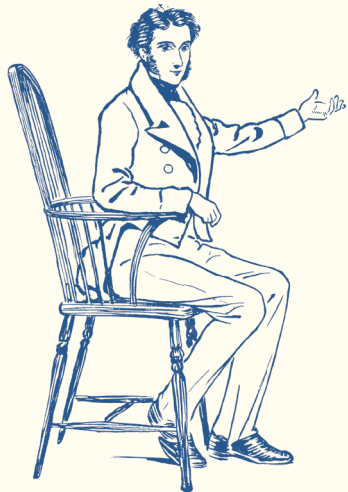


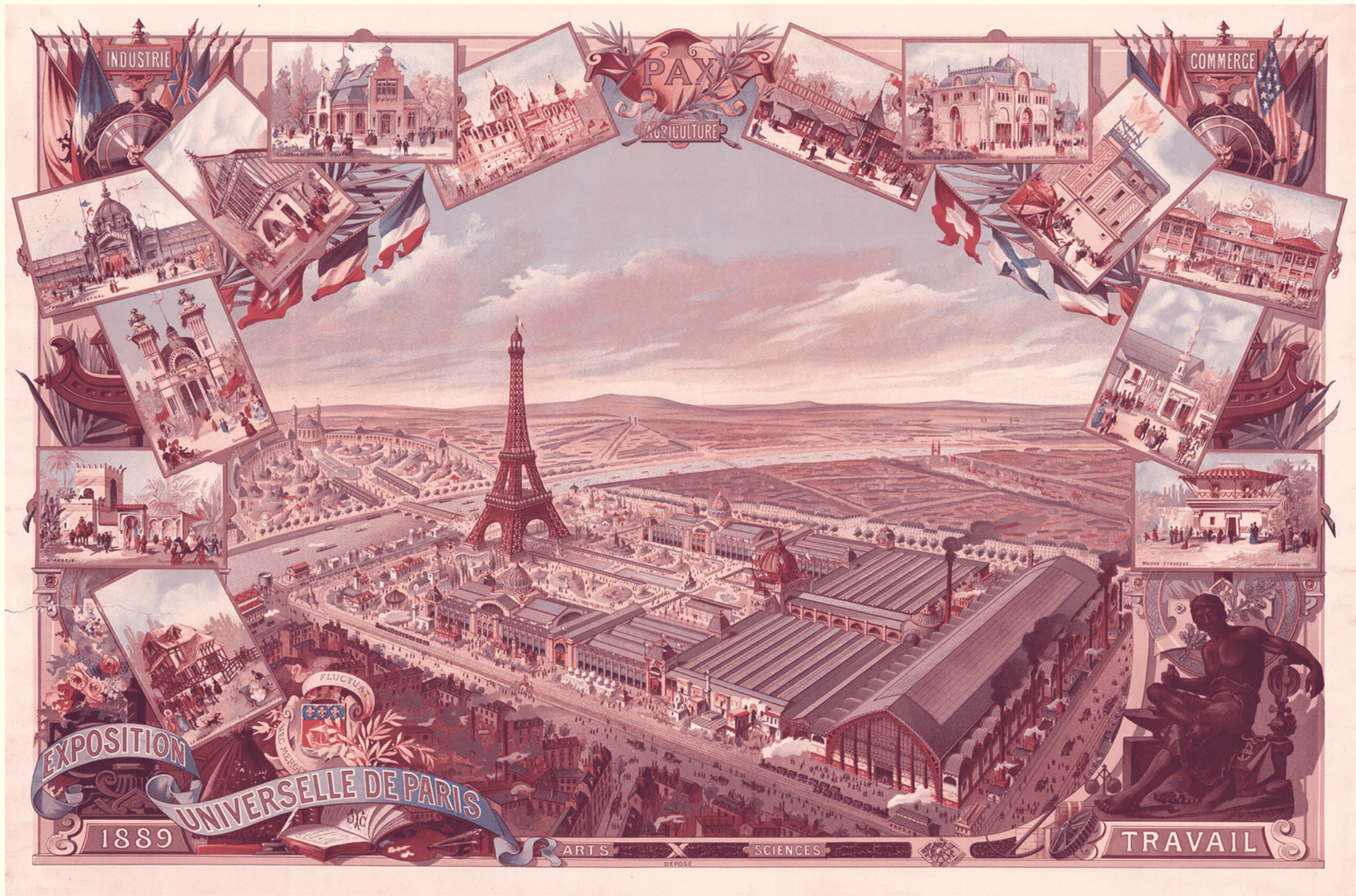
*TO BRIDGIT*

*I may spend more time with coffee,  
but coffee didn't persuade me  
to write this book.*



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INDUSTRIE

PAX

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCE

EXPOSITION

UNIVERSELLE DE PARIS

1889

ARTS

SCIENCES

TRAVAIL

PLUCTUA

AG MERG

DEPOSE

# Chapter

# 1

## LES DEUX MAGOTS

6 Place Saint-Germain-des-Prés  
6<sup>th</sup> arrondissement

## CAFÉ DE FLORE

172 Boulevard Saint-Germain  
6<sup>th</sup> arrondissement

## LE BISTROT PAUL BERT

18 Rue Paul Bert  
11<sup>th</sup> arrondissement

## CHEZ GEORGES

1 Rue du Mail  
2<sup>nd</sup> arrondissement

## LE CHARDENOUX

1 Rue Jules Vallès  
11<sup>th</sup> arrondissement

Nobody  
Sits

Like  
the  
French



Nobody sits like the French.

Wind the clock back one hundred years or so to a moment after the Charleston was gaining steam, but before movies were offering sound. You are in the savory nucleus of Paris, the corner of Boulevard Saint-Germain and Rue Saint-Benoît. Here is a venerable cafe that has been serving crepes and coffee since 1914 in its present location, a watering hole for a (mostly) civilized Serengeti of artists and thinkers as well as busy boulevardiers and slacking flâneurs during the period between the War to End all Wars and the Good War.

You're sitting under the green marquee with lettering the color of Midas' fingertips surrounded on all sides by the likes of Ernest Hemingway, Pablo Picasso, and James Joyce. Immense in their world as whales in a pond, they assembled at Les Deux Magots seeking inspiration and applause from the spirited (and spirit-aided) knockdown debates and the bohemian atmosphere that flooded the cafe.

Listen closely and you can hear Hemingway stage whispering his poetry, and see him working feverishly on *The Sun Also Rises*, stained with the blood and smoke of the Great War's trenches. A few feet away and liquored up on Swiss wine, James Joyce is picking a fight (then hiding behind Hemingway's bulk) while Pablo Picasso is hitting on his future muse Dora Maar there. The mean girls of Surrealism, Max Ernst, Joan Miró, and Man Ray, hold court at their table by the cafe entrance, where, between scarfing down *croque monsieurs* and *macarons* and working on their manifesto, they hiss insults at anyone whose looks they don't like.

Go back even further in time and you can glimpse those twin poets of the damned, Paul Verlaine and



Named in honor of the Baron himself, Boulevard Haussmann stretches across the center of Paris allowing easier movement from east to west. Place Charles de Gaulle (formerly Place de l'Étoile) is the area around the Arc de Triomphe that was redesigned to create the iconic star-shaped intersection of 12 ruler-straight avenues. Avenue de l'Opéra is another one of the extensive boulevards erected under Haussmann's plan, effectively linking the Louvre to the Opéra Garnier. Once the site of the first untethered and manned balloon flight in history, Haussmann's Bois de Boulogne park has been flaunted by Manet, Renoir, Van Gogh, and Cassatt in their work. His Parc des Buttes-Chaumont was once the dumping ground for sewage and horse carcasses, but now is an idyll sculpted by dynamite, including a belvedere ('beautiful view' in Italian) modeled after the Roman Temple of Vesta, from which you can glimpse Sacré-Cœur's white cupolas. At three times the size of New York's Central Park, the massive Bois de Vincennes is Paris' largest park. Formerly a royal hunting preserve and military training ground, it was upgraded by Haussmann into a public park, ultimately hosting the Velodrome for the 1900 Summer Olympics, seating 40,000 spectators. The notorious courtesan, dancer, and spy Mata Hari was executed by firing squad there in 1917.

*Chapter*

9

The Art  
Wants  
What  
It Wants

MUSÉE RODIN

77 Rue de Varenne

7<sup>th</sup> arrondissement



*Junk in the Trunk*

Without the Louis Vuitton trunk and the world's fairs, you might not have been able to travel to Paris itself today.

Louis Vuitton's story isn't so much a story of rags to riches as it is a tale of rags to bags. Desperate to escape a stepmother with the maternal instincts of Joan Crawford, he embarked on a 400-kilometer (249-mile) walkabout to Paris when he was just 13, one that took him a full two years to complete, surviving on odd jobs and the kindness of strangers. Yet the further he got from home, the more he thrived. Once he settled in the French capital, he went the full Charles Dickens route and found work as an apprentice at the box-making and packing workshop of a *Monsieur* Maréchal, a job that essentially consisted of packing the possessions of affluent travelers. There, coincidences and good fortune came with storybook swiftness. His biggest Dickensian break came in the early 1850s, when the President of France, Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, aspired to a more impressive title, staged a coup, and rebranded himself as Emperor Napoleon III. The nephew of the original-recipe Napoleon married a Spanish countess, Eugénie de Montijo, after which the newly installed Empress of France hired Louis Vuitton as her personal box maker and packer, charging him with "packing the most beautiful clothes in the most exquisite way".

In every great innovator's life there is a Eureka! moment when a muse's disembodied voice whispers revelations into a receptive ear, and an idea takes hold as roughly as a cat clutches a mouse. Instead of time and labor-consuming bespoke packaging for each gown or *objet d'art*, Vuitton asked himself, why not a standardized design for luxury luggage that could be mass produced? He opened his first 'Louis Vuitton' boutique in 1854, at 4 Neuve-des-Capucines street.

reaction of a people whose horizons might previously have only been the immediate night sky.

A globe that should have been was one conceived by Élisée Reclus. Known (well, vilified) as an anarchist-vegetarian-naturist-geographer, Reclus proposed a ginormous Earth for *the Exposition Universelle* of 1900. At 160 meters (525 feet) high, it would represent the planet at a scale of 1:100,000. (Even then, the Himalayan mountain range would have been just 3½ inches high.) A spiraling ramp would have let visitors climb from the South Pole to the North and fulfill Reclus' ambition for us to see what a small world it is, after all.

Though never built, it stands as the culmination of what Louis the Sun King started, the shrinking of the world to manageable proportions, where a deity's-eye view would indeed make us as gods.



*Placed on public view at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France – François-Mitterrand, in 2005, the Globes of Coronelli are open to the public and free to view.*