On the Boulevards of Paris:

SCENES IN THE PALPITATING HEART OF THE GAY FRENCH CAPITAL, THE MECCA OF ALL AMERICANS

SIDEWALK SEATS OF THE PARIS BOULEVARD.

BY STERLING HEILIG.

PARIS, Aug. 27.—(Special Correspondence.)—This year 100,000 Americans will do the boulevard.

They will sit in the exact center of the world. It is the open sidewalk round the Place de l'Opera—and in the offing, under the awning. There are 15,000 little tables and 49,750 little chairs. Beneath the awnings blow breezes perfumed with absinthe, violets, coffee, cordials and the sachets of pretty women of all lands. A mighty human river flows past—idlers all.

In this charming razzle the most cool-headed Americans have lost their caution and their money. The other day the representative of a New York bank, sat under the letter "I" in the word "Paix" of the flapping awning sign of that world-famous cafe. He bought a delicate mauve-colored drink, with tinkling ice; it seemed as weak as circus lemonade, but tasted delicious.

These sidewalk tables filled with agreeable American tourists, are as good for impromptu conversations as a steamer deck. The New Yorker was soon discussing pauperism in the East side; and his new friends, moved by his earnestness, actually offered him 5000 francs for distribution to the poor of New York.

The New York man, enthused, said he would add 3000 francs of his own. Another American, worked up by hearing the philanthropic conversation, came to them. Another pale mauve drink came to them. The various sums of money in clean French bills were on the table. Mutual receipts were exchanged and documents and money were put in a big yellow envelope for the New Yorker. The new American desired to add 1500 francs, and he hesitated to quit the sidewalk; he was on the lookout for a friend to pass. Would someone take this big French note and get it changed inside?

"You take it."

"No, you."

Each one hesitated out of super-delicacy, till the man with the big note said:

"Oh, I'll go myself and get my money changed. Come with me, you, and talk French for me. Our friend from New York will keep a lookout for my passing friend. He is a tall, spare, red-headed, smooth-faced man in a light gray suit."

They went.

The New York bank man, with the yellow envelope full of big notes in his pocket, scanned the human river tranquilly. He thought no harm, yet harm there was. No one came back; the yellow envelope proved to contain no money, and his own 3000 francs had naturally disappeared with the rest. It was a simple variation of the green goods substitution of valises.

* * *

The Paris boulevard is the only place in the world where such things still happen to men of intelligence. Some pretend that the insidious novel drinks are to blame.

There is a drink called "For the Princes" bearing no hint on its label of the cocaine, poppy and hyssop it contains. Absinthe in green, with opalescent fires; the "Prince" drink is violet, paling into lilac, striking diamond scintillations when the ice swirls in it. A staid American real estate agent liked its looks because it matched his tie.

"Is it temperance?" he asked.

"Very," said the waiter, "and the more you put in water it is more so."

"I have not drunk strong drink for 11 years," the real estate man told the waiter at 4 P. M. At 5 he was explaining it to a stranger; by 5:30 he had invited four people to dinner; at 5:45 he was persuading the policeman to help him count a wad of big notes on the sidewalk table.

At 6 P. M. he sat with folded arms and closed eyes in a beatific trance. All life was brilliant; the tints of women's hats and gowns were dazzling; everyone was young and gay; he heard happy laughter; horses pranced; autos whizzed past; pretty shop girls danced on to their homes, and a glorious red sunset promised a new dawn to humanity. He heard music in his heart beats. He felt his powers grow within him. He was young, brilliant, daring, and he said:

"As soon as I have done a little more reflecting I will buy the Boulevard and give it to these charming people."

* * *

There is no such free amusement in the world. There are Americans in Paris who spend half their time on the Boulevard. They drink coffee or vichy. They seek no gallant adventures. They do not read the cafes' gratuitous papers. They do not play the cafes' dominoes, backgammon or cards. They sit out upon the terraces dreaming gently, stimulated with kaleidoscopic movement, lights and color, leisure, pleasure-seeking gaiety, pellmell, the throbbing mixup of all peoples come to Paris, not to earn, but to spend money.

The sidewalk seats beneath the awnings give a sensation of superiority over the vast pedestrian throng. I know a New York physician who comes every Summer to Paris.

"My vacation is the Paris Boulevard," he says. "I spend it in the open-air shade of these awnings. I want no better combination of rest and amusement than to leisurely watch the human river flowing by. There is no crowd like this on earth; great nobles, renowned financiers, engineers, kings of industry, rub shoulder incognito. Famous beauties of foreign capitals, great actresses and singers, flit past unknown, in their tourist tailor gowns.

"Swindlers who have got away with millions, criminals who have made rich hauls are drawn to the Paris Boulevard irresistibly. In the throng passing us are men who have built great railways, factories or made inventions—for the pleasure of seeing Paris! Here are brigands and robbers from every land. In the rubber swamps of South America, on the blistered sheep ranges of Australia, men make dates to meet upon the Boulevard. Dusky African kings, watching the southern cross at night, are wondering of it."

* * *

The American playwright, whose piece was the greatest success of the last New York season, wrote it at these sidewalk tables. When he was merely a journalist, I thought it a pretext for lotus-eating. He would take a front seat, a raspberry syrup and ice water. Before him rolled the human river. Fakers offered him gold watches and opera glasses at a bargain; they whispered in his ear: "Transparent cards! No two alike!"

All around him sat the chattering, laughing idlers. He had some white paper and a pencil. Sometimes he would write; but we thought that he did it to tell his wife that he had been working. We were mistaken.

"The Boulevard gives the stimulus and repose that help me do my best," he told me later. "At home in my luxurious workroom, the white paper stares me in the face, and the clock ticks accusingly."

"WITH FOLDED ARMS, IN A BEATIFUL TRANCE!" THE HERO OF THE PALE MAUVE DRINK IS SEEN TO THE EXTREME LEFT.

One of the most popular English musical composers gets his inspirations from the Paris Boulevard.

"The rumble of the omnibuses and the sweep of the great throng suggest a hundred schemes for orchestration," he says. "In the interlocking steps of a thousand promenaders I catch the cadence of a new air. The soft, yet mighty, roll of traffic forms a neutral background for the musical imagination."

Certainly I know of two physicians who send half their patients to the "Boulevard cure" for nervousness, indigestion, sleeplessness and melancholy. The New York physician considers it a medical discovery.

"You cannot sit at one of these sidewalk tables without taking the air, nor watching the human river, however listlessly, without catching interest," he says. "The cadence of the multitude is calming to the nerves. The gaiety of pleasure-seekers is contagious, and insomnia seems to be peculiarly benefited by an agreeable, rythmic tiring of the nerve centers."

The Boulevard soothes everything—even suspicion. This is as good an explanation as the pale mauve drinks. There seems to have been nothing pale mauve in the confidence of Mr. Cook, when, guidebook in hand, before the architecture of the Madeline church, he got into conversation with a well-dressed man who said he was Mr. Douglas, editor of a New Zealand paper.

On their way to the spot where Marie Antoinette was guillotined, they met a friend of Mr. Douglas, presented as Mr. Spencer, of Philadelphia. The three took a drive to the Bois.

Up to this moment all was usual tourist amenities. Next day, young Mr. Cook met Spencer by appointment on the terrace of a Boulevard cafe. In peaceful ease they watched the charming spectacle of the great easy-going throng.

"Why could we not do this at home?" they asked. "It is delightful to sit on the sidewalk."

"Look! That man has dropped his pocketbook!" exclaimed Mr. Spencer.

Young Mr. Cook hastily picked it up. He was about to give it to the stranger, when Spencer, to make sure that it belonged to him, required him to tell its contents.

"Two diamond rings, two diamond drops, other jewels and several European banknotes," was the correct answer.

The grateful stranger, John Corcoran, sat with the Americans upon the Boulevard and took a pale rose drink, but young Mr. Cook insists that he had only Vichy water with a pale blue syrup in it.

"Flavor of sweet plums!" he says.

He was the sweet plum.

Mr. Corcoran was on his way to Rome to administer one of the last requests of an uncle. Complimenting young Cook on his honesty, Mr. Corcoran asked him to act as his agent in America on a guaranteed commission of $10,000. Seeing that young Mr. Cook hesitated, Corcoran, to prove his confidence, handed him the pocketbook, while he left for a moment on business. On his return, Spencer joked him, saying that he thought Mr. Cook would not return such confidence.

"Mr. Cook will trust me with his pocketbook," said Spencer; "but he wouldn't trust you with it, while we go across the street to buy cigars."

Mr. Cook still had Corcoran's pocketbook with the jewels in it. So, to relieve Mr. Corcoran's embarrassment, Mr. Cook trusted him with his own pocketbook, containing 1200 francs good cash; and Corcoran and Spencer went to buy cigars. That is all. You know the rest. The jewels that Mr. Cook held turned out to be worthless.

What is this magic place?

Is the Boulevard the brain of Paris? No; the intellectual city is the Latin quarter whose inhabitants are strangers to the Boulevard.

Is the Boulevard the center of Parisian traffic? No; the Places of the Chatelet and Republic must always remain this, by reason of the markets and the railway stations.

Is the Boulevard the money center? No; the bourse quarter is hidden beyond its eastern limit, and the Bourse of Commerce district escapes it entirely, as do those of the Bank of France, City Hall and Ministry of Finance.

Is the Boulevard the center of pleasure? No; Montmartre, with the Champs Elysees and Bois, make the Boulevard seem old-fashioned. The pleasures of Paris do not help or hurt the Boulevard. Its animation is highest twice a day at the very hours when all places of amusement are filled—at 5 o'clock in the afternoon and at 10 at night.

Thus, a not very broad avenue, rather ugly, badly built, with dusty streets, far from parks or gardens, without a single square, is nevertheless the palpitating heart of Paris.

It is the press that does it. Along boulevard and on side streets the great dailies have their offices. What Paris will know tomorrow, the Boulevard knows today. What papers may not print, the Boulevard discusses. The Boulevard is the public opinion of France—and often of the world.

Every tourist feels it. Toned down to whatever note of receptivity that may be his, the tourist feels the shadow of that mighty thrill. It is this participation in a vast collective consciousness that throws the cautious American off his guard. The promenade deck of an Atlantic liner gives the thrill in a small way. The commotion, the movement, the gossip, the common high spirits, the common leisure, common throwing off serious purpose, melt even the fastidious into chance acquaintances they would not make at home.

JEAN LAFITTE, THE DARING PIRATE KING WHO NEVER WENT TO SEA

LIKE that renowned mariner, Sir Joseph Porter, K. C. B., who, by sticking close to his desk and never going to sea, rose to be ruler of the Queen's navee, that renowned pirate, Jean Lafitte, by sticking close to the land and never going to sea, rose to supreme heights in piracy. Lafitte was the hero of Byron's great poem, "The Corsair," and the hero of Ingraham's romance, "The Pirates of the Gulf," which had a tremendous popularity back in the '40s and '50s, yet he never sailed under the black flag, killed only one man, and for the gallant part he played in the battle of New Orleans got the official praise of General Andrew Jackson and President Madison.

Queer man, indeed, was Jean Lafitte. He made one serious mistake and only one. That was in being born a century too soon. Had he postponed his advent he no doubt would have been one of the greatest captains of industry of the 20th century. He had a genius for organization and a wonderful mastery over men. He knew how to hit the imagination of the people, and knew how to turn patriotism to good account. When he got into a tight pinch with the authorities he engaged the best lawyers in the land to defend him. Rascal he was in a thousand ways, but he never was a stupid rascal. Clever in mind, delightful in speech, courtly in manner, he had the entree to some of the finest houses in New Orleans throughout his career.

Master of Industry.

Never before or since has there been such a wonderful establishment as he built up in Barataria. He introduced order and system into the business of piracy and smuggling until he controlled a large share of the trade of the Mississippi Valley. He gave and took orders as do the great merchant princes of today. His warehouses bulged with the plunder gathered by a score of independent bands of buccaneers, but the Government authorities had as much difficulty in proving anything against him as do the authorities today in their efforts against the trusts. What did it matter to Jean Lafitte how his lieutenants gathered their spoil? Some of them had letters of marque from the republic of France and some had commissions from the joke republic of Cartagena to seize the vessels of Spain. But all flags looked alike to them if the vessel promised rich picking, and they were not of a breed of men who had qualms about spilling blood. Into the waters of La Fourche and into the bay of Barataria they brought their prizes or their plunder. Lafitte never bothered to inquire what had become of the crews of the captured craft and never asked for a bill of lading for the goods that came to his clearing-house. To him business was business, and he left the minor details, such as murder, arson and theft, to the recording angel.

Over his vassals he reigned as did a lord of old. The barge with which he traversed the bayous and in which he made the trips between New Orleans and his chief station on Grand Terre was the finest in southern waters; the entertainments he gave were the richest that land of plenty could supply; slaves he had by the hundreds and his life for some few years was all that the heart of a pirate chief could crave.

It does not seem to matter much what handicape a man has in early life. If he has brains, ambition and courage he is certain to succeed. Jean Lafitte was a blacksmith and a horseshoer. He and two older brothers came from France to New Orleans in 1807 or 1808 and opened a blacksmith shop in St. Philip street, between Bourbon and Dauphine. While they worked at the forge or put shoes on horses men gathered about and chatted with them. Jean was singularly attractive. He could speak Italian, French, Spanish, English and Portuguese and had facility in turning a phrase happily and well. He did not have much education, but he was a great reader and was ambitious to become a rich man and a grand gentleman.

Like a Lord of Old.

New Orleans at that time was the most cosmopolitan city in the Western World. It was full of adventures and there was more of luxury and license than anywhere else in America. It was just the sort of atmosphere to develop a Lafitte, and before he had been in the city a year he began to show signs of prosperity. He had shaves and fine raiment and spent more time sporting about town or giving entertainments in his private apartments at St. Philip and Bourbon streets than he did in the shop near by, and black-bearded, fierce-featured men with the roll of the sea in the way they walked were among his most welcome callers. What did it matter if persons hinted that young Lafitte was turning an honest penny of smuggling? There always had been not only a lot of smuggling, but a bit of piracy in the neighborhood of New Orleans.

In fact, in the early days of the colony, when communication with France had been irregular and when British cruisers preyed upon the vessels of France, it would have gone hard with the colonists but for what came to them through the privateers who scoured the Gulf. What had been almost a necessity in the days of French control became almost a virtue while Spain ruled Louisiana, for the tariff duties levied by Spain were frightfully high. And then nature did so much to make the neighborhood of New Orleans a glorious refuge for the rovers of the sea. All the Gulf country between the Mississippi and Bayou La Fourche, and called Barataria, was ideal for the smuggler, the privateer or the pirate. There were entrances to the Bay of Barataria not only from the Gulf, but a multitude of bayous offered concealment and easy communication with the Mississippi.

What was more natural than that the clever blacksmith who spoke so many languages and who had such pleasing address should, after mending the cutlasses and the dirks of the buccaneers, be asked to dispose of some portions of the cargoes they had brought into some secret harbor? The profit was big and there was nothing immoral in the undertaking, for New Orleans at that time had not settled down to a ready acquiescence in American control. Within a short time Lafitte the blacksmith was a subordinate figure to Lafitte the banker-merchant, and people began to look up to him as a man of substance. But Jean Lafitte was not content with the modest returns from handling the goods of just a portion of the Barataranians. He was a monopolist by nature and had the true trust instinct. There was a lot of waste in the piracy and smuggling business as conducted by the gentlemen engaged in those callings, and he, as a man of system and order, could not tolerate waste.

So when Pierre Lafitte looked after the slaves who worked in the blacksmith shop and paid due attention to the accounts in Lafitte's private bank, Jean Lafitte went over to Barataria and set to work to merge into one big organization the rival bands of freebooters who hitherto had known none of the blessings of good business methods. The advantages he offered to them were such as they could not fail to see. Previously they had been to much trouble to dispose of their plunder, and frequently they had been forced to sell their goods at outrageously low prices. He offered to buy their cargoes in bulk and pay spot cash. If fortune frowned on them he promised to be their friend and banker. Clothes, arms, provisions, etc., they could buy from him for cash or on credit. To be sure, he charged a stiff price for what he sold, but the men he had to deal with did not like to haggle about such trivial matters.

System in Piracy.

They had been accustomed to so much loss of time in disposing of their plunder that the proposition presented by Lafitte appealed strongly to them. It gave quick action to them, and that was what they wanted. When they returned from a voyage they wanted money with which to gamble, to drink and to buy fine clothes, and then, when they had squandered their earnings, they were eager to go forth again to search the seas for new plunder. Only a few Companions of the Coast, as the pirate captains called themselves, objected to Lafitte's plan, and one of them, Grambo, based his opposition mainly on the ground that he wanted to do what Lafitte proposed, but he did not have the means or the ability.

Lafitte put an end to Grambo's pretensions by putting an end to Grambo's life, and he shot his rival so quickly and with so much evident pleasure that he won the admiration of all the Barataranians. From that moment Lafitte was the ruler of Barataria. And he was a just and an honest leader, according to pirate and smuggling standards. Each of his lieutenants was independent so far as his own vessel was concerned.

He received from Lafitte prompt and generous payment for such supplies as he delivered to the pirate boss. In matters of dispute between captains and men Lafitte was an umpire whose decisions were fair and just. Under his beneficent and admirable administration piracy, smuggling and slave trading rose to a height of success never before reached in the Gulf of Mexico or, perhaps, in any other port of the world.

To handle the great amount of goods that came to him from the fleets of the pirate and smuggling bands Lafitte had to build big warehouses and employ many men. Stores and shops sprang up in Barataria and prosperity smiled upon the land. Even the agriculturists were benefited, for they found a ready market for their produce. Here is a picture drawn by a woman who visited Barataria at this time:

A Picture of Barataria.

"The blue waters of the bay were gay with the sails of incoming and outgoing vessels. The landing places bustled and swarmed with activity, and capacious warehouses stood over gorged with merchandise, and the cargoes of slaves multiplied, for the contraband slavers were the keenest of patrons of Barataria. The farms, orange groves and gardens of the family houses of the privateers transformed Grande Terre and the islands around the Grand Pass into a pastoral beauty which, with the marvelous witchery overhead and about, of cloud and sea coloring, might be called truly heavenly. A fleet of barges plied unceasingly through the maze of bayous between the La Fourche and the Mississippi. Under cover of night their loads were ferried over the river and delivered to agents in New Orleans and Donaldsonville.

In New Orleans Lafitte had opened an establishement in Royal street, and there a fair quantity of his goods went for sale to the public, but the bulk of his merchandise was distributed secretly to various merchants who were delighted to deal with him. Far up the Mississippi Valley his trade extended and he was a power in the land.

Those were the golden days of the pirates and of Jean Lafitte. Wealth poured in upon him, but it did not turn his head. His ambition was to become a grande siegneur. He studied all the graces of polite society, and in manner and in speech he appeared the polished gentleman. Handsome, gallant, rich, there were not a few persons of prominence and refinement who opened their doors to him and were glad to have him as their guest.

But while Lafitte prospered and Barataria blossomed, the legitimate trades of New Orleans withered and honest merchants were threatened with bankruptcy, complaint after complaint was made to the Governor and the Federal authorities, with but little result. When a revenue cutter was sent to Barataria little was accomplished, for Lafitte always had early advices of what the Government agents were going to do. There was a suspicion that some of the Government officials were in the pay of the pirate chief. However that may be, Governor Claiborne issued a proclamation against the buccaneers on March 15, 1812. Proclamations did not bother the Barataranians particularly, but late in the following year when a revenue officer was shot at a different complexion was put upon the situation. Then the Governor officially denounced Jean Lafitte as a pirate and offered $500 reward for his capture.

Lafitte, clear-headed and clever, saw that this was the beginning of the end. No one paid much attention to Governor Claiborne's offer of the reward, and Lafitte walked the streets of New Orleans and attended entertainments unmolested and journeyed to and from Barataria without hindrance, but he laid his plans for closing out his business. He knew the people of Louisiana favored his trade and that the Governor was without public support in his attitude, but he knew also that sooner or later the law would prevail. So he auctioned off consignments of slaves and disposed of his merchandise as rapidly as possible. Much to Lafitte's chagrin, just about this time some of his followers killed a revenue agent and wounded two others who sought to seize some contraband goods. The Governor called upon the Legislature to vindicate the law and asked for money to raise a body of troops to send into Barataria to wipe out the pirate nests. Lafitte, like a true captain of industry, blocked the Governor's game. Despite all the Governor could do the Legislature adjourned without providing the needed money.

Lafitte's Trial.

Meanwhile Great Britain was making war on the United States, and British warships patrolled the Gulf. A British sloop of war attacked two of Lafitte's vessels, but got such a vigorous reception that it had to flee. This action only added to the popularity and prestige of Lafitte. Had he been vain or foolish at this time he would have bid defiance to the Governor, but he was neither. Instead he cautioned his followers against violence to the authorities, and, incidentally, he made sure that no more revenue officers should be sent into Barataria without his knowledge.

Governor Claiborne, piqued and scandalized by the conduct of the Legislature, paid no attention to public opinion, and instituted criminal proceedings against Jean Lafitte, Pierre Lafitte and all the prominent Barataranians. Pierre Lafitte was arrested and Jean Lafitte was indicted for piracy. Of evidence there was no end, but Jean Lafitte laughed when the news of his brother's arrest and his indictment reached him. He had made arrangements for just this emergency.

Weeks before he had engaged John R. Grymes, District Attorney of New Orleans, and Edward Livingston, the most distinguished lawyer in the United States. Promptly upon the indictment of Lafitte Grymes resigned his office and began preparations for the pirate's defense. Never up to that time had lawyers been paid such fees as Lafitte promised Grymes and Livingston. They were to get $20,000 each. Livingston was a son of the Livingston who was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and a brother of the famous Chancellor. He had been Mayor of New York and member of Congress. Later he became United States Senator, Secretary of State and Minister to France. Grymes was the greatest pleader at the Southern bar. When his successor as District Attorney taunted him in court with having been led from the path of honor by the $20,000 fee from the blood-stained pirate he challenged him to a duel and shot him, crippling him for life.

So nobly did Grymes and Livingston labor for Lafitte that the gallant pirate and his companions were set free. Lafitte invited his legal defenders to Barataria to a glorious banquet in honor of the victory. At this banquet they were to receive their fee. Grymes attended, but Livingston declined. Instead he commissioned his friend to collect the $20,000 and gave 10 per cent of the fee to him for his trouble. For one week Grymes accepted the princely hospitality of the pirate chief. Never did man fare more sumptuously, but when he returned to New Orleans he had no money. He received $20,000 from Lafitte, but, sad to

(Concluded on Page 6.)