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Chatting...

with M. H. B.

CONTINUING MY CHAT over
the tea cups with Miss Florence
Luke of the high school staff,
who won high standing in the sum-
mer course she took at the Sorbonne
University in Paris last July, Miss
Luke went on to tell me that by day
Paris is a grey city. It is so very old
and the greystone of the buildings at
first presents a rather depressing ap-
pearance. But at night Paris shines.
I mean literally. Miss Luke told me
her most unforgettable memory of
Paris is saying it after nightfall, with
floodlight illuminating the innum-
erable fountains, statues and cathed-
rals. As the beam of light picked out
relief against the blackness of the
their beauty, etching it into bright
night, Paris assumed an unearthly
beauty.

Sampling a bit of the night life
Paris offers, Miss Luke attended the
opera which was celebrating Mos-
art's 200th anniversary with a produc-
tion of "The Magic Flute." It was
very impressive performed on a huge
stage.

She also saw the "Opera Comique"
which had a double bill that night. It
started with the ballet "Swan Lake"
and the other production was "La-
Vie Boheme." Miss Luke tells me how
greatly she enjoyed listening to the
perfect diction of the French actors
and actresses.

A MUST FOR the Paris visitor,
if at all possible, is a visit to
the Folies Bergere. It was a
stupendous show with 1400 persons
taking part. They had the most elab-
orately beautiful costumes and scen-
ery to be seen anywhere. Most of the
settings simulated Marie Antoinette's
time. There is a bit of spice in the
show to please the tourists, but thru
it all again was the perfect diction.
It's wonderful entertainment, playing
to a packed house every night in spite
of the fact that they change the show
only once a year.

MISS LUKE AND HER fellow-
travellers also sampled the
early morning life in Paris. Ar-
ising one morning at 5:15 a.m., they
went to the famous open air market
"Les Halles." It is a fabulous place
where every kind of fruit, vegetable
and farm produce is sold. There is
also a large section devoted to fish
of all kinds, and it is quite a sight in
the meat market to see whole sides
of meat hanging in rows.

The market is where the restaur-
ant owners do their buying, as well
as the housewives. It is like a huge
open air supermarket. Prices are what
the buyer will bear, and as can be
imagined, there is plenty of haggling.
But that is the spice of life at the
market. After their visit, Miss Luke
and friends had coffee and "crois-
sants" in a restaurant. That is the
custom after one visits the market.

While I'm on the subject of res-
taurants, Miss Luke said she did not
find their prices too exorbitant. Of
course in France the "tipping" sys-
tem is used, which Americans and
Canadians find somewhat irritating,
especially in the theatre. But that is
their way of life and you are happier
once you adjust to it with good grace.

About the best "buy" in a French
restaurant is a ham sandwich. In or-
der to make it, several generous slices
of ham are inserted between two
lengthwise slices of a French stick
loaf. Good hot mustard is served with
this, and I'd say that it was practically
a meal in itself.

THERE ARE MANY beautiful
specialty stores in Paris for
fruit, candy and perfume. And
numerous flower-vendors lend
colour to a typically Parisienne street
scene. One custom which took a lit-
tle getting-used to was the two-hour
closing at noon observed by stores
everywhere.

It is all too easy to become lost
in Paris. But the policemen are very
polite and obliging. Miss Luke re-
marked to a friend, as she watched a
policeman directing traffic at a busy
intersection, that she had never been
anything more graceful than the
skillful way he swung his white baton.
She was somewhat taken aback to
learn that the traffic officers learn
how to swing the batons correctly in
a special school. But they are a plea-
sure to watch, and of course one wrong
swing and the traffic would be in a
snarl.

WHILE IN FRANCE, Miss Luke
visited the palace at Versailles,
which is huge, but almost empty. All
the furniture has been sold. She
happened to be there while there was
an exposition of Marie Antoinette's
possessions. They had been garner-
ed from all over the world, but there
weren't many of her jewels shown...
the gardens there were beautiful...

Another lovely historic sight Miss
Luke visited was "Malmaison," which
was the country home and spacious
gardens where Napoleon and Joseph-
ine lived before he rose to complete
glory. The house is completely fur-
nished. One historic room is marked
as the place where Napoleon drew
up the Civil Code of France, which
still holds in Quebec. There he also
drew up plans for the French Legion
of Honour. You may recognize a per-
son so honoured for outstanding ser-
vice to France, by the little red ro-
sette worn in the buttonhole.

NOT BEAUTIFUL in the least
was Vincennes, an old castle
which was used as a prison cen-
turies ago, for such famous people as
Charles the 9th of France and Henry
4th of England. The huge stone tow-
er was used as the prison. The stairs
were seemingly endless to reach the

top, and Miss Luke wondered how
prisoners ever survived because in ad-
dition to many other dreary discor-
forts, there was no way of heating the
lower rooms. The castle proper is
now the headquarters of the French
Foreign Legion. Doesn't make that
organization sound quite so fascinat-
ing, does it?

On a trip organized by the French
National Railways, they also had an
opportunity to see the famous Rheims
Cathedral. They were then in the
heart of the champagne country, so
they visited a champagne cellar, which
again involved the climbing of many
stairs.

ANOTHER PLACE OF interest
was Chantilly, famous for the
manufacture of lace, and also
for its race courses. It is also re-
nowned as a resort where many wealthy
people have their summer homes.

At Chantilly, too, there is a castle
which was given to the Institute of
France by the Conde family, on condi-
tion that all the furnishings, famous
paintings, etc., be kept in immaculate
condition. There are many attendants
to see that this condition is meticu-
lously fulfilled, because descendants of
the Conde family are still alive, and
on the alert for any flaws, for if and
when this condition occurs, they can
reclaim the castle.

Her tour of France also took Miss
Luke to Compiègne and Pierrefonds.
The latter is an example of a media-
eval castle restored. It is very grim
looking. Some of its elaborate under-
ground passages were used during
the war.

BEFORE LEAVING THE conti-
nent, Miss Luke spent nine
days in Switzerland. Her im-
pression of Switzerland concurs with
that of everyone else who has visited
this scenic little country. It is indeed
very beautiful. Her stay in Switzer-
land was made even more enjoyable
by the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs.
Steiner, who entertained her at their
home in Krems, just outside Lucerne.
Mr. Steiner is the brother of
Mr. Steiner in Georgetown, a new Cana-
dian whom Miss Luke has helped with
his English.

FROM SWITZERLAND, Miss
Luke went to England and stay-
ed in London for a week. While
there, she saw Mr. and Mrs.
Andy Mulozzi, both of whom were for-
mer pupils at Georgetown High
School. Mr. Mulozzi, a scholarship
winner, is studying for his Ph.D. in
England. Mrs. Mulozzi is the former
Margaret Sargent.

After her week in London, Miss
Luke rejoined her companions on the
specially arranged air flight for the
teachers, arriving back home in Toronto

in August. After chatting with her,
I almost feel as though I have visited
France myself. And of one thing I'm
sure. Her stay in France will yield
richly in inspiration for her career
in teaching. And our boys and girls
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ones to reap the benefit.

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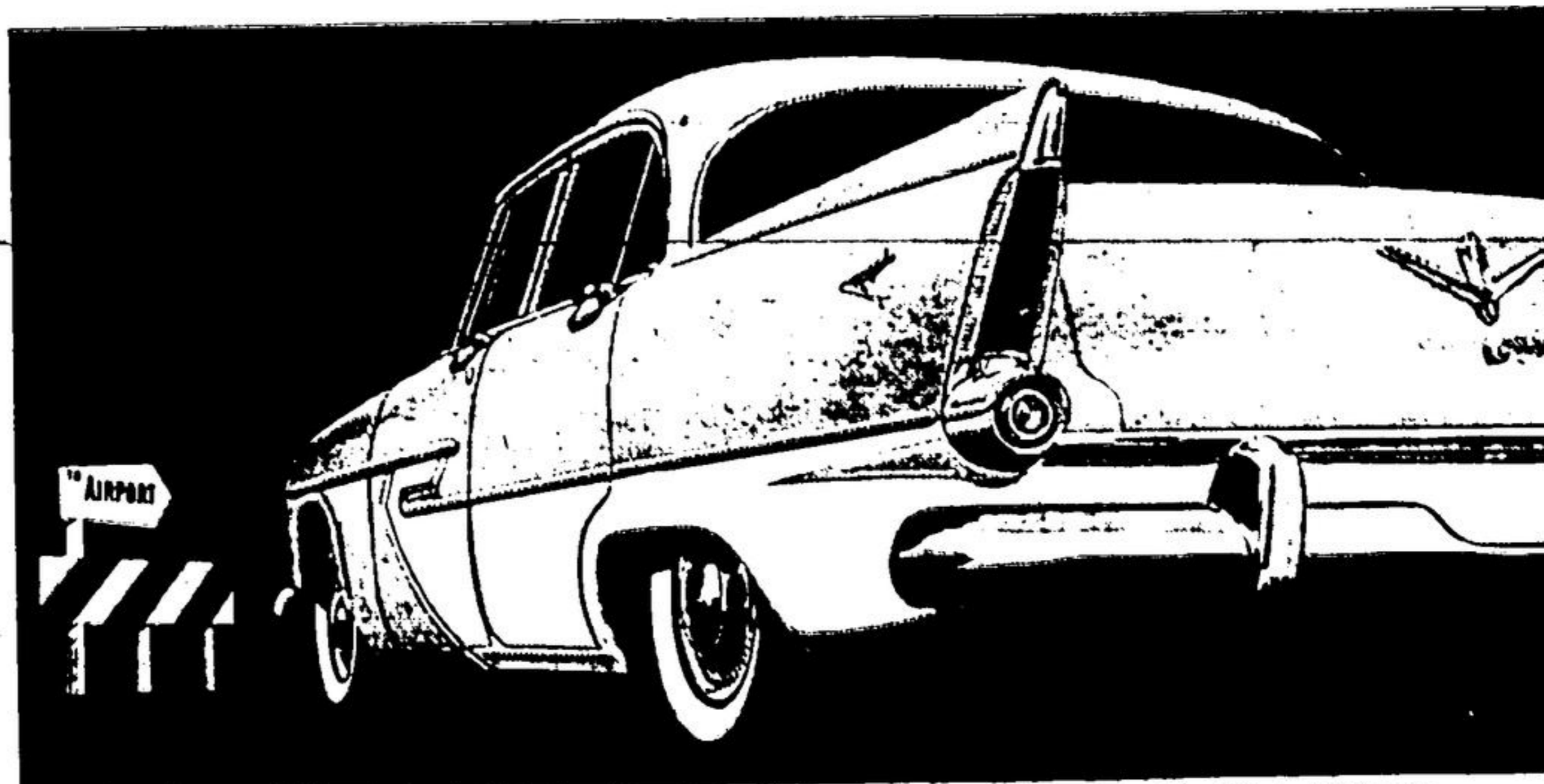
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