

July 10, 1917.—Nell inspected No. 9, rue Jacques. They had been a week in what they called cleaning—"cleaning to the bottom"—which evidently doesn't mean what cleaning means in English. The lady with her lawyers and her father's advice and her bail and her inventory, and her Norman suspicions and cupidity, pronounced the house clean, but Nell has got some Belgian women to go at it, and thus after another week or ten days it will be habitable. Meanwhile we are to leave Eugène in charge of the cleaning and to go to La Belle Ernestine's until the house is fit to occupy.

And this is our last night in the Grand Hôtel des Régates, notable as the most execrable of all hotels or boarding places in this earth. Situated here on this barren, rocky beach, foul-smelling with the sewage of all the cities and towns along the Seine from Paris to Havre—today a dead cow washed up under our noses—and noisy with the rattling of the petroleum tins,¹ with a glare of sun when it isn't raining, it is as bleak a place as though it had been intended by nature for a penal colony. But aside from all its natural disadvantages, its proprietor is, I presume, worthy to be celebrated among the great criminals of history, or would be, if he had a more positive nature and anything like personality. As it is, he hides in the cellar of his hotel, sending up poisonous concoctions that taste and smell of chemicals; he charges enormously, and conducts the cuisine according to those rules that

¹ A ship had been torpedoed off Havre, and the waves had washed in hundreds of broken tins of gasoline.

stingy sheriffs use for feeding prisoners—barely enough to keep them alive. We are suffering from want of nourishment, actually; and have been for weeks in daily danger of poisoning. Several of Gourin's victims have been made ill by the food. On meatless days he gives the servants spoiled meat that has been left over! He charges the same rates that prevail at the leading New York hotels—and grinning behind his beard, is altogether the most detestable scoundrel at large, with his cheating and dishonesty and general villainy of all sorts. Shut the door on him forevermore!