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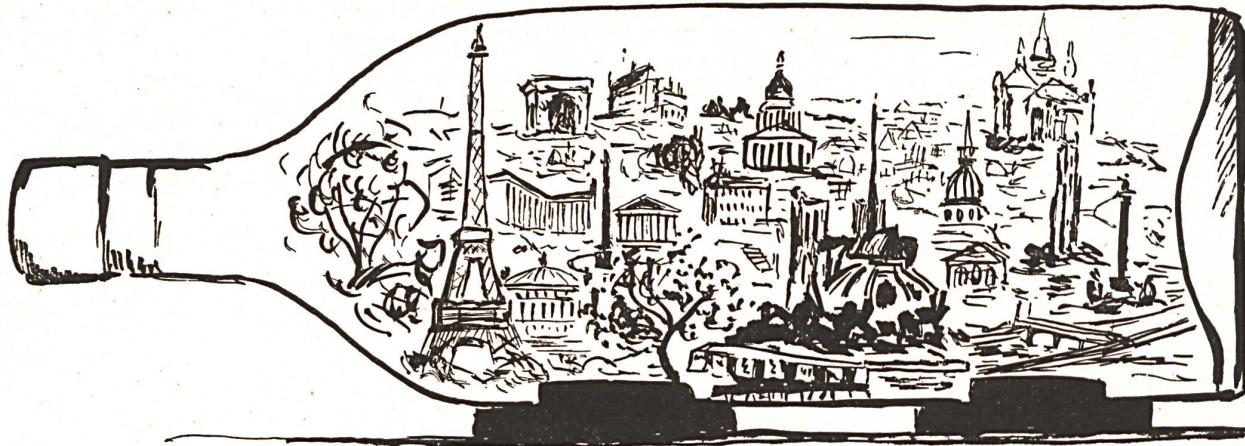
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If you like the grey-blue of the Paris sky...

With enough 'ifs' and 'buts' you could even put Paris in a bottle.

(A Parisian proverb)

If you are wise, forget on arriving in Paris that you are used to a breakfast of porridge and bacon and eggs, followed by toast and marmalade, with interminable cups of tea and be prepared to make do with a cup of coffee and a few rolls or « croissants »;

But, if you like rapid hotel service, even though it is not quite perfect;

If just before going out you have not needed to make a quick long distance call, which would shorten your shopping time considerably;

If you do not mind, on leaving your hotel, walking on pavements that are not over-clean and taking great care when crossing the street, for Parisian drivers are nothing if not reckless;

If you find it amusing to listen to the heated altercations between motorists, lorry drivers, taxi-drivers, people on motor scooters, passers-by and the police, to the accompaniment of much gesticulation and a flow of words you certainly never learnt at school !

If you do not mind leaving your car (all glittering with morning dew) along the curb where it has spent the night for want of sufficient garages;

But, if you like to stroll through the streets and window-shop;

If you, Sir, have no objection to passing gay and attractive looking women in the street;

If you, Madame, are interested in the dresses these women are wearing;

If you intend to spend your French francs

- a) in the bustle of the big stores,
- b) in the luxury shops,
- c) at the shirtmakers',
- d) in the antique shops,
- e) in the restaurants,
- f) at the theatre,
- g) in the night clubs

then...

If you wish to take back a scarf or a square as a present (or even to buy one for yourself), then there is no doubt about it, you will go to Hermès', or one of the couturiers' boutiques;

If you want perfume, you will have only a few steps to take for it is sold everywhere, but don't overdo it! Remember the customs duty on your way home;

If you are looking for a traditional souvenir of Paris, coloured post-cards, a key ring, the Eiffel Tower in bronze or enclosed in a glass ball, a piece of costume jewellery or some amusing trifle, you will find it in the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli;

If you have a craving for a fragrant Havana cigar, with just the right degree of humidity, you, Sir, will make your way to the Civette, Place du Palais Royal;

If your tastes are expensive and your finances in keeping, and you are looking for the finest gem, the Rue de la Paix and the Place Vendôme await you;

But, if it is a watch you are after, be patient just a little longer, wait until you reach Switzerland, its birth place;

If you collect curios, and are not afraid of crowds, dust and mud, go any time from Saturday morning to Monday evening for a stroll round the Flea Market, Porte Saint-Ouen, to see if you can pick up, in the incredible jumble of objects, just the old lamp, engraving, carved chest, firearm or piece of crystal you were looking for,

But, if you prefer very fine old furniture, or museum pieces, there are antique dealers everywhere, especially on the left bank, along the embankment and in the streets leading from the Seine to the Boulevard St. Germain; If you, Madam, wish to see a collection of one of the top designers, but don't know how to go about obtaining an invitation, ask the hotel porter, he will get one for you...

But, if you are content with something less expensive in the way of dresses, then go to the big stores and you are bound to find exactly what you are looking for, the choice is so great; If before going to lunch, the fancy takes you to fill your lungs with fresh air, to get a bird's eye view of Paris, you can choose between the steeples of churches, the tops of columns, the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe or the Mont Valérien with its breathtaking view, and of course the Butte Montmartre, at the foot of the Sacré Cœur.

But don't let yourself be persuaded into visiting Paris below ground, the catacombs or the sewers are gloomy places; and don't forget that it is only in Gaston Leroux's novel, the «Fantôme de l'Opéra», that the lake under the Opera House assumes a romantic aspect...

If you are determined to be adventurous however, cross Paris in a river steamer. You will not regret it. If you are hungry, after all these wanderings, stop and have lunch somewhere; there is no lack of choice and the Michelin Guide (among others) can be relied upon to advise you well;

If you hesitate between a «bistrot» or a luxurious establishment, remember that there is not a very great difference in the prices; they are all exorbitant, so you had better get used to the idea right away!

If you like French wine, do not forget that in addition to the fine, delicate Bordeaux, warm full-bodied Burgundies, mellow Loire wines, bubbling champagnes, there are charming local wines, white Muscadets which resemble certain Swiss wines, Sancerres and Pouillys sur Loire with a taste of smoke, Jurançons which, like the muscatels, come from the Pyrénées, wonderful Côtes du Rhône, light sparkling wines of Die, which sing in the glass and in your throat, the Arbois of the Jura, the crowning glory of which is the Château-Chalon, the «vins rosés» of Provence and of course the great wines of Alsace, not forgetting the famous Beaujolais which has to be served cool, smell of violets and above all, ABOVE ALL, not be diluted with Algerian wine. Then, if the Beaujolais that has been given you seems a shade too heady, ask the wine-waiter to take it back...

But do not think that the majority of wines are tampered with; there are many genuine ones; it is up to you not to let yourself be taken in, and not to hesitate to refuse those whose appearance or taste appears suspicious...

If in the afternoon, you decide to continue with your morning's stroll, good show! There is nothing to add; But, if you want to visit a museum, don't forget that they are all closed on Tuesdays. By the way, the couturiers and better shops shut on Saturday, the big stores and car dealers on Monday, as well as the food shops.

If you want to see a good show, again it is the hotel porter who will tell you which day the theatre is closed, and be able to get you tickets, a little more expensive perhaps but without your having to queue;

If it is a film you want to see, for the same reason (queues), try to go between 6 and 7.30 in the evening. Otherwise you might find yourself without a seat.

If because of this you have not dined and feel hungry on coming out, there are a certain number of restaurants that serve meals until quite late into the night, the Relais du Plaza, the cellars of the Tour d'Argent, the Club de Paris, the St. James, to quote but a few, as well as those of St. Germain des Prés or Montmartre and the «bistros» of the Halles (Paris's Covent Garden) whose speciality is onion soup.

If you are lucky enough to be invited for the launching of a new play, remember that one does not «dress» for a dress rehearsal, but that dinner jacket is compulsory for a first night. As for the gala performances in the cinema world, with their awnings, carpets, flowers and Municipal Guards, they also call for evening dress;

But do not believe for a moment that the presence of Municipal Guards lining the route with drawn swords indicates the presence of the head of State. One can tell if the President of the Republic is attending the performance by the colour of the guards' trousers, which then, and only then, will be white.

If you want to go on to a night club after the show, everyone knows that there are hundreds of them in Paris, you have but to choose. But do not hope to get away with spending less than 8000 francs for two people...

If the idea of cabarets-musettes, with their accordions and rather dangerous-looking apache types who dance so well, frightens you, don't get taken there, although in actual fact there is nothing to fear!

If finally, you like local colour — in the daytime — you have the Place du Tertre and the little streets climbing up towards the Sacré Cœur, the Cour de Rohan (a moving memory of old Paris, near the Place St. Michel), the historic mansions of the Marais district and the Quai d'Anjou, the Place des Vosges, and in the evening, the view of Notre-Dame from the top of the Tour d'Argent Restaurant.

But never forget in your walks that although the Parisian likes to joke and banter, he has a good heart, that the traffic police often shut their eyes to the mistakes you make, that it is quite wrong to think that all tradespeople are out to do you.

But I don't know why I am telling you all this when I am quite sure you know it all already, or rather, yes I do. It is because, as a true Parisian, I want people to like the town I like...

If Then,
you agree with everything that I have said, Paris lies waiting at your feet.

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N.B. There is no publicity in this article.