

November 15, 1918

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PARIS EXULTS AS FOUR YEARS' PALL IS LIFTED AT LAST

**Target of Gothas and Berthas
Ablaze With Light as
Great Day Ends**

UNKISSED SOLDIERS FEW

**Arm in Arm Is Rule of Street,
With Taxis Carrying Everyone
Who Cares to Climb Aboard**

Though it was all France that celebrated, in every village and town, the day of deliverance, the day the armistice was signed, yet it was in Paris, the heart of all France, that the exultation reached its height.

Paris, which had showed itself calm and stoical under all raid and Big Bertha bombardment, which had found heart, in the face of a threatened offensive, to celebrate the Fourth and the Fourteenth of July with bunting, parades and cheers, which for four years and more had been darkened and sad by night, tight-lipped but smiling by day, awoke, on November 11, 1918, about the middle of the morning.

It awoke with a long-drawn-out roar, born first of unbelief, and then, with the realization that the armistice was at last actually signed, it shook off its cloak of unbelief and gave way to unfeigned, delighted, rapt surprise. The roar grew as the news spread, and from the big buildings Paris poured forth, to walk, walk, walk, ceaselessly up and down the crowded boulevards, in and out of the great squares and public places, anywhere, everywhere, just to see and be seen, to see the glow of victory reflected from the faces of the rest of "all Paris." It asked no more; it was enough.

Le Jour de Gloire

The day had come. In the words of La Marseillaise, which everybody everywhere began to sing as though by instinct, *le jour de gloire est arrivé.* The day for which the gayest of capitals had waited so long and so patiently, under the buffets of the enemy's guns by day and under the thudding blows of his bombs by night, had actually materialized. Paris was no longer in the Zone of the Armies; Paris was no longer a garrison town, no longer to be referred to or thought of by friends or foe as "the entrenched camp of Paris." And in that day, as soon as it could rub its eyes and come to itself and be sure that the hideous dream had passed, Paris came home to itself, and the homecoming was glory.

But when one writes even of the rejuvenated, the restored Paris of 1918, one writes not of a merely reinstated Paris of 1914, but of a city that has become the capital of the Allied world. In the throngs on the streets, in the cafés, in the theaters, the four corners of the earth had met, to celebrate the common victory of the common cause.

Yank and Aussie and Jock, Italian, Portuguese, Greek, Pole, Czecho-Slovak, Tommy, Indian, all, from the newly arrived Brazilians to the wizened and weather-beaten poilus wearing the seven brisques denoting four years in the furnace, knew no nationality, no difference of tongues or even of uniform.

Everybody Arm in Arm

Arm in arm they paraded up and down the avenues and boulevards, Australians finding the tam-o'-shanter of the chasseurs Alpins just as fetching as their own nifty bonnet, Italian carabinieri proud and glad to exchange their big cocked hats for the dinky overseas caps of their Yankee brethren, Belgians fresh from the line bestowing their steel helmets on little swarthy men from the East in exchange for the weirdest of headgear.

As they went on their rollicking way, women and children pelted them with flowers, pressed flags into their hands, kissed them, and when they could separate them, danced around them in rings. To remain unknissed of any one, man, woman or child, the Allied soldier, whatever his badges or color, had to descend to a cellar and hide.

It was, in all probability, the greatest day Paris has known since the fall of the Bastille, marking, as it did, the triumph over the last remaining Bastille in the world, the fortress of Spandau, in which France's extorted indemnity of 1870 has laid these 40 years and more. Nearer home, it marked a triumph over the one semblance of tyranny that Paris has tolerated—the tyranny of the taxi-driver.

It was the day of the pedestrian. Street traffic as it is commonly and furiously run in Paris on normal days simply did not exist. If a taxi chose to move the way the crowd was going, it was allowed to proceed, at the crowd's own pace, with soldiers and civilians sitting on its top, its steps and mudguards groaning under the weight of everybody and anybody that chose to hop aboard.

Streets for Pedestrians

So it was with the auto buses, a whole column of which stood blocked in the Rue de Richelieu for the better part of the afternoon, unable to make the crossing at the junction of the Boulevard des Italiens and the Boulevard Montmartre. It seemed as if the Parisians and their Allied guests were determined, for one day at least, to rule supreme over all traffic and to have the streets to themselves for their victory party.

In the Place de la Concorde, to which, because of its name, doubtless, a great crowd repaired, the breech blocks of the captured German cannon were jocularly slammed, and the muzzles peered into by all the children who could crawl and climb up to them, or who had guiding parents to boost them to the place of vantage. The stately statues of Lille and Strasbourg were banked as never before with flowers and flags to celebrate their deliverance. And as the crowd swirled round and round the great obelisk in the center of the square they were showered from the sky by Italian airmen, who, flying over the city in their Capronis, dropped neat little printed messages of congratulation to France "on the recovery of her lost children."

Blaze of Light at Night

People would pick up the leaflets, read them, and then, with cries like delighted children, blow kisses at the almost invisible specks in the sky. Even though the airmen were too far away to be really kissed, the people they had honored were determined not to forget them.

At night the Place de l'Opéra, ablaze with electric lights for the first time since France went out to war, fairly bulged. Every balcony, every window looking out on it was lined, and the crowd stretched far and away down the avenue leading from the Opéra building. Then out on to the balcony of the Opéra itself came the best of France's singers and, regardless of the effect of chilly November wind on precious vocal chords sang and sang away again, with "La Brabanconne," "The Star Spangled Banner," "God Save the King," and always ever recurring, "La Marseillaise."

The crowd took up the choruses and sent the anthems echoing back at the group on the balcony. And when the great folks of classical music finally condescended, at the urgent pleas of the soldiers, to sing "Madelon," it seemed as if all France and all the Armies of the Alliance joined in the roar of applause and in the refrain:

It was a community song festival the like of which no city has ever seen, and the like of which may never come again. Though many lingered on the boulevards to cheer the flashing on an elevated screen of the pictures of the Marshals, of "le Tigre," of President Wilson of Sir Douglas Haig, and of General Pershing, the singing brought the great and exultant day to a close. As the last notes of the Opéra's orchestra died away a French bugler, armed with a sense of humor as well as with his redoubtable clarion, blew the berloque, the all clear signal sounded at the end of the air raids that are now no more.

And all Paris laughed the laugh of happy children after a day's glad play. And the next day, and the next night, Paris sallied forth to romp and play again.