

**TEN YEARS OF  
IMPERIALISM IN  
FRANCE: IMPRESSIONS OF  
A "FLANEUR"**

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Ten years of imperialism in France: impressions of a "Flaneur" by Flaneur

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NOT WANTED IN RBSC

Jan. 16/86.

TEN YEARS  
OF  
IMPERIALISM IN FRANCE:  
IMPRESSIONS OF A "FLANEUR"

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON  
MDCCLXII  
1862

## P R E F A C E.

IN offering his Impressions to the public, the "Flâneur" must apologise for his foreign name, and explain its meaning. His apology is that no word exists in the English language which would convey a correct idea of a Flâneur. He is not an "Idler," as is generally supposed; on the contrary, intense activity of all faculties is one of the most necessary qualifications of a Flâneur. Nor is he an "Observer;" for this would imply the concentration of his faculties towards a definite aim and in a certain direction.

The true Flâneur has a horror of all definite aim; he never seeks—he trusts to chance. His mind is like a sensitive blank photograph plate, ready for any impression which may present itself.

The internal state of France has attracted considerable attention of late, and rather unsettled ideas about Imperialism. Some impressions fresh from the spot may therefore not be without interest at this moment.



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## TEN YEARS OF IMPERIALISM IN FRANCE.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### NEW PARIS.

AMONG the many clever rhapsodies of Edgar Poe, there is perhaps none which exercises more attraction than his 1002d Arabian Night, where he takes up the old favourite Sinbad the Sailor and sends him on a new journey. He goes westward instead of continuing his explorations and adventures south and eastward, and relates what he has seen in this age of railways, steamers, and telegraphs. The story is so incredible that the Eastern monarch, who has taken so piously all the former stories of Scheherazade, begins to suspect her game, and ends the Arabian Nights in truly old Oriental fashion, by cutting off the head of the fair story-teller.

This rhapsody always recurs to my mind whenever I visit Paris, after even a short absence. Sinbad the Sailor, like a true Oriental, takes his *kiéf* between his journeys, and allows an interval of several years to elapse between each of them. What would be the effect on this simple-minded traveller if, after some

ten years of absence, brought on from Marseilles by the express train and packed into one of the monster omnibuses, he were set down on the Place du Palais Royal ?

A traveller of modest means, in search of gain and curiosities, he would probably look out for the Rue des Quinzevingts or Beaujolais, to take up his old quarters in one of the many *hôtels garnis* with which these streets abounded ten years ago. Stunned by the rapid pace of the railway train which brought him from the south, and made drowsy by the omnibus journey over the smooth Macadam, so different from the old orthodox Parisian Barricade pavement, he would think himself under a hallucination, owing to the mischievous designs of the lord of the fiery steeds, or else of the ugly wizard perched up on that uncouth construction which he has just left. He would rub his eyes and try to awake, but would only become more and more confused. There is, indeed, something which seems like an acquaintance, the Palais Royal, or rather the Palais National as Sinbad remembers it; but what are all those huge palaces with their colonnades, that still more magnificent palace tower in front, that endless street of palace-like bazaars which extend eastward, that new tower to the left looking down on a new square of equally palace-like buildings, that other graceful tower further down which stretches its stone lacework high up in the air ? Poor Sinbad is bewildered, and expects every moment to be taken up by some bright Peri, or frightened by the appearance of some winged colossal Gin.

He is, indeed, seized hold of by the arm, and starts ; but it is neither Peri nor Gin who takes that liberty ; it is the good-natured Arab who keeps the shop of mauresque finery at the corner of the Place du Palais