five squadron and he tried to take me to a Breteuil soiree, but I couldn't make it. Harry Woodruff and Piggy Warburg have steam-heated offices in the embassy and they are fine. Harry has no word from Dick. It is apparently awfully hard to get to Paris.

At one time or another I have had many occasions to go to the Gare St. Lazare, but never before to pay a visit to Norman Slade in his office! He was so nice. We had two get-togethers and a lunch, and he read me letters and showed me pictures, and told me about the birth of Maud's little girl, a fact of which I was entirely ignorant. He kept reminding me of Louis. His uniform hangs about him like a greatcoat, - apparently he has lost pounds.

At another time, while looking into a shop window on the Rue de Rivoli, I suddenly became aware of Tommy Oakes at my elbow. He told me of mother's trip to New York, (I have had almost no news now for over eight weeks) and Maudie's departure for Mexico. I also finally contacted Col. Stovall, Mike's nephew, and my good Mentor; and he was able to clear up several mysteries of my army career for me. He gave me a most delicious dinner and took me with a large party to the Lido. Really a fine fellow. I hope to see him again. He happens to be a great friend of Col. Ervin, my erstwhile boss.

So much for people. Now a little about feminine fashion. Correspondents at the liberation spoke of girls on bicycles with sun-burned legs and simple black dresses. This was summer garb. Now that the winter toilettes are out one can see that the organism of style has gone on evolving independently of the outside world, with which I guess it had little or no contact. Well, it has gone quite another way. The silhouette is astonishing. All skirts are knee length and very full, - all sleeves and shoulders are full, all waists are belted and small. The shoes have built-up soles, away beyond the necessities of wartime economy, but it is particularly the hats that astonish. These crown the same strange coiffures that we have in America, - the high pompadour before at the same time as the low chignon behind. Above all this is either a turban or a bonnet or both, - a turban on a bonnet, or a bonnet on a turban. The turban is a scarf wound over a form which is symmetrical and heart-shaped, and the fringed ends of the scarf often hang down on one side. The bonnet is a felt affair covered with feathers or ribbons, flaring at the top at least a foot above the head. The final effect of the diabolical silhouette and the wide upper story is very 1835 - 40. It is not altogether pleasing. On a bicycle it is amazing.

The theatre is starting up again. I went to performances of "Ta Bouche" and "La Haut" both by Maurice Yvain and dating from about twenty years ago. The first was especially good. It was at Mogador and the orchestra and voices were a delight. I thought back to our first trip to Paris in 1922 when we saw it in the tiny Daunou theatre. Moliere is playing everywhere. I saw Dullin's Avaro, the Vieux Colombier's Scapin and tried to get to the comedie's Malade Imaginaire but couldn't. The Comedie opened with a Soiree des Pecces de la Liberation with readings from Aragon Claudel and many others, among them Walt Whitman! The opera opened with Romeo and Juliette - Gounod - Shakespeare. Another theatre offered one act plays by O'Neill, Coward, Giono, Gogol. Very few of the old names we knew and loved; no Guitry, no Baty, no Pitoeff, no Morlay, no Jouvet, no Cocteau, no Bernstein, no Bouchet. Lots of music starting, several performances of the Paure Requien, none of which could I get to, darn it! Impossible to squeeze into the openings of the conservatoire and the various chamber music courses, all sold out weeks in advance, although certain performances are reserved for the American military.

Now for the Salon d'Automne: it is most interesting! In fact, it caused such a scandal at the vernissage that there are blue spots on the walls of that new museum building Quai de Tokio where people threw bottles of ink. All because one entire room was devoted to the eighty or so pictures that Picasso has painted since 1939. To be sure, they are astonishing canvasses and they were hung without frames. They go on from the Guernica into a new mood, - the subject matter, fairly conventional, but the colors clear and "clair" well set off with lots of black and white. There are many pictures of children (needless to say with multiple faces and banana fingers) and a whole series of skulls, human and bovine. In fact, in the midst of these pictures is hung a sort of sculpted skull with antlers or horns. On close inspection it turns out to be a bicycle seat with a pair of handlebars mounted behind it! More surprising to me even than the Picassos are two small Braques that indicate a very great evolution of style and method, - black and white again and much rich purple, - with an arabesque and linear rhythm far more energetic than before. Matisse is represented by a beautiful but not very recent still life. Bonnard has two marvels of color and pattern, whiter and clearer and more subtle even than before. Lhote, Gromaire and Marquet are doing the same sort of stuff as before. Despiou and Friesz are not in evidence. Soutine has died, so has Maurice Denis, - both had retrospective exhibits covering all periods. Conspicuous among the new young group are Gruber and Tailleux. The first has a very large and unimpressive nude Job seated on a chair in an empty alleyway. No sign at all of his former flare for color and silvery tune. Tailleux has turned from his J. E. Blanchisserie and is doing Fauve work. Many of these men are returning to the 1910 periods of Dufy, Derain and Leger. Red is the predominating color. I was tempted to buy several Tailleux that I saw later in a gallery but didn't get around to it. Prices of well known painters as well as fine rugs and jewels are absolutely prohibitive.

Most of the shops and restaurants are open (except for conspicuous German or collaborationists houses such as Heinkel and Maximes), - but eating away from the messes is not too satisfactory and useless anyway because the messes are so good. The night clubs are all in existence, but very expensive. A Martini at the Ritz bar costs \$1.20.

A conspicuous change in the aspect of the city is the absence of many bronze statues. One didn't perhaps remember just what was commemorated at the crossing of the Boul. St. Germaine and Boul. Raspail or even behind the Madeleine, - but the pedestals are empty now, as are several in the Tuileries and the long Quais. Henry XV is still on the Pomp Neuf and so is Louis XIV in the round square. Both Joans of Arc are in place but Shakespeare has gone from the Boul. Hausmann Diderot still sits in front of Cipp's but Voltaire is gone from his place and so is the fine Carpeaux sphere from the avenue de l'Observatoire. As a matter of fact, the Luxembourg is very shocking indeed. The gardens are still closed be-

cause of mines; many earthworks and concrete pillboxes can be seen through the broken grills; the tree trunks are scarred and battered; the rear facade of the Odon is pock-marked and the palace itself has suffered materially without being actually destroyed. All along the sidewalks and walls in this quarter are little mounds of flowers with plaques indicating where and how such and such a man or woman died. There are places where these are so numerous that one has to pick one's way through them. These also are to be seen on the Place de la Concorde and along the Rue de Rivoli. All over here there are small arms fire holes in the buildings revealing the clean can stone beneath, like newly cut flesh wounds. One pillar is gone from the colossal order on the Grillon. The fountains are intact. The horses of Marly were removed to safety before the war. The Tuileries are the world's finest motorpool. For some reason or other the jeeps and trucks are no less shocking in this purely 18th century landscape than the tomato vines that alternate with the rose trees in the flower beds.

As a matter of fact, Paris has never been as beautiful. It seemed to me that the vast harmony of its layout, - a beauty that is man-made in its entirety (except for the modest presence of the river and certain small, almost inconsiderable hills) - the flow of avenue into place, of narrow winding streets into mathematically planned square, the play of prospectives lined with green, of rhythmic bridges and noble monuments perfectly framed, - that this ensemble, surpassing even the most perfect single masterpiece, qualifies the city as the greatest work of art one can expect to see on earth.



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