Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842, and 1843

by Mary Shelley

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RAMBLES IN GERMANY AND ITALY, IN 1840, 1842, AND 1843.

BY

MRS. SHELLEY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

MDCCCXLIV.

O vedovate da perpetuo gelo

Terre, è d’incerto di mesto sorriso,

Addio! * * * Questo petto anelo

Scosse di gioia un palpito improvviso,

Quando il Tiranno splendido del cielo

Mi rivelò d’Italia il paradiso.—Niccolini.

LONDON:

BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

TO

SAMUEL ROGERS,

AUTHOR OF “THE PLEASURES OF MEMORY,” “ITALY,” ETC.

THESE VOLUMES ARE DEDICATED,

AS A SLIGHT TOKEN

OF

RESPECT, GRATITUDE, AND AFFECTION,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

I have found it a pleasant thing while travelling to have in the carriage the works of those who have passed through the same country. Sometimes they inform, sometimes they excite curiosity. If alone, they serve as society; if with others, they suggest matter for conversation.

These Volumes were thus originated. Visiting spots often described, pursuing a route such as form for the most part the common range of the tourist—I could tell nothing new, except as each individual's experience possesses novelty. While I passed in haste from city to city; as I travelled through mountain-passes or over vast extents of country, I put down the daily occurrences—a guide, a pioneer, or simply a fellow-traveller, for those who came after me.

When I reached Italy, however, and came south, I found that I could say little of Florence and Rome, as far as regarded the cities themselves, that had not been said so often and so well before, that I was satisfied to select from my letters such portions merely as touched upon subjects that I had not found mentioned elsewhere. It was otherwise as regarded the people, especially in a political point of view; and in treating of them my scope grew more serious.

I believe that no one can mingle much with the Italians without becoming attached to them. Their faults injure each other; their good qualities make them agreeable to strangers. Their courtesy, their simplicity of manner, their evident desire to serve,

their rare and exceeding intelligence, give to the better specimens among the higher classes, and to many among the lower, a charm all their own. In addition, therefore, to being a mere gossiping companion to a traveller, I would fain say something that may incite others to regard them favourably; something explanatory of their real character.[1] But to speak of the state of Italy and the Italians—

Non è poleggio da picciola barca

Quel, che fendendo va l'ardita prora,

Nè da nocchier, ch'a se medesmo parca.

When I began to put together what I knew, I found it too scant of circumstance and experience to form a whole. I could only sketch facts, guess at causes, hope for results. I have said little, therefore; but what I have said, I believe that I may safely declare, may be depended upon.

Time was, when travels in Italy were filled with contemptuous censures of the effeminacy of the Italians—diatribes against the vice and cowardice of the nobles—sneers at the courtly verses of the poets, who were content to celebrate a marriage or a birth among the great:—their learned men fared better, for there were always writers in Italy whose names adorned European letters—yet still contempt was the general tone; and of late years travellers (with the exception of Lady Morgan, whose book is dear to the Italians), parrot the same, not because these things still exist, but because they know no better.

Italy is, indeed, much changed. Their historians no longer limit themselves to disputing dates, but burn with enthusiasm for liberty; their poets, Manzoni and Niccolini at their head, direct their efforts to elevating and invigorating the public mind. The country itself wears a new aspect; it is struggling with its fetters,—not only with the material ones that weigh on it so heavily, and which they endure with a keen sense of shame, but with those that have entered into and bind the soul—superstition, luxury, servility, indolence, violence, vice.

Since the date of these letters Italy has been much disturbed,—but the risings and their unfortunate consequences to individuals, are regarded by us with contempt, or excite only a desire of putting an end to them as detrimental to the sufferers, without being of any utility to the cause of civilisation and moral improvement. Yet it ought not to be forgotten, that the oppression suffered in that portion of the country which has been recently convulsed, is such as to justify Dr. Johnson's proposition, that "if the abuse be enormous, Nature will rise up, and claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political system."

Englishmen, in particular, ought to sympathise in their struggles; for the aspiration for free institutions all over the world has its source in England. Our example first taught the French nobility to seek to raise themselves from courtiers into legislators. The American war of independence, it is true, quickened this impulse, by showing the way to a successful resistance to the undue exercise of authority; but the seed was all sown by us. The swarms of English that overrun Italy keep the feeling alive. An Italian gentleman naturally envies an Englishman, hereditary or elective legislator. He envies him his pride of country, in which he himself can in no way indulge. He knows, at best, that his sovereign is a weak tool in the hands of a foreign potentate; and that all that is aimed at by the governments that rule him, is to benefit Austria—not Italy. But this forms but a small portion of his wrongs. He sees that we enjoy the privilege of doing and saying whatever we please, so that we infringe no law. If he write a book, it is submitted to the censor, and if it be marked by any boldness of opinion, it is suppressed. If he attempt any plan for the improvement of his countrymen, he is checked; if a tardy permission be given him to proceed, it is clogged with such conditions as nullify the effect. If he limit his endeavours to self-improvement, he is suspected—surrounded by spies; while his friends share in the odium that attaches to him. The result of such persecution is to irritate or discourage. He either sinks into the Circean Stye, in which so many drag out a degraded existence, or he is irresistibly impelled to resist. No way to mitigate the ills

he groans under, or to serve his countrymen, is open, except secret societies. The mischievous effects of such to those who are implicated in them, are unspeakably great. They fear a spy in the man who shares their oath; their acts are dark, and treachery hovers close. The result is inevitable; their own moral sense is tampered with, and becomes vitiated; or, if they escape this evil, and preserve the ingenuousness of a free and noble nature, they are victims.

While thus every passion, bad and good, ferments—a touch is given, and up springs armed revolt. This must be put down or the peace of Europe will be disturbed. Peace is a lovely thing. It is horrible to image the desolation of war; the cottage burnt, the labour of the husbandman destroyed—outrage and death there, where security of late spread smiles and joy:—and the fertility and beauty of Italy exaggerate still more the hideousness of the contrast. Cannot it be that peaceful mediation and a strong universal sense of justice may interpose, instead of the cannon and bayonet?

There is another view to be taken. We have lately been accustomed to look on Italy as a discontented province of Austria, forgetful that her supremacy dates only from the downfall of Napoleon. From the invasion of Charles VIII. till 1815, Italy has been a battle-field, where the Spaniard, the French, and the German, have fought for mastery; and we are blind indeed, if we do not see that such will occur again, at least among the two last. Supposing a war to arise between them, one of the first acts of aggression on the part of France would be to try to drive the Germans from Italy. Even if peace continue, it is felt that the papal power is tottering to its fall—it is only supported, because the French will not allow Austria to extend her dominions, and the Austrian is eager to prevent any change that may afford pretence for the French to interfere. Did the present pope act with any degree of prudence, his power thus propped might last some time longer; but as it is, who can say, how soon, for the sake of peace in the rest of Italy, it may not be necessary to curtail his territories.

The French feel this and begin to dream of dominion across the Alps—the

occupation of Ancona was a feeler put out—it gained no positive object except to check Austria—for the rest its best effect was to reiterate the lesson they have often taught, that no faith should be given to their promises of liberation.

The Italians consider that the hour will arrive sooner or later when the stranger will again dispute for dominion over them; when the peace of their wealthy towns and smiling villages will be disturbed by nations meeting in hostility on their soil. The efforts of their patriots consequently tend to make preparation, that such an hour may find them, from the Alps to Brundusium, united. They feel the necessity also of numbering military leaders among themselves. The most enlightened Italians instead of relying on the mystery of oaths, the terror of assassination, the perpetual conspiracy of secret associations, are anxious that their young men should exercise themselves in some school of warfare—they wish that the new generation may be emancipated by their courage, their knowledge, their virtues; which should oppose an insurmountable barrier to foreign invasion and awe their rulers into concession.

Niccolini, in his latest work, Arnaldo da Brescia, has put these sentiments in the mouth of his hero. That poem, replete with passionate eloquence and striking incident, presents a lively picture of the actual state of Italy. The insolence of the German, the arrogance of the popes, the degraded state of the people, and the aspirations of the patriots, each find a voice. It is impossible not to hope well for a country, whose poets, whose men of reflection and talent, without one exception, all use the gifts of genius or knowledge, to teach the noblest lessons of devotion to their country; and whose youth receive the same with devoted enthusiasm.

When we visit Italy, we become what the Italians were censured for being,—enjoyers of the beauties of nature, the elegance of art, the delights of climate, the recollections of the past, and the pleasures of society, without a thought beyond. Such to a great degree was I while there, and my book does not pretend to be a political history or dissertation. I give fragments—not a whole. Such as they

are, I shall be repaid for the labour and anxiety of putting them together, if they induce some among my countrymen to regard with greater attention, and to sympathise in the struggles of a country, the most illustrious and the most unfortunate in the world.

CONTENTS.

RAMBLES

IN

GERMANY AND ITALY.

PART I.—1840.

LETTER I. Project for spending the Summer on the Banks of the Lake of Como.—Fine Spring.—Stormy Weather.—Passage from Dover to Calais.—The Diligence.—Paris.—Plan of our Route.

Brighton, June 13, 1840.

I am glad to say, that our frequent discussions of this spring have terminated in a manner very agreeable to every one concerned in them. My son and his two friends have decided on spending their summer vacation on the shores of the lake of Como—there to study for the degree, which they are to take next winter. They wish me to accompany them, and I gladly consent.

Can it, indeed, be true, that I am about to revisit Italy? How many years are gone since I quitted that country! There I left the mortal remains of those beloved—my husband and my children, whose loss changed my whole existence, substituting, for happy peace and the interchange of deep-rooted affections, years of desolate solitude, and a hard struggle with the world; which only now, as my son is growing

up, is brightening into a better day. The name of Italy has magic in its very syllables. The hope of seeing it again recalls vividly to my memory that time, when misfortune seemed an empty word, and my habitation on earth a secure abode, which no evil could shake. Graves have opened in my path since then; and, instead of the cheerful voices of the living, I have dwelt among the early tombs of those I loved. Now a new generation has sprung up; and, at the name of Italy, I grow young again in their enjoyments, and gladly prepare to share them. You know, also, how grievously my health has been shaken; a nervous illness interrupts my usual occupations, and disturbs the ordinary tenor of my life. Travelling will cure all: my busy, brooding thoughts will be scattered abroad; and, to use a figure of speech, my mind will, amidst, novel and various scenes, renew the outworn and tattered garments in which it has long been clothed, and array itself in a vesture all gay in fresh and glossy hues, when we are beyond the Alps.

I have been spending the last two months at Richmond. What a divine spring we have had! during the month of April not a drop of rain fell—the sun shone perpetually—the foliage, rich and bright, lent, before its time, thick shadows to the woods. No place is more suited than Richmond where to enjoy the smiles of so extraordinary a season. I spent many hours of every day on the Thames—days as balmy as midsummer, and animated with the young life which makes fine weather in spring more delicious than that to be enjoyed in any other season of the year: then the earth is an altar, from which fresh perfumes are for ever rising—not the rank odours of the autumnal fall, but those attendant on the first bursting of life, on the tendency of nature in springtide to multiply and enjoy. I visited Hampton Court, and saw the Cartoons—those most noble works of the Prince of Painters. All was delightful; and ten times more so, that I was about to break a chain that had long held me—cross the Channel—and wander far towards a country which memory painted as a paradise.

We are to leave England at the conclusion of the Cambridge term, and have agreed

to rendezvous at Paris in the middle of June. Towards the end of May I came here, intending at the appointed time to cross to Dieppe. The weather, at first, continued delightful; but after a time a change has come, and June is set in cold, misty, and stormy. A morbid horror of my sea-voyage comes over me which I cannot control. On the day on which we were to cross, I had an attack of illness which prevented my going on board. It becomes a question whether we shall remain for the next packet in the middle of next week, with the chance of a long, tempestuous passage, or proceed along the coast to Dover. I prefer the latter.

Paris, June 22.

We left Brighton for Hastings, and arrived on a fine evening; the sea was calm and glorious beneath the setting sun. On our way we drove through St. Leonard's-on-Sea. Some years ago I had visited Hastings, when a brig, drawn high and dry on the shore near William the Conqueror's stone, unlading building materials, was all that told of the future existence of this new town. It has risen "like an exhalation," and seems particularly clean, bright, and cheerful.

The next day blew a fierce tempest; our drive to Dover was singularly inclement and disagreeable. We arrived in the evening, very tired and uncomfortable; a gale from the north-west raged, and the sea, wild and drear, broke in vast surges on the shore; the following morning it rained in torrents, as well as blew. The day after, however, the sun shone bright, and the waves sparkled and danced beneath its early rays. We were on the beach by seven, and reached the steamer in a small boat, one of the annoyances attendant on embarking at Dover. We had a rough passage—for some half way over the wind grew into a gale; I lay down on deck, and by keeping very still, escaped sickness: in two hours and a half we were on the French coast. Why we left Dover so early I cannot tell, since the tide did not serve to admit us into Calais harbour for an hour after our arrival—an hour of disagreeable tossing; at last, happy sight, the fishing boats were seen coming out from the port, giving token that there

was water enough for us to enter. We landed. I was quite well immediately, and laughed at my panic.

We went to Roberts's Hotel, a very good one, and the charges moderate. I made my first experiment at a table d'hôte, and disliked its noise and numbers very much. We were to proceed to Paris by the diligence, a disagreeable style of travelling, but the only one we could manage. We have forgotten night-travelling in England—thanks to the railroads, to which, whatever their faults may be, I feel eternally grateful; for many a new scene have they enabled me to visit, and much of the honey of delightful recollections have I, by their means, brought back to my hive: a pleasant day it will be when there is one from Calais to Paris. We left Calais at about ten in the forenoon. P. chose the banquette, as young Englishmen are apt to do; it resembles, more than any other part of this ponderous vehicle, the outside of a stage-coach. There were some merry Irish students there also, who could not speak a word of French: they leapt down from the top at every possible opportunity, so to tease the conducteur, who, to his flock of travellers, acts as shepherd and dog in one—gathering them together with the bark of, "En route, Messieurs!" most authoritatively. I and my maid were in the intérieur, with two Frenchwomen from England: one was a governess at a school, coming for a holiday; she was young, and her eyes were accustomed to the English style; she found fault with the diligence. The elder one would not allow any fault; and, if there were any deficiency, it was because things were not first-rate on this road. The road to Bordeaux was the grand one: the diligences there were Lord Mayors' carriages for splendour. The longest day has an end, and our hours of penance came to a close. We arrived in Paris, and found pleasant apartments taken for us at Hotel Chatham. Travelling by diligence had been an experiment for me. I was delighted to find that, with all my nervous suffering, whenever my mind was intensely or disagreeably occupied, I could bear the fatigues of a journey far better than I had ever done. Several years before I had been a bad traveller; and, even in a comfortable English travelling chariot, suffered

great fatigue, and even illness. When I returned from Italy I had tried the diligence, and been knocked up, and obliged to abandon it after the first night; yet then I enjoyed perfect health. Now I complained, and with reason, of most painful sensations; yet the fatigue I endured seemed to take away weariness instead of occasioning it. I felt light of limb and in good spirits. On the shores of France I shook the dust of accumulated cares from off me; I forgot disappointments, and banished sorrow: weariness of body replaced beneficially weariness of soul—so much heavier, so much harder to bear.

There is a cheerfulness in the aspect of Paris, that at once enlivens the visitor. True, the want of trottoirs is intolerable. From the absence of drains, the state of the streets is filthy; the danger of being run over by hack-cabs, which turn short round the corners, and accelerate their pace on purpose so to do, is imminent. The gravel of the Tuilleries and the Champs Elysées is not half so inviting as the sward of Hyde Park; yet there is an air of cheerfulness and lightsomeness about Paris, which seems to take the burthen from your spirits, which will weigh so heavily on the other side of the Channel. Nor, perhaps, in any city in the world is there a scene more magnifique—to use their own word in their own sense—than the view at high noon or sunset from the terrace of the Tuilleries, near the river, overlooking the Seine and its bridges; the Place de la Concorde, with its wide asphaltic pavements, sparkling fountains, and fantastic lanterns, looking on to the Barrière de l'Etoile one way, or down upon the horse-chestnut avenues of the gardens on the other. There is gaiety, animation, life; you cannot find the same in London. Why? One cause, of course, is the smoke of the sea-coal fires; another results from the absence of fountains. When will London have these ornaments, which could be so readily constructed from our great supply of water? Truly in France the water is all used ornamentally, and there is a sad deficiency for utility; but the coup-d'œil of a fountain is more pleasing than the consciousness of a pipe underground—at least, to the passing traveller.

We have spent a week agreeably in Paris, as we have several friends here. Our two

companions are arrived. We are seriously preparing to set out on our travels. The lake of Como is our destination, and we have put the general guidance of our route into the hands of one of the party. I was a little startled when I was told that I was to reach Como viâ Franckfort; this is something like going to the Line by the North Pole; but I am assured that the journey will be the more delightful and novel. I was shown our way on the map—Metz to Trèves; then down the Moselle—unhacknied ground, or rather water—to Coblentz; up the Rhine to Mayence; Franckfort, and the line south through Heidelberg, Baden-Baden, Freyburg, Schaffhausen, Zurich, the Splugen, Chiavenna, to the lake of Como. These are nearly all new scenes to me. The portion of the Rhine we were to navigate I longed to revisit after an interval of many years. So this route being agreed upon, we have taken our places in the diligence for Metz.

I feel a good deal of the gipsy coming upon me, now that I am leaving Paris. I bid adieu to all acquaintance, and set out to wander in new lands, surrounded by companions fresh to the world, unacquainted with its sorrows, and who enjoy with zest every passing amusement. I myself, apt to be too serious, but easily awakened to sympathy, forget the past and the future, and am ready to be amused by all I see as much or even more than they. Among acquaintance, in the every-day scenes of life, want of means brings with it mortification, to embitter still more the perpetual necessity of self-denial. In society you are weighed with others according to your extrinsic possessions; your income, your connexions, your position, make all the weight—you yourself are a mere feather in the scale. But what are these to me now? My home is the readiest means of conveyance I can command, or the inn at which I shall remain at night—my only acquaintance the companions of my wanderings—the single business of my life to enjoy the passing scene.

LETTER II. Journey to Metz.—A Day spent at Metz.—Proceed to Trèves.—Enter Prussia.—Trèves.—Voyage down the Moselle.—Slow

Steamboat up the Rhine to Mayence.—Railroad to Franckfort.

Thursday, 25th June.

We left Paris on the 25th of June, at six in the evening, and were thirty-seven hours reaching Metz, a distance of about two hundred miles, stopping only for half an hour at a time, and that only twice during the one day we were on the road. I suffered excessive fatigue during the two nights of this journey, partly on account of a cough I caught at Paris; but my health was not in the slightest degree hurt. The weather was very fine; the country we passed through was beautiful, abundant in corn and vines, then in midsummer luxuriance. There was a portion of those dull vast plains, so usual in France; but for the most part the country was varied into hill and dale, arable and forest land. The season setting in so genially in early spring, joined to the refreshing rains which have since succeeded, have caused rich promise of abundance to appear everywhere. I never remember feeling so intimately how bounteous a mother is this fair earth, yielding such plenteous store of food to her children, and this food in its growth so beautiful to look on. How full of gratitude and love for the Creator does the beauty of the creation make us! By a sort of slovenly reasoning, we tell ourselves that, since we are born, sustenance is our due; but that all beyond—the beauty of the world, and the sensations of transport it imparts, springs from the immeasurable goodness of our Maker. True we were also created to experience those emotions. God has not reduced our dwelling-place—as Puritans would his—to a bare meeting-house; all there is radiant in glorious colours; all imparts supreme felicity to the senses and the heart. Next to the consciousness of right and honour, God has shown that he loves best beauty and the sense of beauty, since he has endowed the visible universe so richly with the one, and made the other so keen and deep-seated an enjoyment in the hearts of his creatures.

We passed through Chalons-sur-Marne, Clermont, and Verdun. The corn-fields, the vineyards clothing the uplands, the woods that varied the landscape, and the

meandering river that gave it light and life, were all in their fairest summer dress. Plenty and peace brooded over a happy land. From a traveller in a diligence no more detailed description of city, village, or scenery, can be expected. I will only add, that this was by far the most agreeable part of France I had ever traversed.

Saturday, 27th.

We had been told at Paris that we should arrive at Metz in time for the diligence to Trèves. Out of England one does not expect exactness; still it was provoking, as we wanted to get on, to find, when arriving at seven in the morning, that the diligence had started at six. We needed rest, certainly; and so made up our minds to endure with equanimity the necessity we were under of not fatiguing ourselves to death from a principle of economy. The inn was tolerable, and the table d'hôte sufficiently good; and, best praise, quietly served. Metz is a clean, pleasant town, a little dull or so; but from the gardens on the ramparts we commanded a view of the hill-surrounded plain in which it is built, with the Moselle flowing peaceably at our feet. We hired a boat, and loitered several hours delightfully on the river; but being without a boatman, found difficulty in discovering the main stream amidst a labyrinth of canals and mill-dams. Afterwards, we walked in the public gardens, which would have been pleasant, but for the foreign style of gravel, which is not gravel, but shingle; smooth turf and a velvet sward are never found out of England: they don't know what grass means abroad, except to feed horses and cows. The weather meanwhile was fine, the air balmy; it was a day of agreeable idleness.

Sunday, 28th.

At six in the morning we left Metz for Trèves, the distance fifty-five miles, which occupied us fourteen hours. We had now entered the true region of German expedition. The diligence was a sort of char-à-banc, with a heavy roof. We had the front seats; but the people behind had ingress and egress only by passing ours, which was done by raising the middle seat, in the style of the public boxes at our theatres.

The horses went well enough (I have an idea we only changed them once, half way); but the peculiarity of German travelling consists in its frequent and long stoppages. During each of these the people behind got out, and refreshed themselves by eating and drinking. Another inconvenience resulted from our stopping so often; our left-hand leader went well enough when once off, but it was very difficult to persuade him to move; and he was never urged by any but the gentlest means. Every time we stopped he refused to set off; on which our driver got down to pat and coax him, and feed him with slices of bread—horses eat a great deal of bread in Germany. When he thought he had succeeded, he mounted again; but the horse being still obstinate, he had to get down and renew his caresses and bits of bread. Sometimes he repeated these manœuvres half a dozen times before he succeeded. Once, just as the horse, after showing himself particularly self-willed, had deigned to yield, a passenger behind, a simple-looking bumpkin, started forward, exclaiming in accents of distress— “Oh, mon gâteau!” He had bought a cake; but by some accident had left it behind, and he entreated the driver to stop, that he might recover it: this was too much; a full quarter of an hour’s coaxing and much bread could not thus be wasted, all to be begun over again.

The fields on the road-side were planted with cherry-trees, which, for the purpose of distilling kirchen-wasser, abound all over Germany; the fruit was ripe, and the heavily-laden branches hung over the road; our outside passengers helped themselves plentifully, so that in a short time we were pursued by a hue and cry of peasants. There is a heavy fine for robbing cherry-trees; and these people wanted to be paid: fierce objurgations passed, and a frequent use of the word schwein—the most opprobrious name a German can give or receive. The peasants had the worst and got nothing. We stopped nearly two hours at Thionville for dinner. In the same room, at the other end of the same table, a civic feast was prepared, delayed only by the non-arrival of the sous-préfet: he came at last and was joyously welcomed. But here German was the usual language; and we became worse than deaf, for we heard

but could not understand.

Thionville is pleasantly situated in the valley of the Moselle, close to the river. It was the eve of some great feast in honour of the Virgin; and all the girls around were erecting altars and triumphal arches, and adorning them with waxen figures in full dress, and quantities of flowers and ribbons. They were enjoying themselves greatly and very proud of their handy-work.

Soon after leaving Thionville we arrived at the Prussian frontier; there was but one passenger besides ourselves, and he only had any taxable goods—sugar-plums from Nancy. Our luggage was taken down and some portion of it slightly inspected; the necessary ceremony was soon over; but two hours were loitered away, one knew not wherefore. The people were civil and the day fine, so we did not feel inclined to be discontented. The country after this grew more varied and pleasant, but the villages deteriorated dismally. They were indescribably squalid. The dung before the doors—the filth of the people—the wretched appearance of the cottages, formed a painful contrast, which too often presents itself to the traveller, between the repulsive dwellings of man and the inviting aspect of free beautiful nature, all elegant in its forms, delicious in its odours, and peaceful in its influence over the mind.

As we slowly proceeded, and were entering a village, a violent thunder storm came on; the driver drew up the diligence to the road-side, and he and the conducteur, and all the outside passengers took shelter in an inn, where they remained drinking beer while the storm lasted. After we had proceeded thence about three miles, our fellow-passenger, who had appeared a mild quiet German, and had been conversing good-humouredly with us, discovered that he had been taken beyond his place of destination, which was indeed the village where we had stopped during the storm. This he considered the fault of the conducteur, and flew into the most violent rage. We escaped the benefit of his angry language since we did not understand him;—he

and his portmanteau were left under a tree, looking helpless enough; and we went on.

The disagreeable part of a slow style of travelling is, that although at the outset we take it patiently, and may find it even amusing, yet, when we are to reach a definite bourne, and the hours pass, and apparently we are still as far off as ever, we become excessively weary. The country was pretty, and after the shower, the evening wore a garb of sober gray not unpleasing. But our fatigue increased rapidly; and mile after mile we proceeded, not interspersed with the capricious and ludicrous stoppages that had marked our outset, but in a sort of determined jogtrot, that showed that the men and horses had lost the gay spirit which had led them to play with their work, and were seriously set upon finishing it with all the slow haste of which they were capable. We arrived at Trèves at ten o'clock last night.

The inn (l'Hôtel de Trèves) is the best we have yet met with; the civility and alacrity with which we are served is quite comforting,—as well as the cleanliness of the house, and the ultimate moderation of the charges. Our first care on arriving has been to arrange for descending the Moselle. There is no steamer; one is promised for next year; but, for the present, there is only a passage-boat twice a week, Thursday and Saturday, and this is Monday. Upon inquiry, we learn that we can hire a tolerably commodious boat, with three men to work her, at no extravagant price. We have found also at the hotel two young Cantabs, friends of one of our party, bent on the same voyage, on their way to a tour in Switzerland. They have agreed to join us. By early rising and late arriving, we might accomplish the descent in two days; we prefer a more easy style of proceeding. We are to sleep two nights on shore, and occupy the better part of three days going down the river.

Trèves, or, as the Germans call it, Trier, is a very interesting town, as being one of the oldest in the northern part of Europe. It was a metropolis, we are told, before the time of Julius Cæsar. After the Roman Conquest, and during the decay of the

empire, it was the centre of northern civilisation. During the middle ages, and till the time of the French Revolution of 1789, it flourished as the capital of an archbishopric, such as existed in Germany, where the mitre was united rather to the sword and sceptre, than to the crosier. It is now in a state of decay, but venerable in its fall. The old Roman ruins give token of that magnificent spirit which causes the steps of the masters of the world to be made evident everywhere, through the solidity, grandeur, and utility of their works.

My friends have been rambling about the town and are returned highly delighted. I did not go, for I felt very much fatigued; I repent me now—but it is too late.

June 29th.

We left Trèves soon after noon; our boat was rude enough, but tolerably large. A queer-looking old man steered her, and the oars were held by two young fellows, one with an aspect of intelligence and good humour, the son of the old man; the other, belonging to a grade beneath him in the human scale. Our luggage was piled aft, and we had an awning. Thus, on a fine, but not hot, June day, we pushed off from Trèves; and, full of curiosity and expectation of pleasure, dropped down the swift stream between verdant banks that rose into hills—not striking in their outline, but agreeable to the eye, while frequent villages, each with its church and pointed spire, either nestled in the foldings of the hills, or graced some promontory that formed a bend in this much-winding river. Peace seemed to brood over and lull us—a deeper peace, as at evening the green shadows of the mountains gathered on the quiet river; and now and then a ruined castle crowned a height, and with that peculiar impression of stately tranquillity which a time-honoured ruin imparts, added the touch of romantic dignity, which otherwise had been wanting, to the scene.

We arrived at Piesport at seven, and our boatmen counselled us to remain here for the night. One of the gentlemen, who had joined us, had studied German for this

tour, and a very necessary accomplishment we found it. Nothing can be more futile than the idea that French will carry a traveller through Germany or Italy. At some of the best inns on the most frequented routes, waiters are provided who can talk both French and English; but, go ever so little off the high-road, or address a person not especially put there for the benefit of your ignorance, and you are instantly at fault; and wanderers, like ourselves, if they cannot speak the language of the country, nine times out of ten, run every risk of not obtaining the necessaries of life. We had been told on this occasion, that one of our boatmen spoke French, but oui, and non, and bonjour was the extent of his vocabulary, and we could never make him understand a word we said. We took great interest, therefore, in our friend's first experiment in German, and his success was a common triumph. Piesport is a miserable village, with a miserable inn, and it was matter of difficulty to procure beds for so large a party; the rooms looked dirty and disconsolate—but there was no help; we ordered supper, coffee and eggs, and, our great staple of consumption throughout Germany, fried potatoes; and with the agreeable promise of the excellent wine of the country, we hoped to restore our fatigues. While all this was preparing, we walked up a hill and looked down on the windings of the river, and the green hills that closed around to guard and shelter it. We encountered a poor stray fire-fly on our road, flashing a pale sickly light: how it came there who can tell? it looked lost and out of place.

Tuesday, 30th.

We left Piesport at five in the morning; the mists gathered chill, white, and dank around us. We met many barges towed up the stream by horses up to their middles in the cold foggy river. The hills grew higher and steeper—broken into precipice and peak—crowned by ruined towers and castles. To a certain degree, it might be called a miniature Rhine; yet it had a peculiar character of its own, more still, more secluded than the nobler river. There were no country seats; no large towns nor cities; but the villages, each with its spire, and overlooked by a ruined tower on a neighbouring height, succeeded to each other frequently. At eight o'clock we arrived

at Berncastel; by the windings of the river, it was fifteen miles to Trarbach; across the hills, it was but three. Our boatmen advised us to cross the hill, as the boat thus lightened would make speedier way; accordingly, with the morning before us, we left the boat at Berncastel, and ordered breakfast. My companions scrambled up a steep hill to a ruined castle that overhung the village. We had a good breakfast, and then began our walk. The hill was very steep; the day very warm; I never remember finding the crossing of a mountain so fatiguing. The path was good, not broken into zigzags, but for that reason steeper; and after the fatigue of the ascent, the descent became absolutely painful. At length we reached Trarbach. It was market-day, and the high-street was thronged. One plenteous article of merchandise was cherries: we gave a few groschen, and in return bore off many pounds; the woman who sold them seemed never tired of heaping up our basket. The boat arrived soon after, and repose was delightful after our laborious walk.

The finest scenery of the Moselle occurs after leaving Trarbach; but words are vain; and in description there must ever be at once a vagueness and a sameness that conveys no distinct ideas, unless it should awaken the imagination: unless you can be placed beside us in our rough-hewn boat, and glide down between the vine-covered hills, with bare craggy heights towering above; now catching with glad curiosity the first glimpse of a more beautiful bend of the river, a higher mountain peak, a more romantic ruin; now looking back to gaze as long as possible on some picturesque point of view, of which, as the boat floated down but slightly assisted by the rowers, we lost sight for ever—unless you can imagine and sympathise in the cheerful elasticity of the setting out at morning, sharpened into hunger at noon, and the pleasure that attended the rustic fare we could command, especially accompanied as it was by bright pure Moselle wine; then, the quiet enjoyment of golden evening, succeeded by still and gray twilight; and last, the lassitude, the fatigue, which made us look eagerly out for the place where we were to stop and repose:—there is a zest in all this, especially on a voyage unhacknied by others, and

therefore accompanied by a dash of uncertainty and a great sense of novelty, which is lost in mere words:—you must do your part, and feel and imagine, or all description proves tame and useless.

We arrived at Kochheim at ten, and found a comfortable inn. In the salle-à-manger was a respectable-looking man, apparently some sort of merchant;—he could talk English, and we entered into conversation with him. I observed that it was sad to see the wretched villages and the destitution of the inhabitants, and this in a land which yielded such lucrative produce as Moselle wine, the sale of which must render the landed proprietors rich, while the mere cultivators languished in penury. The man replied, that it was not so—the villagers were well off, having all they desired, all they wanted. During the French revolution, he said, the nobles forfeited their estates, which were mostly bought up by the peasants, and consequently these rich vineyards belonged to the cultivators. It was true that the trade was carried on by wine merchants, who made large profits; but the peasants might do better if they chose. They were, however, cut off from the rest of the world; they lived as their fathers had done before them; and had no ideas or wishes beyond their present style of life. They had enough, and were content.

Wednesday, July 1.

We left Kochheim at eight. The day grew warm; but a breeze sprung up, which helped us on our way. The vine-clad hills still sheltered the river; still villages with their spires occurred frequently; and still the landscape was distinguished and ennobled by the ruins of feudal towers and castles. At about four o’clock, we reached the mouth of the Moselle as it joins the Rhine. Our boatman wished to land us on the bank of the Moselle itself. We naturally desired to enter the Rhine and land close to an hotel. They declared it was impossible,—the stream was too swift. But they spoke to incredulous ears—some of my companions had before this relieved the men in their work, being accustomed to pulling at Cambridge. Two now took the

oars: the old man continued to steer. The rowers did not find the stream very difficult to stem, working as they did with a will. The old boatman steered us near the banks, among the numerous barges, apparently with some malice, to bring us into difficulty. On one occasion, indeed, it appeared as if we should be inevitably run down by a large barge, and my maid screamed and wanted to jump overboard to save herself: a stroke of the oar saved us. We had not far to go. We landed at the bridge, and betook ourselves to the Hôtel Bellevue, close at hand.

The German hotels are all conducted with great order and regularity, and are very clean, quiet, and good. The head-waiter is the responsible person—he is paid for all the other servants; and the usual sum, a franc a day for every master, is reasonable enough, as it includes every one; and the traveller is not laid in wait for by sighing chambermaid or imploring boots. The only fault is, that the eating is carried on in the common room, where Germans smoke, and consider fresh air unhealthy. The Bellevue is one of three first-rate hotels at Coblentz. The Géant, however, is the largest, and enjoys the best reputation. There is a good one, I believe, on the other side of the river.

Thursday, July 2.

This day was passed on board the steamer, going to Mayence. We embarked at ten in the morning. Years had elapsed since I had passed down this river, before steamers were in use—in an ungainly boat, managed in a still more ungainly manner. Memory had painted the Rhine as a scene of enchantment; and the reality came up to what I remembered. The inferior beauty of the banks of the Moselle enhanced still more the prouder and more romantic glories of the Rhine. The promontories stood in bolder relief—the ruined castles and their ramparts were more extensive and more majestic—the antique spires and Gothic abbeys spoke of a princely clergy—and the extent of mouldering walls marked cities belonging to a more powerful population. Each tower-crowned hill—each picturesque ruin—each

shadowy ravine and beetling precipice—was passed, and gazed upon with eager curiosity and delight. The very names are the titles of volumes of romance: all the spirits of Old Germany haunt the place. Even the events of modern days have added an interesting tale:—When the German soldiers, led by Blucher, and driving the proud fallen victor before them, beheld the river honoured by them, so late occupied by the enemy they hated, now open and free, the name of "The Rhine!" burst from many thousand voices, accompanied by tears of ecstacy. Some day I should like much to establish myself for a summer on the banks of this river, and explore its recesses. As we glide by, we obtain but a cursory and unsatisfactory survey. One longs to make a familiar friend of such sublime scenery, and refer, in after years, to one's intimate acquaintance with it, as one of the most valued among the treasures of recollection which time may have bestowed.

We were a large party in ourselves, and enjoyed our voyage greatly; but, as evening came on, we left the more picturesque part of the river, and grew weary as still we did not arrive. When it became dark, we saw, looming up the river, a shadowy bark, with bright lanterns at its mast-head. What boat was that? The steamer that had left Coblentz at two—four hours later than ourselves. It neared—it passed us. "Oui, ça marche plus vite que nous," replied the phlegmatic German captain, to our accents of surprise and discontent. To go a-head, never entered his mind as desirable. One boat went quick, the other slow—that was all the difference—their day's work was the same. To us, however, the difference involved, besides great unnecessary weariness, our comfort for the night.

We did not arrive at Mayence till near midnight; and we were preceded by our rival, which, together with another steamer, had reached the pier, and disgorged their passengers. We had first to seize on porters, to carry our luggage; which, for our large party, was multifarious; and without the aid of our friend who spoke German, I know not how we should have managed it. We went to the best inn: it was quite full. The next—there appeared some hope; but it failed us. We were driven, at last, to a

very mediocre one; but, though we were Godsends to these people, they were neither rude nor exorbitant: on the contrary, they received us with a sort of cordiality; their accommodation was bad, but they made up for it by civility. We were very tired, and very glad to go to bed.

Friday, July 3.

We left Mayence early. Our plan had been to go by the last train of the previous night to Frankfort. Balked of this, we arranged to go by the earliest of this morning. Here we separated from our chance companions; as they stopped to view the lions at Mayence, and were destined for Strasburg, with which city we meant to have nothing to do.

The railroad from Mayence to Frankfort is not a very good one; but the carriages were comfortable, and the way short—twenty-one miles, which we did in little more than an hour. We went (guide-directed by the inestimable Murray) to the Hôtel de Russie—a most excellent one. Frankfort looks a clean, airy, but dull town. We have walked about it a good deal, but seen nothing worthy of remark. We missed, by stupidly not making proper inquiries, viewing the Ariadne of Dannecker, which is held in high estimation, as among the best modern sculpture. I am not well all this time, and tormented by a cough that fatigues me greatly. We have dined at the table d'hôte, which is thronged by English; and at the hotel the waiters all speak English, and are cross if you speak French, as they want to practise.

A bargain has been made this evening with a voiturier to take us to Schaffhausen for eleven napoleons. We were to stop a whole day at Baden-Baden, and reach our destination on the seventh day after leaving Frankfort.

LETTER III. Darmstadt.—Heidelberg.—Carlsruhe.—Baden-Baden.

4th July.

We set off from Frankfort, feeling as if we were making a fresh start, and were about

to traverse districts new and strange. The road we pursued was perfectly flat, and presents an easy task for the construction of the projected railway. To the right, a fertile plain stretches for several miles to the Rhine; to the left, high hills hemmed us in—by turns receding from, and advancing close to, the road. As usual in this frontier part of Germany, the foldings of the uplands were sprinkled by villages, with their spires; and the neighbouring heights were crowned by ruined castles and towers, which ever add so much to the interest of the scene. What lives did the ancient inhabitants of those crumbling ruins lead! The occupation of the men was war; that of the women, to hope, to fear, to pray, and to embroider. Very often, not having enough of the first in the usual course of their existence, they contrived a little more, which led to an extra quantity of the second and third ingredients of their lives, and, in the end, to many a grievous tragedy. Wayward human nature will rebel against mental sloth. We must act, suffer, or enjoy; or the worst of all torments is ours—such restless agony as old poets figured as befalling a living soul imprisoned in the bark of a tree. We are not born to be cabbages. The lady, waiting at home for her husband, either quaked for fear, or relieved the tedium of protracted absence as she best might, too happy if death or a dungeon were not the result. The young looked down from the hills, and fancied that joy would meet them if ever they could escape to countries beyond. Meanwhile, the peasant in the plain below toiled, and had been far happier than his lord, but for the desolation brought on him by the fierce wars, of which this region was perpetually the theatre.

The peasant, at least, has gained by the change. Hard-worked, he doubtless is; and, probably, poorly fed: but he is secure. We look round for the mansions, which we expect should replace fortified castles, as the abodes of the rich; but find none. It is strange; but, except in Italy and England (and I am told, in parts of France, but in none I ever traversed), the wealthy never seek to enjoy the delights which nature affords; and country-houses, and parks, and gardens, are nowhere else to be found.

We were somewhat annoyed, and much amused, at Darmstadt, where we stopped

for luncheon. The inn was good; but they were expecting the Grand Duke of Baden: the whole of the private rooms were prepared for him, and we were shut out from all, except the common eating-room—of course, redolent of smoke. It was impossible not to laugh, however, at the tokens every waiter gave that his head was turned by the expected arrival—I use this expression literally, as well as figuratively; for, as they unwillingly served us, still their heads were averted towards the window, and frequently they rushed madly to gaze; and whatever question we might ask, still their answer was—"The Grand Duke of Baden is coming."

Darmstadt looked, like most of the towns we traversed in this part of Germany, clean and airy, with wide streets, and a large undecorated building—the palace of the reigning prince; but all rather dull. The road continued pleasant, and the mountainous district to our left became more picturesque. Agreeable excursions might be made among the hills; but we were bound right on, and could not indulge in extraneous rambles. We turned in among the inclosing hills, as we approached Heidelberg. The road lay on the right bank of the Neckar, and at every step the scenery acquired new beauty. Heidelberg is on the left bank; to our right, that is, as we advanced up the stream; and is situated on a sort of narrow platform between the river and the hill on which the castle stands. The town itself has a wholly different appearance from those we had recently passed. It has an ancient, picturesque, inartificial look, more consonant with our ideas of German romance. The best hotel was full; we were transferred to the second, which was very tolerable. We went out to walk by the river-side: the scene was tranquil and beautiful: the river gave it life. The castellated hill crowned it with aristocratic dignity, and the picturesque mountains around closed all in, giving an air of repose, and yet of liberty; for mountains ever speak of the free step and unshackled will of their inhabitants, and, at the same time, of their limited desires and local attachments. Parties of students passed down the streets; but all were quiet. There were numerous shops for painted German pipes: these my companions visited, and made purchases.

Sunday, 5th.

Before eight in the morning we were on the alert, that we might visit the Castle before our departure. We walked up the hill: the way was not long. The first aspect from the outer terraces, commanding a beautiful view of the country around, and the ruined towers and walls of the castle itself, all verdurous with ivy and other parasites, was exceedingly pleasing. The woman, who showed us over the Castle, was, without being pretty, very agreeable; with gentle, courteous, and yet vivacious manners: she spoke English with a very pretty accent, and her laugh was soft and joyous. It is always pleasant to meet, among the uneducated classes, individuals with whom you lose all sense of caste—who are instantly on a level with those deemed their superiors, from mere force of engaging manners, intelligence, and apparent kindness of heart. She took us to the ruins of the wing of the Castle built for the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of our James I. She ought to have been happy in so beautiful a place. From her castle windows, she looked on her fertile and rich domains. Her habitation, whose situation was so much favoured by nature, had been adorned by the hands of fond affection; for her husband had not only built this wing for her comfort, but, to welcome her on her arrival, had laid out a flower-garden in the English style, the remains of which still bloom. But she wished to be a queen; and, to gain the shadowy crown of Bohemia, she devoted the beautiful Palatinate to desolation. Again, in Louis XIV.'s time, this unfortunate province was laid waste by his orders, with a barbarity that has cast an indelible stain on the reputation of that monarch, who was, perhaps, the most heartless and destructive among modern kings. These circumstances, and, in later times, an accidental fire, after which it was never repaired, has reduced the castle to a mere ruin; but it is thus one of the most beautiful, both in itself and for situation, in the world. And now, on this summer day, we felt how happily we could spend months at Heidelberg, to enjoy the pleasure of loitering, day after day, beneath these weed-grown walls, and in the surrounding grounds. The façade of the Hall of Knights, which was built by an

Italian architect, charms the eye by its exquisite finish and perfect proportions. We saw also, of course, the famous tun, and the wax figure of the celebrated dwarf.

On we went from Heidelberg. Our route was altogether pleasant. The road preserved the same characteristics. I should say, that this part of Germany was peculiarly agreeable to the mere passing traveller. The towns have the appearance of health, comfort, and cleanliness. The manners of the people with whom we had to deal, was courteous and pleasing: many of the women we thought pretty. The custom of smoking is a drawback; but some annoyance is necessary, for the culture of toleration and patience in a traveller.

Carlsruhe, where we slept on the night after leaving Heidelberg, has spacious streets, and some good-looking public buildings. However, we saw them only from the windows of the inn, for it rained hard all the evening.

Monday, 6th.

About noon, we turned off from the main road, and bending in among the green hills, without ascending any, reached Baden-Baden, which lies picturesquely yet snugly in the valley, on the banks of the Oes—a mere mountain torrent, it is true, but the “sweet inland murmur” of such is ever grateful to the ear. It looked a cheerful, and even a gay place; yet I feel that I could steal away from the throng, and find solitude at will on the mountain tops or amidst their woody ravines. A wish has come over me to remain here: this sounds strangely, considering my yearning after Italy. How seldom do human wishes flow smoothly towards their object; for a while they may steal imperceptibly on, unstopped, though often checked; winding round, or perseveringly surmounting impediments. Or obstacles still more mighty present themselves, and then our wishes gather power;—they swell, and dash down all impediments, and take an impetuous course. But when all is smooth and free for their accomplishment, then they shrink and are frightened, as (to make a grand similitude) the Gauls did when the open gates and silent walls of Rome offered no

opposition to their entrance. We fear treachery on the part of fate; and objections, overlooked in the hurry of desire, present themselves during the peace of easy attainment. With regard to the feelings that hold my wishes in check when I think of Italy,—these are all founded on fear. Those I loved had died there—would it again prove fatal, and do I only please my fancy to destroy my last hope? We are bound for the lake of Como, a place of sad renown for wreck and danger; and my son's passion for the water is the inducement that leads him to fix on it for his visit. What wonder that I, of all people, looking on the peaceful valley of Baden-Baden, with its mountain torrent that would not sail a paper boat, wistfully incline to stay here and be safe. But that which forms, in this sort of back-current manner, its attraction to me, renders it devoid of any to my companions: besides, study and solitude is their aim.

We dined at the table d'hôte; and a most tiresome and even disgusting mode of satisfying the appetite we found it. The company was disagreeably numerous; the noise stunning; and the food, to our un-Germanised tastes, very uninviting. We were amused, however, by our neighbours—three persons—a German, his sister, and his affianced bride, whom he is to marry to-morrow. She was pretty—he was ugly; but she saw him with the eyes of love, and very much in love they were, which they took no trouble to conceal, looking at each other as Adam and Eve might have done when no other human creature existed to observe them. Meanwhile, a number of little sins against the rules of well-bred behaviour at a dinner-table gave a very ludicrous turn to their overflowing sentiment.

In the evening we visited the salon, and looked in on the gamblers—often a dangerous spectacle. The Rouge-et-Noir table was densely surrounded; and gold or silver was perpetually staked, but never, as far as I could observe, to any great amount—four napoleons at a time being the most I saw placed on a colour, and that but once or twice—generally one gold piece or five francs. I believe serious play is reserved for a later hour of the night. I saw no signs of despair; but all looked

serious,—some anxious. The floor was strewed with cards, pricked for numbers. One man I stood near, calculated very carefully, and generally won. Once, when he felt very sure, he staked four napoleons and was successful. He stowed his gains in a purse, which looked gradually but surely filling. The Rouge-et-Noir table was open all day; the roulette table, in another room, only in the evening—it was thinly attended. The multiplication of your stake at this game, if you are lucky, is attractive; but the chances are known to be so much in favour of the bank, that people are shy of it. Rouge-et-Noir, they say, is the fairest game of any; though, in that, the bank has advantages, which, unless under very excessive failure of luck, secures its being largely a gainer, and the players, of course in a mass, certain losers: thus, the players, in fact, play against each other, and the bank has a large premium on their stakes, which renders it for its holders a lucrative investment of money.

Tuesday, 7th.

We spent this day at Baden-Baden. In the morning I took a bath; the water was exceedingly refreshing and pleasant, but the bathing rooms and baths themselves are small, without accommodation, altogether got up in an inferior and dirty-looking style. We have rambled among the hills; looked on the gamblers: the Rouge-et-Noir went on all day. I now betake myself to writing letters. There is to be a dance in the evening and a concert; the place seemed quietly gay, and there are some well-dressed people. I should think, with the aid of ponies to explore the surrounding country, one might spend a few months here, pleasantly. But the circumstance that always strikes me as strange is the manner in which the visitors always seem tied to the spot where they roost, as if they were fowls with a trellis before their feeding yard. It is true that they visit the lions of the place now and then; but, really, to wander, and ramble, and discover new scenes does not form a portion of their amusements; and yet this is the only real one to be found in such a place.

LETTER IV. Offenberg.—Ettenheim.—Freyberg.—The Höllenthal—The

Black Forest.—Arrive at Schaffhausen.

Wednesday, 8th.

We left Baden-Baden a little before seven. The scenery had exactly the same character—level to the right, to which indeed was now added a view of distant high mountains; on the left, wooded hills; often picturesque with peak or precipice crowned by ruined castles. We dined at Offenberg, at the inn, “La Fortune,”—a very excellent one—where we had a good dinner; the host had lived in England, and now frequently exported wine thither. He showed us a book containing the names of his English customers, and took my companions into his cellars, to taste his vintage. He was a jovial, good-humoured man.[2]

Before dinner at Offenberg, we had walked towards a ruin on the hills, but had not time to reach it; it was picturesque, and continued long to grace the landscape as we proceeded along the plain; for the peculiarity of this route from Franckfort to Freyberg is, that you never ascend in the least, though the hills, wild and romantic, are so near at hand. For several miles from the Rhine, there is a plain flat as the Maremma of Italy, and in that country might be as unhealthy.

I have not yet spoken of our carriage and voiturier. The former was roomy and commodious enough, a sort of covered calèche; it could have been thrown quite open but that the roof was encumbered by our luggage. During all this time, the weather, though dry, was by no means hot: it was, in fact, very agreeable weather for travelling. Our driver was quiet, civil enough, and the horses went well; our want of German prevented our knowing much about him. This evening we had expected to reach Freyberg, but he stopped at a road-side inn of bad promise, and no better execution. He could not be persuaded to go on; the evening was fine, the hour early; it was very provoking. I forget the name of the place; indeed, the inn was a solitary house: however, it was near Ettenheim, whither we walked, and which looked a cheerful small town, and has the sad celebrity of being the place at which the Duke

d'Enghien was seized, whose fate was one of three crimes which cast a dark stain on Napoleon's name. The others were—first, the miserable death of Toussaint l'Ouverture; second, the execution of Hoffer. The sun set cheerfully on a pleasant landscape; we returned to our dreary inn;—it was the first bad accommodation we had encountered on our way.

Thursday, 9th.

Proceeding along the same style of country, we arrived in the middle of the day at Freyberg, where we dined. This was not one of the regular, formal, white-looking, modern German towns; it was antique, irregular, picturesque. We visited its Cathedral; it is celebrated for its great beauty: it is Gothic, and the tower, and spire that surmounts it, are of the most exquisite tracery and finish. We were accompanied by a valet de place, who had lived in a nobleman's family in England, and spoke English tolerably. His claims were high to the knowledge of our language; he had not only written an English description of the Cathedral of Freyberg in prose, but an English poem descriptive of the route we were about to pursue through the Höllenthal and Swartzwald, anglicè Valley of Hell, and Black Forest. The poem is in heroic measure, rhymed, meant to be in the style of Pope's didactic poems. It is a curious specimen of the sort of mistakes a foreigner may make in a language which he otherwise understands very tolerably: the accents on the syllables are nearly all misplaced, and the words used with erroneous significations; but, make allowance for these defects, and it reads smoothly enough.

The name of the Black Forest alone awakens the imagination. I own I like to give myself up to the ideas excited by antique names, and by the associations that give it vitality. Through the Swartzwald poured the multitudinous Germans on their way to Helvetia—and the Roman legions penetrated its depths by dint of intense labour and perseverance. The Black Forest of the middle ages is peopled by shadows, still more grim and fearful: the charcoal burners were a race, savage, solitary, and to be feared:

and, till quite lately, the name conjured up robbers, cut-throat inns, and the worst ills to which travellers are liable. We were to reach this wide track of evil renown through the pass of the Höllenthal, or Valley of Hell. The Germans know how to give the glory of spirit-stirring names to their valleys and their forests, very different from the Little Woman, or Muddy Creek, of America. The pass itself perhaps deserved its title better in times gone by:—as we passed through it on this calm and sunny summer evening, there was nothing frightful or tremendous, but all that is verdant and lovely. The Höllenthal is indeed a narrow ravine shut in by hills, not very high, but rocky and abrupt, and clothed in the rich foliage of majestic trees. In parts the ravine closes in so as to leave only room for the road between the precipice and the mountain river, the Dreisam, which now steals murmuring between its turf-clad banks, and now roars and dashes in a rocky bed. Jagged pinnacles and bare crags overhang the road; around it are strewn gigantic masses of fallen rock, but all are clothed with luxuriant vegetation, and adorned by noble woods. We caught points of view to charm a painter, and others almost beyond the reach of imitative art, that might well entice the traveller to linger on his way. The pass opened as we ascended it, and became wilder in its character. We remained the night at the Stern, a tolerable inn, placed amidst abrupt crags, a brawling torrent, and dark forest land.

Friday, 10th.

We ascended out of the Höllenthal into the wilder region of the Swartzwald. The tract, so named, extends over several hundred miles; but is no longer the dark, impervious forest of olden time. Nearly half of it is cleared, and the clearings have become farms, and pretty villages are scattered here and there in the open uplands. There is nothing gloomy, nor what is commonly deemed romantic, in the scenery, but it is peculiar. The clearings have been made in patches, and the road alternates between cultivated fields, with a view of dark pines stretching away in the distance; and, amidst these straight high trees of the forest, where the axe of the woodcutter frequently breaks upon the ear. On the highest part of this mountainous district is a

tarn or lake, named Titi-See, which our poet celebrates; and informs us, in a note, that from this spot, on a fine morning, we might catch a glimpse of the distant Alps, and see “the mountains unroll themselves in a convulsive manner.” Our morning was cloudy, and we were balked of this curious spectacle. We breakfasted at Lenzkirch, in great comfort; and heard the while some fine German music played by a self-acting instrument, for the manufacture of which this part of the country is celebrated. We were told that the women of the Swartzwald were famous for their beauty, so I wandered about the pleasant looking village in search of pretty girls; for beauty, in the human form, is a divine gift, and to see it is delightful: it increases our respect for our species, and also our love—but I saw none. The peasantry, we are told, are a hardworking, independent, manly race; but they are dirty in their appearance, and by no means attractive.

We dined at Stuhlingen in a new-built inn, kept by a man of high pretensions, and had the nastiest dinner, and the most uncomfortably served, we had encountered in our travels. However, young lady’s fare of good bread and butter is always to be found in Germany; and with that, and our stock-dish of fried potatoes and German wine, we always did very well. We have had a long day’s journey, and evening was advanced when we descended on the valley of the Rhine, a blue mountain river, brawling and foaming among rocks. We entered Schaffhausen at last; and the horses, with much ado, ascended its steep streets. Here we bade adieu to our voiturier, a quiet fellow, not over-sullen for a German of that class, who performed his engagement very faithfully, and from whom we parted without any regret; a little glad, indeed, as foolish human beings always are when they get rid of a king Log; being prone, in the hope of doing better, to forget that they may do worse.

LETTER V. The Rhine.—Zurich.—Journey to Coire.—Via Mala.—The Splugen.—Chiavenna.—Colico.—The Steamboat on the Lake of Como to Cadenabbia.

Cadenabbia, on the Lake of Como.

Our journey has reached its termination; but this letter will tell nothing of our present prospects and intentions, for truly they are as yet obscure and unformed: it will but conclude the history of our journey.

The inn at Schaffhausen is large and good, without being first-rate. We engaged a voiturier to take us the next day to Zurich, and bargained to visit the Falls of the Rhine on our way. We wished to reach them by water, as the best approach; but Murray had by a misprint in his Hand-book put seventeen francs instead of seventeen batz, as the price asked for a boat; and as we, as you well know, are perforce economical travellers, we demurred. This misapprehension being set right by the very civil master of the hotel, we engaged a boat, and the carriage was to meet us at the Falls. We embarked in a rough canoe; a man held an oar at the stern, and a woman one at the prow. We sped speedily down the rapid river, and at one point a little apprehension of danger, just enough to make the heart beat, was excited. We approached the Falls, we were hurrying towards the ledge of rocks; it seemed as if we must go right on, when, by a dexterous use of the oars, we found ourselves with one stroke in the calm water of a little cove; the moment was just agreeably fearful; and at the crisis, an eagle had soared majestically above our heads. It is always satisfactory to get a picturesque adjunct or two to add interest when, with toil and time, one has reached a picturesque spot.

The cottage built to let out the Falls as a show is the contrary of all this; but it has some advantages. You see the sight from various points of view, being first on a level with the upper portion of the river, and by degrees, as you descend to other windows and balconies, reach the level of the lower part. The falls of Terni is the finest cataract I have seen: I believe it to be the grandest in Europe; but it is altogether of a different character from the falls of the Rhine. The waters of the Velino are contracted into a narrow channel, and fall in one stream down a deep

precipice. The falls of the Rhine are broken into many, and are spread wide across the whole breadth of the river; their descent is never so great, but they are varied by many rocks, which they clothe fantastically with transparent waves, or airy spray.

What words can express—for indeed, for many ideas and emotions there are no words—the feelings excited by the tumult, the uproar and matchless beauty of a cataract, with its eternal, ever-changing veil of misty spray? The knowledge of its ceaseless flow; there, before we were born; there, to be after countless generations have passed away; the sense of its power, that would dash us to atoms without altering the tenor of its way, which gives a shiver to the frame even while we gaze in security from its verge; the radiance of its colouring, the melody of its thunder—can these words convey the impression which the mind receives, while the eye and ear seem all too limited in their powers of perception? No! for as painting cannot picture forth motion, so words are incapable of expressing commotion in the soul. It stirs, like passion, the very depths of our being; like love allied to ruin, yet happy in possession, it fills the soul with mingled agitation and calm. A portion of the cataract arches over the lowest platform, and the spray fell thickly on us, as standing on it and looking up, we saw wave, and rock, and cloud, and the clear heavens through its glittering ever-moving veil. This was a new sight, exceeding anything I had ever before seen; however, not to be wet through, I was obliged quickly to tear myself away.

We crossed the river in a boat, and saw the Falls from the other side—the spot best adapted to painting—and whence the views are generally taken. The carriage met us here, and we rolled along towards Zurich. At first our road was the same as that which we had taken to arrive at Schaffhausen: “We are going back,” cried one; “this won’t do—we must not go back to Höllenthal,” which might be taken as a pun, at least we laughed at it as such. But we soon turned aside. We dined at a pleasant country sort of inn; the scenery was varied and agreeable, though without any approach to magnificence; our pace was very slow, and we became very tired, but at

last arrived at Zurich.

Some very good hotels had been lately built and opened at Zurich. I believe the Hôtel des Bergues, at Geneva, is the model, as it is the best of these Swiss hotels, where every thing is arranged with cleanliness, order, and comfort, surpassing most English inns. To the door of each room was affixed a tariff of prices, moderate for such good hotel accommodation, though not cheap as lodgings for any length of time; but the certainty of the prices, the fixed one franc a day, per head, for attendance, the extreme cleanliness and order, makes them very agreeable.[3]

We went to the Hôtel du Lac. From our balcony we looked out on the lake of Zurich. This lake is not so extensive nor majestic as that of Geneva, with its background of the highest Alps; nor as picturesque and sublime as Lucerne, with its dark lofty precipices and verdant isles; but it is a beautiful lake, with a view of high mountains not very distant, and its immediate banks are well cultivated, and graced by many country-houses. After dinner, I went out in a boat with P——, by ourselves; he rowed in the style of the natives, pushing forward, and crossing the oars as they were pulled back;—we crossed the lake, which is not wide at this point, and returned again by moonlight.

We had become tired of our slow voiturier style of proceeding, and were seized by a desire to get on. So we took our places in the diligence for Coire, determined to arrive at the end of our journey as soon as might be.

Sunday, 12th.

The diligence was neither clean nor comfortable; we ought to have gone to the end of the lake by the steamboat. The carriage-road runs at a very little distance from the water’s edge. Half way on the lake is the longest bridge in the world. A bridge across a lake is less liable to be carried away, I suppose, by storms and the swelling of the waters, than over a river, but it ceases to be the picturesque spanning arch that adds such beauty to a landscape; it becomes a mere long low pier. At the end of the

lake we took into the diligence a number of passengers, who had come so far by the steamboat. Our road lay through a valley surrounded by immense mountains, which became higher, closer, and more precipitous as we advanced through the plain at their foot. At one time it seemed as if we must be quite shut in, and then, just as we reached the very extremity of the valley, another lake opened on us—the lake of Wallenstadt, so surrounded by precipitous mountains, that it had been impossible to construct a road round it; but blessings on steam—a traveller's blessing, who loves to roam far and free, we embarked in a steamboat, and in an hour arrived at the other end of the lake. The lake of Wallenstadt, surrounded by its high precipitous mountains, is gloomy; indeed, all the region we now travelled was marked by a vastness allied to dreariness, rather than to the majesty of picturesque beauty. Leaving the lake we proceeded along the valley of the Rhine; vast mountain barriers arose on each side, and in the midst was a flat valley, frequently overflowed, with the Rhine in the midst, struggling through a marshy bed. There was something dreary in it; but if the traveller approaches those mountains, and turns aside into their ravines, they instantly disclose scenes graced by all the beauty of Alpine magnificence. I much regretted not visiting the baths of Pfeflers, which I heard to be particularly worth seeing, and only a few miles distant.

At about nine o'clock in the evening we arrived very much fatigued at Coire. Before leaving the diligence-office we secured our places for the following day to Chiavenna. To my great delight I found Italian spoken here. French does not penetrate into these parts; English, if ever found, is a mere exotic, nurtured in particular spots; German, we had none; so now to be able to inquire, and learn, and arrange with facility, was very agreeable. "You do speak Italian!" exclaimed one of my companions in accents of surprise and pleasure;—so many difficulties in the future disappeared under this conviction. I certainly did speak Italian: it had been strange if I did not; not that I could boast of any extraordinary facility of conversation or elegance of diction, but mine was a peculiarly useful Italian; from

having lived long in the country, all its household terms were familiar to me; and I remembered the time when it was more natural to me to speak to common people in that language than in my own. I now easily settled for our places; and we repaired to the inn to supper and to bed—we were to set out early in the morning.

Monday, 13th.

At five in the morning we were in the yard of the diligence-office. We were in high spirits—for that night we should sleep in Italy. The diligence was a very comfortable one; there were few other passengers, and those were of a respectable class. We still continued along the valley of the Rhine, and at length entered the pass of the Via Mala, where we alighted to walk. It is here that the giant wall of the Alps shuts out the Swiss from Italy. Before the Alp itself (the Splugen) is reached, another huge mountain rises to divide the countries. A few years ago, there was no path except across this mountain, which being very exposed, and difficult even to danger, the Splugen was only traversed by shepherds and travellers of the country on mules or on foot. But now, a new and most marvellous road has been constructed—the mountain in question is, to the extent of several miles, cleft from the summit to the base, and a sheer precipice of 4000 feet rises on either side. The Rhine, swift and strong, but in width a span, flows in the narrow depth below. The road has been constructed on the face of the precipice, now cut into the side, now perforated through the living rock into galleries: it passes, at intervals, from one side of the ravine to the other, and bridges of a single arch span the chasm. The precipices, indeed, approach so near, in parts, that a fallen tree could not reach the river below, but lay wedged in midway. It may be imagined how singular and sublime this pass is, in its naked simplicity. After proceeding about a mile, you look back and see the country you had left, through the narrow opening of the gigantic crags, set like a painting in this cloud-reaching frame. It is giddy work to look down over the parapet that protects the road, and mark the arrowy rushing of the imprisoned river. Midway in the pass, the precipices approach so near that you might fancy that a strong man

could leap across. This was the region visited by storm, flood, and desolation in 1834. The Rhine had risen several hundred feet, and, aided by the torrents from the mountains, had torn up the road, swept away a bridge, and laid waste the whole region. An English traveller, then on his road to Chiavenna, relates that he traversed the chasm on a rotten uneven plank, and found but few inches remaining of the road overhanging the river.[4] It was an awful invasion of one element on another. The whole road to Chiavenna was broken up, and the face of the mountain so changed that, when reconstructed, the direction of the route was in many places entirely altered. The region of these changes was pointed out to us; but no discernible traces remained of where the road had been. All here was devastation—the giant ruins of a primæval world; and the puny remnants of man's handiwork were utterly obliterated. Puny, however, as our operations are, when Nature decrees by one effort that they should cease to exist, while she reposes they may be regarded proudly, and commodiously traversed by the ant-like insects that make it their path.

We dined at the village of Splugen. It was cold, and we had a fire. Here we dropped all our fellow-travellers,—some were going over the St. Bernardin,—and proceeded very comfortably alone. It was a dreary-looking mountain that we had to cross, by zigzags, at first long, and diminishing as we ascended; the day, too, was drear; and we were immersed in a snow-storm towards the summit. Naked and sublime, the mountain stretched out around; and dim mists, chilling blasts, and driving snow added to its grandeur. We reached the dogana at the top; and here our things were examined.

The custom-house officer was very civil—complained of his station, where it always rained—at that moment it was raining—and, having caused the lids of one or two trunks to be lifted, they were closed again, and the ceremony was over. More time, however, was consumed in signing passports and papers; and then we set off down hill, swiftly and merrily, with two horses—the leaders being unharnessed and trotting down gravely after us, without any one to lead or drive them.

All Italian travellers know what it is, after toiling up the bleak, bare, northern, Swiss side of an Alp, to descend towards ever-vernal Italy. The rhododendron, in thick bushes, in full bloom, first adorned the mountain sides; then, pine forests; then, chesnut groves; the mountain was cleft into woody ravines; the waterfalls scattered their spray and their gracious melody; flowery and green, and clothed in radiance, and gifted with plenty, Italy opened upon us. Thus,—and be not shocked at the illustration, for it is all God's creation,—after dreary old age and the sickening pass of death, does the saint open his eyes on Paradise. Chiavenna is situated in a fertile valley at the foot of the Splugen—it is glowing in rich and sunny vegetation. The inn is good; but the rooms were large and somewhat dreary. So near our bourne, low spirits crept over some of us, I know not why. To me, indeed, there was something even thrilling and affecting in the aspect of the commonest objects around. Every traveller can tell you how each country bears a distinctive mark in the mere setting out of the room of an inn, which would enable a man who had visited it before, if, transported by magic, he opened his eyes in the morning in a strange bed, to know to what country he had been removed. Window-curtains, the very wash-hand stands, they were all such as had been familiar to me in Italy long, long ago. I had not seen them since those young and happy days. Strange and indescribable emotions invaded me; recollections, long forgotten, arose fresh and strong by mere force of association, produced by those objects being presented to my eye, inspiring a mixture of pleasure and pain, almost amounting to agony.

Tuesday, 14th.

This morning, we were to proceed to Colico, at the head of the lake of Como, there to embark on board the steamer. We engaged a voiture, which cost more than we had hoped or expected. We drove through a desolate region,—huge, precipitous, bare Alps on either side,—in the midst, a marshy plain. The road is good, but difficult to keep up. The Adda flows into the lake, over a wide rock-strewn bed, broken into many channels. It is a mountain torrent, perpetually swollen by rain and

snow into a cataract that breaks down all obstacles, and tears away the road.

We arrived at Colico two hours too early. The inn was uninviting: we did not enter it. We tried to amuse ourselves by strolling about on the shore of the lake. The air was bleak and cold; now and then it threatened rain. At length, welcome signal of release, the steamer, appeared; another hour had yet to pass while it crossed over to us, and we were on board.

Our plan, formed from the experience of others, had been to take up our quarters at Bellaggio—look at a map, and you will see the situation. The Lake of Como is long, and, in proportion, narrow. About midway between Colico and the town of Como, in its widest part, it is divided into two lakes—one taking a more eastern course to Lecco; the other, to Como. On the narrow, rocky promontory that divides these two branches, looking towards the north, Bellaggio is situated. The steamer, however, did not stop there, but on the opposite shore, Cadenabbia, which looked southward, and commanded a view of Bellaggio and the mountains beyond, surmounting Varenna. We were landed at the Grande Albergo di Cadenabbia. A tall, slight, rather good-looking, fair-moustached master of the inn, welcomed us with a flourish. And here we are.

Strange to say, there is discontent among us. The weather is dreary, the lake tempest-tossed; and, stranger still, we are tired of mountains. I, who think a flat country insupportable, yet wish for lower hills, and a view of a wider expanse of sky: the eye longs for space. I remembered once how the sense of sight had felt relieved when I exchanged the narrow ravine, in which the Baths of Lucca are placed, for the view over the plains of Lombardy, commanded from our villa among the Euganean hills. But it was not this alone that made us sad and discontented. This feeling frequently assails travellers when their journey has come to a temporary close; and that close is not home. It will disappear to-morrow. Meanwhile, to relieve my thoughts from painful impressions, I have written this letter. And now, it is

night; the sky is dark; the waves still lash the shore. I pray that no ruin, arising from that fatal element, may befal me here; and I say good-night to you—to myself—to the world.—Farewell.

LETTER VI. Albergo Grande della Cadenabbia.—The Brothers Brentani.—The view from our windows.—The Madman.—Arrival of the boat.

Cadenabbia, July 17th.

The morning after our arrival we began to consider where and how we should live for the next two months. Two of my companions went by the steamer to Como, for money; and I remained with the other, to arrange our future plans. We at once decided not to remove to Bellaggio, but to remain on this side of the Lake. One chief motive is, that the steamer stops each day at Cadenabbia; and our communication with the world is, therefore, regular and facile. We looked for lodgings in the neighbouring village of Tremezzo, and found several, not bad, nor very dear; though rather more so than we expected. But this was not our difficulty. There were five of us, including my maid, to be provided for. We must have food: we must have a cook. I knew that, in a strange place, it requires at least a month, and even more, to get into its ways, and to obviate a little the liabilities to being cheated. But we are only going to stay six weeks or two months; and the annoyance attendant on my initiation into housekeeping will scarcely be ended before my acquired knowledge will have become useless. The host of the inn declared we must have everything from his house, or, by steamboat, from Como: he insinuated we should be better off at his hotel. At first, we turned a deaf ear; then we listened; then we discussed: in brief, we finally settled to remain at the Albergo Grande. We have one large salon; four small bedrooms contiguous, for three of us and my maid, and one up stairs: we are provided with breakfast, dinner, and tea; the whole (rooms included) for seven francs a-head for the masters, four for the servant. This was reasonable enough; and

we agreed for a month, on these terms. Thus I am delivered from all household cares; which otherwise, in our position, might prove harassing enough.

These arrangements being quickly made, our manner of life has fallen at once into a regular train. All the morning, our students are at work. I have selected a nook of the salon, where I have established my embroidery-frame, books, and desk. I mean to read a great deal of Italian; as I have ever found it pleasant to embue oneself with the language and literature of the country in which one is residing. Reading much Italian, one learns almost to think in that language, and to converse more freely. At twelve, the steamer arrives from Como; which is the great event of our day. At two, we dine; but it is five, usually, before the sun permits us to go out. During his visit to Como, P—— went over to the neighbouring village of Caratte, where lives a boat-builder, who studied his trade at Venice. All the boats of the country are flat-bottomed. P—— has selected one with a keel, which he is now impatiently expecting.

Descriptions with difficulty convey definite impressions, and any picture or print of our part of the lake will better than my words describe the scenery around us. The Albergo Grande della Cadenabbia is built at the foot of mountains, close to the water. In front of the house there is a good bridle-road, which extends to each extremity of the lake. One door of the house opens on an avenue of acacias, which skirts the water, and leads to the side-gate of the Villa Sommariva.

Continuing the road towards Como, we come to the villages of Tremezzo and Bolvedro, with frequent villas interspersed, their terraced gardens climbing the mountain’s side. In the opposite direction towards Colico, we have the village of Cadenabbia itself, with a silk mill: but after that, the road, until we reach the town of Menaggio, is more solitary. In parts, the path runs close upon the lake, with only a sort of beach intervening, sprinkled with fragments of rock and shadowed by olive-trees. Menaggio is three miles distant; it is the largest town in our vicinity, and

properly our post-town, though our letters are usually directed to Como, and a boatman fetches them and posts ours, three times a week, with great fidelity.

High mountains rise behind, their lower terraces bearing olives, vines, and Indian corn; midway clothed by chesnut woods; bare, rugged, sublime, at their summits. The waters of the lake are spread before; the villa-studded promontory of Bellaggio being immediately opposite, and further off the shores of the other branch of the lake, with the town of Varenna, sheltered by gigantic mountains. Highest among them is the Resegone, so frequently mentioned by Manzoni in the Promessi Sposi, with its summit jagged like a saw. Indeed, all these Alps are in shape more abrupt and fantastic than any I ever saw.

I wish I could by my imperfect words bring before you not only the grander features, but every minute peculiarity, every varying hue, of this matchless scene. The progress of each day brings with it its appropriate change. When I rise in the morning and look out, our own side is bathed in sunshine, and we see the opposite mountains raising their black masses in sharp relief against the eastern sky, while dark shadows are flung by the abrupt precipices on the fair lake beneath. This very scene glows in sunshine later in the day, till at evening the shadows climb up, first darkening the banks, and slowly ascending till they leave exposed the naked summits alone, which are long gladdened by the golden radiance of the sinking sun, till the bright rays disappear, and, cold and gray, the granite peaks stand pointing to the stars, which one by one gather above.

Here then we are in peace, with a feeling of being settled for a year, instead of two months. The inn is kept by the brothers Brentani, who form a sort of patriarchal family. There is, in the first place, an old mother, who evidently possesses great sway in the family, and a loud voice, but with whom we have nothing to do, except to return her salutation when we meet. The eldest brother, Giovanni, a tall stout man, attends to the accounts. He is married. Peppina, his wife, is of good parentage, but

being left an orphan in childhood, lost her all through the rascality of guardians during the troubled times of Napoleon's wars and downfall. She waits on us; she is hardworking, good-humoured, and endowed with all the innate courtesy which forms, together with their simplicity of manner, the charm of the Italians. Luigi, the next brother, who welcomed us from the steamboat, is put forward to do the honours, as the beau of the establishment. He has all the airs of one, when each day he goes to receive guests from the steamer, with his white, low-crowned hat, and velvet jacket, his slim figure, and light mustachios; he waits on us also. Then there is Battista, who acts as cook: Bernardo, who seems as a sort of under-waiter: and Paolo, or Piccol, as he is usually called, to his great disdain, a handsome lad, who runs about, and does everything: these are all brothers. There is a woman besides, to clean rooms, and a scullion or two: all the family work hard. Poor Battista says his only ambition is to get a good-night's sleep; he is up early and down late, has grown infinitely thin upon it. Bernardo nourishes the ambition of going to England—the frequent resort of the natives of the lake of Como—and try, as others of the villages about had done, to make a fortune. My young companions are great pets in the house. You can be on excellent terms with this class of people in Italy without their ever forgetting themselves: there is no intrusiveness, no improper familiarity, but perfect ease joined to respect and ready service. For the rest, they of course are not particularly addicted to truth, and may perhaps cheat if strongly tempted, and, I dare say, their morals are not quite correct. But in all their doings, as yet, they keep their compact with us faithfully, taking extreme pains to serve us to our liking; far from having the slightest cause of complaint, we have every reason to praise.

Sunday, 19th.

We begin to feel settled, but to-day a strange and disagreeable incident occurred. Peppina came in with wild looks, to say that a madman—an Englishman—had arrived by the steamer, and was frightening everybody with a pistol.

It seems that two gentlemen had landed from the steamer, and had proceeded, as was the wont of visitors, to the Villa Sommariva, to look over it. One was an Italian, the other an Englishman, who spoke Italian perfectly. Suddenly, as they reached the gate of the Villa which opened on the road, the Englishman said to the Italian, “Are you not afraid of being set upon? Are you not afraid of being assassinated?” The other, who had come from Milan with him, and was not otherwise acquainted, and had no idea of his malady, replied, “No, why should he?” “Do you not know that we are watched, and there is treachery everywhere about us?” “No,” said the other, “and if there were, you have as much cause to be frightened as I.” “But I am armed,” said the madman, “this is loaded,” and he drew a pistol from his pocket, and still more excited by the sight of the weapon, began to shriek “Tradimento! Tradimento! Alla Villa Sommariva! Tradimento!” His companion, frightened enough, ran off and alarmed the inn and village, and as Englishmen, my companions were summoned to see if they could do anything with their countryman.

There he stood on the steps before the gate of the villa leading down to the lake, shrieking “Tradimento;” he kept every one at bay with his pistol, which was cocked, capped, and ready. Some people from across the lake tried to land at the steps to visit the villa, but he soon made them row away; the inhabitants around all flocked, hiding behind trees and peeping from coverts. He was well content to talk or to be spoken to in Italian or English, but no one must approach; and his position, standing on a semicircular flight of steps leading down to the lake, was sufficiently impregnable: it gave him the whole command of the road in front, and no one could outflank, or come behind him. After three or four hours, however, he grew less watchful. As the people talked to him, he allowed them insensibly to approach nearer, till one fellow getting behind, threw up his arm with the pistol, and then throwing his arms round him, took him prisoner. His pistol was double-loaded. But with all his madness he was aware, that if he had fired it, his power was at an end; and this latent sanity saved, perhaps, a life.

He was brought to the hotel, and a dismal day my friends have passed watching over him. Poor fellow! he is quite mad. He had given English lessons at Milan for some years, and earned a sufficient livelihood. His insanity has taken the turn of believing, that the Austrian police want to poison him. He said he never went to the theatre but a police officer was behind, who scattered a poisonous powder over him. He will not take any food in consequence; neither touch bread nor water. My maid took him a cup of tea made by herself, and, to her great indignation, he refused it, as poisoned. He tried to escape several times. First, he made friends with his countrymen; but when he found that they watched him, he turned to the Italians, calling us, according to the phrase of the country, “non Cristiani,” and begging them to save him. He had sixteen napoleons with him. It seems that the doctor who attended him (he was without relations or English friends) had advised him to go to England, had put him into the diligence for Como, introducing him to a Milanese in the vehicle, without mentioning his malady, and thus he was delivered over to the miserable wanderings of his mind. A doctor had been sent for from Menaggio at the first moment; of course, he could do nothing. With difficulty he was induced to go to bed; he was thoroughly persuaded he should be murdered in the night, and his expostulations on the subject were shocking and ghastly enough. The next morning, having taken an aversion to all those with whom he had been friendly the preceding day, he consented to go back to Milan, under the escort of a police officer. I saw him as he got into the boat; he was a spare man, with an adust, withered face and unquiet eye; but not otherwise remarkable. We heard that at Como he selected a pear from the bottom of a basket in the market place, and ate it; it was the first food that had passed his lips since he left Milan, two days before.

Tuesday, 21st.

In our hotel are an English gentleman and lady, with whom the adventure of the madman brought us acquainted. Mr. and Mrs. F—— had been spending the last two years in Italy; they are passed middle life: he is a scholar and a gentlemanly man; he

has printed a volume of poetry, and aims at connoisseurship in pictures. She appears one of those dear, gentle, sensible, warm-hearted women, the salt of the earth. Her acquaintance, alone as I am with my son, and his youthful friends, promises to be a great resource to me.

This evening P——'s little boat has come; small, indeed, it is. In shape it is something of a sea boat, and it has a keel, and a tiny sail; but it is too small to convey a feeling of safety. I look at it and shudder. I can bring no help, except constant watchfulness; and many an anxious hour it will cause me to pass. Do not call me a grumbler. A tragedy has darkened my life: I endeavour, in vain, to cast aside the fears which are its offspring; they haunt me perpetually, and make too large and too sad a portion of my daily life.

The arrival of the boat, you see, has dashed my spirits, so I break off.—Adieu.

LETTER VII. Excursions on the Lake.—Manzoni's Ode of "Cinque Maggio."

Cadenabbia, Monday, 27th July.

Yester evening there was a thunder storm, and this morning the loftier Alps to the north are covered with snow, a sign that we shall have a boisterous wind from Colico until the snow disappears; this is the wind that brings heavy waves, and renders the navigation of the lake dangerous. P—— desired to sail; I walked round to the bay of Bolvedro, and watched while he tacked in and out. I afterwards got into the boat to return; but it seemed to me that the little craft must run into the depths of the crested waves which met her. For the first time in my life I took thorough fright, and insisted on our landing at the steps of the villa Sommariva. The most dangerous thing we could do: for the waves might dash us against them, and the lake is fathomless deep in that spot; it is said who went down there, was never seen again. We landed, however, in safety.

Tuesday, 28th.

The arrival of the steamer at noon is the event of our day. Several times acquaintance have come by it, chance visitants to the lake of Como. When we hear the bell, my companions leave their books to run down to see the disembarkation: to-day I heard one of them exclaim, “Ah, here’s D——!” This announced the arrival of a fellow-collegian, who joined our party for two or three weeks, to the great satisfaction of his friends.

Saturday, August 3.

The snow is gone from the mountain tops; warm, really warm weather has commenced, and we begin to enjoy one of the most delicious pleasures of life, in its way. The repose necessitated by heat during the day, the revival in the evening, the enjoyment of the cooler hours, the enchantment of the nights—to stroll beside or linger upon the divine lake, to see the sun’s declining rays gild the mountain peaks, to watch the stars gather bright over the craggy summits, to view the vast shadows darken the waters, and hear the soft tinkling bells, put by the fishermen to mark the spot where the nets are set, come with softened sound across the water: this has been our lot each evening. Each evening, too, at dusk, the girls from the silk mill close by, pass our inn on their way from work to their own village; they sing as they go, and look happy: some of them are very beautiful. They are all well conducted, I am told, keeping sharp watch on one another. The unmarried in Italy are usually of good conduct, while marriage is the prelude to a fearful liberty.

Monday, 5th.

We have crossed to Bellaggio several times, without visiting the villas on that shore. To-day has been excessively hot; at five a breeze sprung up: we crossed the lake, and, landing at the port of Bellaggio, went up the hill to visit the villa Serbelloni.

The extreme and narrow shoot of the promontory that divides the lake into two, is covered by the gardens of this villa. To the north, towards Cadenabbia, the descent

is somewhat gradual to the water, and the hill is cut into terraces, planted with vines and olives. To the south, looking over the lake of Lecco, it is abrupt; dark, precipitous rocks, rise at once from the deep waters, broken into crags and pinnacles, crowned with rich vegetation, and adorned by majestic trees. Paths have been formed along the outmost brink of these picturesque precipices and ravines; and it is impossible to imagine anything more beautiful than the sight, looking down on the clear deep lake, and its high rocky barriers, broken into gorges and watercourses, tree-grown and verdant. A tower in olden time had been built on the height of the promontory—it is now in ruin—and through this there is an entrance to a summer-house that overlooks the deepest and most beautiful of the ravines, with its graceful wood. On the other side of the lake are the huge mountains surmounting Varenna, and, softened by distance, the roaring of a torrent falls on the ear; the sound of a mysterious fountain, called, from its milky colour, fiume latte, whose bed is full and noisy in summer, and empty and still in winter. The grounds of the Villa Serbelloni are peculiarly Italian. One path is cut through a cavern; and at a particular point a view is caught of the opposite bank and of the Villa Sommariva—a picture, as it were, set in a frame; descending terraces lead from the summer-house to the water's edge. The gardens are not kept in English order; but Art has done much in laying them out to advantage, and the exuberant richness of Nature stands in place of trimness, which is not an apposite epithet for gardens in this country.[5] There is a great deal of ground; the demesne is princely in its extent, and in the grandeur of the natural beauties it contains. Its great defect is the absence of a suitable residence.

In times gone by this estate belonged to the ducal family of Sfondrati, whose escutcheons adorn the walls. The Sfondrati were a family of Cremona, and the name appears in the pages of Italian history. In Charles V.'s time, a Sfondrati was employed in various negotiations by Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, and was among the most distinguished of the followers of the Emperor himself. Unfortunately, in those days the Italians of Lombardy were patriots no more, for

they had no longer a country. Francesco Sfondrati was named by Charles V. Governor of Siena, and restored order to that distracted town; so that the Sienese named him Father of their country. As Siena had always been a Ghibelline city, it may be supposed that the majority of her citizens looked favourably on the acts of a governor appointed by the German Emperor. Sfondrati had married a lady of the illustrious house of Visconti, and was thus connected with the reigning family of Milan. When he lost his wife, he entered the Church. He became, first, Bishop of Cremona, and afterwards Cardinal. The youngest of his sons was also an ecclesiastic, and became Pope, under the name of Gregory XIV.; he was known as an author of some works on jurisprudence; and besides, there exists a poem of his, entitled “De Raptu Helenæ, Poema heroicum, libro tres,” published in Venice, in 1559. Another member of the same family, also a churchman, made himself conspicuous by defending the pretensions of the court of Rome in answer to the declaration of the French clergy, in 1682; and was, as a reward, made cardinal.

Nor is the name Serbelloni much less illustrious. This family was originally Burgundian; and three brothers of the name left France during the anarchy of the reign of Charles VI., when the factions of Burgundy and Orleans, and the English invasion, distracted that unfortunate country. One brother established himself in Spain, another at Naples, the third in Lombardy.

One of the descendants, Gabriel Serbelloni, was particularly famous. Had he supported a good cause, he had been a hero. But the Italians had ceased to be a nation, and fought for France or Spain, as circumstances might direct. Gabriel was a Knight of Malta, and fought against the Turks with reputation and success in Hungary. His military skill and prowess introduced him to the notice of Charles V.; and he invited him to enter his service. He fought in Germany and Brabant, and acquired a high reputation. The most honourable circumstance attending his career occurred when Don John of Austria undertook his famous expedition against the Turks. This prince refused to sail till Serbelloni was added to the number of his

Generals. Everything that was most illustrious in Italy and Spain made a part of his expedition. The inimical fleets encountered each other near Lepanto. The greater number of the Generals, both Spanish and Italian, were for avoiding the conflict, the Turkish fleet having greatly the advantage in numbers. Serbelloni alone supported the opposite opinion. Don John yielded to his arguments; and Serbelloni, by his subsequent bravery, as well as by his counsels, was a chief cause of the victory. It was in this battle that Cervantes fought and lost his hand: it is one of the most famous naval combats in modern history. Serbelloni was rewarded by the Vice-Royalty of Sicily. He was employed on other occasions of difficulty and peril against the Turks, and was made prisoner at one time and exchanged for thirty-six Turkish officers of rank, taken in the battle of Lepanto.

He reaped a better glory when named Lieutenant by the Governor of Milan. The plague broke out in the city, and the Governor abandoned his post; Serbelloni remained, and exerted himself, by wise and humane measures, to alleviate the horrors of the time. He was again chosen by Don John to accompany him in his last campaign in Flanders; he was with him when he died, nor did he long survive him.

A more recent Serbelloni—probably grandfather of the present representatives of the family—served under the Emperor Charles VI., and distinguished himself in the wars of Italy, and more particularly during the Seven Years' War. He was afterwards appointed Governor of Lombardy.

I can scarcely explain why I send you these details. These grounds are so attractive—their site so romantic—the name of the Sfondrati sounded so dignified to our ears, that we have been hunting for information with regard to them and their successors. I send you a portion of the result.

Two brothers now remain of the Serbelloni family—one a general, who served during the wars of the French Empire; the other, a church dignitary. Both are childless, and the estates will, on their death, be inherited by their sister.

Probably, in ancient days, all the habitation that existed was the ruined tower on the summit of the promontory. The escutcheons on the walls show, however, that the present villa was built by the Sfondrati; but it is much out of repair and quite unworthy of the grounds, being little better than the house of a fattore or steward. The plan of a new residence on a splendid scale is under consideration, as well as the completion and ornamenting the grounds. But the brothers discuss, and can never come to one mind; so things remain as they are.

Tuesday, 6th.

This evening we crossed again to visit other seats on the opposite bank. Villa Melzi is a very pleasant country house; its marble halls and stuccoed drawing-rooms are the picture of Italian comfort—cool, shady, and airy. The garden has had pains taken with it; there are some superb magnolias and other flowering trees, but one longs for English gardening here. What would not some friends of mine make of a flower-garden in Italy; how it would abound and run over with sweets—no potting and greenhouses to check, no frost to decimate. The Italians here know not what flowers and a flower-garden are.

After loitering awhile, we ascended the bank by a convenient and wide flight of some eighty steps, and reached the villa Giulia, whose grounds look upon the lake of Lecco. It was all shut up, as we were late. We found our way however, across the promontory to a little harbour on the water's edge. Surely on earth there is no pleasure (excepting that derived from moral good) so great as lingering, during the soft shades of an Italian evening, surrounded by all the beauty of an Italian landscape, sheltered by the pure radiance of an Italian sky—and then to skim the calm water towards one's home; while the stars gather bright overhead, and the lake glimmers beneath. These delights are, indeed, the divinest imparted by the visible creation; but they come to us so naturally as our due birthright, that we do not feel their full value till returned to a northern clime; when, all at once, we wonder at the

change come over the earth, and feel disinherited of, and exiled from its fairest gifts.

Thursday, 6th.

The weather is now delicious; yet at times a cloud is spread over the sky; and wind and rain threaten us. This evening I had the pleasure of finding that I had not become quite a coward, and that I feared for P—— more than for myself. I crossed the lake with Mr. ——; the wind rose, and our little sail was hoisted; but the waves rose with the wind, and our craft is so small that a little breeze seems much. However, I had been scolded, and had scolded myself for my timidity, and would not now display even prudence, but went on; and though twenty times I was on the point of proposing to return, I did not, for I was not aware that my companion silently shared my alarm. At length we had nearly reached the opposite side of the lake; the wind and waves had both risen, and if they increased, danger was at hand. I did not feel fear, but I felt the risk. At length Mr. —— said, "I think we might as well return;" and at the word we tacked. It was a side wind, and our skiff was apt to make great leeway, which would take us below Cadenabbia, and heaven knows where we could land. Just then the wind fell, and danger passed away; but the waves continued high, and the sail grew useless, while sculling became fatiguing. It was hard work: at last we reached the port of Tremezzo; and getting a boy to row the boat back to Cadenabbia, we gladly walked home.

Monday 10th.

The moonlight nights are most inviting. I spent several hours on the water this evening. We put out just at sunset: when we reached Menaggio the full moon had risen above the mountain tops, and strewed a silver path upon the waves; instead of returning, we rowed along the shining track, towards the lake of Lecco. We hunted for the tinkling fisher-bells, and loitered delicious hours away. This evening I heard for the first time Manzoni's Ode on Napoleon—strange, I had never before met with it. It was now repeated to me. It is a glorious poem; the opening calls at once the

attention; its rapid sketching of events is full of fire; the recurrence to the poet's self noble and appropriate; and the last stanza instinct with charity and pious hope. The hero, with all his faults, was fitly praised in verse as majestic as ever yet a poet wrote. It is a double pleasure to find poetry worthy of its better days spring up in modern Italy, showing that the genius of the Italians survives the blighting influence of misrule and oppression. The more I see of the inhabitants of this country, the more I feel convinced that they are highly gifted with intellectual powers, and possess all the elements of greatness. They are made to be a free, active, inquiring people. But they must cast away their dolce far niente. They must learn to practise the severer virtues; their youth must be brought up in more hardy and manly habits; they must tread to earth the vices that cling to them as the ivy around their ruins. They must do this to be free; yet without freedom how can they? for the governments of Italy know that to hold their own they must debase their subjects; they jealously bar their doors against all improvement; and every art and power is used to crush any who would rise above the vices and indolence of the day.

I love the Italians. It is impossible to live among them and not love them. Their faults are many—the faults of the oppressed—love of pleasure, disregard of truth, indolence, and violence of temper. But their falsehood is on the surface—it is not deceit. Under free institutions, and where the acquirement of knowledge is not as now a mark inviting oppression and wrong, their love of pleasure were readily ennobled into intellectual activity. They are affectionate, simple, and earnestly desirous to please. There is life, energy, and talent in every look and word; grace and refinement in every act and gesture. They are a noble race of men—a beautiful race of women; the time must come when again they will take a high place among nations. Their habits, fostered by their governments, alone are degraded and degrading; alter these, and the country of Dante and Michael Angelo and Raphael still exists.

LETTER VIII. Voyage to Como.—The Opera.—Walk towards Menaggio.

Cadenabbia, August 15.

Time speeds on; yet every hour being occupied, it appears to move slowly. How often do a few weeks—such as we have spent here—seem a mere shred of life, hardly counted in the passage of a year! But these weeks “drag a slow length along,” day succeeding day, each gifted with the calmest yet most living enjoyment. Calm; for no event disturbs us: instinct with glowing life, inspired by the beauty of the scenery and the delicious influence of the climate.

We hear from the boatmen on the lake snatches of the “Lucia”—the Bell’ Alma innamorata, especially. The Opera-house at Como is open; and, now and then, to vary their day, my companions have visited it, going by the steamer at four in the afternoon, and returning the next morning. I have been tempted thither once. The steamer, the Lario (a better is promised for next year), is a very primitive and slow boat. I now made a voyage I had made years before, when putting off from Como in a skiff we had visited Tremezzo. How vividly I remembered and recognised each spot. I longed inexpressibly to land at the Pliniana, which remained in my recollection as a place adorned by magical beauty. The abrupt precipices, the gay-looking villas, the richly-wooded banks, the spire-like cypresses—a thousand times scarcely less vividly had they recurred to my memory, than now they appeared again before my eyes. Sometimes these thoughts and these revisitings were full of inexpressible sadness; a yearning after the past—a contempt for all that has occurred since, that throws dark and chilling shadows over the soul. Just now, my mind was differently attuned; the young and gay were around; and in them I lived and enjoyed.

Madame Pasta has a villa on the lake, some miles distant from Como. She has an excessive fear of the water, and never goes to Como by the steamer. Unluckily there is no road on her side of the lake; and she has a house on the opposite shore, in which to remain, if the weather is stormy, to wait for the smoothing of the waters.

Methinks the elements are rude indeed not to obey her voice—never did any so move, so penetrate the human heart. In “Giulietta,” in “Medea,” and, above all, in the melting and pathetic tenderness of the opening air of the “Nina Pazza per Amore” of the divine Paesiello, she has in truth taken from the heart its last touch of hardness, and melted it into sweetest tears. Pasta and Paganini alone have had this power over me, but yet different in its kind. By Pasta, the tenderest sympathy was awakened, joined to that soft return to one’s own past afflictions, which subdued the soul and opened the fountain of tears. Paganini excited and agitated violently—it was rather nervous hysterics than gentle sorrowing—it was irresistible—as a friend said, it realised the fables of Orpheus—it had the power of an enchantment. We heard him in a garish theatre, seeing him on a stage, playing simply to attract admiration and gain money. The violent emotions he excited, rose and faded in the bosom without any visible sign. But could we have listened in the wooded solitudes of Greece or Italy, and known that he himself was animated by some noble purpose, surely he might have inspired passion, animated to glorious action, and caused obstacles seemingly irresistible to give way—no fabled power of music ever transcended his.

It is bathos to return to the opera of Como—but it was very creditable. The house was clean and pretty. Teresa Brambilla sang the part of “Lucia” very tolerably, and it was an agreeable change. In the hotel at Como were staying some Italians, whose singing, however, far transcended that of the theatre. Prince B——, in the days of his exile and poverty, often said jestingly, that were his fortunes at their last ebb, the stage would be a sure resource. Perhaps no finer voice than his has been heard in a theatre for many years.

August 30th.

It is not always calm upon the lake. Sometimes a mighty storm comes down from the Alps, bringing with it driving rain, which resembles the mist of a cataract, and

wind that lashes the water into waves and foam,—and then, in half an hour, all is sunny, sparkling—and calm is spread again upon the waters. Several times we had music on the lake: once we got the musicians over from Bellaggio—they were artisans of the place, who had formed themselves into a musical society—to the number of twenty-one, and they played a variety of airs of modern composers. Often we have visited our favourite Villa Serbelloni, and each visit discovered some new beauty. Once, in P.'s little boat, we doubled the promontory, and rowed beneath the crags we had looked down upon from the terraced walks above. Black, abrupt, and broken into islet, pinnacle, and cliff, but all crowned by greenest vegetation, they rose high ground us. Sometimes we visited the high terraced gardens of Villa Giulia, that overlooked the same branch of the lake.

Nor, nearer home, must I forget the Villa Sommariva. The grounds are not extensive, and, of course, broken into terraces, from the nature of the site; with overarching trees, forming shady alcoves and covered walks. It is a cool and pleasant retreat at noon: the house is a very good one, large and cheerful. It possesses a renowned work of Canova, the Cupid and Psyche. The expression of their faces is tender and sweet; but—I like not to confess it—I am not an admirer of Canova's women. He is said to have had singular opportunities of studying the female form; but place his Venus, or any other of his female statues, beside those of Grecian sculpture, and his defects must strike the most untaught eye. There was a little antique of a sleeping nymph in the halls of the Villa Sommariva, which formed a contrast with the modern Psyche. It looked as the finger could impress the marble, as the imitated flesh had yielded to the posture of the figure. Canova's seemed as if it moved only at the joints, and as if no other portion of the frame was influenced by attitude.

When alone in an evening, I often walk towards Menaggio. I have selected a haunt among rocks close to the water's edge, shaded by an olive-wood. I always feel renewed and extreme delight as I watch the shadows of evening climb the huge

mountains, till the granite peaks alone shine forth glad and bright, and a holy stillness gathers over the landscape. With what serious yet quick joy do such sights fill me; and dearer still is the aspiring thought that seeks the Creator in his works, as the soul yearns to throw off the chains of flesh that hold it in, and to dissolve and become a part of that which surrounds it.

This evening my friends are gone to Como, and I sat long on my favourite seat, listening to the ripplet of the calm lake splashing at my feet; to the murmur of running streams, and to the hollow roar of the mysterious torrent—the Fiume Latte—which is borne, softened by distance, from the opposite shore; viewing the magnificent mountain scene, varied by the lights and shadows caused by the setting sun. My heart was elevated, purified, subdued. I prayed for peace to all; and still the supreme Beauty brooded over me, and promised peace; at least there where change is not, and love and enjoyment unite and are one. From such rapt moods the soul returns to earth, bearing with it the calm of Paradise:

Quale è colui, che sognando vede,

E dopo ’l sogno la passione impressa

Rimane, è l’altro alla mente non riede;

Cotal son io, che quasi tutta cessa

Mia visione, ed ancor mi distilla

Nel cor il dolce, che nacque da essa.

Cosi la neve al sol si dissigilla;

Cosi al vento nelle foglie lievi

Si perdea la sentenzia di Sibilla[6].

It has seemed to me—and on such an evening, I have felt it,—that this world, endowed as it is outwardly with endless shapes and influences of beauty and enjoyment, is peopled also in its spiritual life by myriads of loving spirits; from

whom, unawares, we catch impressions, which mould our thoughts to good, and thus they guide beneficially the course of events, and minister to the destiny of man. Whether the beloved dead make a portion of this holy company, I dare not guess; but that such exists, I feel. They keep far off while we are worldly, evil, selfish; but draw near, imparting the reward of heaven-born joy, when we are animated by noble thoughts, and capable of disinterested actions. Surely such gather round me this night, and make a part of that atmosphere of peace and love which it is paradise to breathe.

I had thought such ecstacy as that in which I now was lapped dead to me for ever; but the sun of Italy has thawed the frozen stream—the cup of life again sparkles to the brim. Will it be removed as I turn northward? I fear it will. I grieve to think that we shall very soon leave Cadenabbia—the first sad step towards quitting Italy.

LETTER IX. Italian Poetry.—Italian Master.—The Country People.—The Fulcino.—Grand Festa.—Adieu to Cadenabbia.

Cadenabbia, 7th Sept.

We leave Cadenabbia in a day or two. I go unwillingly; the calm weather invites my stay, by dispelling my fears. (P.’s boat has left us. I bade it a grateful adieu, glad that it went leaving me scatheless; sorry to see it go, as a token of our too speedy departure.) The heat is great in the middle of the day, and I read a great deal to beguile the time, chiefly in Italian; for it is pleasant to imbue one’s mind with the language and literature of the country in which one is living: and poetry—Italian poetry—is in harmony with these scenes. The elements of its inspiration are around me. I breathe the air; I am sheltered by the hills and woods which give its balmy breath, which lend their glorious colouring to their various and sunny verse. There are stanzas in Tasso that make themselves peculiarly felt here. One, when Rinaldo is setting out by starlight on the adventure of the enchanted forest, full of the religion that wells up instinctively in the heart amidst these scenes, beneath this sky. But I

have chiefly been occupied by Dante, who, so to speak, is an elemental poet; one who clothes in the magic of poetry the passions of the heart, enlightened and ennobled by piety, and who regards the objects of the visible creation with a sympathy, a veneration, otherwise only to be found in the old Greek poets. I have read the Purgatorio and Paradiso, with ever new delight. There are finer passages in the Inferno than can be found in the two subsequent parts; but the subject is so painful and odious, that I always feel obliged to shut the book after a page or two. The pathetic tenderness of the Purgatorio, on the contrary, wins its way to the heart; and again, the soul is elevated and rapt by the sublime hymns to heavenly love, contained in the Paradiso. Nothing can be more beautiful than the closing lines, which I quoted in a late letter, which speak of his return to earth, his mind still penetrated by the ecstacy he had lately felt.

My companions wanted a master for Italian. I asked Peppina if there was one to be found near. She recommended a friend of her's at Menaggio: he was not accustomed to give lessons, but would for her sake. This did not sound hopeful. I tried to understand his charges; but though I put the question fifty times, she, with true Italian subtlety, slid out of the embarrassment, and left me uninformed: while I, for the hundredth time, did that which a hundred times I had determined not to do—engaged a person's services at no fixed sum. The whole thing turned out ill. The man belonged to the dogana at Menaggio; his Italian was no better than Peppina's own—who could talk it very tolerably for a short time; but in longer conversations soon slid into Comasque, or something like it. The man had no idea of teaching; and came so redolent of garlic, that the lessons were speedily discontinued. Of course, his charges were double those of a regular master.

I have spoken in praise of the Italians; but you must not imagine that I would exalt them to an unreal height—that were to show that misrule and a misguiding religion were no evils. It is when I see what these people are,—and from their intelligence, their sensitive organisation and native grace, I gather what they might be,—that I

mourn over man’s lost state in this country.

The country people, I have already told you, hereabouts are a fine handsome race; many of the young women are beautiful, but their good looks soon go off. There are silk mills at Cadenabbia and Bolvedro, which employ a great many girls, who laugh and sing at their work, and, leaving it in troops at the Ave Maria, pass under our window singing in chorus with loud, well-tuned voices. Their dress is picturesque; they wear their hair bound up at the back of the head in knotted tresses, to which are fixed large silver bodkins, which stand out like rays, and form a becoming head-dress; but, unfortunately, as they seldom take these bodkins out, and even sleep in them, they wear away the hair. You may guess, from this fact, that neatness and cleanliness are not, I grieve to say, among their good qualities.

It is strange that, though the men and women here are mostly handsome, the children are very plain. The contrary of this occurs in parts of Switzerland. Here, it a good deal arises from the diet: all the children look diseased—as well they may be, considering their food—and the wonder is, so many arrive at maturity. The deaths, however, are in a much larger proportion than with us. I hear of no schools in this part of the country, and the people are entirely ignorant: neither are the priests held in esteem. Thus thoroughly untaught, the wonder is that they are as good as they are. The church indeed is respected, though its ministers are not; but the enactments of the church are most rigorous with regard to fastings and ritual observances. If toil be virtue, however, these poor people deserve its praise. They work hard, and draw subsistence, wherever it can be by any toil abstracted, even from the narrow shelving of the mountains on which rich grass grows. The young men go to cut it each year; and it is so dangerous a task, that each year lives are lost, through the foot of the labourer slipping on the short grass, and his falling down the precipice. Fishing, of course, affords employment; and there is a good deal of traffic on the lake, which is carried on by flat-bottomed barges, impelled by large heavy sails, or by long oars, which they work by pushing forward. Unfortunately, in this part of

Italy, they are not as sober as in the south, and drunken brawls frequently occur. The drunkenness of these men is not stupifying, as usually among us, but fierce and choleric. Great care is taken by government to prevent their carrying arms of any kind, even knives. They have, however, an implement called a fulcino, in shape like a small sickle, which is used for weeding, and cutting grass on the mountains; this they are apt to employ as a weapon of offence. It is, consequently, forbidden to carry it polished and sharpened, but simply in the tarnished worn state incident to its proper uses. This enactment is, of course, constantly evaded. They are drawn in every brawl; and the wound they inflict—a long ugly gash—is less dangerous, but more frightful than a stab. One evening, there was great excitement on a man being fulcinato at a drinking bout, at a neighbouring inn. One of my companions went to see him, and came back, horror-struck; he had a large, deep gash in the thigh, and was nearly dead from loss of blood. When a surgeon came, however, it was found that the wound was not dangerous. He was carried home in a boat; but it was two or three weeks before he could get about again. When these outrages occur, the police carry the aggressors to prison, where they are kept, we are told, ill off enough, till they consent to enlist. The life of a soldier in the Austrian service is so hard, ill-fed, and worse paid, that these poor wretches often hold out long; but they are forced, at last, to yield: nor is the punishment ill imagined, that he who sheds blood should be sent to deal in blood in the legal way. But the root of the evil still rests in the absence of education and civilisation; and one must pity the poor fellows, taken from their glorious mountains and sunny lake, and sent to herd among the sullen Austrians, far in the north, where the sound of their musical Italian shall never reach them more.

September 8th.

This is our last day. We are leaving the Lake of Como just when its season is beginning; for the Italians always make their villeggiatura in the months of September and October, when the fruit is ripe, and the vintage—the last gathering in

of the year—takes place. The nobles, therefore, are now beginning to visit their villas. English visitants have built a few keeled boats, which, on going away, they either sold or made presents of to their Italian friends. There are two or three pretty English-built skiffs on the lake, which render it more gay and busy than before.

Numbers of the middling classes also, shopkeepers from Milan, congregate at Como and the villages, at this season. In some respects, however, this is not so pleasant, as there are many more visitors at the Albergo Grande. Each day crowds come by the steamer; tables are spread for them in the avenue of acacias, where they eat, drink, and are merry. We live at the other end of the house; and as these chance-comers all leave by the steamer, at four o'clock, they do not inconvenience us. But an English lady, who had taken rooms overlooking the avenue, grew very angry at the disturbance, called the Albergo Grande a pothouse, scolded Luigi, mulcted his bill, and crowned her revenge by writing in his disfavour in the traveller's book of the Hotel at Como. For my own part, I love Cadenabbia more and more every day: every day it grows in beauty, and I regret exceedingly leaving it. My dearest wish had been to visit Venice before I turned my steps homewards, as there is a friend there whom I greatly desired to see; but I cannot go, and must resign myself.

I write these few last words from an alcove in the gardens of the Villa Sommariva, whither I have fled for refuge from the noise and turmoil of our hotel.

This is a very grand festa, named of the Madonna del Soccorso, and relates to the progress of the plague being stopped on one occasion through the intercession of the Virgin. The church is on a hill, about two miles from Cadenabbia, and twelve chapels are built, as stations, on the road leading to it. The whole of the inhabitants of the mountains around were concerned in the vow, and flocked in multitudes to celebrate the feast. In one village in particular, far away among the mountains to the north, the inhabitants had vowed always to wear woollen clothes cut in a peculiar fashion, and of a certain colour, if the remnants of their population—for nearly all

had perished—were saved. These people walked all night, to arrive about noon at Cadenabbia. Their dress was ungainly enough, and must have been very burthensome to the walkers this hot day. It was made of heavy dark-blue cloth, with a stripe of red at the bottom of the petticoat—I speak of the dress of the women. I forget in what that of the men differs from that of the peasants of Cadenabbia. The crowd is immense; and the Albergo Grande is the focus where, going to, or coming from paying their devotions on the hill, they all collect. I grew tired of watching them from my window, and have retired to a shady bower of the gardens of the Villa Sommariva, where the hum of many thousand voices falls softened and harmless on my ear. “Eyes, look your last!” Soon the curtain of absence will be drawn before this surpassing scene. You are very hard-hearted, if you do not pity me.

Midnight.

And now the moon is up, and I sit at my window to say a last good-night to the lake. The bells, so peculiar a circumstance in this night-scene, “salute mine ear,” across the waters. Many a calm day, many a delicious evening, have I here spent. It is over now, lost in the ocean of time past. It is always painful to leave a room for ever in which one has slept calmly at night, and by day nurtured pleasant thoughts. I grieve to leave my little cell. But enough—I will add a few words, the history of our last evening, and say good-night.

Very noisy and uproarious was our last evening; so that till now, when all is hushed, it seemed as if instead of quitting a lonely retreat among mountains, we were escaping from the confusion and crowd of a metropolis. The peasants drank too much wine; they quarrelled with Luigi, and the fulcini were drawn. Care had been taken, however, to have police-officers near; on their appearance, all who could threw then weapons into the lake; two were taken with the arms in their hands, and hurried off to prison, which they will only leave as soldiers.

Late in the evening we paid our bill, and gave presents to the servants, usually a

disagreeable and thankless proceeding. But here, all was so fair, the people so pleased and apparently attached, that no feelings of annoyance were excited. Poor people! I hope to see them one day again—they all gathered round us with such shows of regret that it was impossible not to feel very kindly towards them in return. Good-night!

LETTER X. Voyage to Lecco.—Bergamo.—The Opera of "Mosè."—Milan.

Bergamo, 10th Sept.

For the sake of visiting scenes unknown to us, we arranged not to go by the steamer from Como to Milan, but hired one of the large boats of the place to take us to Lecco. We quitted Cadenabbia yesterday at five in the morning. Sadly I bade adieu to its romantic shores and the calm retirement I had there enjoyed. The mountains reared their majestic sides in the clear morning air, and their summits grew bright, visited by the sun's rays. We doubled the promontory of Bellaggio, and quickly passing the picturesque rocks beneath the gardens of the Villa Serbelloni, we found that the lake soon lost much of its picturesque beauty. Manzoni and Grossi have both chosen this branch of the lake for the scene of their romances; but it is certainly far, very far, inferior to the branch leading to Como, especially as at the end of the lake you approach the flat lands of Lombardy and the bed of the Adda. We breakfasted comfortably at Lecco, and hired a calèche for Bergamo. It was a pleasant but warm drive. Oh, how loth will the Austrian ever be to loosen his gripe of this fair province, fertile and abounding in its produce,—its hills adorned with many villages, and sparkling with villas. These numerous country-houses are the peculiarity and beauty of the region: as is the neighbourhood of Florence, so are all these hills, which form steps between the Alps and the Plains of Lombardy, rendered gay by numerous villas, each surrounded by its grounds planted with trees, among which the spires of the cypress rise in dark majesty. The fields were in their best dress; the grapes ripening in the sun; the Indian corn—the second crop of this land

of plenty—full-grown, but not quite ripe.

Variety of scene is so congenial, that the first effect of changing the mountain-surrounded, solitary lake for the view of plain and village, and wide-spread landscape, raised my spirits to a very springtide of enjoyment. We were very merry as we drove along.

There is a fair at Bergamo; it has lasted three weeks, and the great bustle is over. We had been told that the inns are bad; I do not know whether we have found admission into the best, but I know we could scarcely anywhere find a worse. The look of the whole house is neglected and squalid; the bedrooms are bare and desolate, and a loathly reptile has been found on their walls. The waiters are unwashed, uncouth animals, reminding one of a sort of human being to be met in the streets of London or Paris—looking as if they never washed nor ever took off their clothes; as if even the knowledge of such blessings were strangers to them. The dinner is uneatable from garlic. Of course, the bill to-morrow morning will be unconscionably high.

We have come to Bergamo chiefly for the sake of the opera, and to hear Marini, a basso—boasted of as next to Lablache—but, though fine, the distance is wide between. Being fatigued, I did not go to the upper town to see the view, which is extensive, and at the setting of the sun peculiarly grand. But to the opera we went. The house is large and handsome; but the draperies and ornaments of the boxes were heavy and cumbersome; they carried, too, the usual Italian custom of having little light in their theatres, except on the stage, to such an excess, that we were nearly in the dark, and could not read our libretto. The opera was the Mosè. That which is pious to a Catholic is blasphemous to a Protestant, and the Mosè is changed, when represented in England, to Pietro l'Eremita. None of the singers were good except Marini; but the music is the best of Rossini, and we appreciated this admirable master the more for having been of late confined to Donizetti. The quartetto of Mi manca la voce is perhaps his chef-d'œuvre. The way in which the voices fall in, one

after the other, attracts, then fixes the attention. I listen breathlessly; a sort of holy awe thrills through the notes; the soul absorbs the sounds, till the theatre disappears; and the imagination, deeply moved, builds up a fitter scene—the fear, the darkness, the tremor, become real. The whole opera is rich in impressive and even sublime vocal effects. In the ballet we had Cerito—her first appearance at Bergamo—and she was received most warmly. She danced three pas, and after each she was called on seven times. I had not seen her before; and, though not comparable to Taglioni for an inexpressible something which renders her single in the poetry of the art, Cerito is light, graceful, sylphlike, and very pretty.

Milan, 11th.

This day has taken us to Milan, a long and rather dreary drive. We turned our backs on the hills, and proceeded through the low country round the capital of Lombardy, which is indeed the centre of a plain, whose shortest radius is twenty-five miles. The road is shut in by deep trenches, which serve as drains, and is lined by vines, trellised to pollard trees. We felt shut in by them, and unable to gain a glimpse of the mountains we had left to the north. Our drive was uninteresting, and grew very tiresome, till at last we arrive, and find rest and comfort, at the Hôtel de la Ville, an extensive hotel, kept by a Swiss, with a pretty English wife, and very comfortable in all its arrangements.

We expected letters here, on the receipt of which we instantly turn our steps northward. For in vain I have debated and struggled, wishing to visit Florence or Venice. My son must return to England; and, though I shall not myself cross the Channel immediately, I do not like being separated by so great a distance. Our letters, however, have not come, and we shall employ a day or two in sightseeing.

Sept. 14th.

First we visited the fading inimitable fresco of Leonardo da Vinci. How vain are copies! not in one, nor in any print, did I ever see the slightest approach to the

expression in our Saviour's face, such as it is in the original. Majesty and love—these are the words that would describe it—joined to an absence of all guile that expresses the divine nature more visibly than I ever saw it in any other picture. But if the art of the copyist cannot convey, how much less can words, that which only Leonardo da Vinci could imagine and pourtray? There is another fragment of his in the gallery—an unfinished Virgin and Child—in the same manner quite inimitable: the attitude is peculiar; with a common artist it had degenerated into affectation: with him it is simplicity and grace,—a gentle harmony of look and gesture, which reveals the nature of the being pourtrayed,—the chaste and fond mother, lovely in youth and innocence, thoughtful from mingled awe and love, with a touch of fear, springing from a presentiment of the tragical destiny of the divine infant, whose days of childhood she watched over and made glad. In the gallery is Raphael's picture of the Marriage of the Virgin, in his first and most chaste style; where beauty of expression and grace of design are more apparent, than when, in later days, his colouring grew more rich, his grouping more artificial. A catalogue of pictures is stupid enough, except that I naturally put down those that attract my attention, and I try in some degree to convey the impression they made, so as to induce you to sympathise in my feelings with regard to them. The galleries are rich in Luinis—ever a pleasing artist. The Ambrosian library we, of course, visited; but they keep things now rigidly under lock and key: for some one, whose folly ought to have met with severe punishment, had endeavoured to purloin, and so mutilated, some of the relics of Petrarch.

Among other lions we went to a silk manufacture, where many looms were at work on rich silks and velvets. We saw here specimens of cloth of glass, which, hereafter, I should think, will be much used for hangings. It is dear now—as dear as silk, because the supply of the material is slight; but spun glass must, in itself, be much cheaper than silk. The fault of this cloth is, that it is apt to chip as it were, and get injured; it will, therefore, never serve any of the purposes of dress, but it is

admirably fitted for curtains and hangings. What I saw was all bright yellow and white, resembling gold and silver tissue; of course, the glass would take other colours: it would not fade as soon as silk, and would clean without losing its gloss or the texture being deteriorated.

At the Opera they were giving the Templario. Unfortunately, as is well known, the theatre of La Scala serves, not only as the universal drawing-room for all the society of Milan, but every sort of trading transaction, from horse-dealing to stock-jobbing, is carried on in the pit; so that brief and far between are the snatches of melody one can catch. Besides this, they have the uncomfortable habit of giving the ballet between the two acts of the opera. The only good singer was Salvi—a bad actor, but with a tenor voice of good quality and great sweetness. He had some agreeable airs in the first act: but that over, came a ballet d'action. In this theatre I had seen Othello acted in ballet, with such mastery of pantomime, that words seemed superfluous for the expression of passion or incident; but no such good actors as were celebrated then, exist now. The ballet, founded on the last fortunes of Ali Pasha, was splendidly got up, but full of tumult, noise, and violence, till it ended in a grand blowing-up of Ali, his palace, and treasures. Amidst the din and dust the audience mostly departed, and I went also, thoroughly fatigued; but there was another act of the opera, and on a subsequent night I staid to hear it, though paying for the pleasure by a head-ache. Some of the best airs are in this; and the finale, an air of Salvi, is exquisitely tender and touching, and sung so sweetly by him, that I would rather have heard it than any other part of the opera.

On Sunday I went to the cathedral, and heard mass. There was a sermon—the text, the good Samaritan—the gloss, love your neighbour—an admirable lesson; the preacher, however, had but this one idea: and it was curious, during his sermon of half an hour, to hear the various and abundant words in which he contrived to clothe it. To a passing stranger, the Duomo comprises so much of Milan. It is chiefly the outside, with its multitudinous and snow-white pinnacles, that arrests the attention

and charms the eye; a moonlight hour passed in the Piazza del Duomo—now beneath the black shadow of the building, then emerging into the clear white light—and looking up to see the marble spires point glittering to the sky, is a pleasure never to be forgotten.

LETTER XI. Non-arrival of a Letter.—Departure of my Friends.—Solitude.—The Duomo.—Table d'Hôte.—Austrian Government.

Milan, 23rd September.

A most disagreeable circumstance has occurred. I told you that we expected letters at Milan; one especially, that was to contain the remittance for our homeward journey: it did not—has not come. Perplexed and annoyed, we held council; our friends were all departing; and it seemed best that P—— should go with them, and that I should remain to await the arrival of my letter. I did not like the idea of the solitary journey; but in every point of view this seemed the best course. I gave what money I had to P——, barely sufficient to take him to England: he went, and here I am, feeling much like a hostage for a compact about to be violated. I left England with a merry party of light-hearted youngsters; they are gone, and I alone: this, the end of my pleasant wanderings. Such, you know, is the picture of life: thus every poet sings—thus every moralist preaches. I am more dispirited than I ought to be; but I cannot help it. It rained and blew for several days after the travellers left me,—inclement weather for them; but would I had been with them!

Each day I go to the post-office, and look over the huge packet of English letters; but there are none for me. I did not even ask P—— to write to me; for on any day I may get the expected letter, and at once leave Milan. This excessive uncertainty is the worst part of my troubles. To a rich person, such an accident were scarcely felt; and, indeed, with me, though if protracted it may entail on me a good deal of embarrassment, still it is only annoyance—while I, most unreasonably, feel it as a misfortune. I am miserable. Returning each day from the post-office I cannot rally

my spirits; my imagination conjures up a thousand evils; yet, in truth, none as consequent on this accident, sufficient to justify the dismay that invades me. Feeling this, my fancy dreams of other ills—of which this shadow over my mind may be the forerunner; for often, as you know, “in to-day already walks to-morrow;” and yet the evil that comes is not the evil we fear—for, as another poet truly sings—

“Fears! what are they? voices airy

Whispering harm, where harm is not;

And deluding the unwary,

Till the fatal bolt be shot.”[7]

The uncertainty is the worst part, as I have said; for, as I never contemplated staying more than a day or two here, I did not provide myself with any letters of introduction, and it is useless asking for any now, as I shall, I trust, be gone before they could arrive. Besides that, most of the Milanese are at their country-houses; and it is with them that I should have liked to form some acquaintance. By chance, I had a letter to the French consul; but his family is away, and he, meanwhile, dines at the table d’hôte of this same hotel; but he is also a good deal absent, visiting, and is no resource to me.

I spend my time, therefore, as I best may, in alternate walks and reading, or working. Each morning I pass a considerable time in the aisles of the cathedral. The interior is not of course to be compared to Westminster Abbey. The ceiling, for instance, is painted, not carved in fretwork; nor are there the solemn shadows, nor the antique venerable tombs; but, on the other hand, it is unencumbered by the hideous modern monuments which deform our venerable cathedral; nor is it kept in the same dirty state. My favourite haunt is behind the choir, where there is a magnificent painted window, which throws rich and solemn shadows all around. The influence of this spot soothes my mind, and chases away a thousand grim shadows, prognosticating falsehood, desolation, and hopeless sorrow. I throw off the strange clinging

presentiments still more entirely when I have on fine days mounted to the outside of the Duomo. You know, by pictures and descriptions, how the exterior is covered by pinnacles and statues; many put up but yesterday, are snow-white and glitter in the sun. The city and the plain of Lombardy, are at my feet; to the north, my beloved mountains—magnificent shapes, which the heavens stoop to visit, and which, speaking of power and inspiring adoration, excite and delight the imagination, made lethargic by mere plain country. The Resegone is there, reminding me of the ecstasies I felt on the Lake of Como, which I remember as dreams sent from heaven, vanished for ever. I turn my eyes southward, and try to trace the route to Florence. I am much tempted, when I do get my expected letter, to go thither to see the friend whom I wished to visit at Venice, but who is now at Florence. Much of my desire in visiting Italy was derived from the hope of seeing her and her sister, whom I left gay blooming children;—but I must defer this pleasure.

Milan is not a pleasant town for one so strangely placed as I am, who would fain leave streets and houses to take refuge in solitary walks and country rambles. The country immediately round is low and uninviting, especially now that the autumnal rains seem to have set in; and the roads are dirty—indeed, to all appearance, impassable. Still, you may be sure I walk when I can; and when, on leaving the hotel, I do not turn to the left, towards the cathedral, I turn to the right, along a wide street, with the best shops, and where the shops cease there are some fine large palaces. The French have a laudable passion for public gardens; though their notion of what is agreeable in that respect does not coincide with ours; and grass and turf is, as I have before said, unknown out of England. They have laid out gardens in the outskirts of Milan, into which I turn; and then, ascending some steps, I enter on the Boulevard, a wide drive on the walls of the town, planted with trees. This is the Corso, where every evening the Milanese resort in their carriages—not now, however, as all of any rank are out of town. From this boulevard, which is elevated on the walls, one looks down on the vine-planted low lands beneath. A more

agreeable spot—but it is too far for a walk—is the triumphal arch, begun by Napoleon, that forms the entrance to the city from the road of the Simplon. It is surrounded by a grassy plain. As a harrier, at the distance of some twenty miles, rise the Alps, the resting-places of the wandering clouds, the aspiration of earth to reach the heavens. When I see these majestic ranges, I always feel happier: those know not why who have never felt the love of mountains, which is a real passion in the hearts of mountaineers; and, though I am truly English-born, and bred in plains, yet in my girlhood I visited Scotland, and saw from my window the snow-clad Grampians, and I then imbibed this love for the "palaces of nature," which, when far off, haunts me still, with a keen desire to be among them, and a sense of extreme content when in their vicinity.

At four o'clock, is the table d'hôte. I have been tempted to dine in my own rooms. I feel so cast away, going down alone; but I have resisted this feeling, for it is here only I can mingle at all with my fellow-creatures; and though the mode is tolerably disagreeable, yet I am the better for it afterwards. When we came, our party was at the foot of the table. I have mounted gradually, till now I am next my acquaintance, the French Consul, at top. All the guests are changed, and are always changing. They form a curious assemblage—mostly English, and some whom I cannot make out: they talk English as their native language, but there is something unlike ourselves about them. I have been told that where one encounters these Anglicans, who are not English, Scotch, or Irish—they are Americans; and so it may be. Sometimes I amuse myself by classifying the party. There is a round, good-humoured clergyman, with his family, who is the Curious Traveller. He is very earnest in search of knowledge, but gentlemanly and unintrusive. There is the Knowing Traveller: he pounced upon a poor little man sitting next him, to-day. "So you have been shopping,—making purchases; been horridly cheated, I'm sure. Those Italians are such rogues! What did you buy? What did you give for those gloves? Four swanzigers—you have been done! A swanziger and a half—that's the

price anywhere. Two swanzigers for the best gloves to be found in Milan—and those are not the best." This gratuitous piece of misinformation made the poor purchaser blush up to the eyes with shame at his own folly.

I wish I could see a few Carbonari; but I have no opening for making acquaintance—I should like to know how the Milanese feel towards their present Government. Since the death of one of the most treacherous and wicked tyrants that ever disgraced humanity—the Emperor Francis,[8]—the Austrian Government has made show of greater moderation. As the price of the restoration of Ancona by the French, the exiles were permitted to return. While we were at Como, we had seen the honoured and noble Gonfalonieri, returned from Spielberg, the shadow of a man; his wife no more—his life withered, as a glorious exotic transported to the North, nipped by frosts it was never born to feel. In commerce, also, the Austrian is trying to improve. A railroad is projected to Venice—a portion of it is already constructed. They are endeavouring to revive trade, as much as it can be revived in a country where two-thirds of the produce of taxation is sent out of it; and it may be guessed what a drooping, inert revival it is. But the curious thing about the policy of present arbitrary governments is the encouragement they give to the education of the poor. Even the Emperor Nicholas, we are told, desires to educate the serfs. From whatever motive this springs, we must cling to it as a real blessing, for the most extensive advantages must result to the cause of civilisation from the enlightenment, however partial and slight, of the multitude. Knowledge must, from its nature, grow, and rooting it out can alone prevent its tendency to spread.

We ought, however, to consider one thing in the establishment of the normal schools by Austria. To our shame be it spoken, the education of the poor is far more attended to in Germany than with us. In Prussia, Würtemberg, and, above all, in Saxony, the normal schools are admirable. Austria was forced to appear to do the like; and they do so in a way which they hope will increase and consolidate their power. Government allows no schools but its own; and selects teachers, not as being

qualified for the task, but as servile tools in their hands. The books they allow can scarcely be guessed at in this country, so totally void are they of instruction or true religion. The Austrian hopes to bring up the new generation in the lights he gives, and to know no more than he teaches. He has succeeded, and will probably long continue to succeed in Austria, but in Italy he will not. If the physical state of the poor in Lombardy is ameliorated, they will be tranquil; but hatred of the stranger must ever be a portion of the air he breathes.

It is against the rich and high-born, however, that the Austrian wages war. A hatred of the German is rooted in the nobility of Milan; they are watched with unsleeping vigilance: above all, the greatest care is taken that their youth should not receive an enlightened education. From the moment a young man is known to hold himself free from the prevalent vices of the times, to be studious and high-minded, he becomes marked; he is not allowed to travel; he is jealously watched; no career is open to him; he is hemmed in to a narrow and still narrower circle; till at last the moss of years and hopelessness gathers over and deadens his mind. For the present governments of Italy know that there is a spirit abroad in that country, which forces every Italian that thinks and feels, to hate them and rebel in his heart.

26th Sept.

Still no letter: the mystery of its non-appearance grows darker. I have been better off these last few days, from the arrival of the friends who accompanied us down the Moselle. With them I have revisited the Brera, and their society has cheered me. They are gone, and I am fallen again into solitude and perplexity.

27TH.

At last there is change; my letter is come, or rather I have found it, for it has been here almost ever since our arrival—long before I was left alone. I had as usual visited the post-office, and looked over the letters arrived this day—in vain. I then asked for yesterday’s letters; yesterday was not post-day from England, and I had

not visited the office; but letters might have come to me from Venice or Florence. The huge packet of all the English letters was handed me; I looked it over listlessly, when—a bright light illumined my darkness—my letter—lost amidst the crowd—yet I had often looked over this same heap of letters, and it had not been there. I mentioned this to the clerk, who replied, “O, then it must have been out at the time.” It seems that they send the uncalled-for English letters round the town to the different hotels, to be claimed; but by ill luck mine did not reach me. By mistake it had been directed in the first place to Como; but it had arrived in Milan on the 17th, and this is the 27th.

All is changed now—all is hurry and bustle—I am making inquiries for my journey to Geneva. I sit down to close this letter, and to say that I quit Milan the day after to-morrow. My next letter will reach you from Paris. Adieu.

LETTER XII. Departure from Milan.—Journey across the Simplon.—Lake of Geneva.—Lyons.—Steamboat to Chalons.—Diligence to Paris.—History of the eventful Journey across Mont St. Gothard.

Milan, 28th Sept.

I have made a compact with a veturino, to take me and my maid to Geneva for ten napoleons, in six days. He is to provide us with sleeping-rooms, a dinner, and coffee in the morning. This is very reasonable; but we are not to have the carriage to ourselves: he is already engaged to take three English ladies, and I am to join the party. I sent M—— to their hotel to look at our companions; she brings back word that they are certainly ladies—three sisters they are; but, from their accent, she thinks them Irish. Three Irish ladies out on their travels without any attendant, seems odd; but I trust to my maid’s tact as to their being, as she phrased it, really ladies. The whole day has been occupied in getting a passport. P—— had taken mine; and there is always a good deal of trouble in getting a fresh one visé in Austrian Italy.

The weather is beautiful: it seems, on looking back, that unwillingly as I had remained behind, yet thus I have secured for myself a pleasant journey in fine weather, while my friends encountered inclement skies, and perhaps disasters thereon attendant. It had been agreed that they were not to write, as I should probably leave Milan before a letter could arrive. I cannot, therefore, hear how it has fared with them in their passage across Mont St. Gothard till I reach Paris.

I have taken leave of the Cathedral. I have said adieu to the gardens and walks, which I have paced with a heavy heart the last fortnight. I do not think I should like to live at Milan. The Milanese nobility live much among themselves, keeping their palaces sacred from the Austrian; they do not entertain; and their chief assembly-room is the Opera-house—at least this is the account that strangers give. Probably, if the veil were lifted, and the truth known, we should find something very pleasant hidden behind.

Arona, Tuesday, 29th September.

I quitted Milan at five in the morning. The ladies I was to accompany had desired to spend a day at Como: they had gone the day before, and we were to join at Sesto Callende, at the southern extremity of the Lago Maggiore. The drive thither had nothing greatly to recommend it: but Sesto itself is agreeably situated on the borders of the Ticino, just as it leaves the lake, with, to the north, the amphitheatre of the Alps we were about to cross. Here I met the companions of my journey. The first word they spoke discovered their country; they are Scotch, with as rich a Doric accent as the Lowlands can produce. I cannot well explain the reason, but the enigma vanishes on the discovery of their native land; for there is something in Scotch-women more independent than in English and Irish; above all, one expects a better style of person on smaller outward means. They are three sisters, who have been seeing sights all over Italy, and are now returning home. The elder one has mingled something with the world; and besides being acquainted with good

Edinburgh society, she has visited our poets of the Lakes. She is well informed, and with a full, unebbing flow of conversation, which, though much, is always sensible and anecdotic; and, when I am not overtired, I find it agreeable. I have no wish to describe or designate further ladies, who, though chance companions, have a right to enjoy the shelter of privacy, undragged into public by one, who has only to congratulate herself that she is for a few days thrown in their way.

Crossing the Ticino from Sesto, we left Austrian Lombardy for the territories of the King of Sardinia, and were, of course, detained a considerable time at the Dogana. The road lay along the margin of the Lago Maggiore. This lake differs considerably from that of Como: it is wider; higher mountains form its barriers, but they are much further off, and the immediate banks are less precipitous, more cultivated, and diversified with many villages and some considerable towns. The culture, vines and Indian corn, have arrived at maturity, and the fields are alive with labourers, gathering in the last harvest and busied with the vintage. These gay varied fields on one hand, the picturesque and placid lake on the other; the majestic Alps before, and blue sky to dress all in cheerful and summer hues, impart every delight which this journey can have, but one—I cannot help repining that the horses' heads are not turned the other way, and that I am not entering Italy instead of leaving it. We reached Arona, where we are to sleep, early in the glowing sunny evening, and have walked up a neighbouring height to see the bronze statue of San Carlo Borromeo. It is very striking, of gigantic stature, the attitude commanding and simple; standing as it does on a grassy plot of ground on a hill side, with huge mountains all around, the beautiful lake at its feet,—there is something in it that inspires awe. A colossal figure in a building cannot have the same effect; one is accustomed to it, one knows what it means, and no unexpected emotion is excited. But placed thus, amidst a sublime and majestic scene, the first impression is, not that it is one's petty self on a larger scale, but a being of a higher order and of grander proportions, better fitted than we pigmies are, to tread the huge round earth and scale the Alps. There is a

church adjoining, containing the room where the saint died, and a waxen mask, taken after death; it looks ghastly, but the features are good: it was from this that the face of the statue was modelled.

30th Sept.

We still wound along the margin of the lake, which opened wider, and its Alpine boundaries grew higher and nearer. At the usual spot we received the usual invitation from boatmen to visit the islands, which I accepted. My companions were tired out by sightseeing, and declined. I do not minutely describe: these islands are well known. Islands in a lake have a peculiar charm; they are rare too. Three only exist on this lake: Isola Madre; Isola Bella, on which stands the mansion of the Borromeo family, with its terraced grounds; and one other, covered by a town inhabited by fishermen. They are at some little distance from shore. An island all to one's self is ever flattering to the imagination. No one to intrude unknown; the whole rule of the demesne in one's sovereign hands; and to look from this natural throne amidst the clear waters on the populous shores and glorious mountains that surround the Lago Maggiore, affords a picture of dignified seclusion one covets to realise. Fault has been found with the artificial structure of the gardens of Isola Bella; but it must be remembered that its shape is so conical, that without the assistance of these terraces the soil would be washed into the lake. It is acknowledged that Italian taste in gardening is not our taste; but with the wild mountain paths so near, and scenery impending over on such a scale, that man's art vanishes among it, as the path of a boat on the sea, one the less objects to a little nook of ground—one's immediate habitation—being adorned with artificial embellishments. English culture and taste would, indeed, turn these islands into a wilderness of sweets. The palace itself could not be mended. Taken all in all, I should like to live here; here to enjoy the aspect of grand scenery, the pleasures of elegant seclusion, and the advantages of civilisation, joined to the independent delights of a solitude which we would hope to people, were it ours, with a few

chosen spirits.

Such reveries possessed me, as I fancied life spent here, and pictured English friends arriving down from the mighty Simplon, and Italians taking refuge in my halls from persecution and oppression—a little world of my own—a focus whence would emanate some light for the country around—a school for civilisation, a refuge for the unhappy, a support for merit in adversity: from such a gorgeous dream I was awakened when my foot touched shore, and I was transformed from the Queen of Isola Bella into a poor traveller, humbly pursuing her route in an unpretending vettura. Such, for the most part, has been my life. Dreams of joy and good, which have lent me wings to leave the poverty and desolation of reality. How without such dreams I could have past long sad years, I know not.

We stopped at a pleasant inn at Baveno. A party of English were staying there—sketching, and making excursions in the neighbourhood. They were enjoying themselves, apparently, very much. At Baveno begins the ascent of the Simplon. What it must be, I continually said to myself, to descend this road into Italy, and on the first entrance, to meet this glorious lake, with its luxuriant vegetation; its rich chesnut woods; its thoroughly Italian aspect, so indescribably different from Switzerland! With a heavy heart I gazed, till a turn in the road shut out Lago Maggiore and Italy from my sight.

The weather was beautiful. As I have mentioned, two days before there had been rain and storm, the effects of which were very visible. Among them, at different inn-books, were dolorous complaints of travellers detained for days at wretched huts among the mountains. The road was broken up in many places—a circumstance we made light of, for it was no annoyance to alight, and cross the subsiding torrent on a plank. Had it rained, our difficulties had been great. And here we find one of the great evils of the division of Italy. The southern side of the Simplon belongs to the King of Sardinia, but its road leads at once into Lombardy. This sovereign,

therefore, purposely neglects the most magnificent Alpine pass that exists, and devotes it as well as he can to ruin, that travellers may be induced to prefer Cenis. If there were no choice except between Cenis and the Simplon, there might be a selfish policy in this; but there are now so many passes, that no one desirous of visiting the north-east of Italy, need be forced to cross Cenis, even if the road of the Simplon were destroyed. However, so it is. A bridge had been carried away five years before. It is rebuilding, but very slowly; and the river, when swollen by the melting of the snows or by rains, is a formidable obstacle; besides that, broken by floods and torrents, the Piedmontese portion of the road is in a very rough and inconvenient state. So much for what Pope calls—

"The low ambition and the pride of kings;"

which here shows itself in destroying a work, which if pride, only less pernicious, achieved, yet is a monument of the best and most useful powers of man.

1st October.

We slept at Duomo d'Ossola, at the Post, a very comfortable inn, and the next morning we commenced early the passage of the mountain. The carriage was light and comfortable; three sat inside and two in a sort of coupée outside, so we had plenty of room. Our veturino was of Turin; and if any one going to that city see a carriage with the name of Amadeo on it, and he is in search of a veturino, let him engage him at once—a more civil, obliging fellow I never met. He was engaged to provide us with rooms; and every evening he came to me to ask if I was content, or wished for another. We crossed the mountain with the speed of post; indeed, from Duomo d'Ossola to the village of the Simplon, he rode forward with his own horses to spare them, and we had four posters; and afterwards two posters, in addition to his own, till the summit of the mountain was passed.

The weather was admirable; not a cloud. I walked a great deal of the way. I desired to enjoy to the full the sublime scenery of this grand pass: two circumstances

occurred to prevent my seeing it in all its sublimity. One, that our horses' heads were not turned the other way; and I do not repeat this from the sentiment of the thing, but as the simple fact, that to have the best point of view of the mighty features of the scene, you must look towards Italy; and thus as I walked, I stopped continually and turned to catch those views which I had studied with such longing to really see them, in Brockedon's prints. But the scene was indeed different. He speaks of Alpine horrors; the cascade of icicles; the ice-bound torrent; the snow which, with fantastic shapes covered all, and spreading wide and desolate around, gave a wild and awful appearance to the bare rocks and mighty pines, speaking of storm and avalanche, of danger and death. The snow had fled. We caught glimpses of where it lay eternally on the far summits of the impassable Alps; but we had none. Still the scene in its summer appearance was sublime; abrupt precipices, majestic crags, and naked pinnacles, reared themselves on each side of the ravine formed by the torrent, along which the road is constructed: waterfalls roared around; the pines spread abroad their vast weather-beaten arms, distorted by storms into strange shapes. The road also, now free from snow, gains rather than loses, as we can judge better of the torrents its bridges span, the living granite crags its grottoes perforate, the tumultuous cascades it almost seems to bridle and direct, as their living waters were led by various channels away from our path. There was no horror; but there was grandeur. There was a majestic simplicity that inspired awe; the naked bones of a gigantic world were here: the elemental substance of fair mother Earth, an abode for mighty spirits who need not the ministrations of food and shelter that keep man alive, but whose vast shapes could only find, in these giant crags, a home proportionate to their power. As we approached the village of Simplon, the features of the scene became softer; the summit of the mountain was spread into a grassy meadow, with a lake: villages and cottages peeped out; cattle were grazing; flowers decked the fields; afar off we saw the Alpine ranges towering above, clad in perpetual snow. This sight alone reminded us, that the almost rural

scene we viewed, was removed far above the usual resorts of man; and, for at least eight months in the year, was bound in frost and hidden by snow—the resort of tempests, where it becomes labour and pain to exist.

We breakfasted at the Simplon. We found there an English traveller, who told us of the failure of Hammersley's bank: this was a bathos from sublimity which, yet to many, would have been pathetic; a great blow was given also to many English tourists, his notes being in wide circulation. Fortunately, neither I nor my companions were troubled by it. A few miles after leaving Simplon the descent began. I still walked, for the weather was fine, the air elastic, and I desired greatly to gaze my fill on the mighty and glorious shapes around, so that I could not endure remaining in the carriage. The descent is pretty steep: I believe the greatest difficulties for the construction of the road, presented themselves on the Swiss side. On the Italian, the road is cut for the greater part on the face of the precipices beside the Vedro, and follows the windings of the ravine; but northward, the mountain falls more abruptly. It was necessary to follow the sinuosities of its shape along its shoulder, as it were, and so to reach a neighbouring mountain, divided only by a torrent; this is crossed by a bridge, and then the road turns at an acute angle. I looked long, to study with untaught eyes, why this exact route had been chosen by the engineer; and could judge, by the large circuit he took, of the immense difficulties of his task. This portion of the road belonging to the Swiss, is kept in admirable order, forming a striking contrast with its ruinous condition on the Italian side. We reached Brigg at sunset, and had the satisfaction of knowing that the post could not have taken us quicker; and, for my peculiar instruction, I found that had I left Milan when I intended, I might have joined my grumblings to those of many travellers, who recorded their impatient annoyance of being detained three or four days at the miserable village of Isella, or in a wretched hovel at Divedro, weather-bound by the storms that raged from the 20th to the 24th of September; while for me, all unworthy, the heavens were cloudless and serene.

3rd October.

Our road now lay along the valley of the Rhone, more picturesque far than the valley of the Rhine near Coire. Some of the finest waterfalls in Switzerland precipitate themselves from the cliffs of rock that border the road, or can be reached by a short walk. After the rains, we saw them in great perfection. As I looked on some of these, my imagination was hurried on to endow with life and will these elemental energies. It seemed Love—the love of burning youth, forcing through all obstacles, and with hurry, and dash, and fury making its way; yet beauteous from its nature, sublime from its uncontrollable determination, and thus proceeding right onward to its object, in spite of every let and hindrance, till, having accomplished it, it steals away, almost hidden, almost still, gently murmuring its happiness.

My guide to one of these waterfalls was a deaf and dumb child. She was interesting from the intelligence as well as the beauty of her countenance, and a certain grace of gesture, whose vivacity and distinctness became as intelligible as words.

The valley we threaded is diversified by towns. At Martigny, there are many tablets let into the walls of the houses to say where the waters had reached during the memorable inundation, caused by the tremendous overflow of the Dranse, in 1818. In some parts, conical rocky hills rise in the midst of the valley, crowned by castles. The scenery wants the southern sunny glow which I prefer, but is grand and full of variety.

Geneva, 4th Oct.

On Friday night, we slept at Sion. The next day, at noon, we reached Saint Maurice, where I left my companions. I had a whim, instead of coasting along the side of the lake by Saint Gingoux, to go to Vevay, and make the voyage in the steamer. I was in the wrong, I afterwards found; for, being alone, I had no heart to walk about and see sights at Vevay, and the day for my voyage proved cloudy and cold, so that I could not gain sight of Mont Blanc, for the sake of which I had undertaken it. However, on

this account, I bade adieu to my companions at Saint Maurice, and jumped into the coupée of a diligence, which took me to Vevay. And the next morning, bleak and cloudy, as I have said, I embarked on board the steamer.

I felt now that I had passed a boundary-line, and was in another country, meeting people with a totally different set of ideas and associations. The subject of the war with Mehemet Ali, and of the dissensions with France, was raging at its height; and several persons thought me very rash to venture into that country. The fate of English travellers at the time of the peace of Amiens can never be forgotten. It was not a pleasant day for my voyage, as I have said. The far Alps were hid; the wide lake looked drear. At length, I caught a glimpse of the scenes among which I had lived, when first I stepped out from childhood into life. There, on the shores of Bellerive, stood Diodati; and our humble dwelling, Maison Chapuis, nestled close to the lake below. There were the terraces, the vineyards, the upward path threading them, the little port where our boat lay moored; I could mark and recognise a thousand slight peculiarities, familiar objects then—forgotten since—now replete with recollections and associations. Was I the same person who had lived there, the companion of the dead? For all were gone: even my young child, whom I had looked upon as the joy of future years, had died in infancy—not one hope, then in fair bud, had opened into maturity; storm, and blight, and death, had passed over, and destroyed all. While yet very young, I had reached the position of an aged person, driven back on memory for companionship with the beloved; and now I looked on the inanimate objects that had surrounded me, which survived, the same in aspect as then, to feel that all my life since was but an unreal phantasmagoria—the shades that gathered round that scene were the realities—the substance and truth of the soul’s life, which I shall, I trust, hereafter rejoin.

Disappointed in my voyage, for it was dreary, I arrived at Geneva, and took refuge in the Hôtel de Bergues—the model and perfection of these Swiss hotels, where all is conducted on a system that no number of guests can disturb, and a certainty of

expense, always convenient. I dined at the table d'hôte. The tables lined three sides of a large salle-à-manger, and were crowded by a happy flock of travellers, all turning their steps towards Italy. The talk was Hammersley's failure, the consequence of which had been very disastrous to the poorer race of travellers. It was a fine evening; and I walked a little about the town, and took my place in the diligence for Lyons.

10th Oct.

I left Geneva in the coupée of the diligence, and found myself alone in it. Our fine weather returned, and the drive was pleasant; but still, from the height of Jura, Mont Blanc was veiled from my sight.

Here we fell into the hands of the French douane, a long and troublesome operation. One is always impatient of stoppages in travelling. At length we were allowed to proceed. The way, amidst the vast range of the Jura, was interesting. I remembered it as dreary; but summer dressed all in smiles and cheerfulness. We continued near the Rhone; and the aspect of the river lent life and variety to the scene. I enjoyed it in a melancholy grumbling way, losing myself, as I best might, in fantastic dreams and endless reveries. In some things, the travelling in the coupée of a diligence is not so bad. Your limbs are not confined and manacled as in an English stage-coach. I never travelled all night in the latter, and cannot imagine how it can be endured: it is bad enough for a few hours. The meals are the worst part of French public travelling—turned out all together to feed at one table, loaded with badly-dressed French dishes, with difficulty persuading a servant to allow you to make yourself comfortable with cold water and a towel, being perpetually reminded in consequence you must go without your dinner.

By this time I became aware of a truth which had dawned on me before, that the French common people have lost much of that grace of manner which once distinguished them above all other people. More courteous than the Italians they

could not be; but, while their manners were more artificial, they were more playful and winning. All this has changed. I did not remark the alteration so much with regard to myself, as in their mode of speaking to one another. The “Madame” and “Monsieur,” with which stable-boys and old beggar-women used to address each other, with the deference of courtiers, has vanished. No trace is to be found of it in France. A shadow faintly exists among Parisian shopkeepers, when speaking to their customers; but only there is the traditional phraseology still used: the courteous accent, the soft manner, erst so charming, exists no longer. I speak of a thing known and acknowledged by the French themselves. They want to be powerful; they believe money must obtain power; they wish to imitate the English, whose influence they attribute to their money-making propensities: but now and then they go a step beyond, and remind one of Mrs. Trollope’s description of the Americans. Their phraseology, once so delicately, and even to us more straight-forward people, amusingly deferential (not to superiors only, but toward one another), is become blunt, and almost rude. The French allege several causes for this change, which they date from the revolution of 1830. Some say it arises from every citizen turning out as one of the National Guard in his turn, so that they all get a ton de garnison: others attribute it to their imitation of the English. Of course, in the times of the ancien régime, the courtly tone found an echo and reflection from the royal ante-chambers down to the very ends of the kingdom. This had faded by degrees, till the revolution of ’30 gave it the coup-de-grâce. I grieved very much. Perhaps more than any people, as I see them now, the French require the restraint of good manners. They are desirous of pleasing, it is true; but their amour propre is so sensitive, and their tempers so quick, that they are easily betrayed into anger and vehemence. I am more sorry, on another score. The blessing which the world now needs is the steady progress of civilisation: freedom, by degrees, it will have, I believe. Meanwhile, as the fruits of liberty, we wish to perceive the tendency of the low to rise to the level of the high—not the high to be dragged down to the low. This, we are told by many,

is the inevitable tendency of equality of means and privileges. I will hope not: for on that hope is built every endeavour to banish ignorance, and hard labour and penury, from political society.

This is a long digression: but I have not much more to say. We arrived in Lyons at half-past three in the morning, and with difficulty got admitted into an hotel. The system of French hotels has no resemblance to that of the Swiss; and you must conclude from this, that they do not emulate them in activity, order, and comfort. I was bound for Paris; and proceeded by the steamer, up the Saône, to Chalons. On board these long, narrow, river steamers, I found the same defects—the air, most agreeable to a traveller, of neatness, and civility, was absent. There is, however, no real fault to be found, and I should not mention this were it not a change; and I sincerely wish the French would return to what they once were, and give us all lessons of pleasing manners, instead of imitating and exaggerating our faults, and adding to them an impress all their own—a sort of fierceness when displeased, which is more startling than our sullenness. As I said, this has no reference to any act towards myself; but the winning tone and manner that had pleased me of old no longer appeared, and it was in the phraseology used among each other that the change was most remarkable.

Saturday, 10th.

The worst bit of the journey is from Chalons to Paris. The road is much frequented. I was obliged to wait a day for places in the diligence, and then could only get bad ones, in the intérieur, with three little boys going to school in Paris from Marseilles, and a sort of tutor conveying them; for boys are never trusted, as with us, to go about alone; such a proceeding would be looked upon as flagrantly improper. Nothing can equal the care with which French youth are guarded from contact with the world; girls in our boarding-schools are less shut up. They rise early, work hard—(a boy once said to me, “We are always at work; but we do it very

slow")—little or no exercise, and poor fare. Such is the fate of the noblest French youths, as well as those of an inferior class, at the highest public schools.

It had been pleasant travelling under different circumstances, in a picturesque country, for the weather continued serene and warm; but the drear extent of this part of France is uninteresting; and besides, two days and two nights in a diligence was, if nothing else, extremely fatiguing. We came to an end at last—the dreary, comfortless moment of arriving in a metropolis by a public conveyance, especially in Paris, where the luggage must be examined before it leaves the diligence office—this moment was also over, and in a short time I found myself comfortably lodged in Hotel Chatham—a quiet hotel—not more expensive, I fancy, than any other, and Madame l'Hôte herself is an agreeable person to deal with.

Paris, 12th Oct.

I send you the following graphic account of the perilous journey of my friends, after they parted from me at Milan, sent me by P——'s fellow-traveller. I had let them go without anticipation of evil, and felt not a pang of fear on their account, while lingering so disconsolately behind; so blind are we poor mortals to events near at hand, while we tremble at unseen ills! Imagine what the difficulties of the journey had been, if I, as we intended, had accompanied them. I could not have crossed the mountain as they did. Compare, I entreat you, my easy pleasant drive, with their perilous exposure to the elements.

"We started from Milan at four o'clock, p.m., on the 20th of September—raining cats and dogs—alone inside the diligence as far as Como—recognised by the good folks dell' Angelo (what a fuss they made, landlord and all!), though we only stayed in the town five minutes, waiting for the mail letters. Went on to a little dirty pothouse, a post from Como, to supper, as they called it—all garlic (the cost, one franc and a half)—quite uneatable. About a quarter past ten arrived at Bissone, on the borders of the Lake of Lugano.

"At Como we picked up a very agreeable priest, who, observing on the continued rain for many days past, and pouring doubly down at the time, said that he feared we should not be able to get across the lake, as they had been unable to make the passage the day before for many hours.

"After waiting at Bissone for an hour, and after many misgivings as to the result of the quarrel going on outside between the Austrian mail-guard and the deputation of boatmen, we learned gladly, and yet with some alarm, that we were about to embark. The wind was howling, shrieking, roaring, and, more than all, it was blowing, pulling, tearing, and tugging. It had ceased to rain, and the clouds were driving, as if they were behind their time, and afraid of being overtaken by the fellow behind. We were ushered on to a raft, about twelve yards long and six broad, whereon the diligence, horses and all, were quietly standing. There were no sides to the raft, but a parapet of about a foot high, so that the water rushed every now and then over our feet. When we got full into the wind, we expected to be upset every moment. The priest prayed, evidently sincerely, for he was quite calm and engrossed. P—— and I pulled and pushed alternately at the diligence, to moderate the alarming vibrations, which threatened to topple the whole thing over, assisted by the whole number of boatmen, incapacitated, by the breaking of their oars, for anything active in the propelling way, but oaths. (We had had double the usual number of men, at double the usual price per man.) I asked P—— what we had better do?—we were dreadfully hot with our exercise. He said, 'Jump over and swim till the horses are drowned, and then swim back to the raft.' This would have been the best plan if, as seemed inevitable, we had gone over. So we took off our coats and boots, and put them inside the diligence. But we did get safe over, though very far from the proper landing-place, and after a very unusually long passage.

"We, after some delay, at about one o'clock, got under weigh for Lugano (by coach and horses). Lovely ride, by this far the loveliest of the lakes; quite fine, barring the clouds—full moon—the road lay close by the lake, but very high above it—no

parapets. Arrived at Lugano about two. Shivered and smoked for an hour, and started again. Got to Bellinzona about nine in the morning, and over a road much impaired by the rain as far as Giornico. Here the road became so bad, that the horses did little else than walk, the alternative being a standstill. At last, at Faido, a man opened the door, and, with a perfectly uninterested air, gave us some, we did not know what, information, and then joined a group of silent staring idlers like himself. We paid no attention for some time, till it struck us they were long in changing horses. We then learned that the road towards Airolo was utterly broken up and carried away; and if the rain ceased, and the torrents consented to shrink au plus vite, the road could not be restored in much less than a month. After long consultations—we were seven: an Italian of Genoa, in bright blue trousers; an Uri grazier, about seven feet high; P——, myself, two other passengers, and the mail-guard—the two nameless travellers and myself were for sleeping where we were, and off in the morning. The guard said he must be off if he could get a guide. There was found to be a track, avoiding the Dazio Grande, over the mountains; but only one guide could be found who had ever gone the road, and he only once, in the great floods of 1834.

“Well, after dining, we started off. I was lame, but P—— promised he would stick by me; it still rained boa-constrictors, its constant practice of an afternoon, forenoon, and early morning. We had about 30 guides, variously laden with our lighter impediments; the obstacles were escorted by a larger detachment, at a slower pace. The guides squabbled, and it was dark, with rain and clouds; it was about 3 o’clock. The guides divided; P—— was involved in a mist of guides, so that I could not discover him. They and he set off on the higher road. I waited till I was nearly left alone, and then followed the only guide who knew the route. I should have been lost, no doubt, but for that man, who came back for me once when I had been standing a quarter of an hour alone—scarcely able to keep my footing on the slanting sides of the mountain, and by my obstruction creating quite a shallow or rapid in the stream

in which I stood. No road, nor track, nor print of a footstep to be seen, before or behind, and no one in sight for a quarter of an hour. The torrent 100 yards below, sheer below, roaring till I was deaf; and its foam rising higher than my position, nearly blinded me, together with the incessant rain. This was just over the worst part of the Dazio Grande; where the road, at least what was left of it, was 60 feet under the torrent in its present state. The Ticino had carried away about 150 yards of road here, and about 30 yards further on. The pass is called Dazio Grande, on account of the tolls exacted to pay the great expense occasioned by the casualties to which its dangerous position subjects it. We saved the toll, at any rate. Well, the guide came back for me, and made holes for my feet, and rescued me; it was a rescue, and no mistake. The blue Italian here joined us, crying like a child. In another place we had to wait a quarter of an hour, to improvise a bridge over an extempore torrent, which, on this its first public appearance, was rolling rocks the size of a cow about like marbles. It carried its antidote, however, with it in the shape of a tottering pine, over which we crossed. The danger was probably not less than being principal in an ordinary duel; but to this we had become indifferent by this time; also perfectly indifferent (I at least) to the want of either shoes or stockings—the soles of each had utterly disappeared. Our pace during the greater part of this road (to which the tops of the houses in a London street would be a royal road) was a fast run.

"After about three hours we rejoined the road, and arrived at an inn, at Piota; here we waited, and then P—— and his twenty fellow-travellers rejoined us, with certainly an equally momentous account of their road; theirs was the wrong one, and they were really providentially saved. After two hours quick walking, re-inspirited by a tumbler of kirch-wasser per man, we got to Airolo—a nice clean but cold inn, jolly English-loving fat landlord, and pretty daughters. The next day up St. Gothard—very cold—the snow falling so fast, that, looking back, the tracks of the wheels and horses were filled up and imperceptible before we were out of sight of the place where they had been. This pass, though, perhaps, not equal to the Splugen,

as a work of engineering (je n'en sais rien), is, I swear, infinitely more terrific in bad, and, I should think, more beautiful in fine weather.

"At Hospital we dined, and got into a car alone, which drove for a league through a lake, somewhere in which was the road: we might have been near it. Through Andermatt, thence by a shocking, most perilous road—no parapets—over the Devil's Bridge before we were aware of it: it is very fine on looking back; but there is another by it, quite as grand in position, though something safer. Thence at last to Amstag; whence, indifferent at last to broken roads and torrents dashing across our path, half carrying the horse away into the Reuss, we got to Altorf and Fluelen; good inn. To our joy and surprise the honourable Austrians took all additional expenses on themselves, and our payment at Milan covered all. We here embarked on board the steamer on the lake of Lucerne, which you know as well as I. Excuse this incoherent scrawl, if you read it; and excuse the extreme personality of my narrative."

RAMBLES

IN

GERMANY AND ITALY.

PART II.—1842–1843.

LETTER I. Steam Voyage to Amsterdam.—Rubens' Picture of the Descent from the Cross.—Various Misadventures.—Liege.—Cologne.—Coblentz.—Mayence.—Francfort.

Francfort, June, 1842.

I have delayed writing hitherto—for this is our first stazion. I know not of what clay those persons are made who write on board steamers, or before going to bed, when they reach an inn, after a long day's journey. I rather disbelieve in such

achievements. A date or reference may be put down; but during a voyage, I am at first too interested, and then too tired; and at night, on arriving, I confess, supper and the ceremonial of retiring to rest, are exertions almost too much for me: I cannot do more. And then we have travelled amidst a hurricane of misfortunes—money and other property disappearing under the malignant influence of the Belgian railroad and some rogue at the Hotel at Liege. Our missing luggage has been restored, but we have found no remedy for the loss of our money. Sixteen pounds were seized upon at one fell swoop. Imagine such an accident happening when we were abroad, two years ago! At present, it is not pleasant; but it is not fatal, as it would then have been.

Our last week in England was most delightfully spent at the seat of a friend near Southampton, on the skirts of the New Forest. A little quiet sailing in a yacht; drives in a beautiful neighbourhood, strolling about the grounds; the rites of good old English hospitality—varied the day. Our host was all kindness, and added the crowning grace of being really sorry when we departed; his saddened countenance, as the engine whistled and we were whirled towards London, gave us the flattering assurance that we were regretted; and we sincerely returned the compliment.

We spent a day or two in London, taking leave of a few old friends; and on Sunday, 12th of June, we embarked on board the “Wilberforce,” for Antwerp. I hate and dread the sea; having suffered—oh, what suffering it is!—how absorbing!—how degrading!—how without remedy! And then to wish for terra firma—only so much as the feet will stand upon: thus no longer to be the abject victim of the antipathetic element—a speck of rock, one-foot-by-one, would not that suffice to stand upon, and be still? I speak of times past. The mighty Power had, when trusting to its awful mutability, shewn itself merciful as great, as I crossed and re-crossed from and to Dover, in 1840. But this was a longer voyage; and as we steamed down the river, the wind was directly adverse, and felt strong. The sea looked dreary; and the evening set in gray, cold, and unpleasant. I was the last passenger that kept on deck. About

ten o'clock, the increasing spray drove me down. However, I escaped the doleful extremity of seasickness, and slept till morning, when the slow waters of the Scheldt received us. The sun was bright; but nothing can adorn with beauty the low, nearly invisible banks of an almost Dutch river; and there was no busy craft to enliven the scene. It is strange to think how a scene, in itself uninteresting, becomes agreeable to look at in a picture, from the truth with which it is depicted, and a perfection of colouring which at once contrasts and harmonises the hues of sky and water.

Though it may be done a thousand times, still English people must always experience a strange sensation when they disembark on a foreign strand, and find every familiar object startlingly changed: but, if strange, it is very pleasing. I have a passionate love of travelling. Add to this, I suffer in my health, and can no longer apply to my ordinary employments. Travelling is occupation as well as amusement, and I firmly believe that renewed health will be the result of frequent change of place.

Besides, what can be so delightful as the perpetual novelty—the exhaustless current of new ideas suggested by travelling? We read, to gather thought and knowledge; travelling is a book of the Creator's own writing, and imparts sublimer wisdom than the printed words of man. Were I exiled perforce, I might repine, for the heart naturally yearns for home. But to adorn that home with recollections; to fly abroad from the hive, like the bee, and return laden with the sweets of travel—scenes, which haunt the eye—wild adventures, that enliven the imagination—knowledge, to enlighten and free the mind from clinging, deadening prejudices—a wider circle of sympathy with our fellow-creatures;—these are the uses of travel, for which I am convinced every one is the better and the happier.

June 13th.

We landed on the quay at Antwerp, and walked to the hotel—a long walk, under a hot sun. After refreshing ourselves by a toilette, we hastened to the Cathedral—for

we had no time to spare—to view the Descent from the Cross, the chef-d'œuvre of Rubens. Several people were being admitted as we arrived; but, with a rudeness of gesture and tone that far surpassed Westminster, the door was pushed to, and held jealously ajar, till we had paid a few sous, the price of entrance. The interior is spacious and lofty, and remarkable for its simplicity and its being totally unencumbered by screens of wood or stone. The Descent from the Cross is a very fine picture. You may remember that Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his Lectures, mentions the boldness of the artist in enveloping the dead body with a white cloth. A painter, less sure of his powers, would have relieved the livid hues of death by a dark background: the white sheet, under the pencil of Rubens, contrasts yet more fearfully with the livid tints of the corpse.

This is all we saw of Antwerp—this half hour spent in the lofty nave and the dim aisles of the Cathedral. Do not despise us! Some day, I mean to make a tour of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Holland. But we found it quite impossible to combine sightseeing at the commencement of our journey with our intention of proceeding as far as Italy. You know what it is that enables the tourist to loiter on his way; and you know how slenderly we are provided with the same. I have read, somewhere, the remark of a French lady, expressive of her astonishment at the English mania for travelling. She understood, she said, rich people, with comfortable carriages, amusing themselves thus; but how women, who can command the comforts of an ordinary English house, could leave the same, and by diligence and voiturier, harassed and fatigued, should find pleasure in exposing themselves to a thousand annoyances and privations, surprised her beyond measure. I have travelled in both ways. To undertake the last, requires a good deal of energy and an indefatigable love of seeing yet more and more of the surface of this fair globe, which, like all other passions or inclinations, must spring naturally from the heart, and cannot be understood except by those who share it. After having been confined many a long year in our island, I broke from my chains in 1840, and encountered very rough

travelling. I did not find it more fatiguing than the more luxurious species, and enjoyed as much as I had ever done its pleasures. Now I have set out again, my choice being between staying at home and travelling as I could. I preferred, very far, the latter: I should prefer it to-morrow. Still, I do not deny that I did repine much, on various occasions, that I could not linger longer on my way, and visit a thousand places left unvisited. I hope to go to them another time. What I did see is all gain; and I ought rather to rejoice in the spirit of enterprise that enabled me to see so much, than to grumble at the smallness of the means that forced me to see so little.

We returned to dine at the table d'hôte, and were then hurried into the omnibus, waiting to take us to the railway. I have always avoided this mode of reaching the terminus in England, as too full of confusion; and I cannot tell why I changed my notion on the subject here abroad. I repented heartily afterwards, and renewed my resolve always to reach the station in a private conveyance. Just as we left the hotel, our three passports were put into our hands, one a piece: in the hurry I dropped mine—the first loss of a day, rendered memorable by many. On our arrival, everybody in the various omnibuses that arrived at the same time, at once went mad from hurry and confusion. Loss the second occurred here. M—— forgot her handbasket, containing a lady's-maid's treasures for a journey: many things of English birth were gone irreparably. A noisy crowd surrounded one window of the station at the terminus, eager for tickets, as if the train would set off without them. Before another door was piled all the luggage brought by all the omnibuses. It was only admitted piecemeal; and the selection of the articles belonging to each traveller was a scene of indescribable confusion. We none of us understood German—confession of shame! I had taken lessons in the winter; but my health prevented my making any progress. French was of little avail. We had divided our forces, to master the difficulties we encountered. K—— went for the tickets; P—— with the luggage, and I remained to wonder and expect. After a time, the noise ceased, the crowd disappeared, a bell rung, I had got my ticket, and, the gates being

open, I walked into the yard. I found the carriages nearly full, and ready to start—it seemed very odd. My companions had left me, and had gone to look after the luggage. I saw nobody, so I took my seat in a carriage, and in a few seconds, we started.

The carriages are inconvenient, bearing no similitude, indeed, to carriages, but are small rooms or cells, boxed off into eight seats, and placed on a sort of platform. One merit they possessed—we were not locked in; there was no door, and the egress from the front was easy to the platform, and that was scarcely raised from the ground. The carriages were very full, the heat excessive; and several unruly children did not add to our comfort. At Malines (I think it was), we were to be transferred to another train: the one in which we commenced our journey going on to Brussels. Changing carriages is always a tiresome operation. I alighted in the middle of a large square, and was glad to find my companions safely assembled. Our luggage was turned out here; and, as we waited some time before we were taken up again, we amused ourselves with examining our property. With dismay, we discovered that two cloaks and a carpet-bag were missing. Certainly, for travellers somewhat experienced, our conduct appeared disgraceful. P——, who had passed the luggage, had witnessed that all was weighed; but he had not been allowed to remain in the weighing-room to see the things off, and his want of German had rendered the task difficult.

On our arrival at Liege, another scene of confusion at the unloading ensued. It must be said, however, that their method was good, and the noise arose from the numbers of travellers, and their exceeding vociferations. On weighing the luggage, they paste a piece of paper on each article, inscribed with a number—the same number for all the goods belonging to one name; and to this is added the number of articles. Thus all our things were marked “21,” and we had a paper given us that gave us a claim to nine articles marked “21.” The men, as they unload, cry out the number pasted on the articles; and the passengers, with their papers in their hands, claim their own.

Seven only, however, appeared for us; the cloaks and the carpet-bag were missing. Waiting, in hopes that these might at last be forthcoming, detained us among the last. The omnibuses were nearly full; no carriages, nor post-horses for the carriages on the train, nor any other means of getting to Liege, were to be found. We got places, and we heard afterwards, that the confusion in some of the omnibuses had arisen to a scuffle. This we escaped.

Murray's Hand-book was our guide: usually an admirable one. Among other useful information, none is more satisfactory to the traveller than to know the best hotel in a town. Murray directed us to the Aigle Noire, which we found large, clean, and pleasant.

June 14th.

Morning brought with it the discovery of another loss:—"Encore un objêt de perdu!"—and this objêt was more serious and irreparable than our former. We had changed what English bank notes we had at Antwerp, for German gold. My companions counted the contents of their purses—£8 in each. It so happened that they could not get lodged separately, and they occupied a double-bedded room. After counting their money, they left their purses on a large table in the middle of the room: they did not lock their door. In the morning, the door was ajar, and the purses gone. Fortunately, they had placed their watches nearer to them. Perhaps it was the boots of the hotel, who, coming in for their clothes, was tempted by the sight of their glittering purses so easily to be taken. However it may be, they were gone. The master of the hotel behaved excessively ill; talked of sending for the Maire, to constater our loss, but professed his disbelief in our story; travellers, he declared, never leave their purses on a table, and always lock their door. We did nothing. We should probably have been tempted to do something; but we had to record our missing articles, and to arrange for their being sent after us. I, too, had dropped my passport. "Mais, Madame, vous êtes vraiment en malheur," said the

daughter of the hotel-keeper, who was as civil as her father was rude. We were; so we could only say—or rather, I said—in the Greek fashion: “Welcome this evil, so that it be the only one!” I said it from my heart; for, alas! I ever live with a dark shadow hovering near me. One whose life has been stained by tragedy can never regain a healthy tone of mind—if it be healthy—that is consonant to the laws of human life, not to fear for those we love. I am haunted by terror. It stalks beside me by day, and whispers to me, in dreams, at night. But this is being very tragical, apropos of our stolen money.

We hired a carriage to take us to Aix-la-Chapelle. It was a pleasant drive: the country is varied into hill and dale, and is very pretty. About five in the evening we arrived at the railway station, without entering the town of Aix-la-Chapelle, which looked agreeably placed in a valley encircled by hills. The works for the railroad are in full progress, and the mounds are on a vast scale. They spoil rather the beauty of a landscape; yet a railroad gives such promise of change and novelty to the traveller—transporting us at once from the known to the unknown—that, in spite of all that can be said against them, I delight to see or hear of them.

Everything connected with travelling in Prussia is in the hands of Government, and admirably managed. The carriages on this railroad were of the usual construction, and very comfortable. We could not see much of the country as we were whisked through it: the little we could glance at appeared to deserve visiting at leisure. In a very short time we arrived at Cologne, and drove at once to an hotel, near the river. We arrived too late—we departed too early—to see anything of Cologne. Do not despise us: I intend to go there again.

June 15th.

During my last journey, I had not seen the portion of the Rhine between Cologne and Coblentz, and one of my companions had never visited these scenes. We gazed, therefore, with eager curiosity, as at each succeeding mile the river became more

majestic, its shores more picturesque; and every hour of the day brought its store of delight to the eye. One or two chance acquaintance on board the steamer were agreeable; and a few incidents of travel, such as are familiar to wanderers, and form the history of their days, amused us. The man who acted as steward on the steamer, a thin, pale, short, insignificant-looking fellow, had taken his bill to him of our party whom, I suppose, long experience in such matters had led him to divine was the most insouciant. The bill was paid without a remark, and then brought to me. I was startled at its amount, and examined it. First I cast it up, and found an overcharge in the addition. This was pointed out to the man. He acknowledged it very debonairely. "Ah, oui, je le vois, c'est juste;" and he refunded. Still the bill was large; and I showed it to a lady on board, who had paid hers, and had mentioned the moderation of the charges. I found that the man had charged us each half a florin too much for dinner. Again the bill was taken to him. This time he was longer in being convinced; but when our authority was mentioned, with a look of sudden enlightenment, he exclaimed:—"Madame, vous avez parfaitement raison," and refunded. But this was not all: my maid came to me, to say she hoped I had not paid for her, as she had paid for herself. True enough, she was charged for in our bill. We were almost ashamed to apply again; but a sense of public justice prevailed, and again we asked for our money back. In this instance, the man yielded at once. Clasping his forehead, he exclaimed:—"Mon Dieu! que je suis bête!" and repaid us. In the evening of this day, as K—— was gazing on the splendour of the setting sun, the false steward stood beside him, sharing the rapture, and exclaimed:—"N'est ce pas, Monsieur, que c'est magnifique!"

We passed the junction of the Moselle with the Rhine, and under the rock of Ehrenbreitstein; and, landing, proceeded to the Hotel of Bellevue, where we had lodged for a night, very comfortably, two years before.

You know the fair town of Coblentz—its wide, white, clean, rather dull-looking streets: you know the monument erected by French vanity at the time of Napoleon's

invasion of Russia, to commemorate with pompous vauntings an expedition that caused his downfall. Even before the carving of the empty boast had been overspread by a little dust, the Commandant of the Russian army, pursuing the flying invader, had the power, but disdained to erase it; adding only in the style of the Emperor's passports—"Vu et approuvé par nous, Commandant Russe, de la ville de Coblence, Janvier 1er, 1814." You know the lofty rock and impregnable fortress of Ehrenbreitstein, which rises majestically on the opposite bank of the river, and looks proudly down on old Father Rhine and its picturesque assemblage of guardian hills.

June 16th.

We left Coblentz at eight in the morning, and embarked in a larger and more convenient boat. We left here our accidental acquaintance who had made the voyage in the "Wilberforce" with us, and kept on the same way ever since—they were bound for Wiesbaden, and meant to linger awhile on the banks of the Rhine. By some chance few travellers seemed to be making the voyage just now. The only English were a family, who had frequently been this route, and so despised it that the lady remained in a close carriage on deck, with the blinds drawn down, all day.

I believe I am nearly the first English person, who many years ago made a wild, venturous voyage, since called hacknied;—when in an open flat-bottomed sort of barge we were borne down the rapid stream, sleeping at night under the starry canopy, the boat tethered to a willow on the banks; and when we changed for a more commodious bark, how rude it was, and how ill-conducted, as it drifted, frequently turning round and round, and was carried down by the sheer force of the stream; and what uncouth animals were with us, forming a fearful contrast between their drunken brutalities and the scene of enchantment around. Two years ago I renewed my acquaintance with the Rhine, and emerging on it from the Moselle, it gained in dignity by contrast with the banks of a river only less beautiful. Then the diorama, as

it were, of tower-crowned crag and vine-clad hills—of ruined castle, fallen abbey, and time-honoured battlements, sufficed to enchain the attention and satisfy the imagination; and now—was I really blasée, and did my fancy no longer warm as I looked around? No; but I wanted more: I had seen enough of the Rhine, as a picture, all that the steam-voyager sees;—I desired to penetrate the ravines, to scale the heights, to linger among the ruins, to hear still more of its legends, and visit every romantic spot. I shall be very glad some summer of my future life to familiarise myself with the treasure of delight easily gathered by a wanderer on these banks; but as it is—on, on, the Castle of Stolzenfels, restored by the present King of Prussia when Crown Prince, is passed,—but I will not make a list of names, to be found in a guide-book: on we went rapidly, now catching sight of, passing, and losing in distance the “castled crags,”—the romantic hills of the glorious Rhine.

I looked with pleasure also on the lower uplands, with their vineyards. Surely, the inhabitants of this region worship the sun. On one side, that of shadow, forest-trees clothe the ravines, and pine woods crown the mountains—a beautiful but poor growth. On the other, the open, sun-visited banks are rich in vines, whose vintage is almost the best in the world. What a store of merry hours clusters together with the grapes on those old snake-like roots; and how much glittering coin is pressed out from those clusters of fruit into the pockets of their owners. We had a specimen of the first part of its power; some young Germans on board got gloriously tipsy, and called for another, and yet another bottle—becoming with every glass more affectionate and happy.

On this occasion we arrived at Mayence in time to proceed to Francfort the same evening; more than in time; when we reached the station we found the train would not start for three hours. My companions passed the interval in viewing the Cathedral and other sights at Mayence. Most unfortunately, I was so indisposed as to be obliged to remain at the waiting-room of the station. O Life! O Time!—how dear and valuable are ye in the aggregate; how still more dear and valuable are certain

gem-like portions that at intervals fall to our lot—treasures in themselves, dearly prized and hoarded; but how contemptible seems a shred torn off and unusable; such as these three hours spent on a horse-hair incommodious chair, in the bare dull waiting-room, incapable from illness of putting to use the avenues to perception; and uneasy and wearied, in no humour to exercise the jaded powers of the soul. Such three hours slowly dragged themselves along; at last we took our places, and were whirled to Francfort.

We have betaken ourselves as before to the Hôtel de Russie. We have better rooms, for then the hotel was full, and now it is empty; it was about the same season of the year; but there appears a capricious reflux in the tide of travellers, and we have encountered few. You know the peculiar physiognomy of these German hotels; more comfortable than perhaps any others in the world; characterised by order, comfort, and civility; also at this one in particular, by an excellent table; the cook is renowned; people come to the table d'hôte, for the sake of the dinner; the price whereof is a thaler, or three shillings.

Good-night. I will tell you more to-morrow of our plans and future proceedings. I cannot now, for I have not the slightest idea at present what they will be.

18th June.

Madame de Sevigné sagely remarks, that "nothing seems to impede the exercise of our free will so much as not having a paramount motive to urge us one way or the other." Here lies, in a great measure, our difficulty: we intend spending this next winter at Florence, but we have no fixed idea as to how to pass the summer. I incline to some German Bath, as I think it would benefit my health. I should like the Tyrol—any part of the world where the scenery is beautiful; but then I want a few months of peace, and not to be near a lake, so to live in one ecstasy of fear. We find it very difficult to decide, and have determined meanwhile to visit Kissingen. I have heard that it is a pleasant place, very prettily situated. I have an idea that the waters

will benefit me; at least it is something new: we penetrate at once into Germany. It is true, we do not understand German; but where better learn a language than in its native country?

"What's in a name!"—You know the quotation: it applies to things known; to things unknown, a name is often everything: on me it has a powerful effect; and many hours of extreme pleasure have derived their zest simply from a name; and now a name is drawing me on—Germany—vast, unseen Germany! whence has poured forth nearly the whole population of the present civilised world,—a world not gifted, like the ancient, with a subtle organisation which enabled them to create the beauty, which we do little more than admire—nor endowed with that instinctive grace that moulded even every stone which the Greeks touched into imperishable types of loveliness—nor with that vivacious imagination that peopled the unseen universe with an endless variety of beautiful creations,—but the parent of a race in which women are respected—a race that loves justice and truth—whose powers of thought are, if slow, yet profound, and, in their way, creative. Tacitus's Germany—a land of forests and heroes. Luther's Germany, in which sprung up the Reformation, giving freedom to the souls of men. The land of Schiller and Goëthe. Do you remember La Motte Fouqué's Magic Ring—and the old Baron, sitting in his ancestral hall, where banners waved and armour clashed, and the wild winds whispered prophecies, and Power brooded ready to fly abroad and possess the world? Such a mysterious shape is Germany to me. And this, too, is the stage on which Napoleon's imperial drama drew to a close. What oceans of human blood have drenched the soil of Germany even since my birth. Since I love the mysterious, the unknown, the wild, the renowned, you will not wonder that I feel drawn on step by step into the heart of Germany. It will doubtless continue a mysterious and unknown region, since we cannot speak its language; but its cities and its villages will no longer be dim shadows merely; substance and reality will replace misty imaginings; my rambles will be something novel; of the people whom I cannot understand, I shall have so

little to say. A mighty outline is all I can present, if, indeed, I do penetrate at all into its recesses. But our plans are so vague, that really, till something is done, I scarcely can conjecture what we may do.

There is nothing very amusing at Francfort for a passing visitor. This time, however, we did see Dannecker's Ariadne. It is among the best modern statues representing a woman. She is sitting on, and being carried along by, a panther. Her attitude is of repose, of enjoyment: there is something harsh in the face, which I do not like; but there is softness and roundness in the limbs; nothing angular; nor anything narrow or pared away like Canova's female figures. This statue is one in the collection of Mr. Bethman; being the gem of his Gallery, it has a room to itself, and by shutting shutters and drawing down a crimson blind, the statue is seen clad in roseate light, beaming amidst darkness. Such arts for showing off marbles have been termed meretricious; but the finest statues of the Romans were found in chambers where the light of day never entered, and were therefore illuminated artificially.

Goëthe was born at Francfort, and we saw the outside of the house with the three prophetic lyres over the door.

My companions have just returned from the opera; they say that "they found a good orchestra, and singers with very tolerable voices, but mortally ugly, and their action totally devoid of grace; so that it would be much better if they did not ape it, as their abortive attempts make the deficiency more glaring." So it was, you may remember, with the company we had in London, with the exception of Staudigl, whose voice and style is full of elegance as well as power. In spite of the enchantment of the Zauberflaüte, how happy and at home I felt at the Italian Opera, after several visits to that of their rivals in the art.

We have engaged a voiturier to take us to Kissingen in two days, a distance of about eighty miles. With a thrill of pleasure I feel I am going to scenes entirely new. I am not sure that I am rich enough for such an enterprise: yet I suspect much of the half

eager, half timid feeling that urges me on, arises from our being comparatively poor,—all is so easy and same to the wealthy. As it is, there is the dangerous attraction of forbidden fruit in our wanderings.—Adieu.

LETTER II. Journey to Kissingen.—Taking Lodgings.—The Public Gardens.

Kissingen, June 21st.

The country immediately round Francfort is flat and uninteresting; but as soon as we entered Bavaria, we came upon very agreeable scenery. The valley of the Main, which we thridded during our first day's journey, is quite beautiful. Magnificent forests of oak and beech cover the hills; and the little rural plain at their foot, bordering the river, is rich in pasture and ripe grain. There is a steamboat from Francfort to Wurzburg, of which I am half sorry we did not avail ourselves; for I like following the course of a river as it meanders through a country. But Wurzburg is at some distance from Kissingen, and the intervening country by no means so pretty as that we have just traversed. For several miles our route ran close to the river; then, quitting the low valley, we wound along the ridges of the hills, entering the forests, which gathered round us with their pleasant shade. We slept at Lohr. This town is delightfully situated on the Main; the inn, good; the only drawback was, that they had no bread—an extraordinary circumstance, it appeared to me, in Germany, as I have always enjoyed and vaunted its peculiar blessing of excellent bread, even when all else was repulsive. There was some very black bread I could not touch, and some sort of cakes, stale, and even mouldy. We showed them complainingly to our dirty-handed waiter, who caught them up. "These not good," he cried, turning them about and tossing them from one hand to the other—from bad to worse—"they were new yesterday—they are excellent." This manipulation succeeded in rendering them absolutely uneatable. We did not like even to look at them.

Our next day's journey was hilly, as we crossed a height and passed from the valley

of the Main to the valley of the Saale. The hills are lower, but the country bears the same characteristics—a clear stream, bordered by a grassy plain—wooded hills, forming amphitheatres, closing around. The villages are miserable enough.

With eager eyes we caught a view of Kissingen, as we descended the hill from Hammelburg. It looked a small village interspersed with a few large houses on the banks of the Saale. The river meanders through green meadows from east to west, and wooded hills close in the vale. It was a scene of great tranquillity, without any striking beauties; verdant, peaceful, and secluded.

We alighted at the hotel of the Kurhaus, a spacious and good inn. They were expecting the Queen of Wurtemburg and her suite in a few days, but were tolerably empty; and we easily procured rooms. Our next care was to look for a lodging. My companions went on this task, I was so very tired. There is a Commissaire des Voyageurs appointed by Government, to whom strangers can apply, who keeps lists of lodgings and mediates with regard to the price. He pretended to speak French and English; but, as Dangle says in “The Critic,” “Egad, I think the interpreter is the hardest to be understood of the two!” He said he should spend the winter in England, and really learn English for the next season. He seemed straight-forward in his dealings, and went with my friends to various houses. They selected one across the bridge, out of the town. I went to look at it. The terms were tolerably moderate. The rooms had a southern aspect; they were large; and the floors, of white new deal, only wanted a little scouring: in short, though of course somewhat bare of furniture, the lodging, in this summer season, looked cheerful, and even pleasant. We agreed for it and instantly took possession.

I despair of describing the scene of our entrance. Madame Fries, the landlady, was an invalid, and did not appear. Herr Fries, a tall, fair German, is an employé in the police, and was absent. No one spoke a word of anything but German in the house. We were at our wits’ end. Dictionary in hand, we tried to impart our wants; there

was an ugly good-humoured looking maid, and a rather pretty girl to wait on us, in addition to an uncouth sort of lad. These people gathered round us very earnest to please; but how were we to be pleased? We wanted the floors washed, for they looked unhealthy. We wanted our beds arranged in our own way (German beds are so strangely uncomfortable from the queer odds and ends of mattresses with which they are garnished); and above all, we wanted something besides a pie-dish and water-bottle for our washing apparatus. The way to secure this was to insist on a fuss-bad in each room; so small tubs were at last provided. Then we wished for tea: by dint of gesture and dictionary we tried to make ourselves understood. The women stood by laughing; the lad looked all eagerness to catch our meaning. At length he gave an exulting hop, snapt his fingers and rushed out, and brought back a tea-pot. Happy apparition! but it was more difficult to procure boiling water.

After about two hours order was established, and hopes of cleanliness for the morrow brightened round us. We sat down to tea, when lo! Herr Fries entered with another German, whom he introduced as a German Master. We did not like his appearance, and his attempts at English less, so we declined engaging him. This, however, was not the real object of Herr Fries's visit. It was to inform us, by means of his interpreter, for he himself spoke German only, that we had taken his rooms for four months. This startled us; as our bargain was really for four weeks. Our compact, however, had been made by the Commissaire, and we referred to him. Reluctantly, and still arguing the point, Herr Fries at last withdrew.

I shall see a physician to-morrow and begin the waters; the place is rather empty as yet. We walked in the public gardens, in which the medicinal springs flow. Crossing the bridge we entered the gardens at one extremity; they are oblong, occupying about a couple of acres, of course gravelled, or rather shingled, and planted with avenues of trees. To the left they are bordered by the high-road, on the other side of which are all the large hotels. On the right is the Conversation Haus, consisting of a very large and well-built assembly-room with various appendages. At the other end

are the springs; they are in a sort of paved court, about twenty feet below the soil; a low iron railing runs round the court; and they are covered with a light open-worked wire canopy. Two springs are here—the Pandur and Ragozzi: there is another, the Max Brunnen, resembling Seidlitz water, but without iron, which is in another part of the garden. A band plays under the trees from six till eight in the morning, and from six till eight in the evening; at which hour the visitors walk and drink the waters.

LETTER III. Kissingen.—The Cur.—The Table d'Hôte.—The Walks.—German Master.—Bathing.

Kissingen, July 4.

I am in the midst of my cur, and we are all in the midst of a general cure of a regiment of sick people. It is odd enough to seek amusement by being surrounded by the rheumatic, the gouty, the afflicted of all sorts. I do not think I shall be tempted to a German bath again, unless I am seriously ill.

Kissingen, until lately, was not much visited, even by the Germans, and was quite unknown to the English. The Bubbles of the Brunnens brought the baths of Nassau into fashion with us. Doctor Granville's book extended our acquaintance with the spas of Germany; and, in particular, gave reputation to those situated in Bavaria. Kissingen has thus rapidly acquired notoriety; and soon the English, who are flocking hither, will effect a change in the homely habits we have found. A throng of our country people soon effects a revolution, increasing both comforts and prices in a very high degree.

All the Germans get up at four, and parade the gardens to drink the waters till nearly eight; I contrive to get there soon after five. These waters are not mere salts, like Carlsbad, nor mere iron, but a very diluted mixture of both. I believe them to be very conducive to the restoration of health; but they must only be taken under a

physician's superintendence, as it is dangerous to play with them. The morning walk I find pleasant: I leave the gardens after each glass, and stroll beyond into the meadows bordering the Saale, away from the garish spectacle of the smart toilettes, and the saddening sight of the sick. I return to breakfast at eight, if that may be called breakfast, which is not one. So many things are supposed to disagree with the waters, that not only everything substantial, but also butter, fruit, tea, coffee, and milk are prohibited. We dine at one at the table d'hôte of the Kurhaus; the ceremony is, to the last degree, unsatisfactory and disgusting. The King of Bavaria is so afraid that his medicinal waters may fall into disrepute if the drinkers should eat what disagrees with them, that we only eat what he, in conjunction with a triumvirate of doctors, is pleased to allow us. Every now and then a new article is struck out from our bill of fare, notice being sent from this council, which is stuck up for our benefit at the door of the salle-à-manger, to the effect that, whoever in Kissingen should serve at any table pork, veal, salad, fruit, &c. &c. &c., should be fined so many florins. Our pleasures of the palate are thus circumscribed, not to say annihilated; for the food they give us is so uninviting, that we only take enough barely to sustain life: for, strangely enough, though butter is prohibited, their dishes overflow with grease. Oh! the disgust of sitting down with two hundred people in one hall, served slowly with uneatable food: each day we resolve to try to get a dinner at home; but there is a little knot of English about us, and we agree to endure together; but it is sad.

Our evening walks are pleasant. We desert the public gardens, as you may believe: sometimes we walk in the meadows bordering the Saale to the Soolen Sprudel, where the salt works are established, and where there is a spring of water strongly impregnated with gas, which boils up furiously at intervals. People have gas baths here—they ought to be carefully conducted; for though I believe efficacious cures, they sometimes kill. A Russian nobleman since our arrival, died under the operation of bathing in one.

Sometimes we cross the valley, and ascend the hills to the ruined castle of Bodenlauben, which commands a view of this rural vale; but our favourite walk is in the wood that clothes the hill on our side of the valley. They have the practice in Germany, in the neighbourhood of Baths, of laying out innumerable paths all through the woods, and across the hills, for the convenience of the visitors—long walks entering into the course of treatment. The woods, oak and elm, varied by magnificent silver birch, with their graceful tresses, are very fine. We find here a few fire-flies: like unfortunate Italian exiles, they gleam with subdued brightness in an ungenial clime, and one wonders how they can endure so northern a temperature.

We have tried to get a German master. Our first attempt was infelicitous, being an "unwashed" metaphysician, who fairly beat our faculties of enduring disagreeable odours. We have now another, who assures us that he is first-rate; and that it is much better to learn German of the rough Bœotian (Bavarian) sort, than the effeminate softness of Saxony and Hanover. I am afraid I shall not make much progress. We malades are forbidden to exert our intellects; and, to make this prohibition more stringent, the gas one imbibes with the water produces a weakness in the eyes, which has rendered this letter the work of many days.

The progress of the cur, or treatment, indeed, is not pleasant; I find the waters have a very agitating effect on the nerves. I drink the Ragozzi, which contains more iron than the Pandur. It is not disagreeable; that is, the first glass seemed so; but after that one forgot that it had any taste, and the effervescence of the gas makes it rather agreeable. Those to whom iron is hurtful put the glass in warm water, when the gas quickly flies off. We bathe in the water of the Pandur, brought boiling in casks to the house; the baths are mere wooden coffins, and on first entering them their shape rather shocks the feelings. The water made hot has the colour of iron rust, and is opaque. The bathing rooms in our house are badly managed and very dirty; but it is soothing to sit for an hour in hot water, which does not, like a common warm bath, weaken afterwards.

I trust to receive benefit in the end; but it is rather an infliction upon my companions to be dieted by the King of Bavaria, and to live, as they say, surrounded by lepers. We are still undecided as to our ulterior movements.

LETTER IV. Medical Treatment.—Amusements.—German Master.—Broklet.—Preparations for Departure.

Kissingen, 10th July.

As I was sitting at breakfast this morning I had a visit from my physician. He looked with consternation on the table. “Butter!” he exclaimed; “strawberries! tea! milk!” There was a crescendo of horror in his voice. One by one, these slender luxuries were withdrawn, and I was left with a little bread, and water (the staple of the place) ad libitum.

Though the cur of these waters is not an agreeable process, I have great faith in the advantages that accrue. There is a day or two called the crisis, which I have just passed—about the fifteenth or sixteenth after beginning the waters—which, indeed, resembles the crisis of a serious illness. The body becomes inert and languid, with a sense of illness pervading the frame; the mind is haunted by apprehension of evil, and is disturbed by a nervous restlessness and irritability of the most distressing kind. After a day or two these symptoms disappear. I experienced it most painfully, and am now quite well, but rather eager to get away: I am heartily tired of the waters, the promenade, the dinners, the sick; and the surrounding scenery is by no means interesting enough to compensate for our disagreeable style of life.

Generally, the assembling at a German bath is a signal for gaiety; but the physicians here discountenance every sort of excitement, and their malades are very obedient. The Queen of Wurtemburg is here incog. as Frau Grafinn von Teck, with two Grafinnin her daughters—fine girls, with all the beauty of youth and health. The artificers of Kissingen celebrated her arrival by walking in procession, with torches,

into the court-yard of her hotel, where the band played, and the torches flared and smoked, till everybody was blinded and begrimed. The Queen walks in the morning early to drink the waters, and the centre allée of the gardens is left free for her. Such persons as have been presented, she has asked to dinner, but gives no further sign of life. Once a week there takes place what they call a reunion, when everybody meets in the Conversationhaus built by the King of Bavaria for the benefit of the baths. It is as good a ball-room as that of Almack, or in the palace of the King of Holland at the Hague; but the miserable use they made of it shocked us. At half-past eight the room is crowded; but the company do not dance, although there is a good band playing quadrilles, waltzes, and galoppes, the whole evening; sometimes two couples may be seen turning in the midst of the crowd; sometimes these may augment to six—but it is rare—and this in a room where several hundred people are assembled. The cause is the despotic decree of the triumvirate of doctors above-mentioned, who maintain dancing to be absolutely incompatible with drinking the waters.

They tried to get up the appearance of a fête on the birthday of the Queen of Bavaria. They dressed the salle a manger at the Kurhaus with boughs of trees; the Governor dined at our table, and gave a toast, “the Queen;” while the band (we always have music at dinner) played our National Air, which the Bavarians claim for their own. The ceremony of dining was thus longer and more tiresome than usual. There was an illumination in the evening; and the canopy to the mineral springs looked pretty, picked out in lamps.

July 13th.

The King of Bavaria came over this morning. He is popular as a good king and a clever man, fond of the arts; but is esteemed to have “a bee in his bonnet,” which “bee” appears to have degenerated into a wasp with his son Otho. The Crown Prince of Bavaria is much respected, and has the reputation of being gifted with his father’s

talents, with judgment superadded. The appearance of the King is droll enough; tall, with long legs and arms, he walks furiously fast, talks earnestly and loud, and gesticulates violently; he dresses shabbily, and his thin, adust face is inconceivably wrinkled.

The baths which he particularly patronises are those of Brukenau, about twenty miles distant, where he has a palace: these are steel waters, and most people go to strengthen themselves there, after being diluted by the Kissingen springs. The King has perceived the flow of money brought into other States by the resort of strangers to the baths, and is very anxious that his should be celebrated. For this reason, he decorated Dr. Granville's button-hole with a bit of ribbon, much to the disgust of the native physicians, who are provoked to remark, "Our King is sometimes one fool." Dr. Granville is practising here, also to the discontent of the native medical people, who see the rich current of English guineas turn away from themselves. However, as he is the cause of many coming here, he has certainly a right to profit by their visits. The King is very fond of receiving the English; he understands our language, and asks, in royal style, a thousand rapid questions; being somewhat deaf, he does not always hear the reply, and droll equivoques have taken place.

Now that the Queen of Wurtemburg, who changes her dress three times a day, and never wears the same gown twice, promenades the gardens, the ladies pay more attention to their toilettes; but there is a great absence of beauty among us. There are no good-looking Germans,—and the handsomest women are one or two Russians. The English do not shine as much as usual. As yet, few persons of rank are arrived; the season for touring with us is not yet commenced, and the good people of Kissingen will hail a second harvest when we hurry across the channel at the end of the London season. Most of the men here are really ill, and come to take care of their health. Accordingly, they obey the physicians, who forbid gambling. It is only on Sunday, when it is the fashion for all our neighbours, from many miles round, to come over to dine at Kissingen, and that gaming-tables are opened in some rooms of

the Kurhaus, but they are thinly attended. No gaiety goes on in the Conversation House, with the exception of the réunions; but it is always open—a retreat and a lounge from the promenade in the gardens. There is a piano in it; and it is a specimen of German manners, that ladies go in all simplicity to practise, and even exercise their voices in a public room, without any of the false shame, or vanity, or modesty that an Englishwoman would experience, and also without exciting any observation.

I am ashamed to say I make no progress in German; my eyes and health have both held me back, and our master does not lead me on. Yet, though it is the fashion of his pupils to rebel, he has a practice which I am sure is a good one for any person desirous to speak the language quickly. With perseverance, and a haughty sense of our duty towards him, he gathers us together (about six or eight) in the rooms of some one of us, to read aloud a play of Schiller—we each having a copy of the play with a literal translation on the other side. It is strange how quickly the eye can turn from the original to the translation, and the ear get habituated to remember the words and phrases; it is a royal road to a smattering of the language to which I shall certainly have recourse again, so to try to acquire a better knowledge of this crabbed, and to my memory, antipathetic German.

July 17th.

This evening we drove over to Brocklet, about four miles off, described by Murray as “another watering-place, possessing four strong chalybeate springs, in which the salts and soda are largely mixed with iron. The action of the water is powerfully tonic and exciting.” They taste like ink, but I liked them much, and drank several glasses, with a great sense of deriving benefit from them. I really believe I ought to take a course of steel waters after those of Kissingen; but we are so tired of living at a watering-place that I shall not.

Brocklet is situated in a little wooded dell, quite shut in; it is as secluded, shadowy

and still, as the abode of Morpheus, described by Ovid. A few convalescent sick wandered silently under the trees, and a band tried to play, but only produced a lulling murmur, in accordance with a trickling rill and the gentle rustling of the leaves of the trees. In this dim limbo you can live as well and cheaper than at Kissingen. The expense here is not large, but for a family it is not small; our household (three of us and my maid) cost us about eight or nine pounds a week—house-rent and everything included. We could easily spend more, but it is impossible, from the system of things, to spend less. The most agreeable luxury, indeed the only one that there is any opportunity of enjoying, are horses to visit the surrounding country. I wish we had our little Welsh ponies to scamper over the hills away from the malades.

The incidents of our day are few. Now and then Herr Fries, sometimes accompanied by his soi-disant English master, sometimes in all the desolating impotence of his unintelligible German, presses on our attention our pretended compact for four months; we have but one answer—the Commissaire through whose mediation we made the bargain. I do not think Herr Fries has even applied to him, and when we mention the subject he treats it with lofty contempt. Meanwhile our month is nearly concluded, and we shall soon leave Kissingen. I assure myself that I have benefited by the waters, though I gain no belief from my companions who do not drink them, and find the place and its dinners very intolerable. In the midst of our balancing whither to go, a few circumstances have turned the scale. Letters have arrived from a college friend of P. and K., begging us to come to Dresden. There is a railroad we find from Leipsig to Berlin, and from Leipsig to Dresden. My mind has for years been set upon seeing the galleries of pictures in these towns. We have had no warm weather; at the end of July the summer may be considered as well-nigh over. We shall quit this place in a day or two, and penetrate still deeper into Germany, visit cities renowned in history, and pass over ground—the fields of ten thousand battles.

LETTER V. Leave Kissingen.—Baths of Brukenau.—Fulda.—Eisenach.—Castle of Wartburg.—Gotha.—Erfurt.—Weimar.—The Elster.—Leipsig.

Leipsig.

At length we have left Kissingen; and though, while there, we made the best of it, we find, on looking back, that it was very intolerable, and that it is a great blessing to escape from the saddening spectacle of a crowd of invalids assembled en masse. Enormously fat men trying to thin down—delicate women hoping to grow into better case—no children. This is another decree of the physicians: children are prohibited, because the mind must enjoy perfect repose, and children are apt to create disturbance in the hearts of tender parents. It is surprising that, to forward the cure, all letters are not opened first by the doctors, and not delivered if they contain any disagreeable news. As yet, they only exhort the friends of the sick to spare them every painful emotion in their correspondence; but Kissingen will not be perfect, until the post is put under medical surveillance. Do not misunderstand me. I believe the waters of Kissingen to be highly medicinal, and the hours and walks and everything, but the dinners, exceedingly conducive to the restoration of health; but during this season it has not offered any attraction to those who come to a watering-place in search of amusement.

By the help of our German master, Mr. Wertheim, of Munich, who showed himself most zealous and kind, we engaged a voiture to take us to Leipsig in six days. The only error we have found in Murray is, that the price he mentions for the hire of carriages and horses is less than we find it. He may retort, and say we are cheated: but we apply to natives, and, if it be possible, I am sure it would be difficult, to make a better bargain than we have done.

July 19.

The town of Brukenau lay in our route; the Baths, two miles beyond, were out of it:

however, we bargained to visit them. The road lay along the level close under the hills, and we wound for twenty miles through the wooded ravine. The characteristic of Franconia, on the edges of which we still were, appears to be gentle valleys, thridded by small clear streams; the immediate banks either meadow or arable, and closed in by hills, covered with forests of beech, interspersed by the weeping birch. Brukenau itself is beyond this circle, and entered into the territories of the Bishops of Fulda: but in the new distribution of kingdoms, Brukenau fell to the share of Bavaria, and the town of Fulda to the Duke of Hesse Cassel. At Brukenau, leaving the high-road, we entered the valley of the Sinn, and penetrated into the very sheltered bosom of the hills towards the Baths. There is a sense of extreme tranquillity in these secluded spots in Bavaria, where you seem cast on an unknown, unvisited region, and yet, on reaching the watering-place itself, find all the comforts of life “rise like an exhalation” around.

The hills round Brukenau are much higher and more romantic than at Kissingen. They are covered with fine beech forests, and traversed in every part by paths, interspersed with seats, constructed for the convenience of the visitors; and so extensive, that you may wander for ten or twenty miles in their depths. The public gardens, instead of being a melancholy strip of ground, planted with dry and dusty-looking trees, are extensive, and resemble an English pleasure-ground; a brawling stream, the Sinn, adorns them; everything invites the wanderer to stroll on, and to enjoy in fine weather Nature’s dearest gifts, shady woods, open lawns, and views of beautiful country; loitering beside a murmuring stream, or toiling on awhile, and then resting as you gaze on a wider prospect. The waters here are chalybeate and tonic; they taste of ink, but sparkle in the glass, and I found them pleasant. We arrived at the dinner hour, and sat down in the large and well-built Kursaal, where the tables were spread, to a dinner somewhat better than that allowed us at Kissingen, and we enjoyed the novelty of salad, fruits, and ice. We found several familiar faces from Kissingen come here to strengthen themselves with steel

waters. Altogether the place looked at once more sociable and more retired; and, above all, the country around was, without being striking from crag and precipice, far more picturesque than at Kissingen. The whole establishment is in the hands of government, and the houses where the visitors lodge are placed in the midst of the garden. Things are managed both more cheaply and more agreeably than at Kissingen. The visitors, however, are never so numerous, and the style of the place is more quiet. The king has a palace, where he spends the season, and is very courteous to the English. We wished to sleep at the Baths, but unfortunately no beds were to be had, though great exertion was made by several good-natured visitors to procure them for us. Oddly enough, persons we had been accustomed to meet, without speaking, day after day at Kissingen, here had the air of familiar acquaintance. We were sorry to go away, and loitered several hours in the gardens, and visited the old kursaal, a rather dilapidated room. The walls were hung with portraits of the ancient Prince-Bishops of Fulda—the discoverers, and erst the possessors, of these medicinal springs. I should have been glad to stay at least a week in this agreeable retirement, and drink the waters; but we could not now alter our arrangements.

We were obliged to return to the town of Brukenau to sleep; as the golden hues of evening increased at once the beauty and the stillness of the happy valley, with regret we tore ourselves away. Murray bids us go to the Hotel of the Post at Brukenau, and we learned afterwards that this is really a good and comfortable inn. I fancy the master has had some quarrel with the authorities at the Baths, for we were bidden go to another inn; in an evil hour we obeyed. It was very dirty and comfortless.

July 20th.

Leaving Brukenau the following morning early, we by degrees quitted the wooded hills and grassy valleys of Franconia, and entered the domains of the Prince of Hesse

Cassel.

It was in these territories that a scene was enacted during the last century, so overlooked by history, that I believe by-and-bye it will only be remembered (how is it even now?) by the commentators on Schiller. When we read of the Hessians in the American war, we have a vague idea that our government called in the aid of foreign mercenaries to subdue the revolted colonies; an act which roused Lord Chatham to exclaim in the House of Peers, “If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country I never would lay down my arms, never—never—never!” We censure the policy of government, we lament the obstinacy of George III., who, exhausting the English levies, had recourse to “the mercenary sons of rapine and plunder;” and “devoted the Americans and their possessions to the rapacity of hireling cruelty.” But our imagination does not transport itself to the homes of the unfortunate Germans; nor is our abhorrence of the tyranny that sent them to die in another hemisphere awakened. Lord Chatham does indeed in the same speech, from which the above quotations are made, cast a half-pitying glance on the victims of their native sovereign, when he talks of “traffic and barter with every little pitiful German prince that sells and sends his subjects to the shambles of a foreign sovereign.” Schiller, in his tragedy of “Cabal and Love,” describes the misery brought on his own countrymen more graphically. “A petty German prince,” namely, the Duke of Hesse Cassel, or perhaps the Margrave of Anspach, who also dealt in this unholy traffic, sends a present of jewels to his mistress—she is astonished at their magnificence, and asks the bringer of them, how the Duke could pay for such immeasurably costly jewels? The servant replies—“They cost him nothing. Seven thousand children of the soil started yesterday for America; they pay for all.” “But not compelled?” the lady demands; the poor man, who has two sons among the recruits, replies—“O God, no! perfect volunteers. True, some forward lads stepped out of the ranks and asked the colonel, how dear the prince sold his yoke of men? But our gracious lord caused all the

regiments to be marched to the parade ground, to shoot down the jackanapes. We heard the report of the firelocks, saw their brains scattered on the ground, and the whole army shouted ‘Hurrah for America!’ Then the loud drums told us it was time. On one side shrieking orphans followed their living father; on the other a distracted mother ran to cast her sucking child on the bayonets; here a pair of betrothed lovers were parted by sabre blows; and there grey beards stood struck by despair, and at last flung their crutches after the young fellows who were off to the New World. Oh! and with all that the deafening roll of the drum mingled, for fear the Almighty should hear us praying!” We were told that the facts were worse even than this picture; since when first the order was given out for the enlisting of the soldiers, hundreds deserted their homes and betook themselves to the neighbouring mountains of Franconia, and were hunted down like wild animals, and starved into surrender.

History fails fearfully in its duty when it makes over to the poet the record and memory of such an event. One, it is to be hoped, that can never be renewed. And yet what act of cruelty and tyranny may not be reacted on the stage of the world, which we boast of as civilised, if one man has uncontrolled power over the lives of many, the unwritten story of Russia may hereafter tell.

The country, as we went on, became uninteresting—a sandy soil, and few trees. We dined at Fulda, an agreeable, quiet-looking, old German town, once the capital of the prince-bishops of that diocese. We visited the Cathedral, a fine old building, containing some holy relics, which are preserved in little painted wooden boxes kept behind the altar. They had not the air of sanctity about them, and the man who shewed the chancel handled them with great indifference. Afterwards, we went to the Church of St. Michael, where we were taken to some subterranean vaults, in which Aniaschiadus, a saint and confessor, lived, I think, they said, for seven years, hid from the persecution of the Arians. Do not wonder that I speak in doubt, for our guide was German, and we could only guess at his meaning. Enough to learn that

one persecuted for his religious faith did pass a number of years in this dark vault, in fear, want, and suffering; and came out, probably, to persecute in his turn—such is the usual result of this sort of controversy. Ministers of religion have been in all ages too easily led to destroy the bodies of those whose souls they believe to be lost. There is a palace here, standing on the highest part of the town; and a show of military. The city has, indeed, an individual appearance, that stamps it on the memory, without being sufficiently striking for description.

This evening we slept at Buttlar, at a quiet, comfortable, country inn. Buttlar is a small village; this the only good house; but it had all the charm of an English way-side inn in a retired spot, where they are accustomed to receive visitors in search of the picturesque. The charges in this part of the journey were very moderate. We paid highest, of course, at the bad inn, at Brukenau; and the charges at all appear quite arbitrary. Fancy prices put on by the landlord, according to the appearance of his guests. As we pass also, without knowing it, from one State to another, the coins vary. The money is easy enough when not confounded: a Bavarian florin is reckoned as two francs; a thaler, as three shillings. Sometimes we pay in one money; sometimes in another. On the whole, the Prussian thaler, divided into three coins of ten groschen each, equivalent to a shilling, is the most intelligible; but the Bavarian florin denotes greater cheapness in price.

July 21st.

We now entered the depths of the Thuringerwald; and, stopping at Eisenach for dinner, hired a carriage—the distance was not much more than a mile, but the day was wet—to take us to the Castle of Wartburg. Luther, on his return from the Diet of Worms, was waylaid by his friend, the Elector of Saxony, and carried thither as to a place of safety. He remained ten months, passing for a young nobleman; and busily employed in translating the Bible, and composing other works. The Castle of Wartburg is situated on a steep wooded eminence, ascended by a winding road,

thickly shaded by trees. The chamber that Luther inhabited has one large window, overlooking a wide extent of hill and dale, stretching far away over the Thuringian Forest—a noble prospect; and the very site, high-raised and commanding, was well suited to the lofty and unbending soul of the recluse. This chamber is preserved in the same state as when it harboured its illustrious guest; and, except his bed, his furniture remains: his table, his stool, his chair, and ink-stand, are there; and if not the stain on the wall, marking his exploit of throwing his ink-stand at the Arch Tempter's head, there is at least the place where the ink was—some tourist has carried off the memorable plaster. We saw, also, several suits of armour belonging to various heroes of olden time here preserved. Hearing the names of prince, heroine, or even of illustrious robber (names honoured in history), who once endued these iron vestments—looking round on the armoury, or out of the window on the Thuringerwald—I felt happy in the sense of satisfied curiosity; or rather, of another sentiment to which I cannot give a precise name, but which swells the heart and makes the bosom glow, as one views, and touches, and feels surrounded by the remains of illustrious antiquity. The honoured name of Luther had more than any other right and power to awaken this: those of warrior or king only influence the imagination, as associated with poetry and romance; his is rendered sacred by his struggle, the most fearful human life presents, with antique mis-beliefs and errors upheld by authority.

We saw nothing of Gotha, where we slept; though, for Prince Albert's sake, I would willingly have become better acquainted with his native place. There is something pleasing in the mere outward aspect of these Protestant German towns: they look clean, orderly, and well-built. Hail to the good fight, the heart says everywhere; hail to the soil whence intellectual liberty gained, with toil and suffering, the victory—not complete yet—but which, thanks to the men of those time, can never suffer entire defeat! In time, it will spread to those countries which are still subject to Papacy.

July 22d.

We breakfasted this morning at Erfurt, and made duteous pilgrimage to the Augustine convent which Luther inhabited as a monk. In the church, he said his first mass; and it remains in the same state, with a rude old pulpit, in which Luther preached, and carved wooden galleries. His cell is preserved as when he lived in it. It is, like conventual cells all over the world, a small, square, high chamber. Here is the Bible that he first found in the library of the Convent; studying which his powerful mind began to perceive the errors of the Church to which he belonged. The convent is now used as an Orphan-house. There is a gallery in it, with a strange series of pictures. Death is represented as coming upon men and women at all moments, during every occupation—the Beauty at her toilette—the Miser counting his money—the Hero in the hour of victory—the King on his throne—the Mother fostering her first-born—the Bride, proud in her husband. It is a strange idea: the pictures are badly executed enough, yet some are striking.

The country lost, as we proceeded, all its beauty—vast uninclosed tracts of arable land spread out round. From a height, we looked down on Weimar. The trees of its park were the only verdure visible; for the harvest being over, the land was all stubble: no hedge, no meadow, no shady covert. I pitied the poets who had been destined to live there; for however agreeable royal parks and gardens may be, they are a poor compensation for the free and noble beauty of nature.

Dining at Weimar, we spent two or three hours in running about to visit the lions. It is a pleasant looking town. I do not know exactly how to present to your imagination the appearance of these German towns. The streets are wide; and thus, though the houses are high, they look airy, and, though badly paved, clean: the houses are white, and have not the air of antiquity. As I have said once or twice before, an appearance of order and tranquillity is their characteristic. We visited the abodes of Wieland, Schiller, and Göthe, who are the great people here: that is, we saw the

outside of the houses in which they had dwelt; for, being inhabited by a fresh generation, the insides are not show places. The palace is a handsome building; and three apartments are being decorated in honour of those chosen poets. The larger one for Göthe; a smaller for Schiller; a sort of octagon closet for Wieland. The walls are adorned with frescoes of subjects taken from their works. I am not sure that I should give this superiority to Göthe: Schiller has always appeared to me the greater man: he is more complete. The startling quality of Göthe is his insight into the secret depths of the human mind; his power of dissecting motives—of holding up the mirror to our most inmost sensations; and also in dramatic scenes of touching pathos, and passages of overflowing eloquence: but he wants completeness, and never achieves a whole. “Faust” is a fragment—“Wilhelm Meister” is a fragment. It is true, this has a closer resemblance to life which seldom affords an artistic beginning, middle, and end to its strange enchainment of events. Still, the conception of a perfect whole has ever held the highest place in our standard of a poet’s power of imagination. But I will spare you further criticism from an ignorant person.

We saw the coffins of the poets in the dark tomb, placed not side by side, princely etiquette forbad, but in the same narrow chamber with those of the princes who honoured them. These coffins suggest a wonderful contempt for the material of life; Camoëns exclaimed, when dying in an hospital, “Lo! the vast scene of my fortunes is contracted to this narrow bed!” This tomb told us that princely protection and the aspirations of genius were shut up in those dust-containing coffers; yet not so, while the works of the one endure, and the memory of the acts of the others survive in the minds of posterity. This friendship after death, this desire to share even in the grave the poet’s renown, after having sheltered and honoured him during life, makes one love these good German sovereigns. Mr. Landor says the Germans possess nine-tenths of the thought that exists in the world. There is in even larger proportion honour for thought. The gardens of the palace are agreeably laid out; and except that

turf is wanting, resemble an English park, with fine old trees and a river running through. This spot was a favourite resort, and there is a pretty shady summer-house overlooking the river, where the sovereigns held réunions, and entertained their poet friends; many a June evening was there spent in refined intercourse. There is also a pavilion in the garden which Göthe inhabited in the summer months.

The park of Weimar was an oasis in the desert. We found for many miles after leaving it, the same dreary landscape; flat and unmarked as the sea; not as barren, for the country is all corn-fields but as no hedge intersects them, nor any bush shows its tufted top, nor any trees appear except the ill-looking poplars mixed with cherry-trees that line the road, nothing can be more unvaried or uninteresting than these vast plains; uninteresting indeed, in outward aspect, yet claiming our attention and exciting our curiosity as the scene of a thousand battles, above all, of that last struggle, when yielding the ground inch by inch, mile by mile, Napoleon was driven from Dresden to the Rhine.

Some slight interruption occurs in the uniform aspect of these bare plains, when they are intersected by the course of the Saale, a common name for a river in Germany, which winds through a pleasing village. On the heights that surround, stand old castles renowned in story. We soon left this pleasant change behind, and came again on the naked country, sweeping over miles and miles; our guide-books speak of this as the scenes of battles and victories of Gustavus Adolphus, and Frederic the Great. The first name claims our admiration, and we looked with respect on the stone that marks the spot where he fell. Frederic was a very clever man, and except for the evils which, as a conqueror, he brought on his subjects, he did them good as far as his limited views permitted him. But there is no sovereign whose acts fill so many pages in history, for whom one cares so little as Frederic. Cold-hearted, if not false, the dogged determination and invincible purpose that form his best characteristic, yet centred so narrowly in self, that he excites no jot of interest. It was otherwise in his own day. He was a king, a man of talent, a warrior who encountered difficulties

that had overwhelmed a weaker mind, and surmounted them. He had the charm of manners, which, though cruelly capricious to his dependents, were, when he chose, irresistibly fascinating; such qualities awoke, while he lived, the admiration of the world; but with the Prince de Ligne died the last of his enthusiastic admirers.

Another name, greater and newer than his, has thrust him from his place, and occupies our attention—in one respect his entire opposite; for Napoleon was great in success, Frederic in defeat. Perhaps the absence of heaven-born legitimacy took from the latest hero of the world who has joined the dead, the unflinching, stubborn will of Frederic in adversity; besides, it would seem that Napoleon disdained to fight, except when he could gain a world by victory. Here he lost one; and a struggle that lasted many days in the environs of Leipsig, drove him from Germany. When reduced to what he seemed to look upon as the paltry kingdom of France, he played double or quits with that and lost all.

We looked out for the Elster, where the bridge was blown up which cost Poniatowski his life, and lost to Napoleon twenty-five thousand French soldiers taken prisoners. I am told that I now look upon the very spot; that at the end of the garden of the Hôtel de Saxe this tragic scene was enacted: it seems as if a good hunter might leap the narrow stream which decided the fate of an empire.

Here ends a very fatiguing journey. The carriage we hired was to appearance roomy and comfortable; but being badly hung, it was inconceivably uneasy; and partly, I believe, the effect of the Kissingen waters still hanging about me, (I ought to have spent a week at least at Brukenau,) I never suffered more fatigue and even distress on a journey. Right glad I am to be here. To-morrow we commit ourselves to a railroad—blessings on the man who invented them. Every traveller must especially bless him in these naked, monotonous plains.

The Hôtel de Saxe is very good, and not much dearer than any other. They are expecting the King of Prussia to-morrow, and the staircases are carpeted and

decorated with evergreens. The Oberkellner, or upper waiter—a very important personage in these German hotels—is an intelligent little fellow, and speaks English perfectly.

Congratulate me that so far I am advanced in the heart of this mighty country. Though I skim its surface without having any communication with its inhabitants, still the eye is gratified, the imagination excited, and curiosity satisfied.

LETTER VI. Railroad to Berlin.—Unter-den-Linden.—Gallery.—Palace.—Museum.—Opera.—Iron-Foundry.

Berlin, 27th July.

The distance from Leipsig to Berlin is 105 miles; the greater part an arid sandy plain. Earlier in the season it had not been so bad, for the land is arable; but now the stubble remaining after harvest was the only sign left of cultivation. The sense the eye received of nakedness was in no way relieved—no hedge, no tree, no meadow, no bush. One break there was when we crossed the Elbe, and a line of verdure and wood follows the course of the river. I read “The Heart of Mid-Lothian” during the journey, which occupied six or seven hours, and the time passed rapidly.

There are three classes of carriages, and the price is not dear:—1st class, five and a half thalers (a thaler is three shillings); 2d class, three and a half thalers; 3d class, two and a half. A few miles beyond Leipsig we entered the Prussian territory, and changed carriages. The Prussian carriages are very much more roomy and comfortable. The pace we went, when going, was very great, so that I heard passengers call out from the windows imploring that the speed might be lessened. Much time was lost, however, at every one of the numerous stations, where the carriage-doors were thrown open with the announcement of stopping for funfzehn minuten, or funf minuten, or even drei minuten, (fifteen, five and three minutes,)

when the passengers poured out, and comforted themselves with all sorts of slight refreshments—light wine, light beer, light cakes and cherries, nothing much in themselves, but a good deal of it—offered by a whole crowd of dealers in such wares. On arriving at Berlin we went to the hotel Stadt Rom, Unter-den-Linden, which we find very comfortable, the host attentive, and the table d'hôte good.

We are here in the best street, which has a double avenue of lime-trees in the middle, running its whole length. One way it leads to the Brandenburg gate, the other to a spot that forms the beauty of Berlin as a capital—a wide open space, graced by a beautiful fountain, and an immense basin of polished granite, made from one of those remarkable boulders found on the sandy plain, fifty miles from Berlin; adorned also by the colonnade of the New Museum, opposite to which stands the Guard-house, the Italian Opera, and the University. The building of the Arsenal is near, and the whole forms a splendid assemblage of buildings. After dinner, we have walked under the lime-trees to the Brandenburg gate—a most beautiful portal, built on the model of the Propylæum at Athens, on a larger scale. Napoleon carried off the car of Victory which decorates the top; it was brought back after the battle of Waterloo. Before its capture it was placed as if leaving the city behind, to rush forward on the world; on its return, it was placed returning to and facing the city. The square before this gate is chiefly inhabited by foreign Ministers: Lord Burghersh has his house here. Outside are extensive public gardens, in the usual foreign style—that is, numerous avenues of trees, in a herbless sandy soil.

28th July.

Our first visit in the morning was to the Museum. It is at some little distance from the hotel, and the walk led us through the best part of Berlin. The building itself is beautiful; the grand circular hall by which you reach the statue-gallery, and which again you look down upon from the open gallery that leads to the pictures, surpasses in elegance and space anything I have ever seen, except in the Vatican. At once we

rushed among the pictures—our only inducement, except curiosity to see a renowned capital city, to visit Berlin. The gallery is admirably arranged in schools, and the pictures have an excellent light on them; and in each room is hung up a list of pictures and their painters contained in it. First we saw the Io, of Correggio, a most lovely picture, and near it Leda and the Swan, by the same artist; and then our eyes were attracted to one still lovelier in its chaste and divine beauty—a Virgin and Child by Raphael. The Mother is holding a book in one hand, the other arm encircles her infant. It bears the impress of the first style of the divinest of painters, when his warm heart was animated by pious enthusiasm, and his imagination inspired by a celestial revelation of pure beauty. It was once the gem of the Colonna Gallery at Rome, and was sold by the Duke of Lanti to the King of Prussia.

Next to these I was most struck by a picture by Francia, the Virgin in glory, worshipped by six saints. There is a remarkable picture by Rembrandt, a portrait of the Duke Adolph of Gueldres, shaking his fist at his father. The countenance bears the liveliest impress of angry passion: the impious madness of the parricide mantles in the face, and gives wild energy to the furious gesture. The gallery is rich in portraits by Van Dyck—some of his finest: but I must not send you a mere catalogue. From room to room we wandered; sometimes desirous of seeing all, and so penetrating into every nook—sometimes satisfied to sit for hours before a masterpiece.

Yes, I dedicated hours this morning,—I know not how many,—to a painting that has given me more delight than any I ever saw. I had often heard the first style of Raphael preferred to his third, and thought it a superstition; but I am a convert—entirely a convert. Apart, locked up in a room with some of the gold-grounded deformed productions of the Byzantine artists, stands, except one, the largest painting of Raphael’s in the world; the subject is the adoration of the Magi. It is in his first style—it is half destroyed—the outline of some of the figures only remains; no sacrilegious hand has ever touched to restore it, and in its ruin it is

divine. The Baby Jesus is lying on the ground, and Mary, with an angel at each hand, kneels before the lowly couch of her child; on the other side are the kings bearing their gifts; and far in the background are the shepherds visited by angels, announcing peace and good-will to man. I never saw such perfect grace and ideal beauty as in the kneeling figures of the Virgin and her attendant angels. Composed majesty and deep humility are combined in the attitudes. The countenances show their souls abstracted from all earthly thought, and absorbed by pure and humble adoration. Adoration from the adorable: this is what only an artist of the highest class can portray. You perceive that the painter imagined perfect beings, who deserve a portion of the worship which they pay unreservedly to the Creator, and such are saints and angels in the mind of a Catholic. You who so much admire the unfinished ideas of Leonardo da Vinci, would delight in this relic of a greater man: will you receive any from this attempt to convey what I felt? I read somewhere the other day, that speech is one mode of communicating our thoughts—painting another—music another—neither can, with any success, go beyond its own department to that of the other—thus, words can never show forth the beauty of which painting presents the living image to the eyes.

It may be a defect, that I take more pleasure in graceful lines, and attitudes, and expression, than in colouring. Sir Thomas Lawrence told me that it was one, and that an uncultivated eye was, therefore, often better pleased by statuary than painting; and he said this, because I looked with more delight on some inimitable bronze-statues standing on his mantel-piece, preferring them to a richly-coloured painting on which he was accustomed to rest his eye while at work; so to familiarise it to the fullest and most glowing hues—I am not sure that he is right.

Let us take, for instance, two pictures by the prince of painters—the Adoration of the Magi among his first;—The Transfiguration his last work. In artistic power, this picture is said to surpass every other in the world. The genius of its author is shown in its admirable composition, in the spirit of the attitudes, in the life that animates

each figure, without alluding to technical merits, which, of course, are felt even by those who cannot define, nor even point them out. Yet, this picture does not afford me great pleasure—no face is inspired by holy and absorbing passion; and the woman, the most prominent figure, is a portrait of the Fornarina, whose hard countenance is peculiarly odious. Turn from this to the half-effaced picture at Berlin—the radiant beauty here expressed, strikes a chord in my soul—all harmony, all love. It is not the art of the painter I admire; it is his pure, exalted soul, which he incarnated in these lovely forms. I remember Wordsworth's theory, that we enter this world bringing with us "airs from heaven," memories of a divine abode and angelic fellowship which we have just left, that flake by flake fall from our souls as they degenerate and are enfeebled by earthly passions. Raphael seems to confirm this theory; for, in his early pictures, there is a celestial something absent from his latter, a beauty not found on earth—inspiring as we look, a deep joy, only felt in such brief moments when some act of self-sacrifice exalts the soul, when love softens the heart, or nature draws us out of ourselves, and our spirits are rapt in ecstacy, and enabled to understand and mingle with the universal love.

The gallery is open from ten till three. Unfortunately, the fatigue of the journey made me very ill able to endure much toil; and you know,—who knows not?—that visiting galleries produces extreme weariness. I went back to the hotel several times to repose, and then returned to the gallery. I desired to learn by heart—to imbibe—to make all I saw a part of myself, so that never more I may forget it. In some sort I shall succeed. Some of the forms of beauty on which I gazed, must last in my memory as long as it endures; but this will be at the expense of others, which even now are fading and about to disappear from my mind. I feel, though usually I prefer statuary to painting, and there are some statues—and particularly an ancient bronze of a boy praying, that I have regarded with delight; still my mind was full before, the rest can but overflow. The gallery of Berlin will, I fear, become a vague, though glorious dream, for the most part, leaving distinct only a few images that can never

be effaced.

July 29th.

Yesterday evening we went to the opera—the house is small, but pretty. The piece was Massaniello, at which I grieved. I want German music in Germany. There was no remarkable singer. There was no ballet; and all was over, according to the good German custom, by ten o'clock.

To-day, we have been doing our duty in sightseeing; though I grudged every minute spent away from the gallery. There are some good pictures, however, in the palace, especially the portraits of our Charles I. and his Queen, by Van Dyck. The apartments are very handsome. They have an ungainly custom here, as in Holland, of providing the visiter with list-shoes, to preserve their shining parquets. I rebelled against putting on slippers other people had worn, and forced the Custode, grumblingly, to acknowledge that my shoes could not hurt the floor. The rooms of the palace are chiefly associated with the name of Napoleon, and are decorated by vases of Sèvre china and by portraits of himself and Josephine, presents from the conqueror to the conquered, which were impertinent enough at the time; but the spirit is changed now, and they remain as trophies of Prussian victories. I looked with great interest on the various portraits of the celebrated Queen of Prussia. In all, she is inexpressibly beautiful. Her face is thoroughly individual;—animation—independence—a truly feminine, yet, (for want of a better word I must say,) a wild loveliness gives it a peculiar charm. There is a portrait of her at twelve years of age—dignity, true nobility, artless innocence, and evident strength of character, adorn a countenance in the first bloom of untainted girlhood.

We visited the Museum. I did not much care for what I saw. There are many relics of Frederic the Great, and a wax figure, dressed up in his old clothes, is placed on a faded throne beneath a shabby canopy—all such as he used in life. There is nothing to excite respect in this sort of spectacle. It is the misfortune of those who live to be

old that they are always handed down to posterity as decrepid and feeble. If I were a queen, I would never suffer myself to be painted after thirty; or, if well preserved, five-and-thirty at the latest. Queens and beauties—kings and heroes—all must pay our nature's sad tribute, and lose even individuality and charm, as the moss of age creeps over the frame, which, becoming weak and shattered, loses proportion and grace; but it is foolish to leave behind these emblems of decay. Frederic the Great, as he first met Voltaire at the castle of Meuse, near Cleves, or as he wrote his dispatch on a drum after one of his first battles, would indeed be the Frederic, whose deeds, if evil, at least were instinct with power and life. This doll, dressed up to represent a decrepid, feeble old man, is the most dreary sarcasm that can be imagined.

The prospect from the palace windows is really grand: the Platz in front—the Museum—the Fountain—the whole range of buildings—form a coup-d'œil that transcends that of the Place de la Concorde, at Paris.

I desired to visit some of the manufactures of Berlin steel, and expected to see beautiful specimens. It is a curious fact, how difficult it is to find out where you ought to go, and how to see any sight, unless it be a regular lion, or you have an exact address. We took a drosky, and drove to a shop; it was closed: to another; there was no such thing. We returned to our hotel, and learnt that we had been spending many useless groschen by not taking the drosky by the hour instead of the course. Having reformed this oversight, we set off again in search of the manufactory. You know the history of the building of Berlin. Frederic the Great, desirous that his capital should rival that of other kingdoms, inclosed a large space within its walls, and ordered the vacancy to be filled up with houses. This occasions a great difference between Berlin and most foreign cities. In the latter, the aim is to save land, and to encroach on heaven. Here, the builders endeavoured to cover as much space as possible, and many of the finest houses are only two stories high. Wide and grass-grown, the streets, all straight and at right angles, stretch far away,

with scarce a solitary passenger or drosky here and there, making the solitude even more felt. There is another peculiarity in this wide-spread city. It is built on the flattest plain in the world. The Spree stagnates beneath its bridges, and the drains, just covered by planks, stagnate in the streets, and are by no means agreeable during the present heat and drought.

At length, after driving about from one place to another, asking our way as well as we could, resolved not to give in, but much puzzled, we reached the Eisengiesserei, or iron-foundry, just outside the Oranienburg gate. We alighted from the drosky and walked into a large court-yard, and into the sort of immense shed in which is the foundry. We asked every one we met where the works in steel were sold; no one could tell us. We wandered about a long time. The men were at work making moulds in sand. At length a vast cauldron of molten metal was brought from the furnace, and poured into a mould. There is something singular in boiling metal, the sight of which gives a new idea to the mind, a new sensation to the soul. Boiling water, or other liquid, presents only an inanimate element, changed to the touch, not to the eye; but molten metal, red and fiery, takes a new appearance, and seems to have life,—the heat appears to give it voluntary action, and the sense of its power of injury adds to the emotion with which it is regarded; as well as the fact that it takes and preserves the form into which it flows. In this every-day world a new sensation is a new delight. I have read somewhere of a French lady, who went to Rome to kiss the Pope’s toe, because it made her heart beat quicker so to do. Certainly, seeing the diminutive Cyclops pour the glowing living liquid from their cauldron, viewing it run fiercely into the various portions of the mould, and then grow tranquil and dark as its task was fulfilled, imparted, I know not why or how, a thrill to the frame.

After this we were taken to an outhouse, in which there were articles for sale—no bracelets, nor chains, nor necklaces; chiefly small statuettes of Napoleon and Frederic the Great.

I would willingly remain here some days longer; and, above all, I should like to visit Potzdam and the Peacock Island. It is impossible; and we shall proceed to-morrow by railroad to Dresden.

LETTER VII. Arrival at Dresden.—Rabenau.—Gallery of Dresden.—Madonna di San Sisto.—Pictures of Correggio.

July 30th.

A direct railroad from Berlin to Dresden is talked of: as it is, we were obliged to go round by Leipsig. On this account those travellers who have carriages prefer posting; the conveyance of a carriage by a railroad being always expensive. In no part of the world, however, is the speed of steam more acceptable; a drearier prospect of level desert cannot be imagined. I felt this the less, for being very much fatigued, and not well, I slept nearly all the way. We arrived at about two at Leipsig, dined at the Hôtel de Saxe, and embarked on the Dresden railroad. The carriages are small and uncomfortable. As we drew near Dresden, the country assumed a different aspect; hills appeared, and we beheld again some of the charms of earth. The station is in the New Town, and a drosky took us to the Hôtel de Pologne, which Murray mentions as the best; but in this he is mistaken. It is an hotel a good deal frequented by Englishmen, travelling tutors, and their pupils; but the hotels to which all families go are in the Neu Markt. There are several on a scale as extensive and complete as the Hôtel de Saxe, at Leipsig.

We expected to find a friend here conversant with the town to give us information and advice. We learn that he, as well as everybody else, is away; but instead of going to some fashionable baths, he is rusticating at Rabenau, a village some seven miles off. We at once resolved to visit him there; and hiring one of the hack carriages, we the next morning set out on this expedition.

August 1st.

At first we followed the course of the Elbe, beneath picturesque cliffs, and then turning off we got among some cross-roads of the most impracticable description, up a steep slope; when we reached the top we found a chasm, in the depth of which the village we sought is situated. The road was far too precipitous for the carriage to descend, so we walked down. The country has a singular aspect. In other mountainous lands, we live in the valleys, and look up to the hills as they lift themselves towards the sky. Here, however, we descend from the plain into the ravine. These words require further explanation. I have mentioned that we ascended a hill: this was composed of arable land, the fields, unbroken by tree or rock, spread round in smooth upland; but in the midst we found the chasm, the fissure, the rent I mentioned, and we descended, as it were, down into the bosom of the earth—and deeper, deeper, till the wooded hills close round and almost shut out the sky, and a brawling stream, which turns a mill, frets its way between rocks clothed by trees, that nearly meet on either side. Nothing can be more peaceful, more secluded, more shut in; and if not wildly sublime, yet rock and wood and torrent combined to render it picturesque; a rustic bridge crossed the stream, and there, abutting against the hill side, stood the mill, and before the mill a large pleasant room for the reception of guests, for many come, especially on feast days, to dine here. Here our friend had betaken him to compose his opera. Beside the dashing waterfalls, beneath the music-giving pines; and in grassy nooks shaded by mossy rocks and tree-grown precipices, he found a spot whose breath was melody, whose aspect imparted peace. Earth had opened, and this little ravine was a very nest adorned by nature’s hand with her choicest gifts. When we arrived he was absent; he had gone with his note-book to study among the pines. You know and admire his compositions. Thanks to them, Shelley’s Poems have found an echo of sweet sounds worthy of them. The fanciful wildness, the tender melancholy, the holy calm of the poet, have met a similar inspiration on the part of the musician. They have as much melody as the Italian, as much science as the German school—they appertain most, indeed, to

the last; but the airs themselves are original. The song of “Arethusa,” and that entitled “Spirit of Night,” are perhaps the best. The one, light and fanciful; the other, solemn and impassioned; both, beautiful. The rest are second only to these.[9]

We wandered about rather disconsolate and hungry till our friend appeared, who joyously welcomed us; and dinner was ordered, and ready in a trice. The fare was not very choice, nor delicately served; but very characteristic of what one has read of middle life in Germany. To this secluded bower families came—or students—or a fond pair stole hither from the crowd, to drink beer and smoke on the rustic seats beneath the trees. It was easy, however, to escape from these groups deeper into the ravine, or into other fissures of earth of a similar nature, which branched off; or, clambering up the cliffs, to find freer air on the hill-top. The daughter of the miller, not particularly pretty, but willing and good-humoured, waited on us. Snow-white table-cloths, and sparkling, inviting dinner apparatus, unfortunately, were not among the comforts; but the meats were eatable—the trout more than that; the whole not good enough to invite lingering over the meal; and again we sauntered beside the torrent, and reposed under the trees, and talked over our plans and a thousand other subjects, with the zest of people who found a new and willing listener after long seclusion.

Our eager love of Italy has struck a spark and lighted a similar flame in the breast of our friend. He intended repairing to Vienna in the winter. He now proposes taking Venice in his way; so that, if we will remain a month at Dresden, he will accompany us at least so far on our southern journey. It is thus arranged; not, perhaps, for the best—for, if the heats continue, any town must be disagreeable—still we have come so far into the heart of Germany, that there can be no harm, though it be not the town season, in lingering a few weeks in one of its most celebrated cities. We have accordingly taken convenient lodgings in the Alt Markt; and here we are.

Already, you may be sure, we have visited the Gallery—a labyrinth of lofty halls,

adorned by a very mine of painted canvas, which thoroughly to explore would indeed be difficult. Some of its chief gems are in one room. Entering this, we are at once commanded and awed by the “Madonna di San Sisto,” the Virgin bearing the Infant God in her arms, by Raphael. As a painting, technically speaking, I believe there are faults found with it: worst of all, it has been retouched and restored; but no criticism can check the solemn impression it inspires. The Madonna is not the lowly wife of Joseph the carpenter: she is the Queen of Heaven; she advances surrounded by celestial rays, all formed of innumerable cherubim, from whose countenances beam the glory that surrounds her. The majesty of her countenance, “severe in youthful beauty,” demands worship for her as the mother of the Infant Saviour, whom she holds in her arms. And he, the Godhead (as well as feeble mortals can conceive the inconceivable, and yet which once it is believed was visible) sits enthroned on his brow, and looks out from eyes full of lofty command and conscious power. With one hand, he makes the sign of blessing, as in Catholic countries this is bestowed. Below are two angels—both lovely; one inexpressibly so—who are looking up. I have seen copies and engravings from this picture; I have seen these angels well imitated, but never the mother and child. In some, the angelic beauty is sacrificed in the endeavour to portray the majestic glance, which thus becomes stern; or the dignity fades, that the beauty, which thus becomes inexpressive, may be preserved. In truth, copies are very inefficient things; prints are often better; but if you look at the originals, such weak types fade into insignificance.

There are four large Correggios in this room; all among his earlier pictures. As paintings, I am told that they rank higher than the Raphael. They gain by being looked at and studied; the art of painting has never, nor can ever be carried further than the Chiaro Oscuro of this admirable artist; and the attitudes of the figures—the expression of some of the faces—especially of St. Sebastian, in one of them, thrills the frame. Now, the sense of adoration is cold in men’s breasts, and painters can

neither see in others, nor conceive within their own breasts, a passion as absorbing as love, while it elevates and purifies those who feel it till their features shadow forth an angelic nature. A fifth Correggio is also here—the Magdalen, a small cabinet picture. It is well known. I am told that Correggio only painted it once; but Allori, a good painter, but whose conceptions, whose types (to use the word of the author of "La Poésie Chrétienne") are not noble, has made many most admirable copies; it has thus been multiplied; some of the copies are generally said to be by the hand of Correggio himself; yet, in the most celebrated of them, I have not seen the mixed expression which is so wonderful in the face of the original. She is lying on the earth, in a cavern, supporting her head with her hand, reading the blessed promises of the Gospel. Her eyes are red with recent and much weeping; her face expresses earnest hope—or rather scarcely hope yet, but a yearning which will soon warm into satisfied faith; and she is eagerly drinking in the sublime consolations that speak peace to her heart. Her face is not clouded by grief, though you see that she has grieved with bitterness; nor does it express joy, though you see that she anticipates happiness. Is not this the triumph of art? You must add to this inimitable delicacy in shadowing forth expression, an execution quite unrivalled. The word Chiaro Oscuro, as applied to Correggio's paintings, is familiar to every one. This picture teaches more than any other what it means. With other artists, the flesh in shade, is the flesh darkened—blackened: here—look at the arms, the throat of the Magdalen; they are fair as alabaster—or rather, as the fair skin of woman, and the shadow that obscures them, conceals it in the painting not more than it would do in reality.

The heat is very great; the hours of the gallery excessively inconvenient—from nine to one, when it is inexorably closed, that the attendants may dine at the universal German hour; and they do not open again. I am convinced that one of the reasons that there is heaviness in the Germans, is this early hour for their principal, their interminable meal. Who can be fit for anything, after sitting for two or three hours at

mid-day to a plentiful dinner? After such an act, life must be extinct in all the nobler functions for some hours; but, as they go to bed at ten, they do not give scope for the mind to recover itself. To be sure, they rise at five, and therefore their great men have been able to achieve so much.

With regard to the gallery, special permission may be obtained, if sought and paid for, to visit it at other hours. If we were only here for a day or two, it would be worth while to obtain this; but then an attendant would accompany us all the time; now we are free to roam at will. So we shall content ourselves with the public hours.

We are to remain the whole of this month at Dresden; before the end of it, I hope the heat will diminish. It is so excessive that I mean to escape for a few days to Rabenau.

LETTER VIII. Rabenau.—The Gallery.—The Terrace of Brühl.—The Grosse Garten.—The great Heat.

Dresden, August 12.

Thy mountain torrent and thy narrow vale,

With every pine and fir that grow thereby;

The air that passes thee with gentle wail,

That it may not amidst thy thickets die;

Thine evening’s quiet, and thy morning’s gale,

And thy hot noon-day’s mossy luxury;

Thy crags, whose legend says, “Each rugged rock

An altar is to Him who framed the block.”[10]

In such and other verse has the “valley of beauty, sunny Rabenau,” been celebrated by one of my friends, who visited it with us, and whose ardent and poetic imagination was warmed by inspiration in this lonely spot. I am sorry to say, that,

secluded and beautiful as is the narrow dell, I did not quite share his transports; I obtained no refuge from the heat, from which I had endeavoured to escape. Truly we enjoyed the shade of woods and cliffs, and the refreshing murmur of the stream; but deep down and shut in as is the ravine, we found it close and breezeless. Besides, to my misfortune, I am more fastidious than a traveller ought to be. During the day I sought for a cool spot, and even though I found it not, yet as I loitered among the woods, every object charmed the eye; and evening came at last, bringing relief and enjoyment. But at night it was otherwise. The mill is a very rustic cot; and the Germans are not, as far as I can judge, a cleanly people. At Kissingen we were obliged to exert ourselves vehemently to get the floors (which, being of white smooth deal, to use a servant's phrase, show dirt) washed. Water had never touched the boards of my room at Rabenau, and in vain I pleaded for a little scouring. Then German beds, especially in the north of Germany, are uncomfortable. Feather-beds everywhere are disagreeable; but here they are constructed on the most odious principle. They are a quarter filled with feathers: so when you lie down, they inclose you on all sides, as a half-empty bladder does your finger if you press it. Usually there are mattresses besides, and one can discard the annoying softness; but at Rabenau there was only a loose straw palliasse, and one of these disastrous beds, which threw me into a state of nervous agitation, that turned the night into a period of pain.

In short, after enduring the annoyance for three nights, P—— and I quitted it, leaving our poet and musician behind, to indulge, for a few more days, in the inspirations of the rocky dell. An old woman stowed carpet-bag, cloaks, and books, into a basket, and putting a weight I could scarcely lift on her back, walked briskly on before. Like gnomes, we emerged from the inner recesses of the earth, and ascended to its outer edge; and again descending the hill side, we reached the high road, where we hoped to find a carriage sent to meet us. We were disappointed; but after a perplexing half hour, during which we expected to have to walk to Dresden,

we secured a return britska, and gladly took our way to our temporary home. Could I have foreseen the heat, I had not fixed to remain at Dresden so long, but have gone on to wait for our friend at Töplitz. There is no help now, and I console myself by recollecting that I am in a city I have long desired to see, and can store my mind with the memory of a thousand objects, which hereafter I shall look back on as my choicest treasures.

I ramble in the morning in the Gallery: the heat, indeed, is almost insupportable; but still I cannot tear myself away. There is a lovely picture of Rebecca at the well, by Giorgione. There is a fine one, by Annibal Caracci, of the Angel of Fame. He is springing upwards; wreaths of laurel hang from his arm; one hand bears a crown, the other holds a trumpet, and a halo of flame plays round his head. There is something living and spirit-stirring in this picture, though its colouring is not pleasing. There are the portraits of his three daughters by Palma Vecchio: one of them in particular is very beautiful. The women of this painter resemble those of Titian—the same full feminine form, the same voluptuous repose, joined to queen-like dignity.

One of the gems of the gallery is the Cristo della Moneta, of Titian, which Mrs. Jamieson eulogizes with much taste and judgment. It is among the earliest, and is one of the best of the works of this artist. It is but a small half-length, containing two figures. The Jew shows a coin to our Saviour, and asks to whom tribute should be paid. The questioner looks full of cunning—Jesus, suffering, patient, dignified. As with all these great painters, the countenance expresses many mingled feelings, and you read the thoughts of the martyr, revealed by his searching eye and the sad composure of his mien. “This is a snare. You think to entrap me. You will not succeed. With a word, I brush away the flimsy web of evil. But it will not always be thus; the time will come when I shall be your victim; yet I bear the present insult and future death with resignation for your sake—for the sake of all mankind. My path is before me; I tread it patiently and resolutely, though you strew it with thorns.” All this you read in that face; all gentleness, resignation, love, and suffering. A

connoisseur here objects, that the countenance of Christ wants dignity; perhaps it does; yet, methinks, it has as much as the human face, in sorrow, can express. I told you that the gallery shuts at one. I linger to the last. At a quarter before this hour, the men come round, and draw down the blinds, leaving the gallery nearly in darkness. I was in the room containing the Correggios when they did this. The Notte of that painter is among them: The Shepherds visiting Jesus in the manger by night, and the only light emanates from the cradle of the divine child, spreading its halo over the Virgin's face, which is bent over the babe, while the shepherds veil their eyes with their hands from the dazzling effulgence. When, by the drawing down of the blinds, we were left nearly in darkness, the effect on this picture was miraculous. The child lay in living beams, which seemed to emanate from a focus, and spread rays of light around. I could not have believed that any coloured canvas could have shown such glowing radiance. The intention of the master becomes more clear, and his wonderful art more admirable. No doubt the picture was painted for some niche that favoured the peculiar distribution of light and shadow.

There are some very beautiful specimens of the Dutch school in the gallery; but I do not, of course, send you a mere catalogue; and in mentioning those that gave me most pleasure, you know my preference for Italian pictures.

One day, while wandering about the gallery, I saw a well known face. It was more than a pleasure; it was indeed a gain to meet the accomplished Author of "La Poésie Chrétienne" in the very spot where his knowledge and taste would inform my ignorance and correct my judgment; still more agreeable it is to learn that he is also bound for Italy. His animated conversation and refined society will add more than I can express of interest and pleasure to our rambles.

I drag myself painfully home from the gallery, but find no shade, and short repose.

We have here only a woman who "does for us," preparing our breakfast and attending to our rooms. Our dinner is another affair. Not far from us there is a

Tratoria, kept by a Milanese, well known in Dresden as a good cook, and where we can obtain food not germanized in its preparation. We either go and dine there, or have our dinner sent to us; his prices are exceedingly reasonable. The ceremony of our dinner over, I repose as well as the sun will let me, which has by this time left one part of our house and invaded another, making every portion, beyond conception, sultry. I never found any heat so oppressive. This arises from Dresden being so inland; and no rain having fallen for six months, the dryness of the atmosphere renders its high temperature penetrating, subtle, burning, intolerable.

Evening comes, and though it does not bring with it sufficient coolness to banish lassitude and even pain, still the heat is diminished, and I go out to walk or drive. If on foot, we go usually to the Terrace of Brühl, to which you ascend by a wide flight of steps from the foot of the bridge. The view here is beautiful. I can imagine circumstances which would render it sublime. It overlooks the Elbe; and were that river in “its pride of place”—full—rushing—stormy—it would add movement and grandeur to the scene. But the waters have ebbed even as the Arno does, till the bathers almost walk across without any chance of getting out of their depth; the bed, as a river’s bed always does when the shrunken stream leaves it exposed, is a deformity to the landscape; and the extreme dryness of the season has caused the fields on the other side to resemble those seen by Charles Lamb from his retreat at Dalston. “Talk of green fields,” he said, “every one has green fields; I have drab-coloured fields.” I look over the parapet and try to imagine the river full to the brim; the lower piles of the beautiful bridge bathed and hidden by tumultuous waves; the domes and spires of the city rising silent above a turbid, tempestuous, sea-like river: that would be the scene which is the glory and boast of Dresden; now all is slothful and stagnant. The same is to be predicated of the company assembled; all the beau monde of all the towns of Germany is assembled at various baths, and so I must not wonder that I not only saw no beauty, but nothing either well-dressed or elegant in the promenades. We have driven to the Grosse Garten, a large park,

filled with fine trees, and were the lawns laid out in verdant sward, instead of being an incult growth of the coarsest grass, very uninviting, especially in its present arid state, the shady walks and glades would be pleasant. I may say the same of all the other gardens of which this capital boasts. They would be very delightful, only just now they are deficient in freshness and verdure. Do not think I say this as a fault-finder, except that they ought to learn from us what grass when cultivated for ornamental uses ought to be. I consider the gardens and terraces and pleasure-grounds that adorn Dresden more beautiful than those of almost any other capital. The fault is ours, not theirs. The pleasure-grounds of a city ought to be, and in this case are, adapted to the seasons during which the inhabitants make use of them. But in the height of summer, Nature only in her free fresh beauty can afford enjoyment. We have no business to come here now in search of wood and stream and field, which alone can content our souls, athirst and wearied by the heat. The fault, as I have said, is ours; not that of Dresden, which really may be said in some degree to rival Florence in its pretensions to beauty, and which has of course an individual character of its own.

P—— goes almost every night to the Opera. The heat is so very great, that I have only seldom ventured. The house is very pretty; and I had hoped, as there are some good singers, to hear some of the chef-d'œuvres of German composers. I am disappointed. At Berlin, we had Masaniello: here we have La Dame Blanche—Die weisse Frau—instead of the Huguenots, which our musical friend considers the finest composition of modern times—inferior only to Mozart; superior to him, inasmuch as orchestral accompaniment is so wonderfully improved and extended since the day when Figaro and the Zauberflöte were brought out. I am much disappointed in not hearing this opera. The tenor is a young, good-looking man, with a very pleasing voice and good style. It is strange, indeed, how well German sings. Look at the language, with its accumulation of consonants, and it appears worse even than our own for singing; but in reality it is far better; ours being, from its

peculiar accent, the worst, I believe, in the world; while the German is smoothed and vocalised and flowing in a manner which, till I heard it sung by natives, I could not have imagined. This same sdruccioli enunciation does not, however, make it pleasing to the ear when spoken.

Night comes at last. At ten o'clock, all Dresden goes to bed. If you stay out after, you must pay your porter four groschen. Night comes, but no cool breeze to calm and refresh. We live in a troisième, in the Alt Markt, and look upon its large square, our windows being turned to the east. Till a late hour, the people are employed removing the booths in which they expose their wares during the day, and the clatter they make prevents repose. Near us is a church tower, with a loud clock; and as I lie, courting sleep, with my windows of necessity wide open, the sound of the clock seems to enter my room. We are told, sounds are produced by vibrations of air, which beginning where the sound is born, spread themselves further and further; and thus I hear—I feel it. I believe that I am aware of the moment when the clock strikes; on comes the sound, louder and louder, till my room is filled as with thunder—and the wounded sense of hearing would fain fly and escape—but cannot. You can form no idea what it is to have twelve o'clock thus walk up bodily to your pillow, in the otherwise deep silence of night.

We have, as yet, seen few of the Hons. I am trying to summon courage and strength for sightseeing; which will indeed be a task of labour, with the thermometer above ninety in the shade—in the shade of night, remember, as well as in that of day.

Adieu.

LETTER IX. The Green Vaults.—Collection of Porcelain.—Der Freischütz.—The great Drought.—Preparations for Departure.

Dresden, 18th July.

We spent this morning in the Grüne Gewolbe, or Green Vaults, a suite of apartments

containing the treasures of the Kings of Saxony. These sovereigns were much richer once than they are now; and we are told, that, in addition to the dazzling piles of jewels and other valuables here collected, they had amassed large sums of money—all deposited in a secret strong room under their palace. The money is gone, but treasure to the amount of several millions remains, and is spread out for view in eight apartments on the ground floor of the palace, called the Green Vaults—it is said from the hangings with which these rooms were once hung. But why vaults? I cannot help thinking the name comes from some peculiarity appertaining to the former resting-place of the treasures—underground. These rooms display, indeed, incalculable riches. The diamonds alone are worth a kingdom. Their immense size and surpassing lustre must dazzle the eyes when worn. Placed on shelves behind glass frames, of course their exceeding beauty is not enhanced by the movement and sparkle which causes diamonds to transcend all other precious stones. In addition to this almost magical wealth in gems, are a quantity of beautiful works of art, various and magnificent; they are some of exquisite carving, some elegant, some strange and fantastic. We wandered from room to room, wondering at the wealth, amazed by the profusion of treasure; but you must not expect enthusiasm from me on these points. There is something in this sort of treasure, when arranged for show, which takes from their beauty. Pictures are made to be looked at for themselves. The view of them excites the passions or calms the heart; or if even only gratifying to the taste, yet they please for themselves, and require no extraneous interest. It is a bathos indeed to turn from them to stones from the mine; but diamonds and jewellery, and even delicately-carved cups, elegant statuettes and fantastic toys, are agreeable to look at only as objects of personal ornament or use. Show me a beautiful woman, or an illustrious sovereign, adorned in jewels—served in cups that cost a province—and the imagination fills up a picture pleasing to itself—exalting a human being above his fellows—and glorifying weak humanity in his image. Show me a room in which a fellow-creature is accustomed to live, where

all he or she touches might ransom a king, and a thousand feelings and sympathies are awakened. Thus if we read in the "Arabian Nights," of apartments supported by columns encrusted in jewels; then also we find some enchanted prince, who inhabits the wondrous chamber; or if we read of basins of diamonds and cups of a single pearl, they are tributes to beauty from love. With regard to these gems, indeed, we need not go so far afield as the "Arabian Nights" to imagine regal splendour. When Napoleon held his court in the North, to which "thrones, dominations, princedoms" thronged—proud hearts swelled beneath these stones, lifted up with a sense of greatness, and the lovely adorned by them were made glad by the consciousness of admiration.

I am afraid my lion-hunting at Dresden is over. After the Grüne Gewolbe I went to see the collection of porcelain, in an underground suite of rooms at the Japanese palace. I own I was disappointed. I expected to find a quantity of curious and exquisite Dresden china. The collection consists in specimens of porcelain, fabricated from the earliest times in all parts of the world. I confess a very slight inspection would have satisfied my curiosity. But I was with a party, and I dare say we spent two hours in these rooms, which were really vaults. At first their cool atmosphere, after the excessive heats from which we are suffering, was agreeable; but I got chilled, and caught a cold. I have been confined to the house for some days, and feel myself quite incapacitated from undergoing the fatigue of further sightseeing.

July 20th.

In spite of indisposition, I have contrived to go to the theatre, to hear Der Freischütz in its native country. Shroeder Devrient is the prima donna; and a pretty young débutante, a great favourite here, was the Bridesmaid. The orchestra and singing were, of course, perfect; and the music of this opera is indeed enchanting. It is much to be regretted that the talking part is not arranged for recitative: we are no longer

accustomed to the mixture of singing and speaking, and it grates on the ear. The imagination easily lends itself at first, and is soon carried away by the music to admit as natural and proper discourses in melody and singing; but the change from one to the other jars the ear, and unhinges the fancy. We had been told that nearly a year had been devoted to the getting up of the scenery and diablerie. They were very shabby and meagre. When Linda throws open her window in her first exquisite scena, some unlucky urchin had drawn an actual face on the very oily-looking moon—a laugh through the house was inevitable.

There is an Italian company here, with a handsome prima donna. There is something very antagonistic in the German and Italian operatic schools. They despise each other mutually. Professors mostly side with the Germans, but I am not sure that they are right.

The Opera begins at six; it is over by nine; and everybody is in bed by ten. If you come home after that hour, the porter has a right to a fee for being disturbed from his bed at untimely hours: as in Paris, you pay him if you come home after twelve. If early rising conduces to health, how very healthy the Germans ought to be! But they have other habits by no means so consonant to our notions of what is good for the preservation of life. Their dislike of fresh air amounts almost to frenzy; this, joined to their smoking, and, in winter, to the close stoves, must make their domestic hearth (only they have no hearth) very incompatible with our tastes.

July 25th.

The heat continues. Most of the wells and springs of the town are dried up: that in our house yet affords a small supply. It is said that Government is about to issue an order that no water, except that of the Elbe, is to be used, except for culinary purposes. People must send to the river (and that runs shallow) for supplies to wash their clothes and keep their rooms clean. I do not think they use much water at any time for the latter purpose.

The drought indeed becomes alarming. News came, the other day, that a village was burnt to the ground, and the calamity was attributed to some trees taking fire from the extreme dryness of the atmosphere.

Our month is at an end. We are about to undertake a long, long journey to Venice. The dry season has defeated our hopes of ascending the Elbe in a steamer as far as Prague. Professor Hughes, an Englishman long established at Dresden, who receives gentlemen in his house for the purposes of education, and whose kindness has been of the greatest use to us, has bargained with a Lohnkutscher, or voiturier, to take us to Prague, by way of the Saxon Switzerland; as we intend to make the tour of that singular district. From Prague we shall make a fresh start, and be guided by circumstances as to the manner. We hope to find some sort of railroad after Budweis, which will abbreviate a part of our journey.

I leave several sights unseen. I fear that sightseeing will renew my attack of illness, and delay our leaving Dresden, and our journey towards mountain, forest, and stream, for which this heat and drought inspire an ardent longing. My imagination takes refuge at times in shady spots beside murmuring rills, and I look out on the dusty Alt Markt in despair.

When I returned from Rabenau a week or two ago, I found a grasshopper nestled in my muslin dress, and thoughtlessly I shook it off, out of window. That night the act weighed on my conscience. It was a stroke of adversity for the insect, to be transported from the fresh grass and cool streamlets of wooded Rabenau, and cast out to die in the arid, herbless market-place of a big town. In the morning, when I opened my eyes, to my great satisfaction, I found that my grasshopper had rebelled against my cruelty, and had leapt back into the room; it lay evidently in great distress on the floor. I gave it water, which it drank greedily, and put it in a cornet of paper;—that evening, M——, in her walk, on the other side of the Elbe, took it with her, and set it free on the grassy banks of the river. It was not its native glen of

Rabenau—but it was all I could do.

In olden times, this insect might have returned to thank me in the form of a fairy, but the days of wonders are passed. However, pining as I am, to repose “in close covert, by some brook,” thirsting to betake myself to “some wide-watered shore,” I hope to be even kinder to myself than to my victim, and in a few more days to be far, far from the dusty Alt Markt, amid more congenial scenes.

LETTER X. The Saxon Switzerland.

Dresden, 26th August.

Adieu to Dresden—I shall probably never see it more. I cannot say that I visited it (as far as regards the outside, for I saw no more,) under unfavourable circumstances—for the great cold that often prevails, were worse than the heat. Still, every act, every step is a painful exertion. Besides, I dislike all towns; I would never willingly live in one, summer or winter. To be near a metropolis usually—within a drive, and visit it, is pleasant—but I never feel happy except when I live in the palaces or secret coverts of Nature—mountain—forest—stream—or the shores of ocean: these are my true home.

Adieu to Dresden. A long, long journey is before us. We are in a charming ignorance of how we shall proceed, and of how much time the way will occupy: all we know is, that we must make our way as economically as we can to Venice, whither we are bound.

Our first destination is, as I told you, the Saxon Switzerland. We have only time to make a limited tour in this singular region. Professor Hughes, who has been settled for many years in Dresden, has given us instructions how to guide our steps, so that we may see some of the most striking points. I transcribe them, as it may be useful to you if ever you visit these parts. I must premise that we have bargained with a Lohnkutscher to take us to Prague. We sent him and his carriage on with my maid

and our luggage, and we are to rejoin them at Arbesau, he having provided us with another vehicle and driver for our excursion:—

“Start at five o’clock.

“Pilnitz.

“Lohmen.

“Uttervalde—walk through the valley to the Bastei, where the carriage must again meet you.

“Leave the Bastei at latest at 3 o’clock; drive to Hochstein and Schandau.

“Leave Schandau the same evening, at latest at 5 o’clock, for the Wasserfall. Order a mule to meet you at the foot of the Kuhstall; walk to the Kuhstall; descend; take the mule to the Kleine and Grosse Winterberg.

“Leave the next morning at nine o’clock for the Prebischthor and Hernitskretschen on a mule; take a boat for Tätchen; stop at the Bad; order a carriage for Arbesau.”

August 27th.

We left Dresden more than an hour later than the time appointed—a disaster, as we were to crowd so much into one day. We took the road on the left of the Elbe, to Pilnitz and Lohmen. The road grew more varied as we advanced, but I looked out in vain for traces of the mountainous region which we were to visit. The landscape was pretty, but tame, and when we reached the little village of Uttervalde, I wondered why it was necessary to leave the carriage; what road could be here that would not admit a dozen waggons abreast if need were? However, in obedience to our instructions, we did alight, and ordering the carriage to meet us at the Bastei, we hired a sort of open sedan, a comfortable arm-chair placed on poles carried by two men, for me; my companions were to walk, and we set out, as it seemed, to look for wonders where none could be.

But immediately on quitting the village the portals of the mountains opened before

us, and we plunged into their recesses. It is difficult to describe the peculiarity of this region; it differs so much from every other. Rabenau shared in some degree in its characteristics. Generally, when you see mountains, they seem (as they are) upraised above the plains which are the abodes of men; lifting their mighty heads towards heaven. In Saxony, the impression is as if the tops of the hills were the outer circumference of the globe, strangely fissured and worn away by the action of water. We plunge into depths of the earth; we might fancy some sprite of upper air had forced a passage so to reach the abode of subterranean spirits. The mystic imagination of the Germans has indeed peopled this region with gnome and kobold, who watch over hidden treasure. A thousand romantic legends are associated with scenes whose aspect awakens the fancy. In uncivilized and disturbed times the persecuted and houseless found refuge in these secret recesses from lawless freebooters or religious bigots.

As we proceeded through the narrow ravine, the rocks rose perpendicularly on each hand, and shut us in as with walls, but not walls as at Via Mala, abrupt and bare. The precipices are broken into a thousand fantastic shapes, and formed into rough columns, pillars, and peaks numberless; with huge caverns, mighty portals, and towering archways; the whole clothed with pines, verdant with a luxuriant growth of various shrubs; and, but that for the most part the long drought has silenced them, resonant with waterfalls. The stream that makes its way in the depth has thus lost all energy and variety—it ripples murmuring in its rocky channel. The path, ascending and descending over the rocks, winds at its side. Sometimes the fissure nearly meets overhead, and the sun can never shine on the stream below. There is a charm of novelty in the scene quite inexpressible. We penetrate Nature’s secret chambers, which she has adorned with the wildest caprice. Various ravines branch off from the main one, and become numerous and intricate, varied by huge caverns of strange shapes; some open to the sky, some dark and deep; there are little verdant spots in the midst, too, where the turf was green and velvetty, and invited us to rest. We were

taken to the particular spots selected as most remarkable for the formation or grandeur of the rocks, or where cascades, reduced unhappily to a thread of water, were accustomed to scatter their spray abroad. The whole way, I must tell you, was one continued ascent, and this explains the wondrous view we gain when we emerge again into outer air.

At length we left the ravine, and entered a forest of firs. After traversing this we found ourselves, as if by magic, at a high elevation, and stood upon the Bastei or Bastion. This is a vast mass of rock, that rises 800 feet above the Elbe, in the depths and centre of which the rent was made which we had thridded. The uttermost edge projects far beyond the face of the precipice, and here we stood looking on a scene so utterly different from every other, that it is difficult to describe it. A caprice of nature is the name usually bestowed on this district; while geologists explain how the action of water on a peculiar species of rock has caused the appearance before us. It is still the same, though on a gigantic and sublime scale. The earth has been broken, and fissured, and worn away. The Elbe sweeps majestically at the foot of the Bastei; a plain is spread beneath, closed in by an amphitheatre of huge columnar hills, which do not, as is usually the case, begin with gradual upland, but rise at once in shape fantastic,—isolated one from the other. Some of the highest and most abrupt have been used as fortresses. The sides of the precipices of the Bastei are clothed in a forest of firs and other wood.[11] The whole scene was bathed in dazzling sunshine. The heat was so great, that it was painful to stand on the giddy verge, which is protected by wooden rails (for the whole district is prepared for show); yet it was almost impossible to tear oneself away.

There is an inn at the Bastei, where we dined. German cooking is very bad, and we had to wait long, and were served slowly. A young Englishman dined at the same table. In a classification of travellers, what name is to be given to those who travel only for the sake of saying that they have travelled? He was doing his Saxon Switzerland; he had done his Italy, his Sicily; he had done his sunrise on Mount

Etna; and when he should have done his Germany, he would return to England to show how destitute a traveller may be of all impression and knowledge, when they are unable to knit themselves in soul to nature, nor are capacitated by talents or acquirements to gain knowledge from what they see. We must become a part of the scenes around us, and they must mingle and become a portion of us, or we see without seeing and study without learning. There is no good, no knowledge, unless we can go out from, and take some of the external into, ourselves: this is the secret of mathematics as well as of poetry.

We indulged, as well we might, in gazing delightedly from this battlement of nature on the magnificent scene around; and then we turned to the prosaic part of travelling, the necessity of getting on. Our driver (provided by the master voiturier who was to take us to Prague) had been told to meet us at the Bastei; he pretended that this was impossible; that no carriage ever came up, and we must walk some three or four miles to join him. We found all this to be utterly false, and that the usual custom was for the carriages to come up to the Bastei. With a burning sun above, and a good deal of labour before us, we were not willing to encounter any unnecessary fatigue: so we sent a man to order the carriage to come to us. It came; but the kutscher refused to take us unless we paid him something extra. This was an obvious piece of rascality, and we begged our friend, who was absolute master of German, to remonstrate with him. But he had, during his long stay in this country, acquired too much laisser-aller for our impatient English natures. Nothing can equal the slow style in which a German makes a bargain, or discusses a disputed point. He never thinks that he can argue with any success, unless he puts one hand on the other’s shoulder, and brings his face close to him. Indeed, this habit of coming so very near in conversation is, as far as I remarked, usual in Germany. I have often edged off till I got into a corner, and then there was no help but, if possible, to run away. To return to our kutscher. With ignorant and deaf ears we saw him and our friend argue and re-argue the point while time flew. Our instructions were, to leave

the Bastei at three at latest; it was now long past four. Why not yield to the demand? I believe travellers alone know the swelling indignation and obstinate resistance with which, at the worst of times, they meet extortion. We would not yield; and finding our friend still vainly discussing, another among us took our books and cloaks from the carriage, and, pumping up the only German words he could command, said to the fellow:—"Kannen sie nach Dresden gehen." If he had been master, he might have taken us at our word; but he knew we should meet his master at Arbesau, so he took fright and consented, without extra pay, to take us to Schandau. He had been engaged to take us some four miles beyond; but we (foolishly enough) consented to be satisfied with being driven so far.

Descending from the Bastei, the road wound round hills, with a stream on the other hand. Schandau is thus placed, and it is a very pretty country inn; the stream in front, with a bridge, and before a garden, secluded and peaceful, reminded one of the inn at Burford Bridge, near Boxhill. It would have been as well to remain here could we have given three instead of two days to our excursion. But this was impossible; and we were anxious, as evening was advancing, to get on. We asked if we could have a calèche to take us to the foot of the Kuhstall, which is the last point where a carriage is serviceable; the rest of the excursion must be performed on foot, in chairs, or on mules.

Our instructions bid us leave Schandau by five at latest; it was now nearly six: so we begged them to hasten with the carriage. Fair promises were given, and we loitered away half an hour in the garden of the inn, and then we grew impatient. After a time it became apparent that the people were playing the very usual trick of delaying bringing a carriage, till too late, so to force us to sleep at their inn. We were rather slow at arriving at this conviction, and not the less resolute to resist the imposition; indeed, yielding would put us to great inconvenience. After answering our expostulations for some time with false promises, they at last impudently declared that we could not have a carriage. Our only resource was the fellow who brought us

from Dresden, and who by compact ought at once to have taken us to the place whither we wished to go. Two thalers bribed him, and he agreed to proceed. We asked for a guide, and engaged him; but, at setting off from Schandau, he said it was impossible for a lady to reach the Grosse Winterberg that night, and he refused to go.

On the whole, with evening closing in, the guide deserting, and several miles before us, to sleep at Schandau seemed our best resource; but we would not; the cool evening air was pleasant. I did not object to a little adventure. We should, it is true, miss some points usually visited, but we should gain a great object with the tourist—that of viewing the Grosse Winterberg by moonlight and at sunrise;—we went on, therefore, the road winding at the base of wooded hills, till we reached the foot of the Kuhstall. The mules were all gone, and so were the guides. A countryman who was doing work at the inn of the Grosse Winterberg, offered to show us the way thither, and leaving the carriage, and loading the man with books and carpet-bag, we set out.

We had been obliged to give up the idea of viewing Kuhstall and the Kleine Winterberg, and aimed only at reaching the Grosse, which is situated at the top of a very high hill. It was now past eight o'clock, and evening had closed in. The hill we climbed was clothed with pines, and it was impossible to conceive a more fatiguing ascent. The soil was sand, into which we sank to our ankles, as we toiled up. No breath of air stirred the trees. After the first chill which followed sunset, the night became excessively warm; shut in as we were by trees, we were oppressed by heat and toil. To add to our troubles, it soon grew pitch-dark—not a star-beam penetrated the trees—our guide went on before, and we provided him with a cigar, the light of which alone showed us where he was; and now and then my companions struck sparks from a flint to throw transient radiance on the path, which bordered (I believe, but we could see nothing) a steep precipice on one hand; on the other, we had the broken surface of the mountain, and the boughs of the pines overhead. The

way seemed endless—but as we had conquered the people at Schandau, and got our own way, we would not be dispirited—and laughed at our difficulties—and toiled up the steep, plunging as we went deep into the sand. At last we reached the top of the hill, and another half hour brought us to the inn. It was eleven o'clock—so you may imagine that the way had been long, and that we were not a little fatigued.

Late as it was, we determined to reward ourselves with a little amusement. Supper was ordered—and we ordered also three Bohemian girls with their harps. Here, as in Wales, harps form a part of the entertainment given to travellers at the inns; but in Bohemia, they are played by girls instead of men. The harpists were gone, it was so late; but at our call they came, and played and sang several wild national airs. We were now on the frontiers of Bohemia, whence the race of Gipsies was said in old times to have emigrated. I do not know whether there was any Gipsy blood in these girls—their eyes had not the peculiar cast of the race. One of the three was very handsome, and looked proud—as indeed she was—and listened with an air of haughty disdain to every compliment. They had on their faces, that which too often rests on the countenances of the lower order of Germans—an expression of sullenness. I soon grew too tired to listen, and left them playing. The waning moon rose over the sea of hills on which I looked from my window; I was almost too fatigued to see. At sunrise I started up to gaze;—the glory of awakening day was on the mountain tops, which looked more like a stormy ocean than a scene of earth. I scarcely know what I saw; my eyes were drooping with sleep; I knew my companions would not rise, so I went again to bed, and when I awoke, it seemed as if I had dreamed of a glorious sunrise in fairy-land. I looked from the tiny casement of my room—we were on the highest of many hundred hills, nearly two thousand feet above the level of the sea, and commanded a wide horizon, inclosing a district strangely convulsed, wildly heaped up with mountains and rocks of various and fantastic shapes, clothed with wood.

Murray speaks of the inn at the Grosse Winterberg as two or three separate huts,

where sorry accommodation may be obtained. This state of things is reformed. On the highest pinnacle of the mountain is a very good country inn, such as may remind the traveller of those found in North Wales. The host was very civil, and we had to put his civility to the test. I had put a quantity of thaler notes in my writing-desk, and this had gone with our luggage; by a miscalculation, I had not brought enough of the dirty paper for our exclusion, and the less that I had expected to pay for our carriage at Prague. But the fellow who drove us insisted on the money, twelve thalers, before he left us at Schandau; two more we had to give him to take us to the foot of the hill of the Grosse Winterberg; and this had entirely drained us. The master of the inn readily agreed to pass us on to the host at Tätchen, who again would trust us till we reached Arbesau, and were possessed of our dear thalers. It is impossible to express the sense of littleness that comes over one when, in travelling, one has no money at all. Gulliver, in the palm of the hand of the Brobdignagian reaper, could not have felt smaller, till we received our host's ready consent to trust us.

We ought to have left this eagle's nest on a rock at seven, or, at latest, at nine o'clock. But loitering was the order of the day; and I resolved to give way—to make no remonstrance—and see how long we should linger. We went up to a terrace on the roof of the house, to see a yet wider prospect; we looked at the different specimens of Bohemian glass; we listened to the harpists. My mule was brought; but when three of the party were assembled, a fourth was missing; and when he came, another had gone. We got away, at last, at one o'clock.

Immediately on leaving this elevated spot, we plunged down a ravine clothed with firs, just such a one, I suppose, as we had climbed, only it led in an opposite direction. We were soon told that we had crossed the frontier line, and were in Bohemia. The toil was considerable; the descent so steep, that to walk had been less fatiguing; but, as I was about to get off my mule, another ascent began; and very high and steep it proved till we reached a pinnacle abutting over the side of the mountain, which might almost rival the Bastei. The view was different: the absence

of the river rendered it less beautiful. From the side of this rock springs the Presbichthor—a natural arch of vast size, that spans a ravine. The face of the rock from which it springs is cut into terraces; and you climb higher and higher, from one to the other, and reach the summit of the arch. The scene is inconceivably wild. Earth looks rent, convulsed, shattered—isolated, disjointed mountains, rising abruptly from the plain, their sides clothed by firs, are spread around. The majestic arch forms an object of great beauty in the midst. There is an inn here for the refreshment of travellers. We only obtained, however, some bad bread and cheese.

The descent was very abrupt and fatiguing. I walked most part of the way till we reached the Kamnitz, a large stream, or rather river. This added softness, yet movement, to the scene, but took from its singularity. The way was long, but we reached at last Hirniskretschen, where there is a very dirty inn, crowded by travellers—traders, they seemed to be. No rustic holiday inn was this; nor one kept for the accommodation of tourists, but one for the use of the lower order of country people.

Where extortion is not manifest, we ought not to quarrel with the higher prices of hotels in show places, since they are there—oases of civilisation amidst the desert of native dirt and discomfort—for our sole use; and they must be maintained by what they gain during seasons of tours. The singular filth and squalid appearance of this wretched place made us regard even the misdeeds of Schandau leniently.

This village is on the Elbe; and gladly we hired a boat, and exchanged the fatiguing descent of mountain paths for the repose of being carried swiftly and smoothly down the river. In truth, we did not see the Elbe to advantage. On account of the long drought, it had shrunk in its bed: but still a majestic river, sweeping between mountainous banks, always presents varied and agreeable prospects, which seem all peace and enjoyment; and, after our two days of toil, we were right glad of the repose.

Midway on our voyage, we came to the Austrian frontier. The Austrian Government has not joined the league which unites the rest of Germany, and has put an end to the annoyance a traveller suffered, passing in one day the frontiers of several States, and stopped, and his luggage examined at each. However, though the Austrian preserves his right to annoy, he amiably abstained. I had given my passport to my maid, but was not even obliged to get out of the boat to shew myself, the explanation given by my companions being received even with deference. A custom-house officer stepped into the boat: eight gute-groschen (a piece of money similar in value to a shilling) caused him at once to exchange an appearance of extreme official severity to the excess of considerate courtesy. We were detained but a few minutes, and found ourselves admitted in the much-feared Austria with less trouble than we ever before passed a frontier.

Towards sunset we arrived at Tätchen; our boatmen and the bill at the Grosse Winterberg were defrayed by the master of the hotel here. We ordered dinner, and my friends went to bathe in the Elbe. We passed an hour or two pleasantly, but after this, grew uneasy. It was our wish to get on beyond Arbesau that same night, that we might reach Prague on the following day. But the Germans never hurry. It was past six before we got a very bad dinner, with black bread, which nothing but long habit would render edible; and then we had to wait for the carriage, or rather cart, which was to take us on. The first hour or two after sunset was very chilly: that passed, the usual heat returned. I was excessively fatigued, and the jolting of our vehicle was distressing. It seemed as if we should never arrive; and it was past midnight before we entered the open court-yard of the inn, where all slept silently beneath the moon except the dog left by our voiturier to guard the carriage. In our earnestness to get on we were unreasonable enough to call our coachman up and beg him to set off. He was very angry at being disturbed by our outrageous design; and returned grumbling to his straw: for these people never undress, but turn in among straw in the stables, close to their horses. I confess I was not sorry for the ill success of our

magnanimous design. We got some tea and some tubs of water, and these were much more suited to us.

LETTER XI. Baths of Töplitz.—Lobositz.—Arrival at Prague.

August 30th.

If we annoyed our kutscher by rousing him and desiring to set out at twelve at night, he was much more annoyed at our dilatoriness in the morning. We paid our accumulated account here, and became again independent of the world.

The country round Arbesau is the scene of one of the most fatal of the battles, the defeat of Vandamme, which caused the overthrow of Napoleon. The landscape is otherwise devoid of interest. Bare, sandy uplands are spread around without tree or inclosure. I dare say if we looked about, we should discover some rift in the earth, as at Rabenau, and descend amidst shady woods, and murmuring streams, and strange romantic rocks. A subterranean habitation, a gnome may be supposed to have formed, to lure a sylphid to his deep abode, which is all but incommunicable with upper air.

And this idea was almost realised, as descending the steep from Arbesau we reached Töplitz, which is situated in a valley on the banks of the Saubach. I hear that the country around is beautiful: of this we could see little. Our first achievement, after ordering dinner, was to visit the Baths. Anything more delicious you cannot imagine. Instead of entering a dirty coffin, as at Kissingen, or the sort of sarcophagus usually used for such purpose, one corner of the lofty and comparatively spacious room in which you bathe is lowered, and you go down a few marble steps into a basin of the same material, filled with water of delightful temperature and pellucid clearness. I never experienced a more agreeable bath. After dinner we wandered about the public gardens, which are very pretty, and diversified with sheets of water, and ate ices. Here we had the first specimen of a currency which is very odd, and puts strangers off their guard. We had left thalers, which are

three shillings, and Bavarian florins, which are two francs, for Austrian florins, which value two shillings. We were surprised to receive our bill for our dinner, at Töplitz, nearly thirteen florins. We expostulated, and it was explained: Murray also gave us the key to this mystery—all pecuniary transactions are carried on in a nominal currency, called schein, two and a half in name larger than the müntz, which is the real currency. After a complicated sum in arithmetic—multiplying our bill by two, and then dividing it by five—we found our dinner (for four) cost us five florins twelve kreutzers. The annoyance of receiving a bill double what it ought to be, thus agreeably relieved by finding it reduced to less than half, pacifies the traveller, and takes away his power of discovering whether it is much or little in its mitigated state. We slept this night at a dirty inn at Lobositz.

31st August.

We reached Prague this evening, stopping on our way at Doxan. The country is fertile and pleasant, but not striking. In the afternoon we saw Prague as we thought close, and expected to reach it in five minutes:—I think we were about two hours. Prague lies on the banks of the Moldau, and a part of the city climbs the height by which we descended; but the entrance is on the other side of the river, at the other extremity of the town; and the road makes a long circuit, sweeping round the hill and crossing the river at some distance from the gate. Looking down on Prague from the height, and with it thus in view so long, as we descended, it wore a most picturesque and almost eastern aspect, crowned as it is with minarets, domes, and spires.

The portion of Prague that lies on the banks of the river, is divided into an old and new town. The Neustadt, built by the Emperor Charles IV. in 1348 (the date of this novelty gives a delightful air of venerableness to the older portions of the city), was at first separated from the rest of the city by a ditch. This is now filled up, and gives the name to the handsomest street of the new town—the Graben—in which the best

hotels are situated. There was no room at the Schwarzes Ross, which is considered the best; so we went to the Drei Linden, which we find comfortable.

We had intended proceeding immediately; but one of my companions is indisposed, and accordingly we remain a day at Prague. I write this letter, and now I am told the carriage is ready, and I am going out to see some of the lions. I shall have time for few, for many hours have been wasted this morning, and but short space of daylight remains.—Adieu.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:

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1. Assassination is of frequent occurrence in Italy: these are perpetrated chiefly from jealousy. There are crimes frequent with us and the French of which they are never guilty. Brutal murders committed for “filthy lucre” do not occur among them. We never hear of hospitality violated, or love used as a cloak that the murderers may possess themselves of some trifle more or less of property. Their acts of violence are, indeed, assassinations, committed in the heat of the moment—never cold-blooded. Even the history of their banditti was full of redeeming traits, as long as they only acted for themselves and were not employed by government. There is plenty of cheating in Italy—not more, perhaps, than elsewhere, only the system is more artfully arranged; but there is no domestic robbery. I lived four years in Tuscany. I was told that the servant who managed my expenditure cheated me dreadfully, and had reason to know that during that time she saved nearly a hundred crowns: but I never at any time, when stationary or travelling, was robbed of the smallest coin or the most trifling article of property. On the contrary, instances of scrupulous honesty are familiar to all travellers in Italy, as practised among the poorest peasantry.

2. We have since imported wine from him, and the transaction has turned out quite

successful.

3. Crossing lately from Boulogne to Folkestone, I find, that in the new hotel still in progress, but partly opened, at the latter place, they are following this plan; and a printed tariff is hung up in each room. All is clean and comfortable, and the attendants civil and willing. If it keeps its promise, it will do well; and strangers especially will be glad to avoid the pretending exorbitancy of Dover.—(Note 1844.)

4. Mr. Hayward, in the interesting account with which he has favoured his friends of his perilous journey over the Splugen in 1834. Mr. Hayward says, that the storm in question was what is called there Wolkenbruch, (cloud-break or water-spout). A mass of clouds, surcharged with electric matter and rain, which had been collecting for weeks along the whole range of the Alps, came down at last like an avalanche from the sky. I once witnessed a phenomenon of this sort at Genoa. The Italians called it a Meteora. A cloud, surcharged with electricity and water, burst above our heads in one torrent of what was rather a cataract than rain. It lasted about twenty minutes, and sufficed to carry away all the bridges over the Bisanzio, flowing between Genoa and Albaro, and to lay flat all the walls which in that hilly country support the soil—so that the landscape was opened and greatly improved. Cottages, cattle, and even persons were carried away. In the Alps, such a rush of water from the heavens was aided by the torrents that rushed from the mountain tops, and a sudden melting of snows.

5.

“_____retired leisure,

That in trim gardens takes his pleasure.”

Milton’s “Penseroso.”

6. Dante. Paradiso; Canto 33.

7. Wordsworth.

8. It is enough to refer to M. Andryane's account of his imprisonment in the fortress of Spielburg to justify these words. The barbarities of fabled tyrants fall far short of the cold-blooded tortures imagined and inflicted by this despot.

9. Characteristic songs of Shelley, by Henry Hugh Pearson, Esq. Published by Alfred Novello.

10. Giotto and Francesca and other Poems, by A. A. Knox, Esq.

11. A week or two after our visit this wood caught fire, from the effects, it is said, of the drought, and was entirely consumed. We heard that the scene, instead of being injured, was improved, as thus laid bare, the strange characteristics of the region became more distinct.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

Page Changed from Changed to 46 Treisam, which now steals murmuring between its Dreisam, which now steals murmuring between its 144 Paris; and proceeded by the steamer, up the Some Paris; and proceeded by the steamer, up the Saône 228 Eisengieserei, or iron-foundry, just outside the Eisengiesserei, or iron-foundry, just outside the 248 we have La Dame Blanche—Die weise Frau—instead we have La Dame Blanche—Die weisse Frau—instead 248 extended since the day when Figaro and the Zauberflaüte extended since the day when Figaro and the Zauberflöte Typos fixed; non-standard spelling and dialect retained. Used numbers for footnotes, placing them all at the end of the last chapter.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK RAMBLES IN GERMANY AND ITALY IN 1840, 1842, AND 1843, VOL. 1 OF 2 ***

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RAMBLES IN GERMANY AND ITALY, IN 1840, 1842, AND 1843.

BY

MRS. SHELLEY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

MDCCCXLIV.

O vedovate da perpetuo gelo

Terre, e d’incerto di mest sorriso,

Addio! * * * Questo petto anelo

Scosse di gioia un palpito improvviso,

Quando il Tiranno splendido del cielo

Mi rivelò d’ Italia il paradiso.—Niccolini.

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RAMBLES

IN

GERMANY AND ITALY.

PART III.—1842.

LETTER I. PRAGUE.

Thursday, 1st September, 1842.

Strange and wild legends appertain to Prague, and people the heights that overhang the city. The Bohemians are of Sclavonian race; they were in early times fire-worshippers, and offered victims to their divinity on the Laurenzi Berg, which rises behind the town. On the Hradschin, an eminence that frowns above the Moldau, was built the palace of the old Bohemian kings; and the metropolitan church of Prague stands in the palace-yard, on the highest point of the imperial hill.

The most prosperous period for Prague was the reign of the Emperor Charles IV. He appears in no favourable light in the pages of Italian history; but he won immortal and deserved renown as King of Bohemia, by his acts of magnificence, and the liberality and sagacity of his government. He caused the Neustadt to be built, marking the width and termination of the streets, and leaving the spaces to be filled up by private individuals, on whom great privileges were bestowed: the size of the streets and open areas interspersed, give it a noble distinction among the ill-built towns of the middle ages. Churches and convents rose around. He built also the grand old Bridge, which spans the broad and curved stream of the Moldau, and he founded the University, which long vied with Paris and Oxford in celebrity.

The earliest Reformers sprung up in Prague. John Huss was rector of the University: his tenets were the source of that independent and Protestant spirit which then first began to undermine the Roman Catholic faith. In early times, the Church of Bohemia obtained from the Council of Basle, that the sacramental cup should be administered to the laity; and this of itself was a broad distinction between Catholic Bohemia and the rest of the Papal world.

Although John Huss died at the stake, his influence continued high in his country, where he was reverenced as a saint. The Bohemians, loving their own language and their own customs—a sagacious and intelligent race—were well pleased with any

state of things that should conduce to separate them more widely from the surrounding German nations.

The time came when they were to fall. When the rest of Europe was in darkness and enslaved, Bohemia had a pure religion and free institutions: now it is but a province of Austria, and there are not one hundred Protestants in the country. The Emperor Mathias first endeavoured to uproot its liberty, and the Jesuits had been established, to counterbalance, by their insidious system of encroachment, the influence openly possessed by the Protestants. This state of things could not last. The Emperor supported Catholicism, and wished to assimilate Bohemia to his Austrian provinces in language, laws and religion: the national Diet endeavoured to preserve their country as a distinct kingdom. The Emperor insisted on naming his successor, in the person of his brother Ferdinand: the crown had hitherto been elective, and the nobles resolved to preserve their rights. On the death of Mathias, they called to the throne the Elector Palatine, a Calvinist: the Emperor Ferdinand claimed the country as his own, and invaded it.

For one year, Elizabeth of England held a gay and chivalrous court in Prague. Had her husband been a statesman and a soldier, he might have disciplined his brave, enthusiastic subjects, and have repulsed the invasion of Austria. He was vanquished ingloriously, and, forced to fly from the city, he became a wanderer and an exile. Ferdinand triumphed; but a collision between his pretensions and the free institutions of Bohemia was inevitable. The nobles resisted the Emperor’s edicts, and tossed his commissioners out of the windows of the Green Chamber of the palace. This act was the first deed of violence of the thirty years’ war, which hence began, nor ended till all Germany was devastated, and Bohemia enslaved.

We set out on a brief drive round the town, to view the spots where these scenes had taken place. Leaving our hotel, we passed through the crowded and trading Altstadt, and crossed the bridge which connects the Klein Seite with the city. On this stands

the statue of St. John Nepomuk, who, the legend says, was thrown from that spot into the Moldau below, for refusing to betray to Wenceslaus IV. secrets confided to him by his Queen in the confessional. A constellation of five stars was observed to hover over the water, exciting the curiosity and terror of the pious; so that at last the river was dragged; the body of the saint was found, and received honourable interment—though not canonization until some centuries after. Such is the legend; but the true history of this saint, as Mr. Reeve[1] relates it, differs materially, and is curious. He tells us, he perished a martyr to church reform:—"During the contests between Wenceslaus IV. and the then Archbishop of Prague (John of Genzstein, afterwards Patriarch of Alexandria), with regard to certain matters of church property, the prelate was vigorously supported by his Vicar-General, Johanko von Pomuk, upon whom the King wreaked his vengeance; and the spot is still shewn where he was thrown into the river. This event took place in 1381, and was soon forgotten by the people. Time, however, rolled on; John Huss perished in the flames at Constance, and, as his schism was followed by the larger portion of the Bohemian nation, St. John Huss became an object of popular reverence. I have seen hymns in his honour, which were sung in churches even towards the close of the sixteenth century. But when the Jesuits were installed at Prague, to extirpate the Bohemian heresies, they found it useful to have a St. John of their own. The legend of St. John Nepomuk was invented; his relics were shewn; an epic poem, the Nepomuceidon, was composed by the Jesuit Percicus in his honour in 1729; he was canonized, and his fame spread with amazing rapidity throughout the Catholic Church. These honours are now so intimately connected with the system in which they originated, that I once heard a distinguished Bohemian declare that no good could befal his country till St. John Nepomuk was once more thrown into the Moldau." Meanwhile, he has become the guardian saint of bridges; his statue, surmounted by the image of the five miraculous stars, in a more or less rude form, finds a place on almost every bridge of Catholic Germany, as it does here on the Bridge of Prague—on the very

spot whence he was thrown.

In the Klein Seite the nobles had their palaces, and we saw that of the princely Wallenstein: “coiled as it were round the foot of the imperial rock,”[2] to make room for which a hundred humbler houses were rased. Wallenstein, who had arrived at mid life in comparative obscurity, first came forward in a conspicuous manner in the Bohemian war. His immense riches were principally derived from the confiscations of the expelled and exiled Hussites. When some years after his command was taken from him, he built this palace, where he lived in princely grandeur, feeding his imagination with dreams of yet higher glory, ministered to him by Seni the astrologer. It was in early life, during his residence at the University of Padua, that Wallenstein first heard from the Professor Argoli that the stars above echoed the cherished dreams of his own heart. There is no trace, we are told, that Wallenstein ever followed any particular directions emanating from the stars[3]; but the knowledge that they predicted greatness biased his imagination, strengthened his resolutions, and made him boldly enter on a career from which a man of lowlier hopes had shrunk.

The stars foretold greatness to Wallenstein; did they foretell, obscurely, so that he could not decipher their true meaning, that he should obtain that, the want of which made Alexander weep—a poet to illustrate his deeds? This greatness was perhaps written in the starry scroll, whose real meaning he could not decipher, and so aimed at a success that ended in defeat, but which, by means of Schiller, has become immortal glory. Such lights as well as shadows lure us on under the form of regarded or despised presentiments.

“I would not call them

Voices of warning that announce to us

Only the inevitable.”

Wallenstein has been peculiarly fortunate in having two poets; for Coleridge’s

translation of Schiller's tragedy, giving the German poetry an English poetic form, causes him to belong to both countries.

Dark shadows for centuries have obscured the name of Wallenstein; amidst the uncertain there is enough of certain to form a hero both in good and ill; but the chief good, which places him side by side with his illustrious rival, Gustavus Adolphus, was his religious toleration, in an age of bitter, cruel, unrelenting religious persecution.

Passing this extensive palace, we ascended the height on which the Hradschin is situated; old princely Prague, the native city of the savage Ziska, of the martyred Huss, and of generations of resolute, free, and noble citizens, lay beneath in sleepy decay. It is impossible not to ponder upon the world's fate. Had the Prince Palatine been a hero; had Wallenstein, by birth a Bohemian, not fallen in his youth into the hands of the Jesuits; had he grown up as he was baptized, a Lutheran, would not Bohemia have been able to maintain its political and religious liberty? Would not the thirty years' war have been crushed in the egg? would not Germany, which has never recovered the devastation and massacres of that period, have continued flourishing and become free? and might the Huguenots, so supported, not have been quite crushed in France.

But Frederick was an empty coward, Wallenstein a pupil of the Jesuits, and the world is as it is.

Our coachman went a little out of his way up the river, to shew us where a suspension bridge is hung across the Moldau; but disdaining the modern invention, we caused the horses' heads to be turned, and recrossed the bridge of St. John Nepomuk, that we might view the traces of the bombardment of the gate by the Swedes; the defaced ornaments and battered appearance still recall that time. I was very sorry to see no more, but though thus an outside view was all I caught of this picturesque and ancient city,—its mosque-like churches, the dark pile of the old

royal palace, its deserted mansions, and noble river, form a living scene in my memory never to be effaced. “The day we come to a place which we have long heard and read of, is an era in our lives; from that moment the very name calls up a picture.”[4] The stilly evening shed golden rays over dome, tower, and minaret, and brightened the wide waters of the river. I returned with regret to our hotel.

LETTER II. Mülchen.—Budweis.—Linz.

Friday, Sept. 2.

We hired a lohn kutscher to take us to Budweis—about sixty miles—which was to occupy two days: for this we are to pay, including drink-gelt, forty-four florins. I ought to mention, that the coachman who took us from Dresden to Prague, refunded the overcharge of two thalers made by the fellow employed by him to take us through the Saxon Switzerland.

I must tell you that the Germans look down on the voituriers as people of the lowest grade of society. One German master at Kissingen, who made the bargain with the man who took us to Leipsic, actually spoke to him with the er—the third person singular—than which no greater insult can be imagined. These distinctions are droll, varying as they do in different countries. The Germans do not address each other with the plural you, as is our custom: thou denotes affection and familiarity. The common mode of speaking to friends, acquaintances, servants, shopkeepers—to everybody indeed—is the third person plural, sie, they: your own dog you treat with the du, thou; the dog of your enemy with er, or he. The Germans have a habit of staring quite inconceivable—I speak, of course, of the people one chances to meet travelling as we do. For instance, in the common room of an hotel, if a man or woman there have nothing else to do, they will fix their eyes on you, and never take them off for an hour or more. There is nothing rude in their gaze, nothing particularly inquiring, though you suppose it must result from curiosity: perhaps it does; but their eyes follow you with pertinacity, without any change of expression.

At Rabenau, and other country places, the little urchins would congregate from the neighbouring cottages, follow us about, up the hills, and beside the waterfall, form a ring and stare. A magic word to get rid of them is very desirable: here it is—ask one of them, “Was will er?” “What does he want?” The er is irresistible—the little wretches feel the insult to their very backbone, and make off at once. That the kutchers endure the er is astonishing. I could not address them so: for surely it is the excess of inhumanity as well as insolence to use a form of speech that denotes contempt to persons who have never offended you. With the starers it is otherwise; they do offend grievously, and one has a full right to get rid of them at almost any cost. I will just add, that except the under-driver who had charge of us during our tour through the Saxon Switzerland, we have not had reason to complain of our German kutchers—nor any reason to be pleased: they are quiet to sullenness; never gave up a point; and never seemed to care whether we were pleased or not. However, under this sort of sulky apathy there lurked an aptitude for getting into the most violent rage, if their pockets are touched, which was very startling, as compared with the absence of all expression of kindly feeling.

We set out from Prague in the morning, not quite as early as we ought, which disturbed the order of our travelling—a fact difficult to instil into the minds of some travellers,—but in voiturier travelling the whole comfort depends on an early departure. It seems that if a certain portion of work, with certain rests, are to occupy the day, it does not much matter how these are portioned out. It is not so; and experience shows an early departure in the morning and an early arrival in the evening to be the only arrangement that makes this method of travelling at all comfortable. We set out late, and we had a carriage provided, uncomfortable from its extreme smallness: it was, indeed, a mere hack drosky, taken from the streets; one person only could sit outside, and four were exceedingly confined for room inside.

The weather continued fine and warm; and now in the heart of Bohemia, we looked

inquiringly abroad to see how a portion of earth, with a name sounding to our western ears strange and even mysterious, differed from any other. We saw few distinctions—the villages were low-built and dirty; the towns rather pleasing in their appearance, looking airy, with a large square or market-place in the midst, surrounded by low white houses. Hill and dale surrounded us, consisting of a good deal of pasture; but the circumstance that chiefly struck us was, that we saw not a trace of the residence of any landed proprietor, no château, no country seat, no park, nor garden. We saw no house which any but a peasant, or in the infrequent towns, that any but one in an under grade of life, could inhabit. I cannot in my ignorance explain either the meaning or results of this state of things. Perhaps it arises from the circumstance, that the domains of the Bohemian nobility are so large that they are rather small tributary states.[5] The nobles possess ample privileges; and some among them, who belong to the old native families, are truly patriotic, and devote themselves to the good of their tenants, who are almost their subjects; but Prince Swarzenberg and Prince Metternich, who are among the richest landed proprietors of the province, are certainly absentees; and probably the list of such is considerable. However this may be, and whatever may be the cause, we looked out eagerly, as we crawled slowly along, for traces of the habitations of gentry—a race more important often to the prosperity of a country than the nobility—but we saw none.

We expected to sleep at Tabor—our kutcher had so designed, but our late setting out changed his views. This annoyed us; and one of our party, familiar with German—of no great use, since the man was a Bohemian—sat by him and gave him kirch-wasser and cigars, and used what verbal eloquence he could, to persuade him that we might get on to Tabor. The man drank the kirch-wasser, smoked the cigars, and said nothing; while we hoped, in accordance to the old saying, that silence gave consent. At about ten o’clock we arrived at a miserable-looking village, with a worse-looking inn—such as carters and waggoners might frequent. With difficulty, for the entrance was encumbered and tortuous, we entered the court-yard. We sat in

silent despair; but it was necessary to yield. I was taken up a broken staircase to a barn-looking room, with a number of beds in it—it was the only sleeping-room. A handsome, proud-looking girl, the daughter of the house, with a hand-maiden under her, began to arrange my bed. The people in the south of Germany are not disinclined, when generous, to give you a clean under sheet; but the upper one is double and encases the quilt, and this they do not think it necessary to change. I summoned all my German, consisting but of single words; schmutzig, or dirty, applied to the sheet, made the girl angry; but, on my insisting on having another, she complied with the air of an offended empress. My maid slept in the same room. I never dared ask how my companions passed the night—the beds were taken for them out of my room. However, they got an excellent supper (of which I was too tired to partake) of venison—not a common thing in Bohemia; for usually we only got a disastrous huhn (a fowl), rather drier and tougher than deal chips. The name of this village was Mülchen. Our bill was six florins and a half. I mention these prices; for they show, as they vary from one end of Germany to another, sometimes the value of money, sometimes the inclination to extort. The schein money still continues; so you will understand that a bill was brought in for more than sixteen florins, which, multiplying by two and dividing by five, we reduced to the real demand in florins Münz. This sort of currency probably springs from the Austrian money introduced by conquest being of too high value for the poverty of Bohemia, who adhered to their own inferior coin, with a new name.

The people of Bohemia, such as we saw them, are better-looking than the peasantry of those parts of Germany which we had visited; but there is nothing particularly attractive about them. It is impossible, however, to judge fairly even of the surface of a people whose language one does not understand. The Bohemians do not expect to be understood by strangers, unless they can themselves speak German; and they are too little conversant with foreigners to take any sort of interest in them. Their manner was abrupt and decided, with a mixture of sullen disdain: dirty enough they

are, and very poor. The Bohemians are, indeed, singularly cut off from the rest of the earth. Their language is exclusively their own—not understood beyond the boundary. Except to visit Prague, and one or two of their Baths, no strangers enter their country. From what I can gather, they bear the marks of a conquered people, adhering to the customs and practices of their forefathers, forgotten everywhere else—satisfied with themselves—averse to improvement, which, indeed, has no avenue by which to reach them—they remember that they were once free, though they have forgotten that they were Protestants.

3d September.

We still proceeded, not a little weary—the drosky was so very uncomfortable—over hill and dale, and through miserable villages, or now and then a larger town, with its wide square and long range of low houses. We stopped at a better-looking inn than that of Mülchen for our mid-day meal, but fared worse; the only thing they could give us was the unfortunate huhn, against which we had made many violent resolutions, and now entered many vain protests; this, and the absence of bread—for I cannot give that name to the sour, black, damp, uneatable substance they brought as such—made our meals very like a Barmecide feast. Nor was the table graced with clean linen; but to this we had become painfully accustomed.

We rolled on. The weather was beautiful; the country was pleasing without being striking.

The day’s journey was long; we entered Budweis late, by moonlight. This is a large town; and by this light, there was something singular in the appearance of its extensive market-place, surrounded by arcades. The Goldene Sonne is marked by Murray as good, and we had no reason to alter this decision. The hostess was a tall, large woman, of resolute and abrupt manners; she spoke German readily, and, uncommon in Germany, served us with expedition, but with an authoritative and condescending manner, which amused us very much.

We inquired, and found that there was no locomotive on the railroad, that it was drawn by horses; that it set out at three in the morning, and that we should reach Linz the next day. We sent to take our places, and made a great mistake in not securing an “exclusive extra” as the Americans call it—a coach and horse all to ourselves, which we might have obtained at a slight extra expense, and we should have been perfectly comfortable. Our five places cost fifteen florins, and we had to pay seven extra for luggage; which, considering the quantity we had, was dear. Our bill at Budweis for supper and beds, and a cup of coffee in the morning, was eleven florins—nearly double the bill at Mülchen, and, compared even with Prague, dear.

September 4th.

We did not go to bed till nearly twelve. We were to rise at two; and at the blast of a trumpet we were awakened. You must know, besides its glass, Prague is famous for the manufacture of brass wind instruments, and P— bought a trumpet for sixteen florins (thirty-two shillings): to prevent all possibility of any of the party not shaking off slumber at the right moment, he blew a blast which must have astonished all the sleepers in the inn.

We again traversed the ghostly-looking white market-place of Budweis by the light of the unset moon, and took our places in one of the carriages on the railroad. Day soon struggled through the shades of night, quenched the moonbeams, and disclosed the face of earth. I never recollect a more delightful drive than the hundred miles between Budweis and Linz: each hour the scene gains in beauty—from fertile and agreeable, it becomes interesting, then picturesque; and at last it presents a combination of beauty which I never saw equalled. I hurry over the miles, as our carriages were hurried along the railroad, which having an inclination down toward Linz, went very fast—I hurry on, and speak briefly of the ever-varying panorama of distant mountain, wood-clothed upland and fertile plain, all gay in sunshine, which we commanded as we were whirled along the brink of a chain of hills. I never can

forget the glorious sunset of that evening. We were on the height of a mountain,

“At whose verdant feet

A spacious plain, outstretched in circuit wide,

Lay pleasant.”——[6]

As we descended towards Linz, the sun dropped low in the heavens. The prospect was extensive; varied by the lines of wooded hills and majestic mountains, and towering above, on the horizon, was stretched the range of the Salzburg and Styrian Alps. The Danube wound through the varied plain below; the town of Linz was upon the banks, and a bridge spanned the river; above, it swept under high precipices—below, it flowed majestically on: its glittering waves were seen afar giving that life and sublimity to the landscape which it never acquires without the addition of ocean, lake, or river—water, in short, in some magnificent form. Golden and crimson, the clouds waited on the sun, now dazzling in brightness; and now, as that sunk behind the far horizon, stretching away in fainter and fainter hues, reflected by the broad river below. The town of Linz was a point or resting place for the eye, which added much to the harmony and perfection of the landscape. I held my breath to look. My heart had filled to the brim with delight, as, sitting on a rock by the lake of Como, I had watched the sunlight climb the craggy mountains opposite. The effect of this evening—when instead of up, I looked down on a widespread scene of glorious beauty, was different; yet so poor is language, that I know not how to paint the difference in words. I had never before been aware of all the awe the spirit feels when we are taken to a mountain top, and behold the earth spread out fair at our feet: nor of the delight a traveller receives when, at the close of a day’s travel, he—

“Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,

Which, to his eye, discovers unawares

The goodly prospect of some foreign land

First seen; or some renowned metropolis,

With glistening spires and pinnacles adorned,

Which now the setting sun gilds with his beams."[7]

It was dark when we descended into the town: as we crossed the bridge, the waters of the Danube gleamed beneath the hills.

We repaired to the hotel of the Goldener Löwe, which we find comfortable and good.

LETTER III. The Traun.—The Gmunden-see.—Ishl.—St. Wolfgang Lake.—Salzburg.

Monday, September 5th.

The train of the railroad started at two in the afternoon for Gmunden: we thus had a few hours to spare. One of our party climbed the heights above Linz, to feast his eyes on the view which had enchanted me the preceding evening. There is no circumstance in travelling, consequent on my narrow means, that I regret so much, as my being obliged to deny myself hiring a carriage when I arrive at a strange town, and the not being able to drive about everywhere, and see everything. I wandered about the town, and stood long on the bridge, drinking in the beauty of the scene, till the soul became full to the brim with the sense of delight. The river is indeed magnificent; with speed, yet with a vastness that renders speed majestic, it hurries on the course assigned to it by the Creator. Never, never had I so much enjoyed the glory of earth. The Danube gives Linz a superiority over a thousand scenes otherwise of equal beauty. Standing on the bridge, above is a narrow pass, hedged in by high sombre rocks, and the river sweeps, darkening as it goes, beneath the gloomy shadows of the precipices; below, it flows in a mighty stream through a valley of wide expanse, till you lose sight of it at the base of distant mountains. I should have liked to have stayed some days at Linz: I grieved also not to be going

by steam to Vienna.

Our drive by the railroad to Gmunden was delightful. We had a little carriage to ourselves. Our road lay through a valley watered by a stream, and adorned by woods; it was a sequestered home-felt scene; while the high distant mountains redeemed it from tameness. After the sandy deserts of Prussia, and the burnt-up country round Dresden, the freshness and green of a pastoral valley, the murmur of streams and rivulets, the delightful umbrage of the trees, imparted a sense of peace and amenity that lapped me in Elysium. We changed the train at Lambach, a quiet shady village. We had bargained that we should be allowed to visit the falls of the Traun on our way. It was evening before we reached the spot, and the falls are nearly a mile from the road; we had no guide, but were told we could not miss the way. Our path lay through a wood, and as twilight deepened we sometimes doubted whether we had not gone astray through the gloom of the thicket. You know that a mile of unknown road, with some suspicion hovering in the mind as to whether you are in the right path, becomes at least three, or rather one feels as if it would never end. We came at last to the brink of the precipice above the river, and descended by steps cut in the rock. We thus reached the lower part of the fall. With some difficulty, it being so late, the Miller was found, and meanwhile we clambered to the points of rock from which the cascade is viewed. It was dim twilight, with the moon quietly moving among the summer clouds, and shedding its silver on the waters. The river winding above through a wooded ravine comes to an abrupt rocky descent, over which it falls with foam and spray. The drought had reduced the supply of water; a portion also is carried off for the purpose of traffic—a wooden canal being constructed to allow the salt barges to ascend and descend the Traun without interruption from the cascade. This canal is on an inclined plain, and it would be very delightful to rush down: we could not, as there was no boat; but for six swanzikers (six eightpences) the sluices were shut and the water, blocked up, turned to feed and augment the fall. The evening hour took from the accuracy of our view,

but added immeasurably to its charm; the mysterious glittering of the spray beneath the moon; the deep shadows of the rocks and trees; the soft air and dashing waters—here was the reward for infinite fatigue and inconvenience; here we grasped an hour which, when the memory of every discomfort has become almost a pleasure, will endure as one of the sweetest in life. Our carriage all the time was waiting for us by the road-side, so we tore ourselves away. We procured a boy with a lantern to guide us on our return through the wood; and, reaching the road, away we sped along the rails. Our moonlit view, as we went, was pregnant with a sense of placid enjoyment, being picturesque but gentle in its features of wood, village, and glimmering stream; while the dark and gloomy Traunstein rose frowning before our path. We reached Gmunden late, and found a very comfortable inn; it had a court in the middle and an open balcony on the different floors, into which a number of cell-like rooms opened. We had a good supper of fish from the lake, and the comfortable promise of a steam-boat at eleven the next morning; so there was no need for anxiety with regard to early rising.

September 6th.

We fared sumptuously this morning on fish and game; our bill was therefore comparatively high—thirteen florins; it had been the same at Linz. The cost of the railroad to Gmunden, for which we had a carriage for four to ourselves and a place in one of the diligences of the train for my maid, was thirteen florins; we had to pay three extra for our luggage.

But enough of these matters. Now for another scene, which will ever dwell in my memory, coloured by the softest tints, yet sublime—the lake of Gmunden. As the steamer carried us away from the town, which appeared noisy and busy after Bohemia, we might believe that we broke our link with vulgar earth—the waters spread out before us so solitary, so tranquil. The lofty crags of the Traunstein rose on our left—bare, abrupt, and dark—while the sunlight varied its shadows as we

moved on; opposite, the lake was bounded by grassy hills, speckled with villages and spires, with here and there a cove, half shut in by precipitous rocks, half accessible through shady thickets, with green sloping sward down to the water's edge. These bays had a sequestered appearance, as if the foot of man had never desecrated their loneliness. By one of those unexplainable impulses of the mind, which spring up spontaneously and unlooked for, a sense of the beauty of the Greek mythology was awakened in me, more vivid, more real than I had ever before experienced. As the poet[8] says, I could, while looking

"On that pleasant lea,

Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;"

of dryad hiding among the trees; of nymph gazing at her own beauty in the lucid wave; of an immortal race—in short, the innocent offspring of nature, whose existence was love and enjoyment; who, freed from the primæval curse, might haunt this solitary spot. Why should not such be? If the earthly scales fell from our eyes, should we not perceive that "all the regions of nature swarm with spirits,[9]" and affirm, with Milton, that—

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth

Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep."

It is easier for the imagination to conjure such up in spots untrod by man, so to people with love and gratitude what would otherwise be an unsentient desert. Not that I would throw contempt on the pleasures of the animal creation, nor even on those of tree, or herb, or flower, which merely enjoys a conscious life, and in its pride of beauty feels happy, and, as it decays, peacefully resigns existence. But this does not satisfy us, who are born to look beyond the grave, and yearn to acquire knowledge of spiritual essences.

I cannot tell you the sacred pleasure with which I brooded over these fancies, which were rather sensations than thoughts, so heartfelt and intimate were they. I scarce

dared breathe, and longed to linger on our way, so not so quickly to put from my lips the draughts of happiness which I imbibed.

You may remember that this was the spot that poor Sir Humphry Davy visited during his last painful illness: many hours he beguiled fishing in the streams that fall into the lake. Happy, or in sorrow, I hope to return, and spend a summer in this neighbourhood: joy would be more than doubled, and grief softened into resignation, amidst scenes which, among many beautiful, exercised a power over my imagination I never felt before. How deeply I regret not having spent the season here instead of at Kissingen and Dresden; but last summer in Wales so blended the idea of deluges of rain with mountain scenery, that the search of health, a wish to see some friends, and a longing to behold strange cities, made us prefer the North. Regret is useless now. Shall I ever have a sunny summer, when I may choose at will a retreat? If I have, it will be spent here.

The scenery round the lake increased in wildness and sublimity as we lost sight of Gmunden. I was very sorry when our one-hour's voyage was over, and we landed at Ebensee. Here a sort of large car waited for the passengers, and we drove up a wooded glen, through which the Traun flowed—a mountain torrent, broken by rocks—to Ishl. This is a fashionable bathing-place: it is situated in a deep valley, surrounded by hills; though beautiful, it had not the charm of the scenes we had just left; indeed, a lake amidst mountains must always exceed a grassy valley: there is a magic charm in the notion of a cot on the verdant, wooded banks of a lonely lake—the boat drawn up in a neighbouring cove—the sheltering mountains gathering around. However, Ishl presents excellent head-quarters for excursions in this neighbourhood.

We here seriously discussed our future progress. A desire to visit an Italian lake, as yet unknown, made us select the Brenner pass and the Lago di Garda for our entrance into the Peninsula. The extreme beauty of the country in which we are,

makes us desire to see as much of it as possible; and various names, the lake of Hallstadt and Bad Gastein, hung before, to lure us towards them. But we cannot linger; and, on making inquiries, it seems that, unless we make excursions perfectly independent of our ultimate bourne, we cannot visit these spots,—in short, that to do so we ought to spend a summer, choosing some head-quarters, from which to diverge in different radii; but that to go to Venice, we must abide by a known and frequented road.

I gave up the idea of a prolonged stay in this neighbourhood with exceeding regret; but when resolved to proceed, many difficulties presented themselves. The people of the hotel at Ishl, which was large, new, clean, and good, but at the moment nearly empty, were resolved that we should spend at least one night there; and neither post-horses with carriage, nor voituriers, could be procured,—being a fine day, they declared that every horse had been taken out by various parties of visitors for picnics and excursions. This was a renewal of the scene at Schandau. We ought to have yielded at once, and been satisfied to make an agreement for setting out the following morning; but we were stubborn, and much time was very disagreeably taken up by the struggle; and the dogged obstinacy and rude sullenness of the people exasperated some among us very much. They had the best of it however, and we were forced to resign ourselves to remain the night: a change then came, almost magical; the people, late so rude, were all courtesy; and sullenness turned into obligingness. Nor were they bent on extortion: our bill altogether was seventeen florins.

Being now at peace in our minds, we wandered for some time beside the Ishl. If we had been transported suddenly to this spot, we had been enchanted; but we had passed through more beautiful scenery to reach it. There were a good many visitors: among them, Maria Louisa, a woman who might have been respected among women; but she forfeited her privilege.

September 27.

The drive from Ishl to Salzburg was delightful. The road, for a considerable space, bordered the St. Wolfgang Lake. At the head of the lake, the horses rested for an hour; and my friends took a boat, and went on it to bathe. I joined them afterwards. There was not the same charm in this lake as in the Gmunden-see. I cannot tell you why; for I find no language to express differences which are immense to our perceptions, and yet vary little in the description. Both present a wide expanse of water, surrounded by precipitous mountains or grassy banks. This, too, was grand, and solitary, and beautiful, but less softly inviting—less, as it were, holy in its calm, and, at the same time, less cheerful in its aspect—than the Gmunden-see.

What will you say to me when I say that Salzburg surpassed all? It has indeed been pronounced to be the most beautiful spot in Germany. Wherefore? It has not the majestic Danube, as at Linz, sweeping under dark, overhanging cliffs, and winding through a spacious valley, till lost to sight beneath distant mountains: it has not a lake sheltered by hills, with bay and inlet sacred to the sprites. It is observed that one of the most admirable features of a scene is where lofty mountains and an extensive plain unite. This is rare: usually mountains inclose a ravine, or valley, or lake; and the scenery around Salzburg is a specimen on the grandest scale in the world of this mixture.

Imagine a vast, fertile, various plain, half-encircled by mighty mountains—those near the town are abrupt cliffs, which tower above, crowned by castle and convent—with a river sweeping round their base; others, high and picturesque, but of softer forms, and wooded; and then, high above all, craggy, gigantic Alps—not the highest, for at this summer season scarcely a north-turned peak has preserved its snow, but still stupendous—some showing their dark, beetling sides, like Cader Idris, but on a larger scale; others, with what in Switzerland are called aiguilles, their spire-like peaks seeking the upper skies. Remember, we saw all this beneath a bright

sun, the air so dry and pure that every crag and cleft was distinct on the face of the hills at an immense distance. The plain itself has a richer and more cheerful and rural appearance than any I have seen since I left England. The beauty of its meadows and gardens, the frequency of its country-houses, the indescribable variety of the landscape, enchant the eye. What a summer might here be spent!—what a life, I would say, had not society and home a claim;—were it not a dream that we can be happy only in the contemplation of nature, removed from all intercourse with our equals. But you see the magic circle: Linz, Gmunden, Ishl—these are in Styria—then the district called the Salzkammergut. Such is the region in which I design, if I am ever able, to pass some long months, and to enjoy even more than I have ever yet done, the delight of exploring scenery unrivalled in the world. Yes; though the thought of Italy reproaches, and for life, I should not hesitate to choose between the two; yet there is something more sublime, more grand, more mysterious, in this Alpine region; which, as far as I have seen, I infinitely prefer to Switzerland.

As we approached Salzburg, we found the fields and green uplands near the town alive with people. Horse-racing was going on; and the whole population had poured out to see it, reproaching our dusty carriage and our fatigue by the gaiety of the equipages and the holiday trim of the spectators. I do not know anything more humbling to one’s self-conceit than arriving travel-tired and soiled amidst a crowd of well-dressed people; so we looked another way, and went right on to the inn. We found that the inauguration of the statue of Mozart and the anniversary of the century after his birth had been celebrated by three days of holiday at Salzburg—this, the last. It was a great pity we had not arrived the day before to hear one of his Operas; but we were too late. As a token of veneration for this greatest of all composers, Mr. P—— endeavoured to gain admission to the organ on which Mozart had played for years; but the absence of the person in authority prevented his success.

The inn of the Erzherzog Carl is very good; but our duties pressed on us. We could not linger, and we must make arrangements for our further progress. We ascertained here a fact, which we suspected before, that the addition which our party had received at Dresden, however delightful in other respects, spoiled the financial economy of our journey. Persons travelling in Austria without a carriage can, if four in number, secure a separat wagen, and obtain a clean carriage to convey them post the whole way, at a slight advance on the price of the eilwagen; but we were five—we must, therefore, have two carriages, and the expense was doubled. We did not find a voiturier much cheaper. Had we gone post, we should have gone by Villach, and reached Venice in four or five days. But we had set our hearts on the Lago di Garda, and that decided us. We made a bargain for two calèches, with a pair of horses to each, to take us over the Brenner to Trent, in five days and a half, for a hundred and forty florins.[10] We have now left the Münz and schein money, and have passed from the Austrian to the Bavarian florin: this is a gain—the former is two shillings, the latter two francs; and they are worth the same in expenditure. Settling this affair occupied us, at intervals, during the whole evening. We rambled a little about the town, which is remarkable for a large handsome square, with a fountain, built of white marble, and said to be the finest in Europe: it would be finer had it more water. The statue of Mozart is placed in another part of the square: it is of a large size, and striking. On account of the festival, there was no possibility of visiting the lions—every body was out, and all things closed. We wandered beyond the town, on the margin of the Salzer—an impetuous torrent, rushing at the foot of romantic crags. It is a region of enchanting beauty, which I shall leave with great regret. Still, it is much to have had this sort of flash-of-lightning view of the lovely scenes we have lately passed through; and I hope, some day, to visit them again at leisure.

LETTER IV. Entrance to the Tyrol.—Village Fête.—Pass

Strub.—Swartz.—Inspruck.

Monday, 8th September.

We left Salzburg at ten o'clock, on a fine sunny morning. We were about to penetrate the most celebrated passes of the Tyrol,—and the name has magic in it. We wound through the plain of the Salzkammergut, hedged in by lofty mountains, that rise sheer and abrupt from the plain, without any apparent opening by which their recesses may be penetrated. The Tyrol is the most continuously mountainous district in Europe. Switzerland contains plains and lakes—the Tyrol has only defiles and ravines, hedged in closely on all sides by precipice and mountain; while, in the depths, the torrents from the hills unite and form rivers, which turn many a mill-wheel destined for domestic use, besides carrying the riches of the country (salt) down various canals, fed by them, till it reaches the Danube. Once, these streams were laden with the hopes—the fate—of the Tyrolese, and watched with beating hearts by the heroes about to combat for their country—by the women and children who sympathised with and aided the stronger sex in their glorious struggle. The night of the 8th April, 1809, was fixed on for the general rising of the peasantry against the French and Bavarians: the signal agreed upon was throwing sawdust into the Inn, which floated down, and was seen and understood by the peasants. In addition to this, a plank with a little pennon was launched on the river and borne down the stream, and hailed with enthusiasm, as it carried the tidings that all were about to rise to liberate their country.

It is by these defiles—that of the Saal—and afterwards of the Inn—that travellers reach the Brenner. We approached the mighty crags, and by degrees they closed around us, and we found ourselves in a ravine, with the Saal—a common name of a river in Germany—flowing through its depth. This sort of route is familiar to all who have travelled among mountains. Thus are these districts traversed. The chains of mountains are intersected by ravines, and torrents work their way in the depth; the

road is carried along the margin—now ascending, now descending, now turning the huge shoulder of a hill, now penetrating into its recesses, according as the formation of the pass requires.

Soon after leaving Salzburg, we came upon a strip of Bavarian territory; and it was necessary to stop at the last Austrian Custom-house, to have our luggage loaded. While this was being done, the sounds of a fiddle caused us to peep into the public room of a little inn. A marriage was being celebrated, and dancing going on. A curious sight it was. The men are a handsome race, dressed as we are accustomed to see them represented—the jacket, tight breeches fastened at the knee, the sash round the waist, stockings and shoes, and high hat and feather, form a very becoming costume for a good figure. But, alas! for the women: their waists are placed up between their shoulders; their petticoats, short; a peaked man's hat, like a Welchwoman's, completes their ungainly appearance. Nor did I see any beauty: the youngest were weather-beaten and clumsy: they were destitute of all soft feminine grace, and seemed a cross between a boy and an old woman. The dancing is infinitely strange. They walz with impetuosity—with frenzy—interspersing their dance with certain capers, twists, hugs and leaps, which evidently excited great admiration: a Highland fling was nothing to it. We found Murray's description true to the letter, and were much amused. Remember, too, that amidst all the twirlings, springs, and kickings, in which they indulged, the dance was performed with a gravity worthy of a Parisian ball-room, and with infinite precision; no jostling; no romping; their capers were executed by rule, and with perfect decorum.

The pass we continued to penetrate—Pass Strub, which forms the portal of the Tyrol—is one of the most beautiful in the world. We left the Saal; and now crossing the huge shoulders of mighty hills, now thridding other deep gorges, we wound our tortuous way, till we should reach the Unter Innthal, or valley of the lower Inn. This night we slept at Waidringen, a very rustic place; but we were comfortable enough. Our fare was wild food: we had supper, our rooms, and coffee in the morning; and

our bill amounted to four Bavarian florins, for five persons.

September 9.

The Tyrol was ever celebrated for the beauty of its scenery, and the integrity and simplicity of its inhabitants. In 1780, Mr. Beckford travelled here, and celebrates, in various of his inimitable Letters, “the Tyrol, a country of picturesque wonders.” “Here,” he says, “those lofty peaks, those steeps of wood I delight in, lay before us. Innumerable clear springs gushed out on every side, overhung by luxuriant shrubs in blossom; soft blue vapours rest upon the hills, above which rise mountains that bear plains of snow into the clouds.”

The Tyrol is now endowed with a higher interest: it is hallowed by a glorious struggle, which gifts every rock, and precipice, and mountain-stream, with a tale of wonder.

The Tyrol became by inheritance a possession of the house of Hapsburgh as far back as the fourteenth century. The princes of Austria showed themselves worthy sovereigns of this province. The internal government of the country was the object of wise legislation; and, in spite of the opposition of Pope and noble, and imperial city, the Tyrolese received the gift of a free constitution, and governed and taxed themselves. These blessings are guarded by the fact that the soil of the mountains is their own. There are no noble landlords to carry off the wealth of the country in the shape of rents, forcing the labourers to waste their lives in penury and toil, that they may squander in vice and luxury. The peasant possesses the land he cultivates. He is independent, pious, and honest. No mercenary troops have ever been hired among these mountains; but the Tyrolese are not unwarlike. They are devotedly attached to the House of Austria, which conferred their privileges, protected them, exacted few taxes, and in no way displayed the cloven foot of despotism, in this happy region. Their domestic government is carried on by themselves. They furnish a slight contingent to the imperial armies, which is looked upon as an opening to active life,

and operates rather beneficially on the population. They are accustomed to the use of arms, for the militia is called out and exercised each year. They are a happy, brave, religious, free, and virtuous people.

But what is all this to ambition? It suited the views of Napoleon that the Tyrol should belong to Bavaria, when he raised it from an electorate to a kingdom; and by the treaty of Presburg in 1805, Austria ceded, with reluctance it is true, but still it ceded, the best jewel of its crown. The Tyrolese had lately, under the command of the Austrians, defended their passes against the Bavarians with heroic bravery—now they were to become subjects of the inimical power.

Their very hearts revolted against their change of masters. But they had far worse to suffer. Their new sovereign promised solemnly to govern them by their old laws, and to respect their institutions; but no sooner were the Bavarian authorities established in the country, than these stipulations were basely violated. The constitution was at once overthrown by a royal edict. Hitherto they had taxed themselves; now eight new and oppressive taxes were imposed and levied with rigour. Convents and monasteries were confiscated, their estates sold, and their chalices and other sacred treasures seized, melted down, carried off. Not content with inflicting these wrongs and insults, Bavaria attempted to obliterate the very name of the Tyrol from the map of Europe. The district was divided into provinces, called after the various rivers which flowed through them. The inhabitants were ordered to change their language, and only permitted to use that of their forefathers for four more years.

Napoleon, when the country rose against this misrule, declared “the Bavarians did not know how to govern the Tyrolese, and were unworthy to reign over that noble country.” But these words only add greater heinousness to his crimes against them; for his exactions on Bavaria were the primal cause of the heavy taxes—his example had taught that the best way to tame a people was to give them new names, and

change their local demarcations; and when they revolted against the tyranny which he himself declared unworthy, he punished without mercy the oppressed, wronged, and insulted insurgents.

What wonder that the Tyrolese detested their new rulers; or that, fondly attached to their old ones, they should hear and answer with enthusiasm the call of one of their ancient princes. When war again broke out between France and Austria, the Archduke John called on the Tyrolese, in a spirited and exciting proclamation, to expel the French and Bavarians. With transport they prepared to obey. The country rose to a man: women and children assisted; carrying to the scattered peasantry the watchword, “s’ist zeit,” “it is time,” which bade them at once assemble and prepare for action. Slightly aided by the Austrian regular troops, at the cost of many victories and some defeats, they drove the enemy from their country.

But peace was again to prove fatal to them. By the treaty that was signed after the battle of Wagram, they were ceded anew to Bavaria. What wonder that they shrunk from the hated yoke, whose weight they had before experienced, and almost without hope, yet resolved not to yield. They continued the heroic struggle; and in this last contest, their combats and their victories were even more wonderful than in the first instance.

Every portion of the route we traversed had been the scene of victory or defeat, and rendered illustrious by the struggle for liberty. Our road lay through Unter Innthal, which presented mountain scenery, infinitely various in aspect;—glen, wood, and stream;—sunrise, noon, and sunset—shine and shadow added perpetual changes to the ravines and their skreens of precipices. I confess there was none of the charm of Styria or the Salzkammergut. It was beautiful and sublime to pass through, to look upon, but the wish to take up my abode in any of these solitudes never presented itself to my mind. I have even seen passes I have admired more; it bears some resemblance to that of Saint Jean le Maurienne, for instance, on the way from

Chablais to Mont Cenis; but that is more beautiful from its walnuttrees and loftier Alps.

We slept at Swartz—a town of sad celebrity in the wars of 1809. The Bavarians took it by storm, and were guilty of cruelties which the historian refuses to depict, as too horrible and too sickening for his pages.[11] A new race has sprung up; but the town has not recovered its former prosperity.

The inn here is excellent; it is kept by Rainer, known in England as one of the Tyrolese minstrels. His rooms are clean and comfortable; we fared sumptuously, indulging in Rhenish wine. Our bill, with all this, was only ten florins, or thirteen shillings and fourpence, for all; by which you may judge for how small a sum a man alone, bent on economy, might make a tour of the Tyrol.

Leaving Swartz, by degrees the pass widened, and from a height we saw Inspruck, white and nest-like, basking in the valley beneath. All this portion of the country was the theatre of many mortal combats between the Tyrolese and Bavarians and French, in 1809. The town was taken and retaken several times; the bridge of Hall, the Brenner, and Berg Isel, were the scenes of gallant exploits; and the rustic chiefs of these hardy mountaineers were often victorious over officers, who, commanding disciplined troops, disdained the ill-armed and tumultuous peasantry with whom they had to contend. Dietfurth, a Bavarian colonel, had boasted at Munich that, “with his regiment and two squadrons of horse, he would disperse the ragged mob.” He was wounded to death in one of the assaults, when Inspruck was taken; and while lying in the guard-house of that city, singularly added to the enthusiasm of the pious, not to say superstitious, peasantry. He asked, Who had been their leader? “No one,” was the reply; “we fought equally for God, the Emperor, and our native country.” “That is surprising,” said Dietfurth; “for I saw him frequently pass me on a white horse.” These words caused the report to spread that their patron saint, St. James, frequently celebrated in Spanish annals of Moorish wars for his white

charger, had appeared in person to guard the city, placed under his especial protection.

Besides this more modern source of interest, we were told to look with curiosity at an old castle, from a high window of which Wallenstein, then a page of the Margraf of Burgau, fell to the ground without hurting himself—an accident which was said to have sown in his mind the seeds of that superstitious reverence for his own fortune which followed him through life, and was the instigator of many of his exploits. Unfortunately for the fame of the castle, Wallenstein's biographers tell us that this story is a fiction; that he was never page to the said nobleman; never inhabited this castle.

Inspruck, lying in the centre of a little plain, surrounded by Alps, with its tall steeple and white walls, has a thousand times been painted, and is a sort of ideal of what these Alpine cities are. It is clean and fair; one wide well-paved street, which midway enlarges into a square, runs the whole length. There is an immense hotel, usually thronged with travellers, as the road into Italy by Munich, and by the passes of the Tyrol or the Stelvio, is much frequented. We had a very good breakfast here, for which we paid as much as for supper, rooms, and breakfast the night before; the numerous English have taught them high charges. Here we found some letters from England, and wrote answers, and rambled about, but saw not half of what we ought to have seen in this capital of a free country.

LETTER V. The Pass of the Brenner.—Hofer.—Bressanone.—Egra.—Trent.—Riva.—Lago di Garda.—Promontory of Sirmio.

Immediately on leaving Inspruck we began the ascent of the Brenner. The road is being greatly improved; as long as we continued along the new portion, it was admirable, but we were forced to turn off very soon into the old road, now in a

neglected state. The northern side of the Brenner is very dreary. For awhile we commanded a view of the plain of Inspruck, and its gem-like town; but when a turn of the road hid this, we found ourselves winding along beside a tiny rill, and spread around was a wild and dreary mountain side: a drizzling rain fell, which shut out the view of the surrounding country. The people we met looked poor, and the villages through which we passed seemed wretched enough. In one of them we passed the night. The name of the village is not even mentioned in Murray, and the inn was very bad; so you may think we were disgusted—especially as we had entertained hopes of getting on as far as Brenner: but the elder voiturier, who was captain of our movements, was silent, sulky, and obstinate. Endeavours to move him, only added to his sullenness.

The road in the morning presented the same disconsolate appearance: the town of Brenner is on a level, shut in by heights. We were still on the banks of the Sill, which joins the Inn, and pursues its course to the Black Sea; but with delight I saw, and with ecstacy my two companions, who had never visited Italy, hailed, a little rivulet and tiny waterfall, the Eisach, which flows south and joins the Adige; it was grasping Italy, to behold a stream that mingled its mountain-born waters with the rivers and lakes of that divine country.

We descended rapidly; and, passing across the Sterzinger Moss, a marshy flat, we again entered the mountain defiles. After passing through Mittenwald, the ravine closes still more narrowly. This was the scene of a most tremendous conflict during the Tyrolese struggle. Every stone and every crag, indeed, has its tale of victory and defeat.

I have mentioned, that after the battle of Aspern, the Tyrolese had delivered their country from the Bavarian yoke. The desire to be free caught the neighbouring provinces of Bavaria, Vorarlberg, and the northern Italian mountains, and in every part the native peasantry, joined to their Austrian allies, were victorious. The

Tyrolese believed that they had regained their liberty, when the battle of Wagram, followed by the armistice of Znaym, crushed all their hopes. The Tyrol was re-demanded by Napoleon for Bavaria—and ceded again by Austria. The Emperor, after vowing never to desert them, wrote to the Tyrolese to announce, with expressions of paternal regret, the necessity he was under of yielding to Napoleon, and to order his troops to evacuate their country.

The mountaineers received these tidings with indignation, but without despair. They had struggled, bled, and been victorious; but battles in which they had no share, fought at a distance from their territory, were to decide their fate; and they were to be made over like a flock of sheep, bought and paid for, to a master who had oppressed them and endeavoured to destroy all they held dear—constitution, name, language, all! They refused to submit to so inglorious a destiny. At first they deliberated on forcing the Austrian troops to remain; but deserted by them, and by many of their own leaders, who accompanied the retiring army, they turned to Hofer, who accepted the command. The whole of the Tyrol again rose, and many of the Austrian soldiers deserted their banners to join the peasantry. The hopes of the patriots were now high, and they resolved to close their passes against the French and the Bavarians.

Hofer is no silken hero. Many portions of his character militate against the laws of romance; he had the German defects joined to their nobler qualities. He was born in the station of an innkeeper, a position rather of distinction in the Tyrol, since bringing the publican into contact with travellers, he acquires knowledge and civilisation. He is said to have been indolent, as well as convivial, even to intemperance, in his habits. He was often to be found carousing in a way-side inn, while his companions in arms were in the field. With all this, his countrymen idolised him, and he was esteemed and distinguished by the Emperor and the Archduke John, who was the chief instigator of the first rising of the Tyrol. He was possessed of unblemished integrity—honest, brave, open-hearted, resolute, and

pious, he had all the virtues of the hardy, untaught mountaineer.

It is an interesting circumstance in his career, that when called upon to lead his countrymen against the Bavarians, he underwent a violent struggle of feeling. When General Hormayr withdrew from the Tyrol, he persuaded several of the chiefs to accompany him in his retreat. Hofer refused to go, and exerted his eloquence to prevail on his friends to remain, imploring them to make “one more effort in behalf of their beloved country.” Yet his own resolution was not entire. He felt that he was about to lead his countrymen against forces which held the whole of Europe in awe, which had humbled that Emperor, under the protection of whose sceptre he desired to remain. Could anything but ultimate defeat ensue? On the other hand, he could not contemplate with any sense of resignation a renewal of the tyranny of Bavaria: and, doubtless, he entertained a hope that their continued resistance would cause Austria to make another, and probably a successful attempt to claim its own. He passed several days in his native valley of Passeyr, a prey to irresolution, striving to seek a decision by the force of prayer.

Meanwhile, General Lefevre, at the head of a force composed of French, Saxons, and Bavarians, penetrated to Inspruck, took possession of the city, and advanced southward across the Brenner. The peasantry assembled in arms, and Hofer not appearing, Haspinger came forward to lead them. Father Haspinger was a Capuchin friar; he was young and athletic. In his student days, in 1805, he had fought the French; since then he had lived secluded in his monastery; but the cause of his country called him out. He had been present at all the previous battles, and was always seen in the thickest of the fight, bearing no arms except a large ebony crucifix, with which he dealt tremendous blows on the heads of his adversaries, and did great execution. In the absence of Hofer, this singular man came forward to direct the exertions of the peasantry. It was in the narrow pass below Mittenvald, that he prepared a fearful ambush. He caused enormous larch-trees to be felled, upon which were piled huge masses of rock and heaps of rubbish; the whole being held

together by strong cords, and thus suspended over the edge of the precipice.

“We had penetrated to Inspruck,” writes a Saxon officer, belonging to Lefevre’s army, “without great resistance; and, although much was reported about the Tyrolese stationed upon and round the Brenner, we gave little credit to it, thinking the rebels might be dispersed by a short cannonade, and already looking on ourselves as conquerors. Our entrance into the passes of the Brenner was only opposed by small corps, which continued to fall back after an obstinate but short resistance: among others, I perceived a man, full eighty years of age, posted against the side of a rock, and sending death among our ranks at every shot. Upon the Bavarians descending from behind to make him prisoner, he shouted aloud, ‘Hurrah!’ struck the first man to the ground with a ball, seized the second, and, with the cry, ‘In God’s name!’ precipitated himself with him into the abyss below. Marching onward, we heard from the summit of a high rock, ‘Stephen, shall I chop it off yet?’ to which a loud, ‘Nay!’ reverberated from the other side. This was told to the Duke of Dantzig, who, notwithstanding, ordered us to advance. The van, consisting of 4000 Bavarians, had just stormed a deep ravine, when we again heard over our heads, ‘Hans! for the Most Holy Trinity!’ The reply that immediately followed completed our terror. ‘In the name of the Most Holy Trinity, cut all loose above!’ and ere a minute had elapsed, thousands of my comrades in arms were crushed, buried, and overwhelmed by an incredible heap of broken rock, crags, and trees, hurled down upon us.”

Mr. Alison, in his “History of Europe,” tells us that in 1816 he visited this spot, and says “the long black furrow, produced by the falling masses, like the track of an avalanche, was, even then, after the lapse of seven years, imperfectly obliterated by the bursting vegetation which the warmth of the Italian sun had awakened on these beautiful steeps.” Now, thirty-three years, with their various seasons, snow, rain, and sunshine, have drawn a green veil over the ruins; and there is nothing left to tell the tale of defeat and death.

To return to Hofer—for these valleys are filled with his name, and it were sacrilege to traverse them without commemorating his glory and lamenting his downfall.

On hearing of this success, Hofer, joined by many thousand peasants, descended from the valley of Passeyr; through the whole region the hardy inhabitants rose en masse. Count Wittgenstein succeeded, however, in clearing the northern slope of the Brenner, and General Lefevre once more advanced, intending to cross and enter the Italian Tyrol. He was attacked on all sides by innumerable and determined foes. After an obstinate conflict he was defeated, forced back down the mountain; he lost his ammunition and cannon, and, hotly pursued, had only time to take refuge in Inspruck, disguised like a common trooper.

The peasantry collected in thousands, and another battle ensued. The disciplined troops of the invader were unable to cope with the enthusiastic numbers that assailed them; their mercenary courage quailed before the noble ardour of the free mountaineers. Mount Isel was again the scene of the conflict; it ended in the total defeat of the French and Bavarians. Inspruck was evacuated, and General Lefevre retreated to Salzburg. Hofer became commander-in-chief of the Tyrol. The simplicity, the almost childish earnestness to act with justice that characterised his rule, in no way deteriorates from the real elevation of his character. He was an ignorant peasant, and his eyes did not look beyond the well-being of his native province and of his countrymen, who were also his personal friends. To this he was devoted, and no act of arbitrary power or of insolence, no shadow of such a thing, clouded his short-lived prosperity.

It was indeed brief. New armies poured into the devoted country, and the mountain passes were invaded at all points. For three months the peasants kept up their resistance, but the coming of winter forced them from their mountain fastnesses into the valleys below; food became scarce; their power of resisting the foe dwindled, faded, and became extinct—the Tyrol again became a province of Bavaria.

Napoleon, in his haughty contempt and insolent indignation at any opposition to his will, chose to regard the struggle of the Tyrolese for liberty as the lawless tumult of freebooters; he magnified the very few acts of barbarity of which the peasantry had been guilty (not to be compared in number to the atrocities perpetrated by their opponents) and had the baseness to set a price on the head of the peasant chiefs.

Hofer wavered several times. Now, conceiving that farther resistance could only injure his country, he issued a proclamation inviting his countrymen to lay down their arms; but finding they would not yield, he resolved not to desert his post, and told the peasantry that "he would fight with them and for them, as a father for his children." Various feats of arms ensued, and the Tyrolese were often victorious—even while ultimate and absolute defeat could only be deferred a few days by their heroism. At last all was lost; the chiefs for the most part fled; some fell into the hands of the enemy; others, with more or less of peril and hardship, escaped to Austria.

Hofer refused to fly; he refused to surrender. He retired to his native valley of Passeyr. He concealed himself in an Alpine hut four leagues distant from his home, and almost inacessible amidst the snows. His wife and child accompanied him, and his friends supplied him as they could with food, and brought him messages even from the Emperor of Austria, entreating him to escape. He refused. A stubborn patriotism held him to his native mountains, and he declared he would never leave them. Nor would he disguise himself, nor cut off his beard, which, flowing to his waist, rendered him conspicuous. At the same time he probably believed, now the country was subdued and tranquil, that the French would soon cease to desire to possess themselves of him.

He was deceived. A cunning intriguing priest, of the name of Donay, had insinuated himself into his confidence, and now, for the sake of the price set upon his head, betrayed him to the French general. An officer was sent with sixteen hundred men to

take him prisoner; two thousand more were ordered up the pass to be at hand—so fearful were they that the peasants would rise to the rescue.

The column began their march at midnight, on the 20th January, over ice and snow. At five in the morning they reached the hut in which Hofer and his family harboured. He heard the French officer inquire for him, and came to the door and at once delivered himself up. He was bound, and amidst the shouts of the French and the tears of the peasants, he was marched to Botzen. Here he was received by the French commandant, Baraguay d'Hilliers, who treated him with courtesy, and even with such kindness as may be afforded a prisoner. Hofer was greatly altered by his long retreat amidst the snows, and by frequent want of food. His hair had grown gray, but his spirit was untamed, and his countenance beamed with cheerfulness and serenity. He was separated from his family, and carried to the shores of the Lago di Garda. He was put in a boat at the little village of Simone, and on disembarking again was carried on to Mantua.

A court-martial was immediately summoned: but even the laws of war were dispensed with; for the sentence of death was not passed by this court; the telegraph declared it from Milan, ordering his execution within twenty-four hours. Until this moment he had apprehended no danger to his life; yet he received the sentence with unshaken firmness, and only requested the attendance of a confessor: this was complied with. On the following morning, he was taken from the prison. He passed by the barracks of the Porta Molina, where the Tyrolese prisoners were confined, who all wept, and implored his blessing. This Hofer gave them, entreating their pardon for being the cause of their misfortunes, and declaring his conviction that they would soon be delivered from the sway of Bavaria. On the broad bastion at a little distance from the Porta Ceresa, a halt was commanded. Hofer refused to be blind-folded—he refused to kneel. He said, "He was accustomed to stand upright before his Creator, and in that posture he would deliver his spirit up to Him." He said a few words of farewell, expressing his undying love for his country; and

pronounced the word “Fire!” with a firm voice.

The spot on which he fell is still considered sacred by his countrymen.

His funeral was conducted with solemnity by the French. But this was only an act of hypocrisy; such as instigated Berthier, then at Vienna, to declare that Hofer’s death would cause great pain to Napoleon, and that he would never have permitted it, had he been aware. Had Hofer suffered by sentence of the court-martial by which he was tried, there had been some colour to this assertion; but the telegraphic dispatch that commanded and hurried his execution, in spite of the milder dealings of the military tribunal, in fear lest the intercession of the Emperor of Austria would prevent it, could only emanate from an authority intimately conversant with, and blindly obedient to, Napoleon’s will.

When, after landing from Elba, and losing the battle of Waterloo, Bonaparte was taken prisoner, was he less an outlaw than Hofer, who defended his country against invasion? His want of magnanimity does not excuse that of others, but it takes from the respect, the compassion, and the indignation, with which he demanded that his imprisonment should be regarded. It has been justly pronounced, that Napoleon was not guilty of any acts of wanton cruelty; but the pages of his history are also destitute of any record of his magnanimity.

The Emperor of Austria invited the wife of Hofer to Vienna. She refused to quit her native mountains; and resided, till her death, under her husband’s roof, in the Valley of Passeyr.

Such are the deeds, such the name, that shed glory over the rugged and romantic passes of the Tyrol. We continued to thread them; and the interest with which we regarded the scene of these patriotic exploits became exchanged for a more personal feeling of joy as we felt the climate alter, in token that we were advancing nearer and nearer to Italy.

The valley we traversed was met here by another; the scenery was huge, craggy, and

picturesque. Through this second valley is carried the road called the pass of the Ampezzo, the shortest road from Inspruck to Venice. We had several times debated whether we should not go by it; but the wish to see the Lago di Garda decided our negative.

We slept at Brixen—Bressanone is its musical Italian name; but we heard no Italian yet, nor saw a trace of Italy. Murray calls Brixen "a dirty, inanimate town, of 3200 inhabitants." We saw nothing of it. The inn—the Elephant, is a pleasant, country-looking hostelry, on the road-side; trees grow in front, and it resembles the best specimen of a rustic inn in England. Everything was clean and comfortable, and the waiter spoke English. I bought a tiny figure of Hofer, carved in wood, to do honour to the "Tyrolean Champion," who, as Wordsworth well expresses it, was

"Murdered, like one ashore by shipwreck cast,

Murdered without relief."

We found here the moderate charge of a good inn among these mountains: including what we gave to servants, it was nine florins.

Monday, September 12th.

Our journey continues through a most beautiful part of the Tyrol. The road first lay through a narrow, gloomy pass, closed in by dark majestic cliffs, till we crossed the Eisach, when the valley of the Adige opened on us, with the town of Bolzano—still lingering in Germany we called it Botzen—surmounted by the Castle of Eppan; again, I repeat, differing as these valleys and mountains do one from another, delightedly as the eye dwells on the unimaginable variety of grouping which this picturesque and majestic region presents, words cannot describe it. Our road was cut in the side of a mountain, and wound beneath lofty crags; a narrow plain, with a dashing torrent, the Eisach in the depth, and lofty mountains closing in the valley on either side. I have used such words before: mark the difference here. Fair Earth scents the gales of Italy, and already begins to assume for herself the loveliness

which is the inheritance of that country. The slopes of the lower hills are covered by vines. We stopped to bait the horses at what, in England, would be called an ale-house, a very humble inn, which we did not enter; but there was a sort of rustic summer-house and terrace overlooking the Eisach. The terrace was shaded by what, in Italy, is called a pergola, or trellised walk of vines; the vegetation was luxuriant; the sun shone bright, and dressed the whole scene in gaiety. My companions felt that they were approaching scenes dreamt of—ardently desired, never seen. The days of my youth hovered near. I stole away among the vines by the margin of the river, to think of Italy, and to rejoice that I was about to tread again its beloved soil; to find myself surrounded by my dear, courteous, kind Italians, instead of the Germans, who, honest-hearted as they doubtless are, under the repulsive mask that invests them, have yet no grace of manners, no show of that intuitive desire to please—none of that cordial courtesy, which renders the lowliest-born Italian gentle in his bearing, and eager to render service.

We slept at Neumarkt, called in Italian, Egna. We had left our beautiful valley here; and, as is too often the case, in a region of transition from mountain to plain, the soil is marshy and the district unhealthy. There was a large, new-built, clean hotel at Neumarkt; but though the rooms were good, the living was intolerably bad, so that we went nearly supperless to bed.

Tuesday, September 13th.

Still we approached Italy; the hills were covered with vines, the road shut in by the walls of vineyards. Various valleys branch off at intervals, all affording the scenery peculiar to the Tyrol. I own I had no desire to linger longer in this land: we had continued for so many days among ravines, defiles, and narrow valleys, peering up at the sky from the depths between mountains, that the eye grew eager for a view of heaven, and yearned to behold a more extensive horizon. When the bourne of a journey lies beyond, the desire to linger, even in beautiful scenery, is weak. Since I

had left Gmunden and Salzburg I had experienced no desire to stop short.

Some names of cities are so familiar, that one forms an idea of them in one's mind as one does of a celebrated, but personally unknown, individual. The Council of Trent is associated with cardinals and bishops—shepherds of the church, legislators of religion: there was something princely, yet holy, in its idea. What we saw of it looked miserably dirty; grand at a distance and beautifully situated, on entering it, it was common-place; but, after all, nothing can be more deceptive than the impression a way-worn traveller receives, driven, perhaps, through the meanest streets to an hotel where, fatigued, body and mind, he reposes, and then is off again. Mr. P—— sought out the cathedral and the organ, but the organist declared that the instrument was out of tune, whether from laziness or not, I cannot say. The hotel was good; we dined at the table d'hôte. Again I was restored to the privilege of speech, as Italian here is as common as German.

Our compact with our lohn kutschers ceased at Trent. We paid them 140 Bavarian florins, and gave them 30 swanzigers as drink-gelt; a swanziger is the third of an Austrian florin, its worth is eightpence English, and is a very intelligible and convenient coin. The men were satisfied and we had no reason to be otherwise: their conduct had been, on the whole, negative—sullen and silent; and yet with a latent violence and insolence which peeped out as a rank weed on a grassless plain, strangely, unexpectedly, and by no means welcome; I believe they thought of nothing but their drink-gelt the whole way. I was much more interested in the horses, who had done their duty rather better.

We had now to look out for a conveyance to Riva, the town at the head of the Lago di Garda, where we are to find the steam-boat, which is to convey us to its southern shores. We engaged a calèche and a caratella for twenty-two Austrian florins, and were soon on our way. We were in high spirits on having parted with our Germans, and on finding ourselves on the very verge of Italy. I do not pretend to say that this

is a correct feeling; but it was natural, considering our ignorance of German. The valley of the Adige is very grand; and the stream, broad and swift, was more of a river than we had seen since the Danube. Several valleys branch off here; and there is another route to Venice. We were sorry not to see the famous Slovino di San Marco, or avalanche of stone, near Serravalle, celebrated by Dante, who was for some time a guest at the Castello Lizzana; where, exiled from Florence, he was entertained by the lord of Castelbarco.

At Roveredo we changed horses: our road, always on the descent, now became exceedingly precipitous, and ran on the very edge of the steep bank of the Adige. Our drivers were strange fellows. He who drove the calèche in which I sat, was a rough, uncouth animal; but he of the caratella was the most singular—neither Italian nor German in his ways, wild as an untamed animal—coarse and vulgar as a metropolitan vagrant. He was civil enough, indeed; but seemed half-mad with high spirits. You might have thought him half-drunk, but he was not—roaring and singing, and whipping his horses, and turning round to talk to the gentlemen in the caratella with a dare-devil air. I saw him whip his horses into a gallop, and heard him laughing and singing as he dashed down a road, which, in truth, required the drag. It was quite dusk—or rather, but for the stars, dark; which added not a little to the apparent danger. Our driver, a little more tame, yet disdained the drag—and we went down at a rattling pace: I was not sorry, for I was eager to assure myself that our friends in advance were not upset and rolled in the Adige, which rushed at the foot of the rock which our road bounded;—not they,—we reached the bottom, and saw the caratella dashing madly on in the advance. Before or since I never met such fellows; if my friends thought that Italians resembled them, they were indeed mistaken; they had none of their innate refinement, but they had their good humour: they were more like what one reads of as the wanderers of the far west—except, we are told, the Americans appear always to calculate, and so perhaps did these fellows; but they had the outward guise of nearly being insane.

We got to Riva safe. It stands exactly at the head of the Lago di Garda;

Suso in Italia bella giace un laco,

Appiè dell' alpe, che serra Lamagna,

Sovra Tiralli, ed ha nome Benaco.

Per mille fonti credo, e più si bagna,

Tra Garda, e Val Camonica e Apennino

Dell' acqua, che nel detto lago stagna.

The coast, with the exception of the spot on which the town stands, is iron-bound; dark precipices rise abruptly from the water; a bend in the coast limits the view of the lake to a mile or two merely: behind is the chasm of the Adige, beside which Monte Baldo rises, lofty and dark—and mountains somewhat lower—but even they, sublime in altitude, darken the prospect immediately behind Riva. The town is mean and dirty; the inn—not bad to look at, is dirty and uncomfortable. It is kept by a large family; but how different are they from our Cadenabbia people! There are seven sisters—some dress smartly, and sit and receive company, and act the Padrona; others are the Cinderellas of the establishment; but all are lazy and negligent. The beds were not bad, it is true; but the fare was uneatable.

We had congratulated ourselves that the steam-boat, which plies every other day, would leave Riva on the morrow of our arrival; but we found it had not arrived as it ought, and doubts of course hung, as it had not arrived, over the date of its departure.

Wednesday, 14th.

The morning has come, but no steam-boat. It is detained, we are told, at the other end of the lake by the wind. This assertion seems fabulous; we have no breeze, the waters are glassy: but thus is it with lake Benacus. The wind, coming down the chasms of the mountains, is not felt in the sheltered nook in which Riva is situated; but drives with violence on the southern portion of this vast inland sea, and lashes it

into tempest.

We walked out: there is a path for a short distance on one side under the rock, but the road soon ends; the coast, as I have said, is iron-bound. One of my friends began a sketch of the castle La Rocca, built by the Scaligers, and which forms a picturesque object: then I loitered in the town, delighting my eyes with Italian names and words over the shop-doors. We went out for a short time on the lake, but a shower came on—a drizzle first, which ended in pouring rain. We were truly uncomfortable—forced into the dirty, uncomfortable inn, unprovided with books; and, worst of all, quite uncertain as to the arrival of the steamer. The house is full of travellers similarly situated, and others continually arriving; this does not comfort us. Our madcap drivers of the night before are still here; we have canvassed with them the expense of going by land to Venice, but their demands are exorbitant. We have talked with the boatman, of making the voyage in a large open boat; but the time that this would occupy is evidently uncertain: besides, a lingering remnant of reason assures us that, if the steamer be detained by adverse winds at the other end of the lake, this wind, however favourable, must have raised a sea to endanger our navigation. Our projects, therefore, have only served to cheat time a little, and are given up. Dinner has proved no occupation or relief; it was so singularly and uncomfortably bad, that it was difficult to eat any portion of it. Now evening has come, and still it rains hard; the many travellers are dispersed about the house in a state of listless anxiety. Another day like this is too fearful a vision: we have ceased even to speak of the chances of release, for we grow hopeless. The people of the inn finding the boat does not arrive, begin to talk of some accident in the machinery; conversation languishes among all the groupes. I sit writing at a window till twilight is thickening into darkness. Hush! a sound—distant—increasing; can it be the splash of paddles? The bend of the lake prevents the boat being seen till quite close at hand; my soul is in my ears, listening: at length the sound draws the attention of others; one by one they congregate near the windows, but there is silence among all, broken

only by hurried interjections swiftly silenced, that each may listen more intently. At last—there can be no doubt—there is a burst of joy as we behold the smoky, but most amiable monster, double the headland and bear down on the town. O, how good-humoured and communicative we are all become; what a clatter of voices, what joyful mutual congratulations! One sight we have just witnessed, is ridiculous to us who have the best of it—very disagreeable to the actors in the scene: on arriving at the quay the travellers poured out from the steamer, the porters shouldered the luggage, and all came in one stream to our hotel. There was no room; the voyagers expectant occupied every apartment. Travellers and porters went their way out again—the world was before them; but their choice was limited to some most wretched holes.

September 15th.

We thought ourselves in all things fortunate, when the morrow dawned bright and sunny. We had a heavenly voyage, which repaid us for yesterday's ennui, and satisfied us that we had done the wisest thing in the world in entering Italy by the Lago di Garda. We left the abrupt, gloomy, sublime north, and gently dropped down to truly Italian scenes. The waters of the lake are celebrated for their azure tint; no waves could be so brightly blue, so clear, so that we saw the bottom of the lake, fathoms below. The mountains sank to hills, with banks cut into terraces, and covered with olives and vines, decorated by orange and lemon-trees; the country-houses sparkled in the sun. One of my friends quoted the lines that celebrate Benacus. Strangely enough, though weather-bound at Riva by one of those storms for which this lake is famous, we saw not a wave upon its surface; not even a curled ripplet, reminded us that it was

teque,

Fluctibus et fremitur assurgens,

Benace marino.

We landed at Lasise, a town distant fifteen miles from Verona, and while I employed myself in engaging a veturino for that place, and wandered about the town, my companions went to bathe in the clear waters of the azure lake. The promontory of Sirmio was in sight; an Italian landscape all around, an Italian sky, bright above: it was an hour of delicious joy—set, like a priceless diamond in the lead of common life—never to be forgotten.

O, best of all the scattered spots that lie

In sea or lake, apple of landscape's eye,—

How gladly do I drop within thy nest,

With what a sigh of full, contented rest,

Scarce able to believe my journey o'er,

And that these eyes behold thee safe once more!

Oh, where's the luxury, like the smile at heart,

When the mind, breathing, lays its load apart,—

When we come home again, tired out, and spread

The loosen'd limbs o'er all the wished-for bed!

This, this alone, is worth an age of toil.

Hail, lovely Sirmio! hail, paternal soil!

Joy, my bright waters, joy; your master's come!

Laugh, every dimple on the cheek of home![12]

LETTER VI. Verona.—Journey to Venice.—Leone Bianco.—Hotel d'Italia.

September 18th.

I am again in Italy. The earth is teeming with the wealth of September, the richest month of the year. The harvest of the Indian corn has begun; the grapes are hanging in rich ripening clusters from the vines, festooned from tree to tree: a genial

atmosphere mantles the earth, and quickens a sense of delight in our hearts. The road lies through a richly cultivated country: the immense plain around us is bounded to the north by the mountains of the Tyrol, amongst which we seemed to have lost ourselves for an age, so refreshing, so new, so enchanting, is the wide expanse of fertile Lombardy, opening before our eyes.

A sad disaster happened on our arrival at Verona. We had each our passport, and the whole was consigned to the pocket-book of one of the party; and when they were asked for at the gates of Verona, the pocket-book was not to be found. Except our passports, and Coutts' lettre d'indication, it contained no papers of importance; but still, after all the annoyance the Austrians give about passports, it was rather appalling. Nothing could be done. It was remembered that when bathing, the pocket-book was safe; it must have been lost since. We were allowed to go on to the inn, and time would shew the result.

The Gran Parigi is one of the most comfortable hotels I was ever at; it has the air of a palace, as doubtless it once was. The same evening, by the light of the clear full moon, my companions rambled about the town and entered the amphitheatre, which is used as a circus, and horsemanship was going on, and music filled the air. There was something startling in finding the building of ancient days used for its original purpose—the seats occupied by numerous spectators; the partial moonlight veiled with some mystery what the garish sun had disclosed as below Roman dignity in the assemblage.

You know the charm of these Lombard cities. Built by a prosperous people, they have a princely and magnificent appearance: their grandeur is what grandeur ought to be—not gloomy and menacing, but cheerful and inspiriting. The cities look built by a happy people in which to be happy—by a noble and rich people, whose tastes were dignified, and whose habits of life were generous.

We were promised a paper that would give us free course to Venice—for our Consul

was at that city—and we were to be transferred to him, and meanwhile, our loss was made known in the country about. But, though the paper was promised, one or another of my friends was employed the whole morning in getting it properly signed. These delays were vexatious, more from the uncertainty that hung about the whole transaction, which kept us in attendance and perplexity. There was no help. We rambled to the garden, or walled podere, in which there is an open fosse, and an old sort of sarcophagus, which they show as Juliet's tomb. That Juliet lived and died, as Baldelli recounts, there can be little doubt; but it is not likely that this was "the tomb of the Capulets." Still such a scene—a garden, with its high antique walls, its Italian vegetation, and the blue sky, cloudless above—was a scene familiar to Juliet; and her spirit might hover here, even if her fair form was sepulchred elsewhere. It was a long walk thence to the tombs of the Scaligers. The most fairy architecture—not dark and Gothic, nor immured within the walls of a church;—a small open court encloses these elegant sepulchres.

At length we obtained the paper, and set out. We had engaged a veturino for Venice. Some hope had we that the railroad might be open from Padua to Mestri; if not, we were to be taken to Fusina, sleeping at Vicenza in our way. The charm of autumnal vegetation, in a rich vine country, adorned the road, and a distant view of the Alps bounded the scene. We arrived at Vicenza at eleven o'clock, by a bright moonlight. I was sorry to see no more of these Palladian palaces than the glimpses we caught from our carriage-windows. Architecture shows to peculiar advantage by the silver radiance of a full moon: its partial white light throws portions into strong relief, and the polished marble reflects its, so to speak, icy radiance.

September 19th.

We found, on our arrival at Padua, that the railroad was not open; so we proceeded along the banks of the Brenta to Venice. Many a scene, which I have since visited and admired, has faded in my mind, as a painting in the Diorama melts away, and

another struggles into the changing canvass; but this road was as distinct in my mind as if traversed yesterday. I will not here dwell on the sad circumstances that clouded my first visit to Venice. Death hovered over the scene. Gathered into myself, with my "mind's eye" I saw those before me long departed; and I was agitated again by emotions—by passions—and those the deepest a woman's heart can harbour—a dread to see her child even at that instant expire—which then occupied me. It is a strange, but to any person who has suffered, a familiar circumstance, that those who are enduring mental or corporeal agony are strangely alive to immediate external objects, and their imagination even exercises its wild power over them. Shakspeare knew this, and the passionate grief of Queen Constance thence is endued with fearful reality. Wordsworth, as many years ago I remember hearing Coleridge remark, illustrates the same fact, when he makes an insane and afflicted mother exclaim,—

"The breeze I see is in the tree;

It comes to cool my babe and me."

Holcroft, who was a martyr to intense physical suffering, alludes to the notice the soul takes of the objects presented to the eye in its hour of agony, as a relief afforded by nature to permit the nerves to endure pain. In both states I have experienced it; and the particular shape of a room—the progress of shadows on a wall—the peculiar flickering of trees—the exact succession of objects on a journey—have been indelibly engraved in my memory, as marked in, and associated with, hours and minutes when the nerves were strung to their utmost tension by the endurance of pain, or the far severer infliction of mental anguish. Thus the banks of the Brenta presented to me a moving scene; not a palace, not a tree of which I did not recognise, as marked and recorded, at a moment when life and death hung upon our speedy arrival at Venice.

And at Fusina, as then, I now beheld the domes and towers of the queen of Ocean

arise from the waves with a majesty unrivalled upon earth. We were hailed by a storm of gondolieri; their vociferations were something indescribable, so loud, so vehement, so reiterated; till we had chosen our boat, and then all subsided into instant calm.

I confess that on this, my second entrance into Venice, the dilapidated appearance of the palaces, their weather-worn and neglected appearance, struck me forcibly, and diminished the beauty of the city in my eyes. We proceeded at once to the Leone Bianco, on the Canale Grande; they asked a very high price for their rooms, which rendered us eager, as we intended to remain here a month, to make immediate arrangements for removing elsewhere.

Our first act was to send our letters of introduction; the second, for two of us to go out to look for lodgings. The account brought back by our second dove from the ark was rather discouraging; but our first brought better things. Count —— and Signor —— loved and respected too sincerely the writer of our letters not to hasten on the instant to acknowledge them. Signor —— at once perceived and entered into our difficulty. I never saw such friendly zeal; nor was Count —— behind in kindness, though, as a younger man, and not so conversant with the perplexities of travellers, he could not be so efficient in his help. The thing was soon settled. Signor —— remarked that if we took lodgings we should want a cook, and that housekeeping in an unknown town, for a short space of time, was fraught with annoyance. There was a new hotel just established, which desired to be made known to the English, and which therefore would be moderate in its charges. We went to see the rooms. The Hotel d'Italia is situated in a canal, three oar-strokes from the Canale Grande; so far we lost what is most to be coveted at Venice—the view from our window of this ocean stream, with its bordering palaces,—but we were within three minutes' walk of the Place of Saint Mark. Our rooms were on the second floor, a bed-room apiece, and a salon, spacious, turned to the sun, and being but just furnished, clean in the excess of newness. Many a palace had been spoiled of its marble architraves and

ornaments to decorate this new hotel. We made our bargain; we calculated that, everything included, each of our party would pay nine pounds a month for lodging and board.

This done, we returned with our kind friends to the Leone Bianco, as we are not to remove till tomorrow. Evening has come, and the moon, so often friendly to me, now at its full, rises over the city. Often, when here before, I looked on this scene, at this hour, or later, for often I expected S.'s return from Palazzo Mocenigo, till two or three in the morning; I watched the glancing of the oars of the gondolas, and heard the far song, and saw the palaces sleeping in the light of the moon, which veils by its deep shadows all that grieved the eye and heart in the decaying palaces of Venice. Then I saw, as now I see, the bridge of the Rialto spanning the canal. All, all is the same; but as the Poet says—

"The difference to me!"

LETTER VII. The Ducal Palace.—The Academia delle Belle Arti.

Venice, September.

I miss greatly the view of the Canale Grande from my window; however, the result, probably, of our being in a narrow canal will be, that I shall see much more of Venice: for were we among its most noble palaces, it would suffice and amply fill the hours, merely to loiter away the day gazing on the scene before us. As it is, though singularly Venetian—the wave-paved streets beneath, the bridge close at hand—the peep we get at wider waters at the opening,—it is but a promise of what we may find beyond, and tempts us to wander.

There is something so different in Venice from any other place in the world, that you leave at once all accustomed habits and everyday sights to enter enchanted ground. We live in a palace; though an inn, such it is: and other palaces have been robbed of delicately-carved mouldings and elegant marbles, to decorate the staircase and

doorways. You know the composition with which they floor the rooms here, resembling marble, and called everywhere in Italy Terrazi Veneziani: this polished uniform surface, whose colouring is agreeable to the eye, gives an air of elegance to the rooms; then, when we go out, we descend a marble staircase to a circular hall of splendid dimensions; and at the steps, laved by the sea, the most luxurious carriage—a boat, invented by the goddess of ease and mystery, receives us. Our gondolier, never mind his worn-out jacket and ragged locks, has the gentleness and courtesy of an attendant spirit, and his very dialect is a shred of romance; or, if you like it better, of classic history: bringing home to us the language and accents, they tell us, of old Rome. For Venice

"Has floated down, amid a thousand wrecks

Uninjured, from the Old World to the New."[13]

With the world of Venice before us, whither shall we go? I would not make my letter a catalogue of sights; yet I must speak of the objects that occupy and delight me.

First, then, to the Ducal palace. A few strokes of the oar took us to the noble quay, from whose pavement rises the Lion-crowned column, and the tower of St. Mark. The piazzetta is, as it were, the vestibule to the larger piazza.

But I spare description of a spot, of which there are so many thousand—besides numerous pictures by Cannaletti and his imitators, which tell all that can be told—show all that can be shown: to know Venice, to feel the influence of its beauty and strangeness, is quite another thing; perhaps the vignettes to Mr. Rogers's Italy, by Turner, better than any other description or representation, can impart this.

From the piazzetta we entered a grass-grown court, once the focus of Venetian magnificence—for, at the top of that majestic flight of steps which rises from it, the Doges were crowned. The cortile is surrounded by arcades, decorated by two magnificent bronze reservoirs, and adorned by statues. The effect is light and

elegant, even now that neglect has drawn a veil over its splendour. Yet Nature here is not neglectful; her ministrations may be said even to aid the work of the chisel and the brush, so beautiful are they in their effects.

The Scala de' Giganti was before us, guarded by two almost colossal figures of Mars and Neptune, the size of whose statues gives the name to the steps: ascending them, we found ourselves in the open gallery that runs round three sides of the court, supported by the arcades. Yawning before us was the fatal lion's mouth, receiver of those anonymous accusations, the terror of all, and destroyer of many of the citizens. Ringing a bell, we were admitted into the palace.

We do not visit it once only; day after day we wander about these magnificent, empty halls—sometimes going in by the hall of audience, sometimes ascending the Scala d'Oro, we enter in by the library. Sometimes we give ourselves up to minute view of the many frescoes, which record the history, the glories, and even the legends of Venice. At the dawn of the art, the more than royal government caused the walls to be thus adorned by Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, and subsequently by Titian: a fire unfortunately destroyed their work in 1577; and the present paintings are by Tintoretto, Paul Veronese, and others. On an easel in the library, is a picture in oil by Paul Veronese,—the Queen of Cyprus, Catherine Cornaro, a daughter of Venice, resigning her crown to the Doge—an iniquitous act enough on the part of the republic; as others, heirs of Cyprus, with claims more legitimate than Catherine's, existed. There is the grace and dignity, characteristic of this painter, in the various personages of the group. It is to be raffled for, and the proceeds of the lottery are to be given to the infant schools; but the tickets are sold slowly, and the time when they are to be drawn is yet unfixed. There are marbles also, in this room, that deserve attention,—some among them are relics of antiquity; for the Rape of Ganymede is attributed to Phidias, and worthy of him. Sometimes we wander about, content only with the recollections called up by the spot; and we step out on the balconies which now command a view of the piazzetta, now of the inner courts, with

a liberty and leisure quite delightful: and then again we pass on, from the more public rooms to the chambers, sacred to a tyranny the most awful, the most silent of which there is record in the world. The mystery and terror that once reigned, seems still to linger on the walls; the chamber of the Council of Ten, paved with black and white marble, is peculiarly impressive in its aspect and decorations: near at hand was the chamber of torture, and a door led to a dark staircase and the state dungeons.

The man who showed us the prisons was a character—he wanted at once to prove that they were not so cruel as they were represented, and yet he was proud of the sombre region over whose now stingless horrors he reigned. A narrow corridor, with small double-grated windows that barely admit light, but which the sound of the plashing waters beneath penetrates, encloses a series of dungeons, whose only respiratories come from this corridor, and in which the glimmering dubious day dies away in “darkness visible.” Here the prisoners were confined who had still to be examined by the Council. A door leads to the Ponte de’ Sospiri—now walled up—for the prisons on the other side are in full use for criminals: years ago I had traversed the narrow arch, through the open work of whose stone covering the prisoners caught one last hasty glimpse of the wide lagunes, crowded with busy life. Many, however, never passed that bridge—never emerged again to light. One of the doors in the corridor I have mentioned leads to a dark cell, in which is a small door that opens on narrow winding stairs; below is the lagune; here the prisoners were embarked on board the gondola, which took them to the Canal Orfano, the drowning-place, where, summer or winter, it was forbidden to the fishermen, on pain of death, to cast their nets. Our guide, whom one might easily have mistaken for a gaoler, so did he enter into the spirit of the place, and take pleasure in pointing out the various power it once possessed of inspiring despair; this guide insisted that the Pozzi and Piombi were fictions, and that these were the only prisons. Of course, this ignorant assertion has no foundation whatever in truth. From the court, as we left the palace, he pointed to a large window at the top of the building, giving token

that the room within was airy and lightsome, and said with an air of triumph, Ecco la Prigione di Silvio Pellico!—Was he to be pitied when he was promoted to such a very enviable apartment, with such a very fine view? Turn to the pages of Pellico, and you will find that, complaining of the cold of his first dark cell, he was at midsummer transferred to this airy height, where multitudinous gnats and dazzling unmitigated sunshine nearly drove him mad. Truly he might regret even these annoyances when immured in the dungeons of Spielburg, and placed under the immediate and paternal care of the Emperor—whose endeavour was to break the spirit of his rebel children by destroying the flesh; whose sedulous study how to discover means to torment and attenuate—to blight with disease and subdue to despair—puts to shame the fly-killing pastime of Dioclesian. Thanks to the noble hearts of the men who were his victims, he did not succeed. Silvio Pellico bowed with resignation to the will of God—but he still kept his foot upon the power of the tyrant.

Having visited every corner of the palace, and heard the name given for every apartment, we asked for the private rooms in which the Doge slept and ate, which his family occupied. There were none. A private covered way led from these rooms to an adjoining palace, assigned for the private residence of the Doge. The council were too jealous to allow him to occupy the palace of the republic, except for the purposes of the state.

At other times, turning to the right, when we leave our canal, we are rowed up the Canale Grande to the Accademia delle Belle Arti, to feast our eyes on the finest works of Titian. The picture usually considered the chef-d’œuvre of this artist, the Martyrdom of St. Peter the Hermit, has, for the purpose of being copied, been removed from the dark niche in which it is almost lost in the church of the Saints Giovanni and Paolo, and is here. The subject is painful, but conceived with great power. A deep forest, in which the holy man is overtaken by his pursuers, sheds its gloom over the picture; his attendant flies, the most living horror depicted on his

face; the saint has fallen, cut down by the sword of the soldier; an angel is descending from above, and, opening heaven, sheds the only light that irradiates the scene. It is very fine; but in spite of the celestial messenger, there is wanting that connecting link with Heaven,—the rapture of faith in the sufferer's countenance, which alone makes pictures of martyrdom tolerable.

I was struck by the last picture painted by the venerable artist—Mary visiting the Tomb of Jesus. I was told that I ought not to admire it; yet I could not help doing so: there was something impressive in the mingled awe and terror in Mary's face, when she found the body of Jesus gone.

The Marriage at Cana, by Paul Veronese, adorns these walls, removed from the refectory of the suppressed Convent of San Giorgio Maggiore. It is the finest specimen of the feasts which this artist delighted to paint; bringing together, on a large scale, groups of high-born personages, accompanied by attendants, and surrounded by a prodigality of objects of architecture, dress, ornaments, and all the apparatus of Patrician luxury. It is filled, Lanzi tells us, with portraits of princes and illustrious men then living.

We turned from the splendour of the feast to the more noble beauty of Titian's Presentation of the Virgin—a picture I look at much oftener, and with far greater pleasure, than at the more celebrated Martyrdom. The Virgin, in her simplicity and youth; in the mingled dignity and meekness of her mien, as she is about to ascend the steps towards the High Priest, is quite lovely; the group of women looking at her, are inimitably graceful: there is an old woman sitting at the foot of the steps, marvellous from the vivacity and truth of her look and attitude. In another large apartment is the Assumption of Titian. The upper part is indeed glorious. The Virgin is rapt in a paradisiacal ecstacy as she ascends, surrounded by a galaxy of radiant beings, whose faces are beaming with love and joy, to live among whom were in itself Elysium. Such a picture, and the "Paradiso" of Dante as a commentary, is the

sublimest achievement of Catholicism. Not, indeed, as a commentary did Dante write, but as the originator of much we see. The Italian painters drank deep at the inspiration of his verses when they sought to give a visible image of Heaven and the beatitude of the saints, on their canvass.

There are other and other rooms, all filled with paintings of merit. One hall contains the earlier productions of Gentile and Giovanni Bellini. The genius and the elevated piety of these painters give expression to the countenances; but the dry colouring, the want of foreshortening, the absence of grace everywhere except in the faces—which are often touchingly beautiful—all exhibit the infancy of the art.

The Academy contains also a hall for statues; in which the glossy marble of Canova's Hebe looks, I am sorry to say, shrunk and artificial, beside the mere plaster casts of the nobler works of the Ancients.

LETTER VIII. Chiesa de' Frari.—San Giorgio Maggiore.—Santa Maria della Salute.—Lido.—The Giudecca.—The Fondamenti Nuovi.—The Islands.—The Armenian Convent.

Venice, September.

There are three churches here in particular, which we have visited several times, with interest; the most venerable, the Westminster Abbey of Venice, is the church of Santa Maria de' Frari, built in the middle of the thirteenth century. Every portion of this vast and noble edifice is filled with tombs and pictures, exciting respect and admiration. Many a Doge is here buried; and many monuments, some mausoleums in size and magnificence, some equestrian, some mere urns, Gothic or of the middle ages, crowd the walls. With more veneration we looked on the unadorned stone, inscribed with the honoured name of Titian. He died on the 9th September, 1575, at the age of ninety-nine, of the plague, and the visitation of this calamity caused the citizens to consign him hastily to the grave, without thought of marking it by any

monument or inscription, so that the spot was almost forgotten. The mortuary registers of the church of S. Tommaso prove that he then died, and was here buried, and his name with a few words conjoined have been chiselled in the pavement. The republic of Venice projected a monument, which the troubled times and invasion of Napoleon prevented their accomplishing. Canova made a model subsequently; but, dying before he could execute it, the marble was entrusted to various sculptors, and is erected in his own honour in this church on the side opposite to the spot where Titian lies. There is something very impressive in the idea of this monument—a procession of figures entering the half-opened door of a dark tomb.

There are several pleasing pictures in the church, chiefly by Salviati; but its pride in painting is an altar-piece of Giovanni Bellini. He had lived long and painted much in fresco, when, at more than sixty years of age, he was initiated in oil painting by Antonello of Messina, and executed his chefs-d'œuvre,—a picture in the church of San Pietro, on the island of Murano, and that which we have looked at with interest and delight in the sacristy of this church. "It presents," says Mr. Rio, "the imposing seriousness of a religious composition, in the figure of the Virgin, and in that of the saints which surround the throne on which she sits; in the faces of the angels it equals the most charming miniatures for freshness of colour and ingenuousness of expression. A foretaste of beatitude seems to have warmed the old man's soul as he worked—he has removed the cloud of melancholy with which he formerly loved to cover the Virgin's countenance; he no longer paints the Mother of the seven sorrows, but rather the cause of our joy."[14]

Exactly opposite our canal, at the entrance from the Quay to the Canale Grande, is the church of San Giorgio Maggiore; it is built chiefly from a model of Palladio, and is the noblest in Venice. Our gondola landed us at the spacious marble platform before the church. Its situation is most happy. Looked at from the Piazzetta, it is the most stately ornament of Venice. Looking from it, a view is commanded of the towers, and domes, and palaces, that illustrate the opposite shore. The church is

immense, and adorned by several pictures of Titian. A convent adjoined, now destroyed; but as we rambled about, we found that they had kindly retained, and left open for the visits of strangers, the celebrated cloister, surrounded by an elegant colonnade of Ionic pillars, and the staircase, which is one of the boasts of Venice.

Somewhat above, within the Canale Grande, is the church of Santa Maria della Salute; this was built in 1631, a time when architecture had degenerated, and a multiplicity of ornaments was preferred to that simple harmonious style, whose perfection has to my eye the effect of one of Handel's airs on the ear—filling it with a sense of exalted pleasure. Here was beauty, but it existed even in spite of the defects of the building; it sprang from its situation, its steps laved by the sea, its marble walls reflecting the prismatic colour of the waves, its commanding a view of great architectural beauty; within also it contains pictures of eminent merit.

The roof of the Sacristy possesses three Titians, which overpaid you for twisting your neck to look at them. Methinks they ought to convert the exclusive admirer of the mystic school, who would confine painting to the expression of one, it is true, of the most exalted among the passions—adoration, love, and contemplation of Divine perfection. These paintings are, what surely pictures ought to be allowed to be, dramatic in the highest sense; they tell a story; they represent scenes with unsurpassed truth and vigour. The killing of Goliath by David, is admirable. The countenance of the youthful hero, as he stands unarmed, "with native honour clad," is instinct with the glow of victory, purified by his artless reliance on the God of his fathers. The Sacrifice of Isaac, is the only representation of that tremendous act that ever pleased me: generally it inspires pain—often disgust; a father, unimpassioned and pitiless, about to cut the throat of his innocent and frightened child. But Titian's imagination allowed him to conceive the feelings that must have actuated and supported both father and son—that of unquestioning certainty that what God ordered was to be obeyed, not only without a murmur, but with alacrity and a serene conviction that good alone could be the result. In particular, the countenance of

Isaac is the most touching commentary on this story; it displays awe of approaching death, without terror; it is solemn, and yet lit up by that glance into eternity, and unquestioned resignation to a will higher and better than his own, which alone could sanctify the horror of the moment.

But, perhaps, surpassing these in power, is the Death of Abel. Usually, you see a man striking his brother the death-blow, as it seems, with cold-blooded brutality: here, you behold the wild frenzy that transported the fratricide out of himself. I have seen the passion of violent and terrible anger well expressed in two pictures only—this one, and that at Berlin, where the Duke of Gueldres clenches his fist at his father.

One day, in one of our many rambles, we tried to get into a church, but it was at the worst hour for such a visit—between one and four—when the churches are closed. We tried to find the sacristan, when a workman came to us—"You cannot get in there," he said; "but I will show you something." He took us to the building at which he was at work—a convent for Dominicans. The French, during their rule, suppressed all the convents; they are being revived, even in Lombardy, where, till lately, there were none. There was nothing attractive in a modern house divided off into narrow cells, two of which were windowless, and pointed out as luoghi di castigo, by our guide; but it was curious (whether satisfactory or not, I leave to others to decide,) to see this building, narrow of dimensions, mean in its proportions, altogether insignificant in size and aspect, replace the stately edifices in which monks of olden time passed their fives.

The church of the Jesuits is in the ornate style dear to this order, and is even in worse taste than usual. Before the high altar is spread the imitation of a carpet, formed of party-coloured marbles. Even the pictures—many of which are by Palma—that hang around, are robbed of their beauty by their juxtaposition to heavy, inelegant ornaments.

We were glad to leave it, and to turn our steps to the church of the Saints Giovanni and Paolo, a very large and majestic edifice; it is more venerable than any other in Venice, and belongs to the middle ages; the name of the architect is lost: an inscription under the organ only tells us, that it was begun in 1246, and consecrated in 1430. It is filled with magnificent tombs of the old Doges, and rich in pictures by Bonifazio, Bassano, Bellini—the famous Martyrdom of Titian is taken hence. We often wander about its vast and stately nave, reading, with pleasure, the historical names on the tombs—taking delight in the many remains of the middle ages—and filled more and more with veneration for the energy, magnificence, and taste of the Venetians.

I cannot tell you of all we see, or it would take you as long to read my letter as we shall be at Venice. As we remain a month, we do not crowd our day with sights; our gondoliers come in the morning, and we pass our time variously. Sometimes, after visiting a single church, we are rowed over to Lido; and, crossing a narrow strip of sand, scattered with Hebrew tombstones, find ourselves on the borders of the ocean; we look out over the sea on vessels bound to the East, or watch the fishing-boats return with a favourable wind, and glide, one after the other, into port, their graceful lateen sails filled by the breeze. We thus loiter hours away, especially on cold days, when we have been chilled at home; but Lido has a heat of its own—its sands receiving and retaining the sun's rays—which we do not enjoy among the marbles and pavements of Venice.

As the sun sinks behind the Euganean hills, we recross the lagune. Every Monday of this month is a holiday for the Venetian shopkeepers and common people; they repair in a multitude of gondolas to Lido, to refresh themselves at the little inn—to meet in holiday trim, and make merry on the sea-sands. We pass them in crowds as we return on that day. Our way is, sometimes (according as the tide serves,) under the walls of the madhouse, celebrated in Shelley's poem of Julian and Maddalo—

"A windowless, deformed, and dreary pile."

Yet not quite windowless; for there are grated, unglazed apertures—against which the madmen cling—and gaze sullenly, or shout, or laugh, or sing, as their wild mood dictates.

We often allow our gondolier to take us where he will; and we see a church, and we say, what is that? and make him seek the sacristan, and get out to look at something strange and unexpected. Thus we viewed the church of St. Sebastian, which contains the chef-d'œuvre of Paul Veronese, the Martyrdom of St. Mark. There is something in the works of this artist, which, without being ideal or sublime, is graceful and dignified—according to the dignity of this world;—his groups are formed of the high-born and high-bred, and all the concomitants of his pictures are conceived in the same style of mundane but elegant magnificence. Sometimes we walk: passing through the busy Merceria, we get entangled, and lose ourselves in the calle of Venice;—we see an open door and peep in, and ask where we are from a passer by; and hear a name of historic renown, and find ourselves viewing, by chance, one of the wonders of the place. A favourite walk is straight across towards the north, till we reach the Fondamenti Nuovi, a handsome quay, from which we command a view of many of the smaller islands; and far distant, the Julian Alps and the mountains of Friuli. It is to me a most exalted pleasure to look on these heaven-climbing shapes.

Sometimes, if the morning be "kerchiefed in a comely cloud," and it feels chilly, we cross merely to the Canale della Giudecca, which is almost a lagune, and being very much wider than the Canal Grande, is not so convenient for common traffic; a handsome street or quay, turned to the south, borders the water—which, receiving the noonday sun, forms a pleasant and warm promenade.

Madame de Genlis exclaims, "Quelle triste ville que Venise!" For those who love the confusion and clatter of carriages, the garish look of smart shops, and a constant flux and reflux of passers-by, it is indeed dull. There is no noise (except the church

bells, of which there is too much)—no dust; the waters sparkle silently at your feet; the marble palaces catch their radiance and are dressed in prismatic colours, reflected from the waves. It is a place where you may dream away your life, quite forgetful of the rubs, thorns, and hard knocks of more bustling cities.

But if Venice be tranquil, come with me beyond Venice, and tell me what name to give to the superlative stillness that reigns when we cross the lagunes to the islands—Murano, Mazzorbo, Burano Torcello. Little remains on them, except the churches, built in the younger days of Venice; several of these are magnificent in marbles, and interesting from their pictures, painted in the infancy of the art. We rambled about, and our very footsteps seemed unnaturally to invade the stillness that dwells on these desert shores, beside the waveless lagune. For a time we might fancy ourselves—

"The first that ever burst

Into that silent sea."

We were pleased; but quiet became lethargy; and the dank grass and marshy ground looked unhealthy. We were glad to be rowed back to Venice.

It was much pleasanter to visit the Armenian convent. This is the beau idéal of gentlemanly and clerical seclusion. Its peaceful library; its cultivated and shady garden; the travelled tastes of its inmates, who all come from the East, and are not imprisoned by their vows, but travel on various missions, even as far as that Ultima Thule which we consider the centre of all busy life—the view of the domes and towers of Venice; and further still, of the Euganean hills to the west, and of the Alps to the north; the sight you caught of some white sails on the far ocean;—all this gave promise of peace without ennui—a retreat—but not a tomb.

Thus I dwell on the beauty, the majesty, the dreamy enjoyments of Venice. I will now endeavour, though the time I stay is too short to enable me to observe much, to tell you something of the Venetians.

LETTER IX. Free Port.—Venetian Society.—Titles of the Nobility.—The Dotti.—Infant School.

October.

When I was here last, the duties on all imports to Venice were high, living became expensive, and the city languished;—it is now a free port; everything enters without paying the slightest toll, with the exception of tobacco. The Emperor of Austria grows a wretched plant, to which he gives this name, on his paternal acres, and will not allow his subjects to smoke anything else. If that were the only misdeed of his government, I should not quarrel with him, but only with the people, who do not thereon forego the idle habit of cigars altogether.

The free port gives a far greater appearance of life and activity to the city than it formerly had; and some luxuries—such as Turkish coffee, and, indeed, all things from the East, are much better and cheaper than with us. To the Venetians, coffee stands in lieu of wine, beer, spirits, every exciting drink, and they obtain it in perfection at a very low price. The Austrian is doing what he can to revive trade, so to increase his store; for two thirds of the taxes of the Regno Lombardo-Veneto go to Vienna. He desires that railroads should be made, and one is being constructed from Milan to Venice. Nay, they are in the act of building a bridge for the railroad carriages from Mestre to the centre of the city; however convenient, it is impossible not to repine at this innovation; the power, the commerce, the arts of Venice are gone, the bridge will rob it of its romance.

With scarcely any exception, all the Venetians of the higher ranks are at Villeggiatura at this season, so we have seen but very few of them. The manner in which the upper class live is, I fancy, monotonous enough. In the winter, the Viceroy comes from Milan to inhabit his palace, and gives a few balls. Some ladies open their houses for conversazioni in the evening; but the usual style is for each lady to have her circle, and the general drawing-room is the Opera-house; or they

assemble in the Piazza of San Marco. There is a plentiful supply of chairs before the doors of the principal caffès, and they sit and converse. It is not etiquette for a lady to enter a caffè, and they are shocked at the English women, who do not perceive the difference between eating their ice, or sipping their coffee, in the open Piazza, and entering the shop itself. To sit or to walk, listening to the band, and exchanging visits in this glorious drawing-room, lighted up by the mighty lamps of heaven, is, especially to an unhacknied stranger, a very pleasant way of passing a summer evening. The caffè to which the noble Venetians resort, is that of Suttil. Foreigners go next door to Florian, where Galignani is taken in, which is an attraction to the English.

That reading does not flourish here, may be gathered from the fact that there is no circulating library, nor any literary society, such as are frequent in country towns in France and England, where people subscribe among one another for the supply of books. The French Consul tried to establish one, but did not succeed. I think it is Doctor Gregory who says, reading novels is better than a total incapacity to take an interest in books, since it enlarges the mind more than no reading at all. It is sometimes alleged, that in a state of society where there is no thought nor desire for the acquisition of knowledge, it is better not to read, than to imbibe the opium or exciting cordials of the usual run of novels. The question is, whether these works are not a step towards awakening a desire for nobler and more useful mental culture. Meanwhile, to live among a people who do not read—do not desire to learn—presents to us a singular phasis of society. What can they do? Many things, it may be said, remain for women in the discharge of their duties, without becoming blue; but the fact is, that a desire for improvement is the salt of the human intellect; that a wish to acquire knowledge is natural to a well-conditioned mind, and ought especially to exist among individuals of that class of society which enjoys uninterrupted leisure. The Italians are delicately organised, and have intuitive taste in music and most of the fine arts; but accomplishments, as they are called, cannot

be cultivated to any extent, nor can even a love of duty subsist among the idle, which the Italians proverbially are.

Still, among the Venetians, as all over Italy, you must not suppose because they are ignorant—because they live in a confined routine—because to make love in their youth, and take care of their money in later years, be the occupation of the greater number, that you find the provincial tone of a French or English country town. Graceful manners—accents modulated by the kindest courtesy—suavity that is all gentleness, and a desire to do more than please, to be useful, is innate among them—it reigns in every class of society, and wins irresistibly.

When I was last at Venice, many many years ago, I knew no Venetians, and it so happened that the English whom I saw chose to erect themselves into censors of this people, and to speak of them in unmeasured terms of censure. New to Italy, we believed those who had lived there long. Shelley, in his letters and poems, echoes these impressions. I cannot pretend to say with what justice such opinions were formed: I do not know whether the Venetians are improved. If a foreigner came to England, and chose to associate with the most vicious of our country people, both nobles and that worst race who live by the vices of the rich, he might find as much to abhor as Lord B— represented as detestable at Venice. But then there is another class among us,—and he declared there was no other here. We know, indeed, generally speaking, that Italian morality is not ours; but if it falls short in some things, perhaps in others, if we knew them well, we should be obliged to confess its superiority.

The duties of husband and wife are in England observed with even more sanctity than they obtain credit for. But in how many instances do our affections and duties begin and end there—with the exception of those exercised by the parents towards their very young children. We all know that when a son or daughter marries, they literally fulfil the dictum of Adam, “therefore shall a man leave his father and

mother, and cleave unto his wife." Our family affections centre in the small focus of the married pair, and few and ineffectual are the radii that escape and go beyond.

Now, it must be acknowledged that, however endearing at the outset, however necessary and proper, to a certain extent, such a state of things may be, it often degenerates after a little time into the most sordid selfishness. The Italians are deficient in this self-dedication to one, but they have wider extended family attachments, of a very warm and faithful description. We who consider it a necessity of life to have a menage to ourselves—each couple in its nest—cannot understand the harmony and affection nourished in a little republic, often consisting of grandfather and grandmother, who may be said to have abdicated power, and live in revered retirement—their days not counted and grudged, as with us is too frequently the case: then comes father and mother, respected and loved—and then brothers and sisters. If a sister marries, she becomes a part of another family, and goes away. The son brings his wife under his father's roof; but the size of their houses renders them independent in their daily life. The younger sons are not apt to marry, because, in addition to their want of fortune, too many women, essentially strangers, would thus be brought under one roof, and would be the occasion of discord. We know how readily the human heart yields to a law which it looks on as irrefragable; submitting to single life, uncles learn to love their nephews and nieces as if they were their own offspring, and a strong family chain is thus formed. A question may arise as to how much of family tyranny turns these links into heavy fetters. In the first place, their families are seldom as numerous as with us. The necessities of their position fall lightly on the males. All over the world younger sons seldom marry; or only do so to exchange luxury for straitened circumstances; and younger sons who continue to grow old under the paternal roof, sharing by right the luxuries to which they were born, and in which they were educated, are better off than our younger sons, who are often thrust forth from the luxurious home of their youth, to live on a bare pittance in a wretched lodging.

Unmarried women all over the Continent have so much the worst of it, that few remain single. How they contrive to dispose of their girls, now convents are in disuse, I cannot tell; but, as I have said, there are not so many as with us, and they usually contrive to marry. At times you may find a maiden aunt, given up to devotion, who sheds a gentle and kindly influence over the house. It does not strike me that, as regards daughters who survive their parents, things are much better managed with us.

This family affection nurtures many virtues, and renders the manners more malleable, more courteous, and deferential. For the rest, though I cannot pretend to be behind the scenes—and though, as I have said, their morality is confessedly not ours—I am sure there is much both to respect as well as love among the Italians.

The great misfortune which the nobles labour under is, in the first place, a bad education, and afterwards the want of a career. The schools for children are as bad as they can be;—at their universities there is a perpetual check at work, to prevent the students imbibing liberal opinions; for as the governments of Italy consider that those who dedicate themselves to study and reflection are sure to be inimical to them, so do they look on such with jealousy and distrust, while sharp watch is kept on the professors, to prevent their ranging beyond the bounds of science, into the demesnes of philosophy.[15] Young men at college, however, are all liberal, all ardent for the freedom of their country, all full of the noblest, though too often the most impracticable views for her regeneration. They leave college,—and what is to become of them? If they have already distinguished themselves for boldness of opinions, or even for great capacity and love of knowledge, they are marked men; they are not permitted to travel;—in any case they have no career, unless they give in at once their adherence to Austria; and, certainly, however hopelessness or misfortune may tame and induce them to do this in after times, at their first outset in life, an Italian would feel as if, in so doing, he were a traitor to his country. Some few there are—as many perhaps as with us—chosen spirits, who can pursue their

course, devoted to study, or the service of their fellow creatures—abstracted from the frivolity or vices of society. But the majority have either never felt the true touch of patriotism and a desire for improvement, or find such incompatible with worldly pleasure. There is little or no public employment; the marine is but a name; the army, no true Italian would enter; if they did, they would be quartered far away from their native country, in Hungary or Bohemia; they have nothing to occupy their minds, and of course plunge into dissipation. Play is the whirlpool that engulphs most of them. As with us during the middle of the last century—as among a certain set of our present aristocracy—play is their amusement, their occupation, their ruin;—many of the noblest Italian families are passing away, never more to be heard of, the heirs of their wealth having lost all in play.—New men, mostly of Jewish extraction, who have gained by banking, stock jobbing, and money lending, what the others have lost by their extravagance, are rising on their downfall.

A curious anomaly exists among the nobility of the north of Italy. It is well known that titles in England are on a different footing from those on the Continent, and hence are far more respected. In England, a peer is an hereditary legislator, he is certain to possess a comparatively large fortune; so that, to be a noble with us, is to be in the possession of power and influence. His sons, except the eldest, enjoy little of all this, and in the next generation they sink into untitled gentry. In Italy, indeed every where abroad, the descendants of a noble are also noble to the end of time. The individuals of this order, in consequence, intermarry only among one another, and flourish as a numerous class, wholly apart; but of course the respect in which titles are held is greatly diminished, as power and fortune by no means constantly attend them.

At present many of the most illustrious families of Venice and Lombardy have lost their titles. Thus it happened. On Napoleon’s downfall, when Venice and her territories and other parts of Northern Italy were ceded to Austria, the kingdom Lombardo-Veneto was formed, and all those persons who wished to become nobles

of the new state, were ordered to prove their titles by producing the diplomas and documents establishing the same. The Venetians could easily have complied, since the names of the nobility were, under the republic, inscribed in the libro d'oro; for, although the original of this book was burnt by the republicans in 1797, several copies existed; and the Venetian nobles were informed, that on presenting a petition to request leave, and paying the tax or fees, they might retain the titles of their forefathers. Many who were descended from families which had given doges to the state, refused to petition.—"What is the house of Hapsberg," they said, "that it should pretend to ennoble the offspring of old Rome?" Nor would they deign to request honours from the invaders of their country, who carried their insolence so far as to demand proof of noble origin from those who, for centuries, had illustrated the pages of history with their names.[16]

The nobility of Lombardy were also called upon to ask for the confirmation of the titles which they already possessed, by producing the documents that proved them. Very few were able to comply, as the Jacobins had destroyed their papers when they seized on all public and private archives, and burned them. Thus many of the most ancient and illustrious families are deprived of the titles which, for centuries, they enjoyed. These regulations concern that portion of Lombardy lately incorporated in the Austrian kingdom. With regard to the Milanese nobility, and that belonging to the states which Austria possessed before the French Revolution, the edicts touched only the new nobility, for which the Austrian government entertained an antipathy, and was desirous of finding a pretence for depriving of rank; it was often enabled to succeed by taking advantage of some flaw in their diplomas, or in the manner in which they had fulfilled the conditions contained in the article of the constitution which treats of feudal tenures. It also forced the nobles of Lombardy, who had received additional rank, to choose whether they would belong to the ancient nobility by their old titles, or to the modern by their new. Litta and Visconti, who had been made dukes, as well as others who had been advanced in rank, chose the

former, and thus, though of ancient race, belong to the new nobility.

But to return to the more important topic of the state of knowledge in Italy—for this matter of titles is held by themselves in great contempt, and only thought of as marking the desire of Austria to arrogate power and to annoy. The Italians care very little for titles; and I have often heard them say, that until they visited France or England, they scarcely knew or cared whether they possessed any.

You must not suppose, from what I say, that Italy in no way shares in the enlightenment of the present times. Moreover, the Emperor of Austria admits the diffusion of science in his dominions. Happy Italians, to whom is conceded one path, on which their minds may proceed in the journey onwards for which God created man. The Austrian government is aware that their own native subjects can go pottering on with theories and science, without one aspiration to become men, in the free and noble sense of self-government, stirring in their hearts: it supposes that it will be the same in Italy; but the people of this country are made of different clay; and it seems to me, that as Jehovah hardened the heart of Pharaoh for his own destruction, so does he soften the heart of Prince Metternich, thus to admit a system of improvement into Lombardy, which will hereafter prove the instrument of the overthrow of his power. Science is generally pursued by clever Italians as a mode of employing their understandings, which does not excite the suspicion of government; and scientific meetings, such as assemble with us at stated times in the great provincial towns, take place yearly in Italy. This season the learned met in Padua; and at the inn where we refreshed ourselves in that city, we found tables spread for three hundred Dotti, as they are called. A ridiculous story came to us the other day from across the lagune. A student of the university looking over the bridge, and seeing come up the river a barge full of pumpkins, cried out, “Vengono i dotti—see, they have sent their heads before them!” Testa di zucca, or pumpkin-head, answers to our phrase of blockhead. This, however, was regarded as a serious insult, and the offender has been put under arrest, and is to be imprisoned till the great men leave

Padua.

There is another point for which the government shews toleration, on condition that its own political catechism is taught—infant schools. I visited one, and was much interested. It belongs to our district of Venice, and is one among many. It was for both boys and girls under the age of nine. I saw the girls' room first. They learn according to the system now prevalent everywhere for teaching the poor—Bell's and Lancaster's, as it used to be called. There were some thirty or forty girls; and I am sorry to say they did not shew so well as the boys; the cause, I trust, being that the head-teacher, a priest, attended only to the latter. I do not mean to detract from the governesses who presided over both schools: they seemed sensible and zealous, and in every way the whole thing was respectable. But the priest, a young man, has a passion for arithmetic; he teaches it with ardour to his pupils, who have a happy knack for the same; and the sums we witnessed brought to a happy conclusion by these little fellows, all under nine years of age, and one between seven and eight being the cleverest, were to me quite prodigious. Once the master disputed a point; the boys insisted they were right, and so it proved. We gave the stuns. As to the correctness of the computation, we trusted a good deal to the honour of the governesses and master; but in truth, to see the eager and intelligent way in which the boys answered, was quite sufficient, for no one could be so ready and glad unless he felt himself in the right. These children were not pretty. I have often remarked, that handsome as the Italian common people are, their children (probably from bad food) are seldom good-looking.

Unfortunately, when the children leave the infant schools, their education ends; they fall back on the habits of indolence and ignorance indigenous here. How far their arithmetical studies may conduce to their honesty, I cannot guess. I am not one of those who say,

"Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring."

A little light is better than total darkness; especially in Italy, where the cleverness of the people prevents their ever becoming stupid. They must learn something; and a little good is better than all bad.

LETTER X. Venetian Palaces.—Gondolieri.—Basilica of St. Mark.—Opera.—Illumination of the Fenice.

Venice, October.

Many of the palaces of Venice still preserve their pictures, and shew, in their numbers and beauty, the wealth and taste of the families in old time. The Palazzo Manfrin contains, I think, the largest and most choice collection. It has some incomparable pictures by Giorgione, the contemporary, and rival, of Titian. He also was a pupil of Gian Bellini, but invented a style of his own, and first painted with that richness and grandeur of colouring which is the pride of the Venetian school. His pictures in the Palazzo Manfrin are wonderfully beautiful. The Deposition from the Cross, by Titian, is here: indeed, the collection is in every respect magnificent, and deserves many visits. In the Palazzo Mocenigo (which Lord Byron inhabited—there are two palaces Mocenigo: it is one of the most illustrious families of Venice), there is the design for the Paradiso of Tintoretto. In the Palazzo Pisani is an admirable picture by Paul Veronese—the Family of Darius at the feet of Alexander. It rises above his usual style of mere portraiture into the ideal. There is the true chivalrous expression in the mien and countenance of the youthful victor—the grandeur of habitual command, the dignity resulting from noble ambition; at the same time, you see that his very soul is touched by compassion for the fallen princesses, and the ingenuous shame which a generous mind feels on beholding those lately placed so high humiliate themselves before him, mantles in his face.

In the Barberigo Palace is the Maddalena Scapigliata of Titian. Her eyes, swollen and red, are raised to heaven, and her face is disfigured by much weeping. Her

remorse, her vehemence of grief, differs wholly from the tender sorrow, chastened and supported by faith, of Correggio's Magdalen. At first sight, the deformity of her features produced by violent weeping, is almost repulsive; but the picture gains on you; the real beauty of the countenance—a something of noble and soft, in spite of passionate sorrow and self-abasement—is perceptible through her tears.

We were taken to-day to see a modern picture painting for the Emperor. It is on a large scale—Foscari taking leave of his Father; his mother is fainting; the Doge, struggling with contending emotions, turns half away. The best figure is that of the son: the feebleness arising from physical suffering—veneration for his seemingly severe parent—grief, tenderness, and resignation—are well expressed in his kneeling figure and downcast face.

The Venetians are much interested at this moment by the restoration of the Pala of the high altar of St. Mark's. It required an order to view it and the other precious objects preserved in the Treasury.

The Basilica of San Marco is the most singular among the edifices of Venice. Its strange Arab architecture denotes its great antiquity. The ancient chapel of St. Theodore (who, before the transfer of the body of St. Mark, was the patron saint of the city), built in 552, was incorporated in 828 in the ancient church of St. Mark, at the time when the bones of the Saint arrived. These edifices being consumed by fire, the foundations of the present were laid in 976, and completed in 1071; but even until the middle of the last century its internal decorations were not completed.

Every portion glistens with precious stones. Its walls are covered with pictures in Mosaic: its pavement, and the five hundred columns that adorn it, are composed of verde antique, jasper, porphyry, agate, and the most precious marbles. Usually, one cares little for such things; but here the barbaric magnificence—the Eastern aspect—the tombs of heroes it contains, and its association with the glories of the republic—combine to render the tribute of Mammon to Heaven interesting.

The high altar has two Pale: one covers the other. The internal one, a curiosity from its richness, has been taken down to be repaired. It is called the Pala d'oro, and is formed of enamel paintings on silver and gold, encrusted with a profusion of gems; it was executed at Constantinople by order of the Doge Piero Orseolo, under whose reign the Basilica was finished. It now forms the delight of Venice, and many noble ladies have contributed a quantity of gems, to replace those that have been lost. It is a curious specimen of the state of the arts in the middle ages, before it revived and received a soul from the great painters of Tuscany and Umbria. It is all glitter and richness, and a sort of barbaric elegance, without real taste.

The treasure of St. Mark once overflowed with wealth, in gems, pearls, and worked gold, chiefly transferred from Constantinople; these have all disappeared; the only objects that attract attention are an antique porphyry vase, with letters carved on it, such as are found in Persepolis—and a golden rose, one of those which it was the practice of the popes to present on certain occasions to catholic sovereigns. This had been presented to a doge of Venice; it was no meagre gift, being a very large bough, bearing many roses, all formed of the precious metal.

Each day we grow more familiar with this delightful city—favourite of Amphitrite and the Nereids; the little roots, generated by sympathy and enjoyment, begin to strike out, and I shall feel the violence of transplanting when forced to go. I look wistfully on some of the palaces, thinking that here I might find a pleasant, peaceful home; nor is the idea, though impracticable for me, wholly visionary. Several of the palaces, bereft of their old possessors, are used for public offices, or are let at a low rent. It is easy to obtain a house, whose marble staircase, lofty halls, and elegant architecture, surpass anything to be found in France or England. Several English gentlemen have taken apartments, and fitted them up with old furniture, and find themselves, at slight cost, surrounded by Venetian grandeur. No one can spend much money in Venice:—a gondola is a very inexpensive carriage; hiring one, as we do, costs four swanzikers a day—about four pounds a month, with a buona mano of

half a swanziker a day to the gondolier, on going away.

Of course, if settled, you must build your own gondola; and to be respectable you must have two gondolieri in livery. The appearance of the boatmen dressed like footmen is, to my eye, the only inharmonious sight in Venice. These men used to be reserved only for the use of the gondola and carrying messages; but in these poorer days, they serve as domestics in the house; they are still, however, a race apart, thoroughly acquainted with every nook and corner of the city; intelligent, alert, zealous; ready (as we were told of old) to do any bad errand; but with such having nothing to do, we know nothing. We have two gondolas in our pay. One of the gondolieri is a favourite, Beppo, No. 303; the other, Marco, 307. We have no fault to find with either; and they join intelligence to exactness. At first, we would not engage Marco, because, accustomed to foreigners, he was proud of his scraps of bad French. We made a bargain with him that he should always speak Italian—Venetian we would not insist upon, for we should not understand him. I am almost sorry to know nothing of Venetian; it was the first dialect formed from Latin that was written. At the time when, in the other cities of Italy, the annals were drawn up in barbarous Latin, the Venetians made their records in their vernacular tongue, which remain to this day in multitudinous volumes in the Library of St. Mark. It has been averred that the first colonists from Padua brought this dialect of the Latin with them, and that it is a remnant of the vernacular of Roman Italy. Nine centuries later, the lingua Toscana could scarcely be said to exist; the language of Brunetto Latini, Dante's master, being very scant and inefficient. I am told that Dante himself hesitated whether to write his "Divina Comedia" in Latin or Venetian, till fortunately he became aware that the talk of the common people of Tuscany possessed all the elements of expression; and he, collecting them with that life-giving power proper to genius, "created a language, in itself heroic and persuasive, out of a chaos of inharmonious barbarisms."[17] There is, I believe, even at this day, greater scope for wit and airy grace in Venetian than in Tuscan.

The gondolieri often sing at their oars; nor are the verses of Tasso quite forgotten. One delicious calm moonlight evening, as we were walking on the Piazzetta, an old gondoliere challenged a younger one to alternate with him the stanzas of the "Gerusalemme." I have often wished to hear them. It was a double pleasure that I did not do so by command, but in the true old Venetian way, two challenging each other voluntarily, and taking up alternate stanzas, till one can remember no more, and the other comes off conqueror. We are told that the air to which they sing is monotonous: so it is; yet well adapted to recitation. The antagonists stood on the Piazzetta, at the verge of the laguna, surrounded by other gondolieri—the whole scene lighted up by the moon. They chanted the favourite passage, the death of Clorinda. I could only follow the general sense, as they recite in Venetian; but the subject of the verse, high and heroic, the associations called up—the beauty of the spot—a sort of dignity in the gestures of the elder boatman, and nothing harsh, though it might be monotonous, in their chaunt—the whole thing gave me inexpressible pleasure—it was a Venetian scene, dressed in its best; and the imagination was wrapped in perfect enjoyment.

The weeks pass away, and we are soon, I am sorry to say, about to leave Venice. We have taken our sight-seeing quietly, and each day has had a novel pleasure. It is one of our amusements to visit the piazza of San Marco at two in the afternoon, when, on the striking of the hour on the great clock, the pigeons come down to be fed. These birds are sacred to Saint Mark, and it is penal to kill any. They lead a happy life, petted by all the citizens. Now and then they may be served up at the dinner of a poor man; but they are too many not to spare, without grudging, an individual or two for the good of their maintainers.

We have visited the arsenal, a monument of the glory and commerce of Venice; silent, empty, useless. One poor brig lies in the harbour; it served during the late war in the East; and the young officer, who kindly acted as cicerone, had captured a Turkish flag, which showed fresh among ancient Venetian trophies. It seemed only a

pretty compliment when I told him, that it gave me more pleasure than all the curiosities he was showing us; but I spoke the simple truth. Anything that demonstrates the valour and spirit of the present race of Italians, is more satisfactory to behold, than all the cobwebbed glories of old times.

No good opera is going on here. The Fenice, the large theatre, is only open during carnival. The most popular amusement is the famiglia Vianesi, about half a dozen children, who sing the Barbiere di Seviglia and the Elisir d'Amore. It was very wonderful, but not pleasing. There is a young and pretty prima donna—a mezzo soprano—Gazzaniga, who takes the part of Romeo in the Montecchi e Capuletti, and sings it very nicely; and there is an amusing buffo.

A grand opera was got up at Padua during the visit of the Dotti, and even Taglioni was engaged. There was a talk of her coming to Venice, but it fell to the ground. However, after the learned had dispersed, the operatic company crossed the lagune, bringing the decorations of Robert le Diable. The Italians do not understand German music. They bring it out because it has been praised; but they do not like it; and alter it, and try to make it coincide with their taste, and spoil it completely.

The Emperor Ferdinand's uncle, and the heir presumptive of the imperial crown, is come to spend a day here, and it is thought proper to mark his visit by a festival. The Piazza di San Marco has been illuminated—only with a mezza illuminazione, but still it was very beautiful; nor can anything be otherwise in the magnificent theatre of this stately square.

In addition they opened the opera-house of the Fenice, and lighted it up. An illuminara in one of the great opera-houses is almost a national event in an Italian town: I never witnessed one before, and now could understand the excitement that it occasions. The price of boxes was very high, some sixty swanzikers and more. Signor —— kindly brought me the keys of a very good box, opposite that occupied by the royal party. We went early; the whole house was full; the passages and

corridors, all brilliantly lighted, were filled with the common people—admitted without paying. Nothing could be more animated, more gay. Our gondolier, one of whose offices this is, paid for us, and showed us the way to our box. When the door opened we were dazzled: it was like a scene in fairy land. Accustomed to our few wax candles, and the deforming, sombre light of gas, the innumerable lights that shed more than day over the whole house, produced an effect of brilliancy and elegance quite indescribable.

There had been much debating as to the opera, Gazzaniga wished to have the Montecchi e Capuletti, as she shone in the part of Romeo; but the primo buffo did not like to be excluded from singing before H. R. I. H. Accordingly, the opera of Chi dura Vince was fixed on, in which Gazzaniga had a prominent serio-comic part. The story of the play is similar to that of our Honeymoon; and the way in which she acted the angry, deluded bride was very amusing. This opera is by Ricci, and has a few agreeable airs in it—though nothing rising above mediocrity. The Archduke went away before the opera was over. Royal personages labour so very hard; and the Archduke was to leave Venice at four the following morning. He went in a steamer to view the sea-wall building at Malamocco, and thence is to proceed by steam to Trieste. Another steamer accompanied him; and the first people of Venice, and all strangers, were invited, as for a party of pleasure. I had a sort of fore-feeling I should not like it; for though I was assured the steamer would make the voyage in the lagune on this side Lido, I did not quite believe that to be possible. So it proved—the steamers took to the open sea, which was rather rough; and though plenty was provided to refresh and entertain the guests, very little was eaten.

LETTER XI. Journey to Florence.—Cold and rainy Season.—Excursion to Vallombrosa.

October 30th.

We have taken flight, over plain, river, and mountain, and are arrived in the

beautiful city of Italy—Firenze la Bella. We parted excellent friends with the host of l'Hôtel d'Italie, who had shown himself anxious to please, and fair in his dealings. A vetturino journey is always somewhat tedious, and the deep roads neighbouring the Po, having been damaged by rain and flood, our progress was more than usually slow. We were drawn by two admirable little horses, and their avaricious master taxed their strength to the utmost. He had demanded more from us, alleging the necessity of extra horses, but grudged the price asked, and went on merely with his own. The stinginess of this fellow had its reward in riches, for he told us he was called Il Miliorino. This it is that makes avarice an incurable vice. It can never be satiated, for it ever wants more; and it is seldom disappointed, for it gains its ends more passively than actively, and its success depends on self, not on others; but this it is also that renders it so despicable. "Tell him his soul lives in an alley," said Ben Jonson, when Charles I. sent him a niggard gift. The souls of the avaricious live in the narrowest of all alleys; they are shut up in the dreariest solitary confinement, from which they have not the spirit to escape.

We contrived to peep at a few pictures. At Padua, we paid a hurried visit to one or two churches adorned by frescoes by some of the earlier masters, admirable for the artless gesture—the earnest, rapt expression—the power of shewing the soul breathing in the face. Every painter who aims at the ideal—at expressing the purer and higher emotions of the soul, ought to make a particular study of these early Christian paintings; they must not imitate them—true genius, indeed, cannot imitate. He can catch the light which the labours of his predecessors throw over his path; but he will proceed on one shaped out by himself. To imitate Perugino would be to write poetry in the obsolete language of Chaucer. Yet every English writer ought to be familiar with the pathos, sweetness, and delicate truth of one of our greatest poets.

I was sorry not to spend more time at Ferrara; and in particular not to revisit the galleries, and palaces, and churches of Bologna. To have seen these once was no excuse for not seeing them again; but I could not.

I cannot say why, but the impression left on my mind of the passage of the Appenines had been unfavourable, and I was agreeably surprised to find the scenery far more varied—richer in wood, and more picturesque than I expected. The mountain inns are all much improved since I last crossed. Evening closed as the valley in which Florence is situated opened before us; the descent is rapid, ending almost at the gate of the city itself. We traversed it at its greatest length, from the Porta San Gallo to Schneiderff's Hotel, where very uncomfortable rooms were assigned to us.

This, and the expense of the hotel, made us eager to take apartments. I was instantly employed in the wearisome task of finding them. There are a great many, but still it was difficult to find such as we wanted. There were several numerous and handsome suites of rooms at a high price, and a great number of narrow and uncomfortable ones tolerably cheap. Neither suited us. We at last fixed on a second floor, on the Lungo l'Arno. The rooms are nearly all turned to the south, and look over the river: they are not large, but they are clean and neat. We are sure of the sun whenever he shines; which is a great desideratum, especially in an Italian winter, when the presence of sunshine often admits of an absence of fire. We have engaged our rooms for four months. It is very cold—as cold as it can be in England.

November.

To cold has succeeded rain, with a few sunny days to break the dreariness of the season; but I believe you in England are enjoying fine weather, and, strange to say, we hear that in Rome and Naples the rain is still more continuous and chill. Walking is out of the question; and driving,——how I at once envy and despise the happy rich who have carriages, and who use them only to drive every afternoon in the Cascine—the Hyde Park of Florence. If I could, I would visit every spot mentioned in Florentine history—visit its towns of old renown; and ramble amid scenes familiar to Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Macchiavelli.

The fault of Florence is, that it is built in a basin, too entirely and too closely shut in by mountains, which collect the clouds, and render the air stagnant; so that it is hot in summer; and in winter, when there is snow on the Appenines, sharply cold. Now that there is no snow, the season being mild, we have the other alternative of rain and mist. Sometimes the Arno rises so high that it threatens a flood: on these occasions, it is watched and guarded like a wild beast, and every inch, as it rises, is proclaimed. I like to hear it, roaring and rushing in its course—

"Per aver pace co' seguaci sui,"

as Dante says of the Po; and any one witnessing the turbulence of these tideless Italian rivers when swollen by rains; who views their precipitate speed, and listens to their thunder, as the mountain torrents, named by the poet their pursuers, come dashing after, to augment their fury—whoso sees this, is conscious that in this passage Dante displays his peculiar and high power of putting a sentient soul into nature, and representing it to our minds by images suggested by a quick and poetic feeling of her vitality.

During the intervals between the rainy days, the mists hang as dense and low over the city as they used to rest over the valley of Dolgelly during last year's wintry summer. But when the sun does shine, and when the smiles of Nature call me forth, I cross the Ponte alle Grazie—I leave the town by the gate of San Miniato, and ascend the steep hill to the platform before the little elegant church (San Miniato fuore delle mura) on which Michael Angelo delighted to fix his eyes, calling it "La bella villanella." From the height, you command a view of the city, crowned by dome and tower, of the Appenine that slopes down to cradle it in its green lap; and of the Arno, that, having forced its way among the mountains, now hurries on towards the marine plain. This view, and the climate also of Florence, was injured not many years ago, when the forests, that clothed the mountain sides, were cut down, to be replaced by the olive—a more profitable growth. But the removal of the

forests opened the gullies of the hills; took away the check formerly opposed to the violent tramontana; which collects its strength on the snowy peaks, and rushes down the bared sides with mightier power.

I look on those glorious hills, and turn to a map of Italy, and long to lose myself in their depths, and to visit every portion of Tuscany; every smaller town and secluded nook of which, is illustrious through historical association. It is my dream to set out some day on this ramble, and see places untrod by the usual tourist; but now I cannot.

However, we could not resist the temptation of visiting Vallombrosa. It is true this is not the season for excursions, autumn being too far advanced; but a fine day gave us promise, we hoped, for the same on the morrow: so we hired a vettura and set out.

The road skirts the river, and winds up the Valdarno, the slopes of whose inclosing hills are thickly studded with country seats. It was a showery day; but the sun shone at intervals, and brightened the stream and mountain sides. The road is new and good. At about one o'clock we reached a small town where a cattle fair was going on.[18] After some little delay, however, we got ponies and a guide, and proceeded. We now fell upon a true mountain path, winding up the hill beside a brawling torrent; the crags rose high above, and the branches of noble forest-trees were spread over our path—truly they were in the sear and yellow leaf; but the place was the more consonant with Milton's verse—

"Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks

In Vallombrosa, where th' Etrurian shades

High, over-arched embower."

As we climbed higher, a shower of sleet came on, and we arrived wet through at the Convent. No women are admitted within these sacred walls, but a forestiera is built adjoining for our accommodation.

The grassy plain, or platform, before the Convent is at the head of a huge gully or

ravine, which slopes down towards the valley of the Arno. A mist hung over the scene; but in summer-time it must be—what it is named—Paradise.

Vallombrosa is situated on the verge of the mountainous region of the Casentino. This district is little known; it vies with Switzerland or the Tyrol in beauty; covered by forests, resonant with streams, the valleys that intervene are green and fertile. Cortona is its capital. Its nobility is of high antiquity, and the peasantry are attached to it with a sort of feudal sense of vassalage.

We arrived wet through. The lay-brother made a good fire, and asked us what refreshment we would have. We had already dined, so he brought us some excellent coffee, and a chasse of rosolio, such as is only to be found distilled by the Monks of this Convent.

The rain made the scene dreary; but it ceased at last, and we mounted our ponies. The sun broke out as we descended; and the sparkling torrent murmured softly as it danced along. I hailed it with delight, as one of—

“Li ruscelletti, che de’ verdi colli

Del Casentin discendon giuso in Arno,

Facendo i lor canali e freddi e molli;”—

Verses are these that might refresh a thirsty wanderer in a hot sandy desert. There is scarcely a spot in Tuscany, and those parts of the North of Italy, which he visited, that Dante has not described in poetry that brings the very spot before your eyes, adorned with graces missed by the prosaic eye, and yet which are exact and in perfect harmony with the scene.

There are three convents, Vallombrosa, Calmaldoli, and Laverna, situated in the depths of the district of the Casentino, of which visitors make the tour. Monks of old were wise to choose spots of extreme beauty, however solitary, for their life of seclusion, peace, and praise.

LETTER XII. Art at Florence.—Cosimo Rosselli.—Ghirlandajo.—Beato Fra Angelico.—Poccetti.—Later Florentine School.

January, 1843.

Florence contains a multitude of various paintings, which to describe, or even to classify, would demand a volume, and would require a knowledge of the art, the elements even of which I do not possess. I have not the remotest pretension to being a connoisseur; nor do I say, as some have done, “I do not know what is called good, but I know what pleases me”—giving it to be understood, by these words, that they have an untaught instinct, transcending culture of the student. I believe, in all matters of art, good taste results from natural powers joined to familiarity with the best productions. To read sublime poetry, to hear excellent music, to view the finest pictures, the most admirable statues, and harmonious and stately architecture, is the best school in which to learn to appreciate what approaches nearest to perfection in each.

M. Rio satisfactorily proves that the modern art of painting resulted from the piety of the age in which it had birth. The adoration of images—or, if that expression be too strong, the having recourse to images for the purpose of concentrating, vivifying, and exalting the faith of the worshippers—created a demand (to use a phrase of the day) for pictures on religious subjects. At first this was satisfied by paintings of the Byzantine school, to which custom gave sanctity. But when men of eminent piety, gifted with pictorial powers, turned their talents to representing bodily to the eye, the Saviour of the world, the chaste sinless mother of God, or saints, who through their faith form a portion of the hierarchy of heaven, and are admitted by the Judge to mediate for their fellow-creatures, they depicted all that their souls could conceive of sublime and holy in the face of man, seeking to present

“Of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.”[19]

It is with extreme delight that I have viewed some of the works of the elder

Florentine painters, who excelled in pourtraying the human countenance lighted up by the nobler passions. Simplicity and innocence; rapt enthusiasm, or dignified repose, characterise their various productions. It has been remarked that Shakspeare's personages speak the very words which we may imagine that our noble selves would say under the suggestions of certain passions, dispositions, and circumstances. So it may be said that every figure painted by these higher artists looks an individual chosen among our species for nobility of bearing and beauty of countenance, and that their attitude and look strictly belong to them. There is nothing theatrical nor affected, which is the Charybdis—nor anything constrained or inane, which may be termed the Scylla of the art.

Among the compositions eminent for the conjunction of the truth of nature and ideal beauty, is the fresco of Cosimo Rosselli, in the church of Saint Ambrosio. The subject is the translation of the miraculous chalice to the episcopal palace. It is replete with figures of various aspect, but all expressive of the sentiment of worship and admiration proper to the occasion. There is a group of women in particular, which, if such lived and assembled in the churches of Florence, show that personal beauty and graceful dignity then existed among the sex in a degree unparalleled elsewhere. But these evidently are not mere portraits; and the painter, though accustomed to associate with a race occupied by nobler thoughts and desires than now for the most part harbour in the brain and heart of women, yet idealised his actual experiences.

There is another picture of this age, which to see, is to feel the happiness which the soul receives from objects presented to the eye, that kindle and elevate the imagination. It represents the Adoration of the Magi, by Ghirlandajo, in the chapel of an hospital in the Piazza della Annunziata. There is one of the Kings standing on one side of the Virgin, which might (as the Apollo Belvidere is said to have done), create a passion in a woman's heart. Where on earth find a man so full of majesty, gentleness, and feeling? There is a charming accessory to this picture. In the

back-ground is represented the Murder of the Innocents, in all its terror; but immediately in the foreground, on each side of the Virgin, kneel two children—the souls of the Innocents who died for Christ, and are redeemed by him. The attitude of these babes, especially of one, has that inexpressible charm of innocence which words cannot convey, and which since the creation of man, the pencil has seldom been able to depict.

Led by the admiration which this picture excited, I visited every other in Florence by Ghirlandajo; they mostly bear the stamp of the power I have mentioned. Vasari, albeit of a different school, praises him highly, but chiefly for the naturalness and truth with which he pourtrayed the feelings; and speaks of the wonder excited by those effects, and the pleasure they produced in the beholders. Describing one of the paintings in a chapel of the Church of the Santa Trinità, at Florence, representing the Death of St. Francis, and the grief of the monks, he says, “there is one friar who kisses his hand; and it is not possible, in painting, better to pourtray the expression; and there is besides a bishop, with spectacles on, who is singing vespers, not hearing whom is the only testimony that it is a mere painting.”

Lanzi speaks of his perfection of outline, grace of attitude, truth of ideas, and of his facility and rare diligence. He was the master of Michael Angelo; and, it is said, envying the talents his pupil displayed, contrived that he should quit painting for sculpture. But this, I have no doubt, is a calumny. He is one of the most prolific among the early Florentine painters; but, among his many pictures, I liked none so well as the Adoration of the Magi I before mentioned, and the Life of St. Francis, in a chapel dedicated to this Saint, in the Church of the Santa Trinità.

The Beato Fra Angelico surpasses all his contemporaries in the celestial sweetness he infuses into the countenances of his saints and angels. We may believe ourselves regarding the blessed in the kingdom of heaven, as we look at these creations of a mind cradled in love, charity, and devotion. Fra Giovanni, of Fiesole, known as the

blessed Fra Angelico, presents in his life the very type of a Christian ecclesiastic. He gave himself wholly up to piety and good works. His humility was such, that when Pope Nicholas V. desired to make him Archbishop of Florence, he represented to his Holiness that he did not feel himself formed to govern the many, and implored him to name another more worthy in his stead. “It appears, from this holy man,” says Vasari, “that the monks of his time did not desire to obtain those burthensome honours which they did not think that they could worthily fulfil, and were ready to yield them to others whom they judged more capable—as did this truly angelic father, who spent his life in the service of God, and in benefiting the world and his neighbour; and what more can be desired by man than by living holily to attain the kingdom of heaven, and acting worthily to acquire eternal fame on earth.” Fra Angelico was no lazy priest—besides his works elsewhere, Florence abounds with lovely images whose serene and blessed faces breathe the virtues of their author. The delicacy and softness for which he is remarkable never degenerates into insipidity. His pure taste made him conceive the highest beauty, his faith gave him a foretaste of beatitude, and he adorned with these attributes the beings whom alone he consented to represent, the saints and angels of Paradise.[20]

We had a curious scene in the sacristy of the church of Santa Maria Novella, whither we went to hunt for one of the works of this angelic artist; the reliquaries mentioned by M. Rio; consisting of two tablets painted with a series of miniatures, representing the Life of Jesus Christ; the Last Judgment, in which the beatitude of the elect appears in all its living ecstasy, and St. Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great, surrounded by their disciples. For a long time the keys could not be found of the closet in which these reliquaries were deposited; and a most active hunt after them was made. At length they came to light, and the tablets were brought out. The Dominican, who took every pains to find them for us, had lately arrived from Rome, and had never seen them. His almost childish delight, as he regarded the inexpressible loveliness of these exquisite miniatures, was highly amusing.

Whenever you have to do with an Italian, you do not encounter the doltish ignorance of an English clown, nor the dogged sullenness of a German. He takes pleasure in your pleasure, and interests himself in the objects which are exciting your interest, in a manner at once gratifying to us and honourable to himself.

Of a later age is Poccetti, unnamed by Vasari, because, when he wrote, he had not painted the pictures which render him one of the most admirable fresco painters in the world: Florence is full of his works, and every one may be visited with pleasure and profit, for he depicts Nature in her truth and yet in her elegance;—if that word denotes the power of displaying in the demeanour and attitude, and countenances of men, their souls defecated of every meaner quality—dignified through unaffected self-forgetfulness—animated by charity—beaming with faith.—One of his most renowned works is a series of frescos in the cloister of the convent of the Santissima Annunziata: they represent the conversion, holy life, and death, of seven Florentine gentlemen, who dedicated themselves to religion under the name of Servi di Maria. The aspect and bearing of these holy men mark them as gentlemen in the best sense of the word. Men, “generous, brave, and gentle;” and, in addition, animated by earnest benevolence towards their fellow-creatures, and lively faith towards the divinity. Perhaps, however, the most admirable of his works is the cupola of a chapel, belonging to the church and convent of Santa Maria degli Angioli. It is painted in fresco, and represents the Saints of the Old and New Testament; the more beautiful portion is the congregation of female saints—Saint Cecilia, the musician; Saint Clara, the nun; Saint Catherine, the bride of Christ, &c. The foreshortening is admirable, the spirit and grace of the attitudes worthy of the highest masters of the art.[21]

Such is the spirit that animates the earlier school of Florence. But as painting became more of an art, and grew to represent domestic scenes and portraits, artists broke from the confinement of mere religious subjects, or treated them in a mundane manner. Then it was that their imagination so degenerated, that they had recourse to

portraits to represent Christ, the Virgin, and the Saints; some of them even fell so far from the ideal of sinless chastity, as to paint their mistresses and women of unworthy life; offering to the worship of the pious, the image of mere physical beauty, without the superior grandeur of moral excellence.

I must confess, that any rules (except the immutable laws of moral rectitude) that tend to limit the objects on which man is to exercise his faculty of the imagination, appear to me contrary to the scope of our creation. We are so far from being all born possessed of equal powers of mind, that since the world began there has been scarcely a hundred among us capable of the higher flights of the intellect. How few possess, in any degree, the capacity of becoming painters, and far fewer are those who are able to rise to an exalted order of art. We ought to know what the highest is,—that those who feel the power should endeavour to elevate themselves to it; but beauty may be found elsewhere, and must not be rejected. Bigotry is ever to be eschewed in all that pertains to man; to confine painters to one class of pictures, is to turn some who would be great, if allowed to originate subjects of a lower grade, into tame copyists, and humble, lifeless imitators of the thoughts of others. As well insist that all poets should write hymns and heroic poetry, as that painters should confine the pencil to the delineation of the conceptions of religious mysticism.

The genuine school of Christian idealism is, for the present, come to an end. And I confess, as far as I may be allowed to judge, that it strikes me that the Germans of the present day, who are endeavouring to revive it, fall into the same mistake as our sculptors, who employ themselves in imitating the ancients;—they are good copyists, but are never original. And what appears to prove this is, that the Germans are not content with endeavouring to reproduce that composed and severe expression which the earlier painters yet knew how to ally to vitality in its highest sense, but they return to the dry colouring and meagre composition, which is the chief defect of the infancy of painting.

Still, there can be no question that in poetry, music, or the plastic arts, the ideal must rank above the merely imitative. Those painters who can embody ideas conceived in their purest and most elevated contemplations, far removed from vulgar and trivial reality, are the greatest. Artists, however, are men formed by nature with the peculiar eye to see and represent form and colour; and it is not strange that the majority among them should turn to the study of these, and view in the perfection of representing the one or the other, the aim of their labours. Thus the study of nature succeeded to the ideal; art fell lower afterwards, and became the copyist of art; and ancient statues grew to be the models from which modern painters strove to gain inspiration, till the uniformity, stiffness, and even deformity thus produced, induced others, who perceived these faults and their cause, to have again recourse to nature.

But these remarks tend beyond the limits of my knowledge, or even powers of observation. I have mentioned pictures not much visited except by the curious, just to shew the way towards, not to guide you (for I cannot), in your search after pictorial excellence: nor will I long detain you in the more beaten road of the public galleries.

LETTER XIII. The Gallery.—Palazzo Pitti.—Le Belle Arti.—Portrait of Dante.—The Churches.

With slow steps my feet almost unwillingly first moved to the collection in the Reali Uffizi. As I entered the Tribune I felt a crowd of associations rise up around me, gifted with painful vitality. I was long lost in tears. But novelty seems all in all to us weak mortals; and when I revisited these rooms, these saddest ghosts were laid; the affliction calmed, and my mind was free to receive new impressions.

The Tribune is adorned with the selected chefs-d’œuvre of the best artists of every school, in addition to some of the finest ancient sculpture in the world. The matchless statue of the Queen of Beauty reigns over the whole—Venus, majestic in her bending softness, which once to see does not reveal its perfection. There is here

one of the most beautiful of Raphael's Madonnas—one of the eight which M. Rio mentions as among the chefs-d'œuvre that Raphael executed in the short interval of two years, during which he especially dedicated himself to multiplying representations of the Virgin, for whom from childhood he had felt an especial devotion.[22]

Here is the master-piece of Andrea del Sarto, a painter of very high, though not the highest, merit. He wants warmth of colouring, fire of expression, and variety of invention; while he has been named Andrea senza Errori, from the purity of his outlines, the graceful decorum of his personages, and the faultless completeness of every portion of his pictures.

Perfection in drawing, of which Michael Angelo was the great master, is the leading merit of the subsequent Florentine school. It has not the glowing colouring of the Venetian, nor possesses artists to compare with Raphael, Correggio, or Leonardo da Vinci. Michael Angelo was its most glorious example—a man whom I do not dare criticize; whom I will wait to mention till I have seen the Sistine Chapel, at Rome; to whose majestic powers of conception every connoisseur bears testimony, while still there is something of extravagant—something which is not absolute beauty—in most of his works at Florence. The glorious Medicean monuments,—

"Where the gigantic shapes of Night and Day,

Turned into stone, rest everlastingly;

Yet still are breathing."[23]

—in spite of the magic art which makes them for ever sit and sleep, yet jar with the sense of harmony in form. His love of the naked was carried to a curious excess. In the Tribune, is a Holy Family, into which he has introduced a variety of naked figures in different attitudes, that have not the smallest connection with the subject of the picture, but intrude impertinently to mar its effect.

A charming Madonna of Correggio, kneeling beside the divine infant, adorns the

Tribune; there is also the portrait termed the Fornarina of Raphael; certainly it is not the Fornarina, for it does not at all resemble her undoubted portraits, and it has been doubted whether the picture be by Raphael. From the Tribune, which, as a focus, collects the rarest and brightest rays of art, branch off several rooms, divided into schools. One of the most interesting is that containing the portraits of painters, by themselves. There is a stately chamber, dedicated to the Niobe and her children, whose maternal, remediless grief sheds a solemn sadness around. The Florentine school possesses specimens of its worst style, the inane, expressionless nudities of Vasari and his imitators. In the room of bronzes is the model of the Perseus of Benvenuto Cellini, and there is something more spirited and graceful in his attitude than in the larger bronze in the Piazza. There is the model of the glorious statue of John of Bologna, which Shakspeare we might think had seen when he spoke of the "herald Mercury;" and a David of Donatello, neither imitated from ancient sculpture, nor conceived under their inspiration. There is all the verve of an original idea; the youthful hero is neither Mars nor Hercules; he is the inspired Hebrew shepherd boy, who derived his victory from his faith. The galleries which run round three sides of the square, from which open the various rooms, are hung with many pictures, and adorned by a series of the busts of the Roman Emperors, and by a number of statues. Just below the cornice is a range of highly interesting portraits. Paul Jovius had made a vast collection of original portraits of all the illustrious personages of his time, and placed them in the palace of the Conte Giovio at Como. Cosimo I. sent a painter, celebrated for his portraits, Cristofaro dell' Altissimo, to make copies, and these are here hung up.

With the exception of the Tribune, the collection in the Pitti Palace exceeds that of the gallery. There are here pictures from every school; and by going often, and selecting beforehand the master whose works I wished to see, I have spent many a morning with delight. Once or twice I have gone merely to refresh my eyes with a marine view—a sunset by Salvator Rosa; it is a picture all calm, all softness, all

glowing beauty; and, during the misty and darker days of this unsouthern winter, I have gone—as I would in England—to warm my heart and imagination by the golden hues of a sunnier and purer atmosphere.

The gallery of the Belle Arti is rich in paintings of the olden times, when the soul worked more than the hand; when the artist sought, in the first place, to conceive the sublime, and the glorious endeavour bore him aloft among the angels and saints, whose blissful ecstasies he was enabled to represent. Why did not some among these great artists portray the other passions that ennoble our nature? We have portraits of great men, worthy of them, it is true; but the ideal of the warrior who would die for his country—nay, I may say, of the lover who loves unto the death—the representation of such men and women as Milton and Shakspeare have embodied in verse, is not to be found in the works of these painters; or only found, because among their groups of worshippers at some miracle, we see the power of great actions sit upon the brow, and add majesty to the gesture of some among them. When they portrayed earthly love, they betook themselves to mythology, and depicted passion, without the touch of tender fear which must ever mingle with, and chasten the affection we feel one for another. As far as I remember, there is no picture such as would idealise Ferruccio Ferruccini or Bayard—nor can I recollect the representation of mutual and tender love in any picture by a great artist, with one exception—that called the Three Ages of Man, by Titian—the original of which is in the Bridgwater collection; and there is a fine copy in Palazzo Manfrin, at Venice. The expression of the lover's face seems to say, "I love a creature who is mortal, and for whose safety I fear; yet in her life I live—without her I die;" and she catches the light of tenderness from his eyes, and the two souls seem fused in one commingling glance; but there is nothing to shock the most bashful mind—love is evidently hallowed by that enduring affection which is proof against adversity, and looks beyond the grave.

One of the most interesting paintings in the world has been lately discovered at

Florence; the portrait of Dante, by his friend Giotto. Vasari mentions that Giotto was employed to paint the walls of the chapel of the Palace of the Podesta at Florence, and that he introduced into his picture a portrait of his contemporary and dear friend, Dante Alighieri, in addition to other renowned citizens of the time. This palace has been turned to the unworthy use of a public prison, and the desecrated chapel was whitewashed, and divided into cells. These have now been demolished, and the whitewash is in process of being removed. Almost at the first the portrait of Dante was discovered: he makes one in a solemn procession, and holds a flower in his hand. Before it vanishes all the preconceived notions of the crabbed severity of his physiognomy, which have originated in portraits taken later in his life. We see here the lover of Beatrice. His lip is proud—for proud, every contemporary asserts that he was—and he himself confesses it in the Purgatorio; but there is sensibility, gentleness and love; the countenance breathes the spirit of the Vita Nuova.[24]

I often visit the various churches of Florence. The old paintings to be found in them attract me; but you must not imagine that the interior of these Florentine cathedrals and churches is to be compared to our Gothic edifices. The space within a large building of this sort often defies the talent of the architect: the Greek temples had but small interior shrines. Their rows of columns may be said to bear resemblance to the trunks of trees; while the capital, and architrave, and roof, does not imitate the shadowy boughs, though their purpose is the same. Gothic architecture, on the contrary, resembles the overarching branches, and imparts the same solemn tranquillity as the aspect of a venerable avenue or darksome glade. The Italian architects seem not to have known well what to do with the vast space enclosed by the majestic walls of their edifices. They afforded glorious room for the painter; but where not adorned by him, they are bare, presenting no image of beauty, and inspiring no solemn feeling. The pictures and sculpture we find are, however, sources of ever new delight; it is here that we may study the infancy and progress of the art—here also, alas! we may perceive its degeneracy—till, last and worst of all,

we see raising to the walls, on which inimitable frescoes are fading away, daubs that——I am not fond of ill-natured criticism, so will say no more.

Let us turn, rather, to the gates of the Batistero, worthy of Paradise. Here we view all that man can achieve of beautiful in sculpture, when his conceptions rise to the height of grace, majesty, and simplicity. Look at these, and a certain feeling of exalted delight will enter at your eyes and penetrate your heart, which is the praise to which a painter or a sculptor aspires. Nor forget when you visit the church of Santa Croce, to look at some fast-fading frescoes, on the loggie of a palace, on the right hand of the piazza. The perfect taste exhibited in the ease and dignity of attitude and gesture of the figures will well reward you for careful examination.

LETTER XIV. The Carbonari.

Of late years there has been a spirit in Italy tending towards improvement; this, perhaps, is less outwardly developed in Florence than elsewhere, yet here also it exists. Politically and materially considered, Tuscany is looked upon as the best governed and happiest Italian state, but in some respects this very circumstance has kept back its inhabitants. The foreign power that rules Lombardy exciting undisguised hatred, and the misrule of the Popes being beyond all question quite intolerable—the people of those states are in avowed opposition to government, while in Tuscany there is little to complain of, beyond the torpedo influence of a system of things that undeviatingly tends towards the deterioration.

The reign of Leopold I. was the golden age of Florence. He was grandduke at a time when a good sovereign was the dearest wish of a people, and the notion of governing themselves was not looked upon even as desirable. The French came next, and the tendency of their government was always to destroy the nationality of any people subdued by them. But this had a certain good effect in Italy. The curse of that country is its divisions,—while the other nations of Europe, in the middle ages, became divided into feudal tenures, and possessed by nobles, who, unable to

maintain their independence, at last became mere courtiers of an absolute monarch,—Italy was divided into municipal republics, or small states,—the mutual rivalry and quarrels of which were the fatal causes that France and Spain disputed alternately, making Italy their field of battle, and Italian met Italian in opposing fight; and Pisa was willing to abase Florence; and Bologna gloried in the misfortunes of Ferrara:—the union of the whole of northern Italy under the French was the first circumstance that checked a spirit so inimical to all prosperity,—all improvement.

When the French were driven from Italy the peninsula became politically Austrian. The Austrian cabinet directed all the councils, and guided every act of the various states. If Ferdinand contrived to maintain a more beneficent internal government, it was only because the Tuscans shewed no inclination to join in the revolutionary movement. But while Austria substantially ruled the whole, it was well aware of the benefit to be derived from disunion, and it stirred up the spirit of discord by a curious contrivance;—a tub was thrown to the whale;—the government ordered the institute of Milan to occupy itself in the reform of the National Dictionary, and hence arose a fierce battle between the Della Crusca Academy and the authors of the "Proposta" on the score of language. Did the Italians speak Tuscan, or Italian? such was the mighty question that engrossed the learned of Italy; it was never started among two or three men without exciting the most violent party feeling, and for many years it set Tuscan against Lombard. Monti, by no means a pure political character, is accused of undertaking this war to please the Austrians, with his eyes open to the end in view. His son-in-law, Perticari, who shewed himself very earnest in the discussion, was too much honoured and loved, his memory is too entirely reverenced, for him to be open to the same accusation. For seven years the battle raged, exciting a virulence of party and municipal feeling, quite inexplicable out of Italy. It ended at last, as the question of big-endians and small-endians terminated in Liliput, by every one breaking his egg at whichever end he pleased;—the Lombards

came to the conclusion that the Tuscans might like their language best if they chose—and they must choose, for it is not only the purest and the most idiomatic, but it is the only language at once spoken and written, except, indeed, the Roman; but that is very inferior in strength and vivacity.

Other influences were at work in Italy to turn the Italians from such puerile contests. The sect of the Carbonari had spread throughout the peninsula, and the hope of throwing off a foreign yoke and achieving more liberal institutions animated every Italian heart.

Colletta, in speaking of the Carbonari, considers this sect to be derived from the Freemasons of Germany—transported into their country by the Neapolitan exiles of 1799, on their return. I have heard Italians well versed in the secrets of Carbonarism deny this. They say that the deeply religious and mystic spirit of the sect at its commencement, proves its Neapolitan origin, and that it was founded by men, Neapolitans themselves, who knew how to adapt their doctrines and their rites to the temperament of a people, at once superstitious and lovers of the marvellous.

The hopes of political liberty which all nations entertained when the armies of the allies quailed before those of republican France, found an echo in Naples; while Ferdinand and his queen, who before the French Revolution had shown an inclination to imitate Joseph and Leopold of Austria, in reforming the laws of their kingdom, taking sudden fright, indulged in such acts of arbitrary power as incited rather than repressed the desire for change. Many Neapolitans, therefore, welcomed the French with enthusiasm, and rejoiced in the flight of their sovereign. The liberators, as they delighted to call themselves, soon, however, showed the cloven foot, and appeared in their true light, of invaders and spoilers. The hearts of all real lovers of their country were alienated from them; and if Ferdinand, on his return, during Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt, when the French were driven from Italy, had shewn himself moderate and forgiving, he had acquired the affection of all his

subjects. But both he and his queen seemed to be driven mad by hatred and terror of the new doctrine of a people's right to be well governed. Executions—the most barbarous imprisonments—persecutions that, blinded by fury, rather attacked a friend than forgave an enemy, followed their restoration. All the constitutionalists or republicans fled—some to France, Germany, or Switzerland, some to the wild and pathless mountains of the Abruzzi and the Calabrias.

When the French returned, the situation of the exiles was not mended; and many among them continued to dwell in unknown and savage retreats, among the inaccessible mountains and solitary valleys of those regions. They lived without any bond to unite them together, yet not so isolated but that they frequently met, and communicated to each other their hopes and projects. More than the Bourbon who had persecuted them, they hated the usurpation of the stranger. The most earnest desire of their hearts was to drive the French from their country, while some among them, looking beyond that time, revolved the means of strengthening their party, so that a republic might be instituted; or, at any rate, if Ferdinand returned, that he should be forced to concede just and free institutions to his people.

Among the refugees of Calabria, who were not to be subdued by persecution and adversity, was a young man of high courage, strong understanding, and gifted with wonderful powers of persuasion. Capo Bianco had first appeared as the bold leader of the militia of his native place (in Calabria), and had won the love, respect, and blind obedience of his followers. He possessed all the qualities belonging to the head and founder of a sect. I am told that he was handsome in person, and courteous in manners, but of a stern and inflexible disposition; severe towards delinquents, gentle and kind to the inoffensive, and to his friends. He added enthusiasm to these qualities, or he would never have erected himself into the founder of a sect. He abhorred the name of king—not because he had been persecuted by his sovereign, but because the power of royalty was detestable in his eyes—so that not one among his followers ever dared name before him Napoleon or Ferdinand; Austrian or

French. He would consent only to republican institutions for his country; he desired the same government to prevail all over Italy, and argued warmly in favour of Italian union and independence. Such was Capo Bianco, as he is represented by the friends who survived him: he was the founder of the most celebrated sect of modern times, and died on the scaffold, a martyr to the cause he advocated.

Capo Bianco had taken shelter in a spot, to which he gave the strength of a rocky fortress, among the most rugged fastnesses of the hither Calabria; he there defied the power of his enemies. Nor did he remain shut up: he frequently called together and appeared among his faithful adherents; and, communicating his bold projects, and warming them by his persuasive eloquence, he induced them to believe that the hour was come when they might unite with the population of their country, to throw off the detested yoke of the French usurpation.

The Carbonari, who have survived a time now almost forgotten, relate how, in the silence of a dark night, Capo Bianco assembled his most attached friends near a poor hut, situated in the depth of a thick forest, and there laid the first stone of the edifice of his sect. He explained its principles and its spirit, and caused them to swear a fearful secrecy on the cross. From this focus the new association spread, guarded by tremendous oaths, and by menaces of a dreadful vengeance to be taken upon traitors; by all the precaution, resolution and terror, that its originator could devise. He gave his adherents the name of Carbonari, because the society was founded in a district principally inhabited by charcoal burners; and men who followed that trade were among the first, appertaining to the lower classes, who were initiated into the secrets of the sect. They, descending from the mountains for the purposes of traffic, carried with them and propagated, wherever they went, the tenets of their founder.

Capo Bianco understood the disposition of his countrymen, and gave a religious and mystic colouring to his society. Striking rites were established; the initiation was terrible; the lessons taught often apparently abstruse; the end was single—to

overturn monarchy in all its forms, and erect republics on the ruin of thrones. To attain this among a people pious to superstition, it was necessary to mingle mystic tenets with political opinions; in short, to erect and disseminate a political religion; and thus, not long ago, Carbonarism was professed, and found proselytes among the mountains of Corsica and Sardinia. The laws of the Carbonari were, they declared, founded on the equality of the gospel, and on the traditions of Freemasonry. The initiated swore to take terrible vengeance for the Lamb, sacrificed by the Wolves. The religion of Christ was the lamb; kings were typified in the wolves. They said that Jesus, who was the Word of God, had been the first who proclaimed upon earth the abolition of ancient servitude, and taught brotherhood and equality among men. He was therefore crucified by the wolves of his age, and died an illustrious victim of tyranny. The Carbonari swore to vindicate the death of Christ, and to exterminate the race of wolves, that is of kings, who inherited the guilt and infamy of the assassins of the Son of God. To strike the vulgar eye, fearful representations were made in their ceremonies, apt to excite the imaginations of a southern people of a highly religious temperament, and the proselytes pronounced tremendous oaths upon the cross and the dagger. The initiation was accompanied by various circumstances calculated to test the moral and physical courage of the novices; and the slightest sign of shrinking, caused them to be irrevocably rejected.

The Carbonari had, like the Freemasons, distinctive grades in their society; they recognised each other by mysterious signs, and called themselves by a secret name—that of “Buoni Cugini,” or good cousins. They took an oath to succour, at their need, every other Carbonaro, and to defend the honour of their women. They swore, if ever they themselves became traitors, to consent that their bodies should be torn to pieces, burnt, and the ashes cast to the winds; that their name should be cursed, and become a warning to all the Carbonari scattered over the face of the earth.

Carbonarism took deep root and spread rapidly. At one time, Murat was induced to

look upon it as a means for civilising the wild Calabrians, and to regard it with favour. But the sect hated the French too much for this to continue. Ferdinand, meanwhile, in his retreat at Naples, spared no endeavour to disturb the government of the invader, and, if possible, to drive him from the kingdom. Banditti were enrolled; a crusade preached by the churchmen among the ignorant peasantry; and a civil war ensued, at the horrors of which the heart sickens. He heard of the growing power of the Carbonari, and had recourse to them.

Already, indeed, led by Capo Bianco, the Carbonari had assembled in arms in the neighbourhood of Catanzaro; they scoured the country, attacked the towns, drove out the partisans of the French, and, raising a cry that the reign of Joachim had come to an end, they hoisted the tri-coloured flag of the sect, and set up wherever they could republican institutions. Become strong in the places of which they had possessed themselves, they sent letters and emissaries to every vendita, inciting the sectaries to raise the standard of liberty and come to their aid. Capo Bianco was the soul of all, and inflamed their zeal by his eloquence. “My Italian brothers,” he cried, “you are the slaves of the French. You have changed masters, but not your state. Your new rulers,—prouder, more insolent, and more rapacious than those of old,—give you no repose, and you lavish without advantage your possessions, your own and your children’s lives! Will you remain slaves—the scorn and mock of the stranger, who heaps wrongs upon you—the victims of the insolence and rapine of a lawless soldiery?” It were long to recount all the arguments of the chief. He concluded by telling them that if they joined his forces, they would command victory, and Italy, liberated, would acquire greater splendour and power than she had ever before enjoyed. “The destiny of our unfortunate country,” he concluded, “is in your hands; and posterity will either bless or curse you for your deeds.”

While this was going on at one place, Ferdinand had given it in charge to Prince Moliterno, who was at the head of the royal forces in Calabria, to treat with other leaders of the sect, and invite them to espouse his cause. The Prince had ever

professed republican principles; and even then, while heading an army in the name of Ferdinand, liberty and the union and independence of Italy were the watchwords he adopted. He endeavoured to persuade the chiefs of the sect that, by using their influence to drive out Murat, they would acquire such power as would force Ferdinand on his restoration to give his people a constitution, as, indeed, he had passed his royal word to do. Many of the Carbonari, although at that time the society was the mark of persecution of the French Government, shrunk from alliance with a sovereign, whom they knew to be in his heart a despot; while others among them gave ear to his promises, and joined the royalists. Both parties, royalists and Carbonari, while they thought it necessary to unite to drive out the French, fostered the secret hope that the victory once gained over the stranger, they could easily get rid of their confederate. Capo Bianco, however, never yielded, nor gave ear to the emissaries of the King. “You mistake,” he said to those of his partisans who took the other course; “and whether the royalists are victorious or defeated, you sharpen the sword that will destroy you; and build the scaffold on which I and my partisans will inevitably perish.”

Calabria was convulsed by these various parties; every portion of it was in arms; and its rivers ran red with blood. Then, as is usually the case in countries which are the prey of civil war, the evil was increased by the crimes of ferocious and lawless men, who collected in bands and ravaged the country, intent only on booty, and ever ready to destroy. For two years Calabria could be said to belong neither to the French, nor to Ferdinand, nor to the Carbonari: each had the upper hand by turns, and were, therefore, unable to clear the country of the brigands that infested it. This state of things could not continue, and the French Government resolved by extraordinary and terrible measures to root out the banditti, and to include the widespread and powerful sect of the Carbonari in the destruction. The atrocious and sanguinary methods by which General Manhes succeeded in extirpating the brigands is matter of history. Colletta recounts it in his usual graphic and vigorous manner. In

his pages[25] you will find related also how Capo Bianco was deceived, betrayed, and executed, to the shame of the French General, Iannelli, who laid the snare by which he was entrapped. He died with heroic firmness; intrepid and calm, he willingly gave his life for the country and cause which he devotedly loved. Colletta, though no friend to the Carbonari, and accused of being a partisan of the French, yet reprobates the conduct of Murat towards the sect. “The violence and severity exercised towards the brigands,” he says, “ought not to have been turned against the Carbonari, for the bandits were guilty of crimes—the sect demanded laws; the brigands were the refuse of society—the Carbonari were honourable and honest men. Carbonarism degenerated afterwards—but was then innocent; it had been invited and approved by Government, and its rites and tenets were civilised and beneficent. Many friends of Joachim begged him to disarm Carbonarism by mild and judicious measures; but anger, which was powerful in him, prevailed, and kept him firm in his evil counsels.”

During and after the fall of Murat and the return of the Bourbon dynasty, Carbonarism, which had never been destroyed, spread; and while the restored king assumed at once despotic power, the sect, finding every promise of freedom for Italy broken, were the more zealous to acquire partisans, and to labour for the union and independence of their unfortunate country.

Do not think that I advocate any secret society: the principle is had. The crown of every virtuous act and feeling is, not to fear the light of day. But it must be remembered with what fearful odds the Italians have to contend; they have not only openly against them the whole fabric of their various governments, backed by an overpowering foreign army; but a secret society is spread throughout the country, the friend of existing institutions;—the confessional is an engine of mighty power, diffused through every portion of every city, the most populous; entering every hut, the most retired; acting on the fears of the timid and the credulity of the superstitious; pandering to the bad passions of the wicked and awakening the

scruples of the pious. Every priest bids his penitents confess, not only their participation in any act or thought inimical to the church or to the government—not only to denounce father, husband, or child, who might trust to them the secret of their lives—but to reveal every little circumstance that may tend to discover the lovers of liberty. Can it be wondered that men who wished to regenerate their country in the face of so penetrating, so almost omnipotent a power, should cloak themselves in impenetrable secrecy, and strive to check the influence by counter-terrors,—equally awful?

Fearful deeds were the result of the laws of the society; the individuals that composed it, knowing themselves to be supported by numerous companions, and sheltered from detection by the secrecy that veiled their name, lost their moral sense. The act, commanded by a power to which they had sworn obedience, ceased to be a crime, and assassination was no longer looked on as a murder, but as an execution; numbers of Carbonari, suspected or really guilty of treason to their oaths, were assassinated all over Italy, especially during the latter days of the society; and volumes might be filled with the history of these tragedies. If any man to whom the lot fell to execute the sentence of the rest, shrunk from his task, he was considered a traitor, and condemned to death.[26] Such was Carbonarism, at the time when it shook kings on their thrones, and made the sovereigns of Italy tremble. Calabria and the Abruzzi swarmed with sectarians; the society was rapidly propagated throughout the kingdom of Naples, whence it spread to Romagna, Piedmont, and Lombardy; Vendite[27] were even established in fair and tranquil Tuscany. Every Vendita was a permanent conspiracy,—every Carbonaro an enemy to the reigning authority;—yet even sovereigns were their accomplices, since they had made use of the society to overthrow the dominion of the French in Italy.

The early Carbonari were men who were actuated by deep-rooted love of their country, and detestation of the vice, ignorance, and slavery into which Italy had fallen; they entertained the belief that means terrible and unflinching could alone

regenerate a people sunk in superstition and slavery. The triumph of the Carbonari was the proclamation of the constitutional government at Naples. But even then the sect was no longer the same. It had transgressed against the great and permanent moral laws by which society ought to be governed; it had been guilty of crimes—now it sunk into feebleness. Its results fell miserably short of its proud promise; for its work had been undertaken by men who were not sufficiently prepared,—who did not look to the future;—who were often swayed by violent and capricious passions, and whose principles were rooted in scepticism. The pure patriotism of its originators became tainted by the personal ambition of their followers. At the very height of its success it was ignominiously vanquished. Unable, from whatever cause, to resist the Austrian invasion of Naples, in 1820–21, the constitution they had erected was overthrown, despotism reestablished, and the chiefs of the Carbonari either fled, or died on the scaffold;—the name became the mark for persecution.

Still the spirit of the sect is not conquered; all the outbreaks in the Peninsula may be traced to its influence; and the different governments of Italy have vainly had recourse to every means for its extermination. They were unsparing in bribes to traitors; they suborned spies; they sowed dissension in its councils, and became possessed of all its secrets. On this account, not long ago, the society was reformed, and became merged in other secret associations, among which that named La Giovane Italia, is principal. The heads of this sect are, for the most part, exiled beyond the Alps; but, even in banishment, they maintain their influence, and machinate risings: above all, they sedulously keep awake the spirit of national union. These new societies can never be as powerful as the Carbonari were—they are but a shadow of that mighty influence; but, if they have less power, they have committed no crimes; and work by spreading knowledge and civilisation, instead of striking terror.

It is to be regretted, that the patriots of Italy have recourse to darkness and secrecy to

carry on the regeneration of their country: for falsehood is the offspring of mystery, and integrity is destroyed by a system that hides itself from the light of day. The Italians must do away with oaths that cannot bind the traitor; and the dagger, which makes a murderer of him whose intent is virtuous. They must sacrifice the formula of union, and be content with disseminating its spirit. Could they teach inflexible truth, could they inspire military courage, did veneration for just and equal laws spring from their lessons, Italy were nearer the goal it pants to attain.

Meanwhile a certain good has arisen from a sect which, however founded in love for their country, has been polluted by many crimes. Carbonarism cannot be denied the praise of having co-operated to destroy the anti-social municipal prejudices, and the narrow spirit of local attachment, which was long a serious obstacle to the union of a country, divided as Italy is into many states, and subject to the stranger. The Carbonari first taught the Italians to consider themselves as forming a nation. It is to be hoped they will never forget the lesson. When the Roman considers himself, in his heart, the countryman of the Milanese—when the Tuscan looks upon Naples as also his country—then the power of the Austrian will receive a blow, which it has hitherto warded off, from which it will never recover.

LETTER XV. Tuscany.

February, 1843.

Nothing is more difficult than for a foreigner to give a correct account of the state of a country—its laws, manners, and customs;—the first often so different in their operation from what outwardly appears; the latter, never fully understood, Proteus-like, assume a thousand contradictory appearances, and elude investigation. A stranger can only glance at the surface of things—often deceptive—and put down the results of conversations, which, after all, if carefully examined, by no means convey the whole truth, even if they are free from some bias, however imperceptible, either in speaker or hearer, the result of which is a false

impression—a false view.

An English person, accustomed to the gigantic fortunes and well-ordered luxury,—to the squalid penury, hard labour and famine,—which mark the opposite orders of society in his own country, is struck by the appearance of ease and equality that reigns in Tuscany, and especially at Florence. There is poverty of course—but penury cannot be said to exist; there is work—but there is also rest: nay, there is no lack of enjoyment for the poor—while the nobility, for the most part, scarcely rise above the middling orders; bankers and foreigners being those who make most figure in society, and that, except on particular and infrequent occasions, on no magnificent scale.

Many reasons may be assigned for this equality. During the flourishing days of the republic of Florence, a blow was given to the nobility of the city and surrounding country, from which it never recovered. Those nobles who still preserved their titles and fortunes, were obliged to conceal all pride in the former, in order to preserve the influence naturally resulting from the latter. The Medici were merchants; and when an Austrian prince succeeded to the extinct family, no change was operated. On the contrary, it was, I believe, one of them, Leopold I., who abolished the law of primogeniture in Tuscany. It is true, that the usual result of the prohibition against entails in subdividing estates, is frequently eluded. A father possesses absolute power over his property, with the exception of a tenth or twelfth, which is called the quota legitima, which must descend to his children, and be divided among them in equal portions. The same law appertains even to the mother's dowry—which becomes her husband's property. A man may, therefore, accumulate and leave the whole of his possessions to his eldest son, with the exception of the above-named quota; and, when this has been done for some generations, large fortunes are preserved. But it seldom is: and as a man has absolute propriety in his estates, a spendthrift can alienate the whole for ever. The nobles of Tuscany being for the most part without pride of order, have readily yielded to the spirit of their country,

which absorbs them in the democracy. At the same time, the feeling of accumulation being extinct, no barrier exists to prevent the dissipation of property: in the hands of a young heir, extravagance and play (the bane of Italy), soon bring to an end the fortunes of an ancient name. Thus, I am assured, many of the noblest families in Tuscany are reduced to poverty: the capital of the country has fallen into the hands of bankers, the majority of whom are of Jewish origin. A number of illustrious names, consecrated in the pages of history, have almost disappeared. They only mark the walls of palaces, empty of the impoverished descendants of their former possessors.

This absence of accumulated riches, of course, checks the arts of luxury, mechanical improvements, and all progress in the framework of society; it multiplies the numbers of those who are just raised above poverty; while the benignant nature of the climate, and the abstemious habits of the Italians, prevent the poor from suffering want. The country is, for the most part, divided into small farms (podere), cultivated by the family of the countryman (contadino) who holds them—he giving his labour, the crops, and tools—the owner the land, dwellings, and substantial repairs; the profits are divided, and the rent, for the most part, paid in kind—a circumstance which aids the farmer, and limits the fortune of the owner. The country people labour hard—very hard, and live poorly, but they do not suffer want; and if there are no farmers so rich as with us, there is no absolute agricultural distress.

In Florence itself the common people are well to do. They are, perhaps, the least agreeable people to deal with in Italy; self-opinionated, independent, and lazy, they can often scarcely be brought to work at all; and, when they do, it is in their own way and at their own time. They love their ease, and they enjoy it: they are full of humour and intelligence, though their conceit too often acts as a drawback on the latter. I speak especially of the Florentines, as they are represented to me; for conceit is not a usual fault among the Italians.

As I have said, an English person, accustomed to heart-piercing accounts of suffering, hard labour, and starvation among our poor, gladly hails a sort of golden age in this happy country. We must look on the state of society from a wholly different point of view—we must think of the hunger of the mind; of the nobler aspirations of the soul, held in check and blighted—of the tendency of man to improve, here held down—of the peculiar and surpassing gifts of genius appertaining to this people, who are crushed and trod under foot by the jealousy of government—to understand, with how dead and intolerable a weight King Log hangs round the necks of those among them, who regret the generous passions and civic virtues of bygone times. The Florentine reads of Filippo Strozzi, of Ferruccio Ferruccini, of Michael Angelo. He remembers the pure and sacred spirit that Savanarola lighted up among the free and religious citizens; he thinks of the slavery that followed, when genius and valour left the land indignant, and

"For deeds of violence

Done in broad day; and more than half redeemed

By many a great and generous sacrifice of self to others,"

what has come? The poet speaks of—

"the unpledged bowl,

The stab of the stiletto."[28]

But those days, too, are gone; there has come such life as the flocks lead on the mountain sides—such life as the idle, graceful fallow-deer may spend, from spring-tide to rainy autumn, under the noble trees of some abundant park; but where is the soul of man? In the hands of those who teach him to fast and tell his beads—to bend the neck to the yoke—to obey the church, not God.

Nor is this all; especially among the rich; far—far from it; for men, unless tamed by labour, can never lead the innocent lives of the beasts of the field: if darker crimes are unfrequent, yet vice flourishes, rank and unchecked: the sense of honour is

destroyed; the nobler affections are crushed; mental culture is looked on with jealousy, and dies blighted. In the young may be found gleams of inextinguishable genius—a yearning for better things, which terrifies the parents, who see in such the seeds of discontent and ruin: they prefer for their sons the safer course of intrigue, play, idleness—the war of the passions, rather than the aspirations of virtue.

To do nothing has been long the motto of the Tuscan government; had it been strictly observed, still much might be said against it. Leopold I. was a good sovereign, a clever and liberal man; Ferdinand, who succeeded to him, suffered many vicissitudes of fortune during the period of the empire of Napoleon; but he was not, like his namesake of Naples, driven by adversity to cruelty and arbitrary violence. When he was restored to his throne, still it was his wish to keep his people happy and contented. It is his praise, that if authority sheathed its sword and veiled its terrors, nor even used the wholesome restraint of the law to punish crime, it acted simply as a torpedo on the energies of the land, nor used any concealed weapons. Ferdinand constantly and resolutely refused to institute a secret police in Tuscany. It was a story I remember, told at the time, during the revolutionary period of 1821, that the Austrian minister at Florence presented a list of sixty Carbonari to the Grand Duke, and begged that they might be arrested. “I do not know whether these men are Carbonari,” said Ferdinand; “but I am sure, if I imprison them, I shall make them such,” and rejected the list. His successor, Leopold II., has not had the wisdom to pursue the same course. The bane of Italy is the absence of truth, of honour, of straightforwardness; the vices opposite to these nobler virtues have now the additional culture which must ensue from the circulation of a system of secret police, of spies, of traitors.

Yet still the government is mild. In 31–32, the throne of Leopold II. was shaken by several conspiracies; and the revolutionary spirit of Romagna, which tended to unite all Italy in one bond, had numerous proselytes in Tuscany. But for a traitor, it is supposed, that on one occasion the person of the Grand Duke would have fallen into

the hands of the conspirators: at the eleventh hour the leader took fright, and discovered all. On this, and on other occasions, the arrests were not numerous; the sentences (to us to whom treason and the gallows are quick following cause and effect,) mild; and these even, after a few months, softened. Leopold wishes his people to be quiet and happy—he hates violence: to pay a traitor to betray, and so to crush a conspiracy noiselessly, appears to him wise and judicious policy. In all respects he is averse to strong measures. For many years no capital punishment has been inflicted in Tuscany; a fact, which of itself demands our admiration, and must be replete with good effects.

“All this is true,” said an Italian to me; “and yet I, who wish my countrymen to cultivate manly habits of thought and action, regard our state as almost worse than any other. Tyranny is, with us, a serpent hid among flowers; and I, for one, sympathise with the sentiment of a Florentine poet—odio il tiranno che col sonno uccide. There are other evils besides those which press upon the material part of our nature, and the new generation in Tuscany feels wrongs of another description. The better spirits of our country pine for the intellectual food of which they are deprived. Thus they tend towards a new and better order of things, the more difficult to realise, because a timid and absurd policy endeavours to throw every obstacle in the way to its attainment.”

LETTER XVI. Italian Literature.—Manzoni.—Niccolini.—Colletta.—Amari.

Italian literature claims, at present, a very high rank in Europe. If the writers are less numerous, yet in genius they equal, and in moral taste they surpass, France and England. In these countries everybody reads, and there is a great demand for books of amusement. M. de Custine remarks, that the French write now for “les concierges et les forçats,” the ignorant and depraved; we write for the frivolous. The uneducated and idle in Italy do not read at all; and an Italian author writes for

readers whom he respects, or wishes to instruct: I speak of the lighter literature. In the higher walks we are lamentably deficient, while France boasts of admirable historians. The Italians possess modern histories to compete with France.

There has been a great revolution in Italian poetry of late years; and it has, to a great extent, returned to the nature and character that marked its outset. When poetry first assumed a form in the Peninsula, Europe was still, if not in a barbarous state, at least in the very infancy of civilisation; and Italy alone, among European nations, taught arts, science, and letters. The character of the youth of modern European civilisation, with all its defects and all its charms, is indelibly impressed on the literature of that age. The poetry of the first great Italian poets sprang from the complicated feelings which a new æra awoke in them. When you read their best productions, you feel that they are animated by the energy proper to the young; and even when they appear to guide themselves by ancient rules, the true soul of poetry, the youth of the spirit, breaks its way through every obstacle. The first Italian poets never obeyed, but on the contrary resisted, Aristotelian rules. Dante, the greatest of all—Petrarch and Ariosto, abandoned themselves to the genuine impulse of their minds, and were great;—great, because free. The history of Italian poetry confirms the truth, that the poet follows the real and the sublimest scope of art when he keeps in mind the character of his country and of his age. The highest Italian poetry is truly national.

The poets who followed were, with few exceptions, imitators; they bowed to the rules of Aristotle, and produced no great works. Since the fall of the republic of Florence, poetry and eloquence, which ought to have waited on the changes and advancement of civilisation, and to have harmonised with the thoughts and manners of the country, failed to do so. Italian painting left no path untried so to arrive at perfection, and sought originality by a thousand different roads; while poets were afraid of novelty. This is not strange. The creations of genius and the inventions of the imagination are derived from, and depend on, the moral culture of the intellect, and this culture was shackled. After the sixteenth century Italy never enjoyed

political liberty, and the intellect of the country was unable to develope itself with freedom. On this account the Italians ceased to contemplate man and nature in an original manner: they were imitators of the ancients, and in the sequel, imitators of imitators, their literature even became influenced by that of the French. No attempt was made to enlarge its limits or to renovate its spirit; for such an attempt, from political reasons, would have been dangerous. Governments who are not strengthened by public opinion, always shackle the free exercise of the intellectual faculties. Writers both in prose and verse, thus grew to aim at grace of diction and beauty of imagery, unsustained by daring and original thought, or even by variety of invention, which is more nearly allied to the enjoyment of freedom than is usually supposed. Yet, notwithstanding these obstacles, Italian poetry of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, possesses high merit; and such, so to speak, is its exterior beauty, that, had it greater intrinsic power, it would surpass every other in the world.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the dawn of a reform in every branch of human knowledge may be perceived. Every one felt the need of having recourse to the real source of inspiration, the hopes and fears which form the national spirit of the age; among others Alfieri rose. There can be no doubt that he was the writer who best knew how to echo the passions and hopes of his contemporaries. I pass over the names of the great writers who, on every subject, shed lustre over Italy at that time, and come at once to the authors of the present day, who sprung up at the close of the wars of the French empire, and may be said to be the offspring of a bitter contest that arose at that time among the literary men of Italy: and even among these, I shall confine myself to the two who possess the highest and most durable influence, Manzoni and Niccolini; men who, in common with other Italian writers of the present day, reject letters as a tribute to frivolity, or means to fortune; consecrating them to the advancement of the great interests of their fellow-creatures, desiring to make them, as Lord Bacon expresses himself, “a rich storehouse for the glory of the

creator, and the relief of man's estate."

I have mentioned in another letter how, under Monti's auspices, a great war of words began in Italy: about the same period another battle raged between what was called the classic and romantic schools. It began in 1818, when Berchet, a poet of merit, descended suddenly into the arena, throwing, by way of challenge, a translation of the Leonora of Burgher, accompanied by an essay, discarding the old models and planting a new banner, beneath the shadow of which the flower of the Italian youth eagerly crowded to contend—displaying the more enthusiasm, because under this literary discussion was hid the hope of regenerating the political opinions of Italy. The classists were not slow in meeting the attack; and when they found their authority, which had been respected for centuries, was in danger of being overthrown, they hurried to the rescue. Monti fought with them. Angry epithets, ridicule, abuse, were bandied about by both parties in the ardour of fight. Book succeeded to book; pamphlets and articles poured furiously down, each breathing the ire of an earlier and more uncivilised age. The Romanticists wished to banish the mythology—to make poetry patriotic—that is, founded on national faith, chronicles, and sympathies. They added example to precept; Berchet published a volume of odes which met with eminent success; the subjects were Italian, and breathed great force of passion and feeling. Grossi, the rival, or rather, as he calls himself, the pupil of Manzoni, commenced with "Ildegonda," a tale in verse, founded on a Milanese story, which was received with immense applause. Manzoni published his "Carmagnola;" Pellico his "Francesca da Rimini" and "Eufemio da Messina." Pellico, afterwards so sadly celebrated for his misfortunes, was at this time tutor to the sons of Count Porro. He projected founding a periodical work which should serve as a common link between the writers of every state in Italy. Porro and Gonfalonieri seconded him, and hence arose a periodical publication named "Il Conciliatore" (the Conciliator). Gioga, Romagnosi, Manzoni, Grossi, Berchet, and Montani contributed to its success, without mentioning the political contributions of

Gonfalonieri, Porro, Pecchio, Arrivabene, and many others, who were then secretly conspiring against the government, and preparing the ill-starred revolution of 1820–21. The first number of the "Conciliatore" was published Thursday, 3rd September, 1818—it came to an end in 1820. From its birth the Austrian government had decreed its extinction; but its short life was yet glorious, since it excited the public mind to free discussion, and gave an impetus to letters.

Manzoni rose into notice as the poet of this party. His sacred hymns and his tragedy of "Carmagnola" appeared at the time when the literary war raged hottest. His poems were received with enthusiasm. "Carmagnola" and "Adelchi" were hailed as national and romantic dramas; their fame spread into Germany and France. Goëthe speaks of them as making "a serious and profound impression, such as great pictures of human nature must always create." "Let the poet," he says, "continue to disdain the feeble and vulgar portions of human passion, and attempt only such high arguments as excite deep and generous emotions."

To us these tragedies appear, though eminently beautiful as poems, to be failures as dramas. It is not enough that passions and events are developed, we desire character also: they have not succeeded even on the Italian stage, on which several of Alfieri's have kept their place. In the "Carmagnola" the audience are at a loss on whom to expend their sympathy. A vague and uncertain tone keeps us in suspense—not that suspense arising from the mingled blame and admiration excited by the hero, which is the true foundation of dramatic interest, but caused by a sense that the writer has no determined object. The "Adelchi" is, in parts, more interesting; but even in that we find no real hero. Our sympathy is most excited by Ermengarda; but she is entirely episodical. These tragedies, however, breathe a spirit that renders them dear to every Italian. They have for their subject national events, which are treated in a powerful and original manner. Alfieri makes his Lombard princesses express themselves like Grecian heroines: Manzoni imbues himself with the spirit of the times; and his personages speak and feel in his dramas, as his creative imagination

taught him that they did during life. More particularly this is found in the "Adelchi," where the veil is for the first time lifted from the intrigues of the Popes, who contrived the overthrow of the Longo Bardi, and the successful invasion of Charlemagne, not in the interests of Christianity, but in that of their own temporal power; and the vain struggle of the falling Lombards, with the insolence of the invader and the hypocrisy of the priest, is finely drawn. It is his odes, however, that give high rank to Manzoni as a poet. In these, his diction is exquisitely finished, and his conceptions rise to the sublime. No reader can fail of being carried away by the pathos and fire of the chorus in Carmagnola, describing the horrors of the wars of invasion in Italy, which became civil contests, as the various states adhered to one or other of the foreign powers, who poured down from the Alps for their destruction. The "Cinque Maggio" is, out of his own country, the most popular of Manzoni's odes, but this chorus and the sacred hymns obtain the greatest meed of praise in Italy.

The "Promessi Sposi" followed. This, to a certain degree, is an imitation of the romances of Walter Scott: it rises above in grandeur of description and in unity and nobility of purpose, though in inexhaustible fecundity of character, the Scotch writer surpasses the Italian. The historian Ripamonti suggested his subjects. The account of the Innominato is to be found in his pages, as well as that of the errors of a high-born nun—of a sedition, a famine, a pestilence—of the character and life of Federigo Borromeo; but these, though suggested by history, are treated with a poetic fire, an originality of idea, and a vitality, which belongs entirely to Manzoni himself. His tale is sustained by a moral, or rather religious scope. He desires in his romance to prove that society, both civil and political, is diseased, and that Catholicism must be the remedy. Manzoni is a devout Catholic. He paints, with peculiar fervour, the merits and uses of a pious clergy; and personifying it under the names of Father Cristofero and Cardinal Borromeo, he shows the beneficial influence it may obtain over the people and the nobility, of whom Renzo and Lucia, the Innominato and

Don Rodrigo, are the representatives. It is not the vulgar notion of bringing forward the Pope, with his army of priests and monks, as the regenerators of society, at which he aims; it is the Christian spirit of resignation and self-denial that he wishes to revive, and render the master-feeling of the world. Manzoni is eminently pious and resigned—this is the internal spirit; in form he adheres to ancient Catholicism, which he regards as the final tendency of humanity.

Manzoni was born at Milan in 1784. I have heard that his father was a man totally without instruction; while his mother, the daughter of the Marchese Beccaria, author of the well-known work, “Dei delitti e delle Pene,” was an accomplished and active-minded woman. Manzoni spent many of his early years on the Lake of Como, at the very spot where he places the scene of his romance. In his youth the Latin poets occupied his attention; he read Virgil and Tibullus with delight—while in Italian he studied the works of the cinquecentiste: so that I have heard that his early unpublished verses are conceived in the spirit of those writers. But he soon broke away from such fetters. He read and admired Dante, with the deep-felt enthusiasm a poet naturally experiences for that sublime writer. At the beginning of the present century Manzoni visited France, and lived for some years with his mother in Paris. In 1808 he returned to Milan, and soon after, chiefly induced by the instigations of his relations, he married a Protestant lady, the daughter of Blondel, a banker of Geneva. They visited Rome, where the lady became a convert to Catholicism; and, as I am told, converted also her husband, who heretofore had been sceptical or careless on religious subjects—but who, from that hour, became an ardent and devout Catholic. He passes the greater portion of the year at his villa, five miles from Milan; he sees little society, being by disposition excessively shy. In 1831 he had the misfortune to lose his wife, whom he fondly loved and entirely trusted. I never had the happiness of seeing him: he is, I am told, of middle stature, of gentle aspect, resembling the portraits of Petrarch—and suffers somewhat from nervousness. He is profoundly versed in history, political economy, and agriculture;

and it is said is now occupied on a history of Italian literature and a philosophical work. In his tastes with regard to poetry not Italian, he admires Schiller and Shakspeare; but, unlike almost every other foreigner, the scepticism of Lord Byron renders his poetry distasteful to him. His soul is filled with love of the beautiful, the elevated, and the pure. These qualities shine forth particularly in his odes, which, since Petrarch, are the most perfect lyrics in the language; and among them, the "Inni Sacri" are distinguished for the exquisite finish and poetic fire that adorns the fervent piety which they breathe.

It would be vain to attempt to say even a few words of the swarm of romance writers that have tried to follow in his steps, and who all deserve the same praise of writing to instruct and elevate, and not, as is too usual with writers of fiction, to amuse, and even corrupt. Out of Italy, Azeglio ranks highest. Like all Italian writers of the day, he is animated by a patriotic feeling. The desire of destroying the prejudices that separate state from state, made him, who is a Piedmontese, choose for his heroes Neapolitans and Florentines. In his first novel, "Ettore Fieramosca," he impresses on his readers the loveliness of the feminine character, depicting the purest struggles between passion and duty. In "Niccoli de' Lapi," a burning love of country, joined to a piety at war with the grosser superstitions of Rome, adorns his venerable hero. The Tuscans generally do not like his style, and prefer that of Grossi. Tommaso Grossi is the intimate friend of Manzoni, to whom he dedicated his popular romance of "Marco Visconti," calling him by the endearing name of "Master." He commenced his literary career by the publication of two beautiful tales in verse, "Ildegonda," and the "Fuggitiva;" in this species of composition there is no one to compare with him, and "Ildegonda," in the estimation of his countrymen, is quite inimitable. A Florentine, Guerrazzi, has published two romances, "L'Assedio di Firenze," and "La Battaglia di Benevento," popular in his own country, from the ardent, the almost frantic love of liberty which inspires their author. This is a spirit that ever finds a clear echo in hearts palpitating with the sense of wrong, and with

the aspiration to independence. He is eloquent and passionate in his style, and has happy touches of situation and character which show him to be a man of genius—but he is diffuse, exaggerated, and sometimes incoherent.

A greater man than these, and in the eyes of his countrymen, equal to Manzoni, is the Florentine, Gian. Battista Niccolini. This poet, it is true, is not as celebrated as the author of the "Promessi Sposi" on this side of the Alps, but in Italy he has attained an equal, and indeed, in some respects, a higher reputation. Niccolini is a tragic and lyric poet, and a great prose writer. He commenced his career, as a dramatist, by tragedies on Greek and mythological subjects. His mind full of the verses of Dante, Tasso, and Ariosto, he reproduced on the stage, garbed in simple and sublime poetry, the theatre of the Greeks. His "Polixena"—his "Ino e Temisto," and his "Œdipus," might be said to be written on the model set by Alfieri, and equally liberal in sentiment. They were acted, and the beauty of the verses insured their success. Niccolini soon, however, became aware that his works did not meet the wants of modern society, and that he ought no longer to remain in the ways trodden by his masters; but that the time had arrived when to cease imitating the ancients. He resolved to seek the reputation of an original poet, and to create a new theatre. The "Foscarini," a national subject, in which he paints, in the liveliest and blackest colours, the dark tyranny of the Venetian aristocracy, had a success on the stage previously unexampled in Italy. The enthusiasm spread among every rank of society; country people, farmers and labourers from the environs of Florence, were seen mingled with the lower class of citizens, besieging the avenues of the theatre for hours before the opening of the doors. Animated by this success, Niccolini composed the "Sicilian Vespers," which is, in fact, a protest in favour of Italy.[29] This drama was received with transports of enthusiasm. The French Secretary of Legation, M. de la Noue, had the folly to complain to the Tuscan government of certain expressions levelled against the French nation. The Austrian Minister laughed at his application, and saw through the artifice. "Vous ne voyez pas," he

said, “que si l’addresse est à vous, le contenu est pour moi.” An interesting and sad incident occurred on the first representation of this play. The mother of Niccolini, an aged woman, insisted on being present—the immense success and triumph of her son were too much for her—she was carried dying out of the theatre, and only survived two days.

The style of Niccolini’s tragedies is looked upon by his countrymen as a perfect model for the romantic drama. It is elevated and yet natural. The poet rises to the height of his argument; his versification is harmonious yet severe—his imagery rich and choice; his tone is majestic, and through all there glows an ineffable love of his art. Niccolini is celebrated also as a lyric poet; but as far as I have read, he falls very short of Manzoni. As a prose writer he has as yet only published his speeches delivered in the Accademia delle belle Arti. They justify his reputation for research, and may be pointed out as models of style and eloquence; he proves himself in them to be an original thinker, and capable of understanding and judging the age in which he lives.

Niccolini joins to his intellectual greatness a character that makes him the darling of his native city. Devoid of vanity, of pure and exemplary life, he passes his days at Florence, surrounded by friends who respect and love him. He is at present busily occupied by an arduous work, the “History of the House of Swabia.”

Italy, from the earliest times, has been renowned for its historians. From Dino Compagni and Villani until Botta, Colletta, and Amari, the Italians appear to inherit the art of narrating events, and describing men and countries, as well as of deducing philosophical conclusions from the experience of past ages.

Colletta’s “History of the Kingdom of Naples, from the year 1734 till the year 1825,” is a remarkable work, as not being the production of an author who spent his life among books, but of a man who bore a distinguished part in the political and military affairs of his time, and who was somewhat advanced in years when, exiled

from his country, he dedicated himself to the study of his native language and the composition of his history.

The first publications of Colletta consisted of a “Narrative of the Revolution of Naples in 1820,” and the “History of the Death of Murat.” The vigour of his style, the truth that reigned in his narrative, and the warmth of enthusiasm that animated his pen, attracted attention, and received applause. To a certain degree an adherent of the French rule in Naples, though fully aware of its faults and its injustice, he, in the account of the death of Murat, undertook, with just indignation, to defend the illustrious partizans of the fallen sovereign, whom the minister, Medici, falsely accused of having ensnared and betrayed him; throwing the blame where it was due, on the rashness of the victim and the baseness of his enemies. This narration is incorporated in his history, and forms one of its most striking passages. It seems to me one of the finest pieces of writing in the world—full of a mournful dignity, that renders its pathos touching, and gives grandeur to its scorn.

A few pages are prefixed to his history, written, I believe, by his friend Count Gino Capponi, which gives an account of his life. While yet a mere boy, he was imprisoned by Ferdinand on a slight suspicion of liberalism, and with difficulty escaped with his life. He, though his name is omitted by French writers, accompanied the soldiers of Murat in their attack upon Capri, and by his gallantry and sagacity mainly contributed to its success. Many important posts, both civil and military, were entrusted to him by Murat, and, on his return, by Ferdinand, and he acquitted himself in all with reputation. He acted at once a prudent, firm, and patriotic part, during the Neapolitan revolution. But though Ferdinand employed, frequently consulted, and often followed his advice, this did not save him after the Austrian invasion. He was first imprisoned at Brünn, in Moravia, at the foot of the Castle of Spielburg, of infamous renown; afterwards, as his health failed, he was allowed to transfer himself to Tuscany. During his severer imprisonment and milder exile, ever ambitious of a noble fame, he meditated his future work. First, he applied

himself to the study of his native tongue, forming his style on that of Tacitus; and then, armed with the strength of pictorial and vigorous language, he dedicated himself to the compilation of his history.

An eye witness of many of the events which he narrates, and frequently a prominent actor in them, he strives to be impartial both to friends and enemies. He has not, however, escaped the blame of undue bias. He expresses his opinions at times with too much passion, displaying excessive severity against his rivals or opponents in his military career. This, however, is not much; and, with very slight drawbacks, he may be esteemed worthy of the reader's confidence. He knew the men whose character he draws, and these individual portraits give value to the work they contribute to adorn. Among them may be named, in especial, that of the infamous Canosa, and the youthful hero, Emanuel de Deo. Even more admirable are his striking descriptions, after the manner of Tacitus. If you shrink from undertaking the whole work, read the accounts of the earthquake in Calabria in 1783—of the executions of 1799—of the death of the unfortunate Murat—of the tragical fate of the Vardarelli—and the character of the reign of Ferdinand, at the conclusion. It will be difficult to find finer passages in any history.

He came to Florence in 1823, and died on 11th November, 1831. The interval was spent in composing his work, and rendered happy by his intimate friendship with two Italians, esteemed as the cleverest men of their time, Count Gino Capponi and Valeriani, translator of Tacitus. These friends assisted him with their counsels and criticisms—some Italians go so far as to consider Gino Capponi the writer of the history. But others, who associated with Colletta and his friends at Florence, have assured me that this supposition is entirely erroneous.

Quite lately, another historical work has appeared, the production of a young Sicilian, Michele Amari, who promises, from his talents, his industry, and the admirable spirit of his book, to add another illustrious name to Italy.

The Sicilian Vespers was a tremendous event, which astonished and confounded the nations, and even in Italy was ill understood by contemporary historians. It was supposed to be the result of a conspiracy formed by Giovanni da Procida, under the auspices of Don Pedro, King of Arragon, who reaped the fruits. Amari, on consulting the archives of Sicily, found reason at first to suspect the truth of, and afterwards entirely to reject, this explanation of an event, which, in this light, could only be regarded as a cruel massacre—but which, from the documents he adduces, he proves to have resulted, not from a treacherous conspiracy, but from the sudden impulse of a people maltreated and insulted to desperation; whose only defence was the knife, whose only safety rested in utterly rooting out their oppressors.

Fired with generous sympathy for a people who, against a fearful odds, resolved to liberate themselves from a barbarous foreign oppression, Amari relates the events of the war that followed the massacre with glowing eloquence. The history of the siege of Messina may take place beside the noble resistance of Numantia and Saragossa, with the more cheering result that it was successful. This portion of his work, and the subsequent chapters that describe the last war and death of Don Pedro of Arragon, are admirably written. You will scarcely find in any historian a more animated and graphic narration than that which tells how Don Pedro, deserted by all, hated by all, proudly and sternly, and at last successfully, stood his ground against his numerous and triumphant foes.

It is the work of a young man, and of a Sicilian, who had to learn and form the language in which he writes. The style wants elegance; the construction of the history is imperfect, and, at times, rambling; but it has the first and best merit of a work of genius—it is written from the heart. The enthusiasm of the author carries the reader along with him; you forget the imperfections in the justness of his reflections, and the sincerity of his convictions; you excuse the absence of methodical order as you are carried away by the interest which he throws over the facts he narrates.[30]

LETTER XVII. Voyage to Rome.

March 20.

I left England, as you know, with very vague ideas of whither I should go. I did not dare entertain a hope that I should visit Rome. But,

“Thought by thought, and step by step led on,”

We have reached what Dr. Johnson says is the aim of every man’s desire.

My companions dreaded a long veturino journey, whose leisure is a false lure, since you always arrive too late, and set out too early, to see anything in the towns where you stop. I consented to go by sea, and Heaven rewarded the act of self-sacrifice.

We left Florence at twelve at night, in one of the most uncomfortable veturino carriages I ever had the ill fortune to enter. The moon was near its full, and its bright snow-like glare almost blinded my friends, who rode outside, and prevented them from sleeping. The morning dawned golden and still; and, although it was March, we anticipated a calm voyage. So it proved. We embarked on board the “Castor,” a small, but well-built and quick steamer, and dropped down towards Elba. The view from the sea near Leghorn is not sufficiently praised. The Ligurian Alps

“Towards the North appeared,

Thro’ mist, a heaven: sustaining bulwark, reared

Between the east and west.”

The sun went down beneath the sea, and the full moon rose at the same moment from behind the promontory of Piombino—hazy at first,—but as she rose higher, assuming her place as radiant Queen of Night. We passed between the island of Elba, whose dark and distinct outline rose out of the calm water, and the shadowy form of distant Corsica; as we proceeded, other and other islands appeared studding the tranquil deep, and varying its sublime monotony. It was very difficult to consent to shut one’s eyes on so very fair a scene.

At sunrise we were on deck again, and the steamer, with that sort of pride which a boat always seems to exhibit when it reaches its bourne, entered the harbour of Civita Vecchia. We were detained for pratique till eight o'clock, when the Governor got up, and for three hours we had full leisure to contemplate the growth of the morning on the sea, and to feel tired of conjectures about the towers and buildings on shore. As soon as we landed, and had breakfasted, and were refreshed, we set off in a separate diligence for the Eternal City.

The road for some miles bordered the sea. The shore is varied by little bays, inlets, and promontories—every five miles is a watch-tower,—the Maremma is spread around, deadly in its influence on man, but in appearance, a wild, verdant, varied pasture land, with here and there a grove of trees, and broken into hill and dale: the waves sparkled on our right; the land stretched out pleasant to the eye on the left; mountains showed themselves on the horizon. No one can look on this country as merely so much earth—every clod is a sacred relic—every stone is an object of curiosity—every name we hear satisfies some desire or awakens some cherished association. And thus, in a sort of trance of delight, we were whirled along, till the old walls appeared. We entered by the Janiculum, and skirted the Place of St. Peter's; then the pleasant spell was snapped, as we had to turn our thoughts to custom-houses, hotels, and all the worry of arrival.

Evening advanced; but what ailed the Romans? they were all looking up at the sky—it was an epidemic—in crowds or singly, not an eye looked straightforward; all were looking at the heavens;—at a turn in the street we looked too, and saw in the south a long trail of glowing light; we were the more surprised, as we had perceived nothing of the sort the previous night at sea. It was a comet, of course;—does it shine in your more northern hemisphere? here, it loses itself among the stars of Orion, while the nucleus is below the visible horizon;—it is bright, yet the stars shine through its web-like texture, which, composed of thin beams, is stretched out, and you may see delicate sea-weeds—or aquatic plants in a stream,

through a large space of the heavens.

LETTER XVIII. Raffaelle at Rome.

April 5.

The multitude of pictures and statues at Rome is such, that it is quite impossible to give the most cursory account of the Galleries. I have been more struck even than I expected, by what I have seen; the limits of man's power appear enlarged to the uttermost verge of all that the imagination can conceive of beautiful and great.

The admirable proportion of the temple-like chambers in which the finest relics of ancient statuary are placed—the snatches of views that you catch, from open windows, of the papal gardens and the country around the city, renders a visit to the Vatican a step out of everyday life into a world adorned by the works of the highest genius of all countries and all times. It is a great pity that they are not arranged in a manner to instruct the spectator as to the age and schools to which they belong—the collection at the Vatican greatly needs to be regulated by enlightened criticism—but here, everything is done from paltry motives: a man, who in some way can command patronage, writes a catalogue of all the statues, and changes their numbers and places, to make it necessary that you should buy his book; so that those who go with the elaborate and learned works of German critics in their hands, find every reference a mistake, and get hopelessly embroiled.

It is said that all the works of ancient Grecian sculpture bear the character of divine repose; and that those statues which are in attitudes of action, are the works of Greeks, indeed, but executed when Greece was a province, at the command of Roman masters. Among such, is the Apollo Belvidere, which is not adorned by the faultless perfection of Athenian art—yet who can criticise? As I entered the compartment in which he stands, a divine presence seemed to fill the chamber. The godlike archer is stepping forward; his gesture and look breathe the eagerness and gladness of victory. In some sort, this statue is the ideal of a youthful hero—but he is

not human—there is no trace of the chivalrous feeling, that even in triumph honours the fallen. He is above fear and above pity.

From room to room the eye is so fed by sights of beauty, “that the sense aches at them;” truly the limbs unwillingly fail. From the halls of the statues you go through long galleries filled with funereal urns, ancient maps, and old tapestry worked from Raffaelle’s cartoons, into rooms where the paintings are. It is managed so, that when you have passed through all, you quit the rooms by the loggie of Raffaelle, and the Swiss on guard does not permit you to return;—there is no great harm in this—as it would be nearly impossible to walk the whole way back again. Visitors ought, nevertheless, to be allowed to enter by this door at choice, that they may at once reach the pictures without the extra labour of traversing the extensive galleries that lead to them. Of the oil paintings we see here, the San Geronimo by Domenichino is perhaps the finest. Of the Transfiguration I have before spoken: as a composition, it is esteemed the grandest picture in the world; but I turn from it to others (to the Madonna di Foligno, for instance) of an earlier date, in which there is a more heavenly grace; an expression of celestial and pure beauty, an emanation of the immortal soul, superior to any perfection of colouring or grouping.

But it is among the frescos of Raffaelle that I have lingered longest with the greatest delight. These were the first works of this matchless painter, when called to Rome. He had been soliciting leave to be associated with Leonardo da Vinci and Michael Angelo in painting the halls of the Palazzo Vecchio, at Florence, when Pope Julius II. called him to Rome, and gave him in charge to adorn the walls of the Vatican.

At this time Michael Angelo was, I will not say, his rival; but, as he painted the Sistine Chapel while Raffaelle was engaged upon the Vatican, a passion of generous emulation rose in the heart of the latter that spurred him on to work with indefatigable ardour. As Lanzi tells us, the subjects chosen for these halls elevated his imagination. They were not scenes from old mythology, “but the mysteries of the

noblest science—the most august circumstances pertaining to religion, and military deeds whose result established peace and faith in the world." None better than Raffaelle could achieve this work; for of all men he had firmest hold of "that golden chain which is let down from Heaven, and with a divine enthusiasm ravishes our souls, made to the image of God, and stirs us up to comprehend the innate and incorruptible beauty to which we were once created."[31]

He began by the figures of Theology, Philosophy, Poetry, and Jurisprudence, on the arched roof of one of the rooms. The figures of Theology and Poetry, particularly the latter, are in the highest style of mystic art. The picture named the Dispute of the Sacrament—if that be the name of a picture which is, after all, nameless—covers one of the walls. There is an assemblage of all the doctors of the church, and among them Raffaelle boldly placed Dante, with his laurel crown, and, still more boldly, Savanarola, who ten years before had been publicly burned at Florence as a heretic.[32] Above these groups, heaven opens, and the Trinity and the Angels are congregated. By the lovers of the mystic school, this picture is preferred to every other; yet I was more struck by that which represents the Vision driving Heliodorus from the Temple. The story, as told in the Apocrypha,[33] is fitted to excite the imagination. Through the relation of Simon, Seleucus sent Heliodorus, his treasurer, to seize on the wealth of the Temple, laid up by Onias, the High Priest, for the relief of widows and fatherless children. When Heliodorus entered the Temple to execute the king's command, "there was no small agony throughout the whole city. Then, whoso looked the high priest in the face, it would have wounded his heart; for his countenance, and the changing of his colour, declared the inward agony of his mind." The whole city flocked, transported by indignation and grief. "And all, holding up their hands to heaven, made supplication." Heliodorus, nevertheless, persisted; but when he presented himself at the treasury, "the Lord of Spirits, and the Prince of all power, caused a great apparition, so that all that presumed to come in with him were astonished at the power of God, and fainted, and were sore afraid."

It is deemed the triumph of art to adorn the real with something grander than meets the ordinary gaze; but to paint the superhuman, and convey to the eyes the image of that which surpasses the might of visible objects, and can scarcely be conceived by the strongest effort of the imagination, is that which Raffaelle only could achieve. In this fresco the vision of a “horse with a terrible rider” fills the beholder with awe—the one shakes terror from his looks, while the horse may be seen to neigh and breathe destruction around. The figures of the two youths, “notable in strength, and excellent in beauty,” who are driving the spoiler with scourges from the Temple, are divine in swiftness and might. Celestial indignation animates their gestures, and motion was never painted so real, so impetuous, so uncontrollable.

This was among the latter works of Raffaelle. Whether it be, as M. Rio argues, that falling from that high devotional state of mind which inspired his younger works, he could no longer rise to ideal perfection, or that the remains of antique art at Rome, and the simple and majestic pencil of Michael Angelo, in the Sistine Chapel, giving larger scope to his ideas of composition, he began a new style, and the powers of man being limited, the attaining something new, however excellent, occasioned him to lose a portion of that which he before possessed; there can be no doubt that his manner entirely changed. I am not always disposed to regret this alteration. It has been the cause of a variety in excellence; for if we miss in his latter pictures the portraiture of innocence, and divine love, represented in the Madonnas and saints of his first style, we have something else, which no one but Raffaelle could give. To understand me, let me ask you to call to mind the Madonna di Foligno in the Vatican, and the Descent from the Cross in the Palazzo Borghese. The first beams, with an adorable and beatified sweetness, all purity and love. In the second, do you remember, besides the many other pity-striking figures, the St. John? He is holding one end of the cloth which enfolds his dead master’s body. The expression of agony proper to the beloved disciple, struggles with the exertion of strength necessitated by the act on which he is employed; the resolution to perform the rites due to the dead,

is mingled with yearning veneration for the corpse of him whom he passionately adored. These pictures are the triumph of Christian art. Then recollect the frescos of the history of Psyche in the Farnesina, and the youthful and nymph-like loveliness of the Galatea—these are specimens of his last style—and form your own opinion as to his improvement or otherwise. Whichever way you incline, there is one conclusion to which you must necessarily come, that Raffaelle in both styles, the Christian and the Pagan, is superior to every other painter—"high actions and high passions best describing."

Day after day, often accompanied by our accomplished friend, whose taste and knowledge are invaluable, we visit the galleries of Rome. In one small chamber of the Barberini palace are three gems of art; and in these, expression appeared triumphant over skill, to the disadvantage of Raffaelle. A portrait of the Fornarina is contrasted with that of Beatrice Cenci, by Guido. In vain I was told to compare the exquisite finish, the faultless painting of cheek and lip, of the disagreeable-looking beauty, with the comparatively imperfect touches of Guido's pencil. The innocent, tearful face of the young and lovely girl, whose look expresses the self-pity which must have swelled in her heart, as she thought, how she, from very horror of crime, was become a murderess, put to shame the dark eyes and pencilled brows of her, whose passion was devoid of tenderness. It is gratifying to see the work of an English painter in a Roman church. The picture by Mr. Severn in the Cathedral of San Paolo fuori delle Mura, is a beautiful composition, and shews to great advantage. It is the first work of a Protestant artist admitted into a Roman church. The high esteem in which Mr. Severn was held in Rome ensured him this distinction.

I have visited with great pleasure the studios of modern statuaries. They are mostly now employed in portraying or idealizing a Capuan peasant-woman, la Grazia, whose beauty is of an expressive, mobile, and grand cast. The best representation of her is as Hagar in the desert.

The angel of the day of judgment, by Tenerani, is very fine; and Mr. Gibson's studio contains statues admirably executed in that classic taste which he so successfully cultivates.

LETTER XIX. Ruins of Rome.—The Holy Week.—Music and Illuminations.

Trinità de' Monti, April.

"What are the pleasures that I enjoy at Rome?" you ask. They are so many, that my mind is brimful of a sort of glowing satisfaction, mingled with tearful associations. Besides all that Rome itself affords of delightful to the eye and imagination, I revisit it as the bourne of a pious pilgrimage. The treasures of my youth lie buried here.

The sky is bright—the air impregnated with the soft odours of spring—we take our books and wile away the morning among the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, or the Coliseum. From the shattered walls of the former, the view over the city and the Campagna is very beautiful. The Palatine is near at hand, and majestic ruins guide the eye to where the golden palace spreads its vast extent. These ruins, chiefly piles of brick—remnants of massive walls or lofty archways—may not be beautiful in themselves; but overgrown with parasites and flowering shrubs, they are grouped in so picturesque a manner among broken ground and dark gigantic trees—the many towers of the city gathering near—the distant hills on the clear horizon, with clouds just resting in scattered clusters on the tops, and the sky above, deeply blue—that the whole scene is delightful to feel, as well as look at.

There is one view from the Coliseum that I am never tired of contemplating. Ascending to the second range of arches, and looking from the verge towards the tomb of Cestius—in the foreground is the Temple of Venus, the Palatine Mount, and the ruins of the Forum—the country, varied by woods and hills and ruins, is spread beyond—the tomb of Cestius, gleaming at a distance, is a resting place for the

eye—and various trees seem placed expressly to give the scene the air of a landscape sitting for its picture—all grace and smiles and radiance.

The Forum used to be, long, long ago, before I ever saw it, a broken space of ground, with an avenue through the Campo Vacino leading to the Coliseum, with triumphal arches and tall columns half-buried in the soil. Now the excavations are considerable. I have heard painters lament that the picturesque beauty has been spoilt; but as its appearance, such as time and neglect had left it, is changed, it is as well to complete the task of excavation. Much has been done since I was here last, and workmen are in constant employ. I wish you could see the chief among them. Imagine an Indian file of fifty old men in the last stage of decrepitude, grey-headed, bent-shouldered, and feeble-legged, each rolling a small wheelbarrow, creeping along so slow, and yet that extreme slowness appearing an exertion for them.

From the Forum we ascended the hill of the Capitol, and, with some trouble, got the custode, and mounted the tower of the Campidoglio. We looked round, and fancied how, from this height, the patricians and consuls of Old Rome watched the advance of marauding parties that wound out from the ravines of the hills, or whose spears and helmets glittered above the brow of the Janicular hill; and the cry of the Sabines, or fiercer and more terrible, of the Gauls, made the populace gather in the Forum below, and give their names to be inscribed as soldiers for instant fight. The Tiber glitters in the distance, and Soracte rising from out the plain,

“Heaves like a long-swept wave, about to break,

And on the curl hangs pausing.”[34]

I never look at the ridge of Sant’ Oreste, (as it is now called,) but these lines, which so admirably paint it, come into my mind.

I scarcely know what view of Rome to prefer. That from the ruined Baths of Caracalla, or from the verge of the Coliseum, or the panorama of the Capitol, or from the porch of the Lateran, which commands a different landscape.—You see

nothing of the city, for your back is turned on it; you are on a height, the Campagna at your feet, spanned by a number of ruined aqueducts, whose grandeur and extent impress the mind, more than any other object, with a sense of Roman greatness. From the Lateran down to the Coliseum, nearly a mile, and in the adjoining space, was the most magnificent quarter of the old city. Now it is occupied by Poderi, divided by high walls, with here and there a ruin—a toppling wall or broken arch. When Pope Gregory VII. called in Robert Guiscard to drive Henry III. from his capital, the Saracens of Sicily, under the command of the Norman, sacked Rome, and this portion of the city was burned and levelled with the soil. So utter was the desolation, that the survivors found it more convenient to build nearly a new town at a distance, than to attempt to restore their homes among the smoking ruins of palaces, temples, and baths, which lay a black heap, till they crumbled away—and trees and flowers sprung up, and the peasantry came with the plough, and sowed seed and reaped corn.

We spent half a day rambling over the Palatine—the Contadino, our guide, told us that every July and August, the mal' aria reigned, and his sunken cheeks spoke of his having been a victim. He asked us if we had the mal' aria in England.—"Che bel paese," he said with a sigh on hearing our negative.

Often, as at Venice, we leave our home without any definite object, and wander about the deserted part of Rome—that which once was the centre of its magnificence. Thus we viewed the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, built by Michael Angelo, with materials, columns and marbles, remnants of the Baths of Diocletian; it is one of the most striking and majestic of the Roman churches. Thus we found ourselves at the foot of the Capitol, and an inscription led us to visit the Mamertine prisons, a spot held sacred since St. Peter and other Christian martyrs were confined there. It is indubitably the oldest relic of the ancient republic, and the monument of its cruel and arrogant disdain for human life and suffering, impresses one painfully. How much of that has there ever been all over the world—and now! I

used to pride myself on English humanity; but the boast is quenched in shame, since I read, last winter, the accounts of the cruelties practised in the Affghan war. We were injured, and, therefore, we revenge; such also was the tenet of old Rome.

The galleries of the Capitol often entice us. Here are some of the finest statues in the world. The Amazon, in whom a severe and martial expression is allied to feminine grace, and a something womanly softens the countenance in spite of sternness. The Venus of the Capitol is the only Queen of Beauty that can at all compete with the Goddess of the Tribune. The Cupid and Psyche is less tender and innocent than the Florentine group, but there is a passionate love in the caress that makes the marble appear tremulous with emotion.

April 20.

Holy Week is over. The ceremonies of the Church strike me as less majestic than when I was last here; perhaps this is to be attributed to the chief part being filled by another actor. Pius VII. was a venerable and dignified old man. Pope Gregory, shutting his eyes as he is carried round St. Peter's, because the motion of the chair makes him sea-sick, by no means excites respect. If I ever revisit Rome during the Holy Week, I shall not seek for tickets for the ceremonies; it will be quite enough to enter the Cathedral for half an hour while they were going on.

But a thousand times over I would go to listen to the Miserere in the Sistine Chapel; that spot made sacred by the most sublime works of Michael Angelo. I do not allude to the Last Judgment—which I do not admire—but to the paintings on the roof, which have that simple grandeur that Michael Angelo alone could confer on a single figure, making it complete in itself—enthroned in majesty—reigning over the souls of men.

The music, not only of the Miserere, but of the Lamentations, is solemn, pathetic, religious—the soul is rapt—carried away into another state of being. Strange that grief, and laments, and the humble petition of repentance, should fill us with

delight—a delight that awakens these very emotions in the heart—and calls tears into the eyes, and yet which is dearer than any pleasure. It is one of the mysteries of our nature, that the feelings which most torture and subdue, yet, if idealized—elevated by the imagination—married harmoniously to sound or colour—turn those pains to happiness; inspiring adoration; and a tremulous but ardent aspiration for immortality. Such seems the sentient link between our heavenly and terrestrial nature; and thus, in Paradise, as Dante tells,—glory beatifies the sight, and seraphic harmony wraps the saints in bliss.

Another sight of this week, is the washing of the feet of the pilgrims. The ladies of Rome belong to a sisterhood who perform this service on Good Friday for the female pilgrims. The hospital of the Pelegrini was crowded; we could hardly make our way. In my life I never saw so much female beauty as among the sisterhood—their faces so perfect in contour; so lovely in expression; so noble, and so soft, that the recollection will haunt my memory for ever.

I went to mass at the Church of the Jesuits—as usual glittering with ornaments, precious stones, wax-lights, and all manner of finery. The music was in the same style—well suited for the Opera-house; it would there have enchanted; but it wanted that solemn, religious descant, which awed the spirit in the Sistine Chapel.

The illumination of St. Peter’s terminated the sights of the week—that and the fire-works of the Castel Sant’ Angelo.—There is more of creation in the first of these sights than in any other in the world. It is but a dim, and scant, and human imitation of the third verse of the first chapter of Genesis; but it is an imitation of the most sublime act of divine power; and though bearing but a very weak resemblance to what we imagine of the moment when, on a word, light disclosed the glories of creation, yet, there is darkness, and radiance sudden and dazzling bursts forth, and—it is very fine.

It is curious to see all these solemnities—many of them doubtless of Pagan

origin—dear to the people, and therefore preserved and christianised by the Popes—and to reflect, that such, for many, many centuries, was the chief link fostered by religion between man and the Divinity. We have obliterated all this among ourselves. No doubt the impulse of piety in the heart is a truer and purer oblation; but Catholics reason that these are aids and supports to enable weak humanity—a creature half matter, half soul—to sustain itself in its pious ecstacies. Besides, God created in us not only the sense of, but also in some degree the power of creating the beautiful; and is it not well to dedicate to divine worship the glorious gifts which were bestowed for the purpose of raising the soul from earth and linking it to Heaven?

LETTER XX. The Pontifical States.

May 3.

"Wherever the Catholic religion is established, I have uniformly observed indolence, with its concomitants, dirt and beggary, to prevail; and the more Catholic is the place, the more they abound."[35] These are the words of a clever writer, well acquainted with Rome, àpropos of Rome. It must be added, that wherever the Catholic religion prevails, great works of charity subsist. During the time of Catholicism, charitable institutions, as is well known, abounded all over England—in some few obscure corners such still survive, where the old may find a peaceful refuge—not in crowded receptacles, where they are looked on as useless burthens on a heavily-taxed parish—but in decent almshouses, bordering grassy enclosures, near gardens that supply their table; peaceful nooks, where the aged may converse with nature, and find the way to the grave soothed by that calm so dear to declining years.[36] Jesus Christ so forcibly recommended the poor to all who professed his religion, that, in common with all other Christians, every good Catholic considers works of charity to be his paramount duty. One of the most enlightened, Pascal, gave a touching proof of this, when, on his death-bed, he only

admitted his pains to be soothed by careful nursing, on condition that two paupers in the same state should receive the same attentions in an adjoining apartment. The poor were to him objects of real and tender affection.

As eleemosynary charity is an essential portion of Catholicism, we may expect that it should flourish in the capital of the Catholic world. There are many beggars, but there is no absolute want, at Rome. Beggary is a condition, and it becomes a matter of favour to be allowed to beg. Plates of metal are given to such as are permitted, and fastened to the arm of poor deformed objects, who are to be found in every corner of the city, asking alms. Many convents distribute food regularly at different hours, when all who ask may have. There is, besides, a house of industry, I hear, carried on on excellent principles. There are, to the destruction of the savings of the poor, state lotteries all over Italy. It was considered that this demoralising gambling ought not to be kept up in the capital of the head of the church: but it was argued that a love of putting in the lottery could not be rooted out, and while Naples, Tuscany, and Venice had lotteries, the Romans would send their money to those states, if they could not be indulged at home. A Roman lottery therefore exists, and the proceeds go to keep up a house of industry. Here a number of young people are taught various trades. Young men are apprenticed, and girls receive dowries, while the old people have a home that smoothes their passage to the grave. Besides these conventual aids and government institutions, there are many confraternities of citizens whose bond of duty is charity to the sick and poor. People of all classes of society belong to them, and meet on an equal footing. The city is divided into several quarters, and the various confraternities have each one assigned to them, which they visit and relieve.

Several of the persons I know remained in Rome during the visitation of the cholera in 1837, and they still vividly remember the horror of the time.

It was a conviction, a superstition, nourished by the church, that this fatal epidemic

would spare the Holy City, and the arguments urged to prove its exemption were absurd, and yet horrible to hear. When the great heats of August set in, and a few cases began to be mentioned, the government, grown frantic through mingled terror and folly, thought only of convincing the people that Rome would be spared. The pest might be said to have been welcomed by illuminations and processions, and its virulence propagated and fixed by the poor people being encouraged to go about barefoot, while their last coin was drained from them to buy oil for lamps to burn in the churches. The stench and heat in these edifices became of itself pestilential, for the summer was more sultry even than usual, and the crowds that filled them were tremendous. Groups of persons were to be seen in the streets and churches, standing barefoot before the Madonnas and crucifixes, expecting to see the images open their eyes and shed blood, both of which miracles, it was averred, had taken place. But this absurd buffoonery sunk into insignificance compared with the dreadful ideas purposely put into the people's minds about poison; in the early stage of the epidemic, several persons fell victims to the frenzy thus occasioned.

In the middle of August the most splendid illuminations had place all over Rome,—a thanksgiving to God for sparing the city. On the 15th, the Pope set out in procession to accompany a famous black Madonna from the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore to St. Peter's. Thrice he was stopped by storms. People crowded in to join from all the towns and villages in a circuit of many miles. The vast concourse, the excitement of the procession, and the violent rains to which they were exposed, barefoot and bareheaded, tended only to exasperate the power of the epidemic. On that day many persons died: the illusion vanished—it was admitted that the cholera was in Rome. Strangers and nobles fled, and for two months the most fearful scenes had place. The dead-cart went all night—people fell down in the streets, convulsed by the frightful spasms of that terrible disease; 15,000 persons (about one in ten of the whole population, 150,000) died at Rome.

The Pope shut himself up in the Quirinal. Every one who entered the palace was

obliged to undergo fumigation—a thing abhorrent to the Romans, who detest every kind of perfume. An imperative order was issued that the cardinals, the heads of government, and various employés, should not quit the city—but it was very ill obeyed—government was indeed paralysed, and great fears were entertained, especially at first, of the violence of the ignorant and wretchedly misguided people. “If you were to imagine the devil insane,” wrote an English gentleman, “it might give you some notion of the state of things, and they already talk of sending for some Austrian troops.” As the epidemic pursued its course, the people grew at first familiar with it, and then cowed. Their state was most horrible. I have heard, from one who was on the spot, that it was greatly to be doubted whether all who were borne nightly in the dead-carts to hideous, unhonoured sepulture, really died of cholera. There was reason to believe that many were victims of a virulent typhus, brought on by acts of superstition and excessive fear—and, worse still, that numbers died of starvation. The administrators of government having for the most part fled or shut themselves up—a strict cordon being drawn round the city, and the neighbourhood struck with inconceivable panic—food grew scarce, and the poor wretches who had spent their last in propitiating Heaven by lamps and candles, without money and without succour, died of want.

Yet there was not absent many redeeming touches in the dark picture of the times. The regular clergy fulfilled their duties unshrinkingly; and the conduct of the Jesuits was particularly admirable. They visited every corner of the city, watching by death-beds with unwearied zeal. They were seen taking, with gentle care, babes from the sides of their mothers, who lay dead in the streets, wrapping them tenderly in their black gowns, and carrying them to places appointed for their refuge. The confraternities also did not desert their post. A Roman told me he was one of three brothers; they removed their aged father to a safe place, at a distance from contagion, and remained themselves: they were employed at different quarters of the city. “I never felt happier,” said my informant; “our father was in safety; we had no

fears for ourselves. All day we were busied among the sick, and when we met in the evening, it was with light hearts; the employment gave us something to do and to think about; the dangers we might be supposed to run, endeared us to each other. I remember now with regret the sort of exhilaration with which we met, thanked God for our preservation, and then again went to our task, not only without fear, but with a feeling of gladness superior to every other happiness." The few English, also, who remained, displayed unshrinking courage. Lord C——, in particular, a Catholic nobleman, acted with a heroism that shamed the Cardinals and heads of the state. He earnestly strove to prove how erroneous was the fear of contagion; the succour he brought, and the example he displayed, were of the utmost utility, and saved many, many lives.

The country round Rome, each town and village within its cordon, was left pretty much to itself. No disturbances occurred, and the people showed themselves much more capable than could have been supposed, of self-government. One English family took refuge at Olèvano, a small town, some fifteen miles from Rome. They went thither without the intention of remaining; they took very little money with them, and could get nothing from Rome: the people of this little place showed them a kindness at once singular and touching. They not only provided them with provisions, but exerted themselves to please and amuse them. Each day some little fête was given by the mere country people for their diversion; so that they seemed, like the personages of the Decameron, to have escaped from a city of the pest, to enjoy the innocent pleasures of life with the greater zest.

Such is the amiable and courteous disposition of this people, except when their violent passions urge them to crimes, which they scarcely look on as wicked; for they are taught (for heresy, read any sin against the ordinances of the church)

"Il gran peccato è l'eresia! che gli altri

Pesan men d'una piuma, e se ne vanno

Con un segno di croce."[37]

Where men's wants are few and easily supplied, where a benignant climate clothes the earth in abundance, and nature is the indulgent mother instead of the stern overseer of our species, men have leisure, and, if they are idle, they become vicious. The air of Rome inspires lassitude, and renders the inhabitants inert. The Romans who live in the healthy parts of the city are all inclined to grow fat; their language, unidiomatic, and, so to speak, long-winded in its expressions, is pronounced with a grace of accent, a slow and melodious emphasis, that renders it more agreeable than any other Italian to the ears of strangers, and is strangely in harmony with the dreamy contentment of their minds. Accustomed to receive and to gain by foreigners, they are courteous, amiable, and ready to serve; there is among them an air of easy indolence, which, though it militates against our notions of manly energy, yet is never brutalized into stupidity. The women are among the most beautiful of the Italians. You feel as if all lived under a spell; and so they do; for, troubled and unquiet as is the rest of the papal dominions, Rome and its immediate neighbourhood remains in a sort of hazy apathy. The Pope appreciates highly their passive submission, and does all he can to keep them from communicating with the discontented districts. For this reason he is opposed to the construction of railroads; that, as he says, his revolutionary subjects of the East may not corrupt his obedient children of the West.

To the outward eye, the papal government pays a slight tribute to the increased demands of the times. There is more decency in the lives of the clergy; there is more done for the poor. But it is not eleemosynary charity that is needed—it is the spirit of improvement, just laws and an upright administration—none of these exist; and even scientific knowledge, encouraged in other parts of the peninsula, is forbidden. Meanwhile, penal laws are slight, and seldom enforced. There is, some fifteen miles from the city, a miserable collection of huts, in the middle of a tract of country, the peculiar haunt of mal' aria; it is called Campo Morto, and is an asylum of the

Church. All criminals, who fear being taken, fly hither. The spot, consecrated as an asylum, is watched by soldiers. The fugitive who once enters the fatal bounds, never dares leave them. Three years is the extent to which a man can drag out existence in this pestilential atmosphere. So here the hardened criminal comes to die, in his desire to escape from death. He is soon struck by fever, grows feeble and emaciated; and at his appointed hour is gathered to the grave.

The papal government is considered the worst in Italy; and the temporal rule of the Church is looked upon as the chief source of the nation's misfortunes. This is no novel assertion. You may remember Dante's apostrophe:—

"Ahi, Costantin, di quanto mal fu matre,

Non la tua conversion, ma quella dote,

Che da te prese il primo ricco patre."

In the middle ages the temporal power of the Popes urged them on to many acts of unjustifiable aggression; yet, as the faith of nations in those days made them strong, the people were, for the most part, their friends; kings, their enemies—and often they made the latter tremble on their thrones, while they showed themselves the protectors of the former. The Popes were then Guelphs, and watched over civil liberty, till attachment to temporal riches turned them into Ghibellines, and led them to support the pretensions of sovereigns to absolute power. Savanorola denounced this unholy alliance as subversive of the purity, and even existence, of the Church. As faith decayed, and reform grew imminent, the compact between the head of a religion that preached equality, and the sovereigns who aimed at despotism, was sealed: while as the revenues of the Church, so lately swollen by tributes from all the Christian world, decreased, the pontiffs clung more tenaciously to the few miles of territory which they claimed as their own.[38]

Before the first French Revolution, English travellers denounced the temporal rule of the Popes as corrupt and odious; it subsists now as it did then—only things are

worse—partly, because all that does not improve must deteriorate; partly, that the uses and end of government are better understood, and abuses become more torturing and intolerable; and partly, because the checks and restraints which time and custom opposed to their tyranny are now all swept away.

The Pope and his prelates, alone, are invested with political, legislative, and administrative authority, and constitute the State. From education and from system they are despotic, and repel every liberal notion, every social progress. The people pay and obey: all the offices, all the employments, great and small, are in the hands of the clergy. From the Pope to the lowest priestly magistrate, all live on the public revenues, whence springs a system of clients, which existing principally in Rome, yet extends over the whole of the papal dominions, and creates a crowd of dependants devoted to the clergy. Corruption is the mainspring of the State, which rests on the cupidity which the absence of all incentive to, or compensation for, honest labour inspires: yet nearly all are poor, and poorest is the Head of the whole; who, shrinking from all improvement, fearful if the closed valves were opened, he should admit in one rushing stream, with industry and knowledge, rebellion, yet finds that the fresh burthens which his necessities cause him to impose on the people fail to increase his revenue.

The Romans, themselves, submit without repining, their state has existed, such as it is, for centuries; the abode of the Pope and concourse of strangers enrich—the Church ceremonies amuse them. But out of Rome the cry has been loud, and will be repeated again and again. The Marches bordering the Adriatic, Romagna and the four legations, (four cities, each governed by a Cardinal legate), suffer evils comparatively new to them; and the memory of better days incites them to endeavour to recover their former independence. These states formed, it is true, a portion of the pontifical dominions before the French revolution; but they existed then on a different footing, and enjoyed privileges of which they are now deprived. Bologna in especial considers herself aggrieved.

During the reign of Pope Nicholas V., driven by the political necessities of the times, Bologna placed itself under the protection of the papal government. The city engaged to pay an annual tribute, and to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Pontiff, while he, on the other hand, guaranteed its independence, and a representative senate to rule the state. Such was its position till the French invasion of 1796. The Congress of Vienna, in 1814, among its other misdeeds, made over the four legations to the Pope. They became a part of the patrimony of St. Peter; their municipal rights were abolished, and, contrary to every stipulation, they were reduced to the same condition as the ancient subjects of the Pope. At first the Pontiffs thought it necessary to take some steps to reconcile them to the loss of their ancient privileges. They promised them laws in accordance with the improved notions of the times; and that the code of Napoleon should continue in force. These promises were never fulfilled, and a farrago of laws was imposed impossible to be understood, and for ever changing; as each new Pope, supported by his infallibility, makes new ones at pleasure, while the corrupt mode in which they are administered increases the vexation of the people. A diminution of their burthens was also promised, but they continued as high as ever, without those attendant circumstances, that, in the time of the French, compensated for heavy taxations. Money was then spent in constructing roads and other useful public works; now the whole treasure is employed to pension the clergy, and to support in splendour the state and luxury of the Cardinals.

LETTER XXI. Insurrection of 1831.—Occupation of Ancona by the French.

If a revolutionary spark is lighted up any where in Europe, the fire bursts forth in Italy. The misgovernment above mentioned is the cause that latterly Romagna has been the centre of these insurrectionary movements, but there has never been sufficient union or strength to secure success. When the French revolution of 1830 occurred, the surviving Carbonari and the heads of other secret societies believed

that the moment was propitious to their designs. The government of Louis-Philippe, desirous of drawing away from France the storm that brooded over her from Russia and Austria, excited two unfortunate enslaved countries, Poland and Italy, to rebel. It proclaimed the principle of non-intervention. Marshal Soult exclaimed in the Chamber of Peers:—"The principle of non-intervention shall henceforth be ours; but on condition that it shall be respected by others." These solemn declarations satisfied the Italian conspirators. Central Italy, that is, the northern pontifical states in chief, with the duchy of Modena, was to be the focus of their movement, and the chiefs believed that they would be strong enough, at least in Romagna, to cope with the armies of their sovereign, if Austria were not permitted to pour its tens of thousands beyond the boundaries of Lombardy.

I have asked Italians for some account of the troubles of those times. "I fear," was the reply, "that it will be difficult to tell any thing worthy to be recorded. Horrible disasters, acts of incredible bravery, admirable instances of self-devotion, were found side by side with atrocious crimes; but all so scattered and individual, that it is scarcely possible to group the events together so as to form a narrative."

Discontent, particularly among the upper classes, was general all over Italy; yet few were willing to risk life and fortune for a cause of which they despaired. The actual revolt was therefore confined to the heads of the secret societies—many of them in exile, and a few thousand young men. The want of talent in some, and of honesty in others among the leaders, led to every disaster. They roused and gathered together bands of ardent youths, holding out to them false hopes of a judicious and wellregulated insurrection, aided by the power of France. Five thousand lads, chiefly of good birth, taken from their boyish studies, withdrawn from the caresses of their mothers, from the pleasures of their homes, without experience, without forethought, who had scarcely reached the threshold of life—rash and untaught, embarked on the difficult and dangerous path of revolt. Their only tie in common was the desire of driving the stranger from their country. They had none to counsel, none to

encourage, none to lead; they entrusted the conduct of their attempt to men who, either from timidity or treachery, hung back when they ought to have shewn boldness, and neutralised the small power of aggression which they possessed. They were confronted by a hundred thousand Imperialists, veteran soldiers, supported by all the material of war.

The result was such as might have been expected. As soon as Louis-Philippe felt secure on his throne, he was eager to see an end put to the commotions excited by the revolution of thirty. He deserted the Italian cause. The leaders had no boldness, no military skill—the youths whom they commanded showed bravery, but were too inefficient, few, and ill-armed, to cope with a large, disciplined, and veteran army. The end was defeat and surrender; then came the violation of treaties, death, and exile. It would strike with pity the coldest heart to draw but a slight sketch of the various misery that befel individuals. Many a domestic drama of harrowing tragic interest convulsed families, deprived of their noblest offspring; and whether the bereaved parents were base enough to disclaim and cast them forth, or whether they mourned in bitterness over their fate, the misery was the same. It is not yet ended: England and France still swarm with unfortunate exiles—the better portion of the insurgents, who sigh to return to their country, but who will not in hardship and banishment, make those sacrifices of principle which would at once restore them to rank and wealth.

The occupation of Ancona by the French is an event quite distinct from the insurrection of Romagna, though our vague recollections confuse them together. Abandoned by the French, hemmed in by an Austrian army, the insurgents had surrendered, and the pontifical flag again waved over the citadel of Ancona. Still Romagna was full of commotions, occasioned by their desire for some amelioration of the laws. The five Powers of Europe interfered to prevail on the Pope to yield in some degree to the desires of his subjects. His answer was an edict that overthrew all hope, and confirmed the worst abuses—the superiority of the ecclesiastical courts

over the civil, the minor punishments for the clergy compared with the laity, and the continuation of the Inquisition. To enforce these edicts the Pope, helped by Austria, transacted a loan, and declared his intention of sending troops to occupy the four legations.

The account of this military occupation is one of the most frightful passages of modern history. The papal regiments were recruited from the prisons, and formed of bands of San Fedisti—the name of troops half brigands, half soldiers, formed by the priests in opposition to the Carbonari, whose frightful history you may find in the pages of Coletta. This soldiery committed every excess: whether they met with resistance, or, hoping to disarm their ferocity, they were welcomed in the towns as friends, the result was the same—outrage, rapine, massacre. The spirit of the people was roused, and Cardinal Albani's army, stained by multiplied acts of barbarity, no longer sufficed for the mastery of the whole of Romagna. Succour was requested from Austria, and promptly afforded. Six thousand Austrians, dragging with them the five thousand brigands rather than troops, under the pay of the Head of the Catholic Church, entered Bologna a second time. The severest discipline was enjoined to the German soldiers, and strictly observed. Prince Metternich was praised for his interference; the result showed his secret intentions. The Italian populace compared the discipline and moderation of the Germans with the recent excesses of the papal soldiery, and it was hoped that an impression would be made of the preference that ought to be given to the Austrian over the pontifical sway, which hereafter might serve the former in good stead.

When the Pope declared his intention of a military occupation of the discontented provinces, the five Powers, whose ambassadors had just been urging milder measures, with one exception only, approved. England, represented by Sir George Seymour, expressed dissent, and her minister withdrew from the councils of the other diplomatic agents. On the other hand, France expressed her approbation in emphatic terms. The second occupation of Bologna by the Austrians, and the

dexterity shown by Prince Metternich, however, made a deep impression on Casimir Perrier, then Minister for Foreign Affairs. This was a step in advance made by the Austrian under cover of friendship; but if Romagna was to be lost to the Pope, he saw no reason why the French should not divide the spoil, and he suddenly resolved to occupy Ancona. A ship and two frigates received orders to sail for that city, and carry thither eleven hundred men, under the command of a naval captain Gallois, and of Colonel Combes. General Cubières was named commander-in-chief of the expedition. He set out for Rome, by way of Leghorn, for the purpose of communicating with the Pope with regard to this seizure of one of his principal cities. The French government calculated that General Cubières would have time to see the Pope, and obtain his consent, and reach Ancona before Captain Gallois and Colonel Combes could arrive; but contrary winds delayed Cubières, while on the other hand, the little French fleet doubled the coasts of Italy with an expedition that could not be foreseen, and which indeed excited general surprise; so that when Cubières arrived at Rome he found the French ambassador in a violent rage; the tidings of the occupation of Ancona having reached Rome a few hours before; the Pontiff also was inexpressibly indignant.

Ancona was taken in the night of the 22–23d February, 1832. On their arrival, Colonel Combes and Captain Gallois did not find Cubières. He held the instructions of government, without which, strictly speaking, they could not commence the attack. They did not, however, hesitate to assume the responsibility of the assault—a resolution which they regarded due to the honour of their flag. The fleet cast anchor three miles distant from the city. A portion of the French soldiers disembarked without impediment, and in a short time, by a hurried march, they arrived under the walls. The gates were closed; the papal troops would not open them. The sappers of the 66th regt. broke one open with furious blows of the axe, and were aided in the work by some of the populace. The French dispersed themselves quickly in the city, disarming the posts. Colonel Lazzarini was made prisoner in his bed before he

awoke; and thus, by a coup-de-main, the French possessed themselves of the city. At daybreak the rest of the troops were disembarked. Colonel Combes, at the head of a battalion, marched against the citadel. The pontifical troops, frightened, yielded immediately; the French were received as friends into the fortress, and the tri-coloured flag was hoisted. The people of Ancona co-operated actively with the French, and not a drop of blood was shed; the inhabitants looked on the occupation as the beginning of liberty, and rejoicing and gladness everywhere prevailed. The Italian tricolor floated in all the streets, and over every square. The French raised the cry of Vive la liberté! which was responded to by the Italians with tumults of joy. The governor of the province and the commandant of the piazza were made prisoners, but afterwards set at liberty; they left Ancona. The state prisons were thrown open, and several chiefs of the insurgents liberated. The city was that night illuminated, and the theatres resounded with patriotic songs. A staff officer got upon a bench in one of the principal cafés, and brandishing a naked sword, declared that the regiment occupying Ancona was merely a vanguard, which announced the liberty of Italy.

All Europe was astonished by this event. Austria, in its first movement of surprise, demanded categorical explanations; at the same time that the general of the Austrian troops stationed at Bologna, published a proclamation, in which he declared that the French had occupied Ancona through the same motives, and for the same ends, which had guided the Austrians in Romagna. The Pope gave immediate orders that his troops should retire from Ancona, and that the provincial government should be removed to Osimo: but this anger on the part of the Vatican was of short duration; it listened to the declarations and protestations of the French government, which had in truth no notion of favouring Italian liberty, but intended simply to check Austria, or at least obtain a part of the spoils, if the Pope lost Romagna. Sad were the conditions upon which the French were permitted to prolong their sojourn at Ancona. The part they filled afterwards redounded to their shame in the eyes of the

Italians. They averred that the French soldiers, until the evacuation, only served as sbirri of the papal power. And while the government of France held language openly that made Europe believe that Ancona, while in their possession, was a place of refuge for the liberals, it by its acts proved to the various cabinets, that its views were in unison with those of Austria, Prussia, and Russia. A few years ago Ancona was made over again to the Pontiff, the French saving their credit by having the reputation of obtaining in exchange the pardon of some of the exiles of Lombardy; which, in fact, Austria only wanted a pretext and a fair occasion to grant.

At present the spirit of revolt is checked, but not quelled in the pontifical states. A volcanic fire smoulders near the surface, ready at every moment to burst forth in a flame. The whole of the country before disturbed, the Marches, Romagna, the four legations, together with the population of the mountains, are bound together by secret associations, and wait impatiently for the favourable moment when to break their chains. These secret societies, unfortunately, are bad means for seeking a good result; and it is to be feared that the country will never attain a high moral tone and a true feeling of independence, till the means used by their leaders are changed.

Secret associations ought to be particularly eschewed by the Italians, as tending to foster their principal defect—their cunning. The violence of their passions, which they are so little taught to control, is the source of much crime and unhappiness; but under better laws they would be checked. The cowardice of which they are accused, I regard as a mistake: mingled with other soldiers the Italians are as brave as they—it is the want of leaders which has occasioned this low estimation of their courage. No troops will hold together who have not confidence in their generals. In all instances of their defeat it seems evident that their disasters were not occasioned by cowardice in the soldiers, but absence of military skill among those in command.

The habit of deception is the worst fault of the Italians; accustomed to look on the dark side of human nature and to disbelieve in its virtues, they are ever awake to

ward off covert injury by astuteness; while the purer virtues, stainless honour and unspotted truth, belong to few (yet to a few they do belong), among them.

The evil has been fostered by the bad use to which the confessional has been put during troubled times;[39] by the institution of a secret police by the governments, and by the spread of secret societies. For what is held mysterious, concealed by oaths, and carried on in the dark, must use falsehood as a shield, and terror as a weapon.

Little good, I am afraid, has been operated by these associations on the character of the people; and the real interests of the country must result from the improvement of the moral sense. Meanwhile, they occasion frequent and partial insurrections, that keep the sovereigns in alarm, but do not advance their cause. It cannot be expected that Italy should be able to liberate itself in a time of lethargic peace like the present. And the attempts of the few who, from time to time, are driven by indignation and shame to take up arms, are but the occasion of tears and grief. They form a band of hidden and obscure victims, which each year that power devours that holds them in slavery. It may even be doubted whether an European commotion would give an occasion favourable to Italy. We must not forget that the people are demoralised and degenerate. The present affords no glimmering light by which we may perceive how the regeneration of Italy will be effected. It is one of the secrets of futurity at which it is vain to guess. Yet the hour must and will come. For there are noble spirits who live only in this hope; and every man of courage and genius throughout the country—and several such exist—consecrates his moral and intellectual faculties to this end only.

LETTER XXII. Sorrento.—Capri.—Pompeii.

Sorrento, June 1.

It seems to me as if I had never before visited Italy—as if now, for the first time, the charm of the country was revealed to me. At every moment the senses, lapped in

delight, whisper—this is Paradise. Here I find the secret of Italian poetry: not of Dante; he belonged to Etruria and Cisalpine Gaul: Tuscany and Lombardy are beautiful—they are an improved France, an abundant, sunshiny England—but here only do we find another earth and sky. Here the poets of Italy tasted the sweets of those enchanted gardens which they describe in their poems—and we wonder at their bright imaginations; but they drew only from reality—the reality of Sorrento. Call to mind those stanzas of Tasso, those passages of Berni and Ariosto, which have most vividly transported you into gardens of delight, and in them you will find the best description of the charms of this spot. I had visited Naples before, but that was in winter—and beautiful as I thought it, I did not then guess what this land is in all the glory of its summer dress.

Here is the house in which Tasso was born—what wonder that the gardens of Armida convey to the mind the feeling that the poet had been carried away by enchantment to an Elysium, whose balmy atmosphere hung about him, and he wrote under its influence.—So indeed was it—here is the radiance, here the delights which he describes—here he passed his childhood; the fragrance of these bowers, the glory of this sky, haunted him in the dark cell of the convent of St. Anna.

I know not whether I should prefer the view of the bay which his house (now occupied as an hotel) commands, to our own from the Cocumella—the scene from his windows is certainly completer; situated more in the bend of the bay, turned northwards towards Vesuvius, he looked upon a circle of mountain crags, embracing the sea; our view is more turned to the west—it is less picturesque—perhaps more sublime.

The portion of the bay that belongs to Sorrento is singularly formed. For the most part, steep cliffs rise from the water, with here and there a break, where there intervenes a short space of sands, hedged round by cliffs. The cliffs are perforated with caverns, some open to the air, and clothed with luxuriant vegetation; others

scooped deep in the face of the rock. Many of them have been enlarged, and openings made for ventilation, and passages cut down to the sands, and up to the gardens above. Every house almost has one of these calate or descents, down from the heights above to the beach; some cut in the face of the cliffs—corkscrew galleries—some communicating with the caverns; most of them are walled up to prevent smuggling. I believe when the family to whom the house belongs resides on the spot, at their request the calata belonging to them is opened. One of the royal family had been staying at or near the Cocumella; the passage was opened for their convenience, and the keys were left at our inn; so we had full command of the descent from the garden of our house. Our calata is considered one of the best; it opens into a huge double cavern, which tradition or imagination has appropriated to Polyphemus. It is large enough for him and his flock, and within is an inner cave, where the giant-shepherd stored his cheeses, and against whose rough surface the luckless voyagers clung, hoping to escape: the rock he flung to sink the vessel of Ulysses still lies a furlong from the mouth of the cavern. In the morning nothing can be cooler than the sands shaded by the cliff; later in the day the sun descending to set behind Ischia, strikes on the rocks and beach, and they become burningly hot.

P—— has got a nice sailing-boat over from Naples; too small, but still a wonderfully safe, good boat, considering its size, and we have a marinaro also from Naples, to whom it belongs; he takes care of it all day, and sleeps in it at night. He is a young fellow, and certainly never shows any signs of timidity, but considers his little skiff charmed from danger within the bay; beyond, the seas are far heavier; his father ha timore and will not let him venture. He tries to persuade us to go with him to Ischia and Capri. I am shy of this—the boat is so small; but P—— and his friend often sail some miles from shore, and run down to Castelamare; and on calm days I go on exploring expeditions into the frequent and strange caves of the coast, or stretch across to the Temple of Neptune, and roam about the ruin-strewed shore. These caverns are mysterious recesses, which the fancy is excited to people with a

thousand fairy tales. As I have said, some are like ours of the Cocumella, scooped out in the face of the rock—others, narrow clefts in the rock, open to the sky. Into the strangest you enter by narrow passages, just large enough to let the boat pass; they are covered at top, and paved by the waves, which play flickering with a turquoise tint quite peculiar and very beautiful.[40]

The plain of Sorrento, which is spread on the top of the cliffs that overlook the sea, is shut in all round by a belt of hills—intersected here and there by narrow ravines—clefts, as it were, in the soil, thickly clothed with various trees and underwood. The plain itself is planted with orange trees. These gardens being shut in by high walls, the walks near us are not at all agreeable; therefore, when we leave our terrace, and our beach, and our cavern, it is in a boat or on mules—the rides are delightful. To Capo del Monte, which those who live nearer to Sorrento than ourselves can reach by a walk, and therefore to live nearer has advantages—but I like our greater retirement better; or to the Calmaldoli, or to the Conti delle Fontanelle, a height whence we command a view of the Gulf of Salerno, the rocks of the Syrens, and the long line of coast that runs southward, on which Pæstum is situated; and of Capri rising abrupt and dark. I can only compare the difference between these enchanting scenes and those of other countries which have heretofore delighted me, by saying, that in all others it was like seeing a lovely countenance behind a dusky veil; here the veil is withdrawn, and the senses ache with the effulgent beauty which is revealed.

June 3.

To-day we visited Capri. The winds here are so regular, that with the exception of a scirocco which will sometimes intervene, you know exactly in summer-time on what you may depend. At noon the Ponente rises—a west wind, brisk and fresh, which crisps the sea into sparkling waves, that dance beneath the sun. This wind goes on increasing till about five or six in the afternoon, and then dies away; at about nine or

ten an air comes off from Vesuvius—a land wind, in fact—which lasts till morning. Thus to go to Capri, it was necessary to set out early to profit by this breeze, which wafted us southward to the island. I do not know anything more striking than the manner in which, as we stretch out from our bay, the island of Capri, with its two peaks and beetling cliffs, rises upon us. As we ran down towards it, headland after headland opened, and disclosed the bays between. In two hours we reached the island, and ran into the little bay in which the town of Capri is situated. We then transferred ourselves to two small boats, for the purpose of visiting the Grotto Azzurro. We were rowed under the high, dark, bare, perpendicular cliffs, and with anxious curiosity I looked for the opening to the grotto. The mountains grew higher, the precipices more abrupt and black, as we rowed slowly in the deep calm water beneath their shadow. At length we came to a small opening; it was necessary to sit at the bottom of the boat, as it shot through the narrow, low, covered entrance; within, the strangest sight is revealed: we entered a large cavern, formed by the sea; the hue resembles that which I mentioned as belonging to the caves of the Sorrentine coast; only here it is brighter—a turquoise, milky, pellucid, living azure. The white roof and walls of the cave reflect the tints, and the shimmering motion of the waves being also mirrored on the rock, the effect is more fairy-like and strange than can be conceived. This cave was discovered by two Englishmen, who went to swim under the cliffs, and penetrated by chance its narrow opening. It deserves the renown it has gained. I cannot explain from what effect of the laws of light this singular and beautiful hue proceeds. Partly it is the natural azure of the waves of this bright sea, which, entering, reflects the snow-white cavern, and is turned as it were into transparent milk; another cause may be, that the walls of the cavern do not reach deeper than the surface of the water; they just touch it—and the sea flows beneath. The water is icy cold, and the adventure would be perilous; but a good swimmer might be excited to dive beneath the paving water, strike out under the cave, and seek for wonders beyond.

After lingering some time in this favourite grotto of the Nereids, which they have, since the creation till the present time, kept sacred from our intrusion, we returned to Capri, and hired donkeys for our ascent to the palace of Tiberius, which is situated on the summit of one of the mountain-peaks of the island. We had several guides; the woman that accompanied me attracted me by her extreme beauty. She had that noble contour of countenance that I so particularly admire; a beauty at once full of dignity and expression. The sun burnt bright above, and the way was fatiguing. We clambered up through vineyards that clothe the mountains' sides, and podere, or small farms, sown with grain, and prolific in the huge prickly pear, which grow as giants. We reached at last the remains of the palace of Tiberius; a part of the walls and many portions of mosaic pavement remain, as well as the relics of a way down to the sea, of very solid yet elaborate workmanship. The view from the summit, where a portion of the ruins has been turned into a little church, is more grand than anything I ever saw, The Bay of Naples on one side; that of Salerno on the other; with the coast on which Pæstum is situated, bounding the eastern horizon. There is a peculiarity in the way in which the steep promontories of the southern Italian coast abut into the sea, and in the hues of ocean, as it embraces the rocky shores, which those who have not visited the South cannot conceive; which I never saw till I came here, but which satisfies the mind that this is beauty; that here, God has let fall upon earth the mantle of glory which otherwise is gathered up among the angels!

We had brought provisions with us, and dined on the sort of platform at the summit; and here, in one of the ruined chambers, where the mosaic pavement is entire, the peasants danced the Tarantella. On mainland, this dance is forbidden, at least, for the two sexes to dance it together;—why, I cannot guess: as far as we saw, it is more decent than the waltz. The couples set and turn round each other, but without touching even each other's hands, for these are occupied by the castanets. Two or three of the women were handsome; but none so attractive as the woman who was my guide.

As we descended, I talked to her. The wretched lot of these poor people is very sad. In England we see and read of the squalid condition of the poor; and when it is contrasted with the luxury of the rich, we feel deeply, "That there is something rotten in the state." But while we are aware that our climate fearfully increases the sufferings of the poor, we know that to keep out cold and hunger is costly, and the suffering does not appear so causeless and arbitrary as in this fairy island; here, where the sun in all his splendour kisses earth, which, well cultivated and fertile, yields plenty; and where, moreover, the sea is abundant in fish; the heart rebels yet more vehemently against the hungry poverty of the hard-working peasants. Fish and meat they never touch: all that is caught of the former is taken to Naples. Maccaroni they get on festivals: at other times, they live on vegetables—nothing so wholesome as the potato—the prickly pear chiefly. The better off among them indulge now and then in polenta, the flour of Indian corn made into porridge. They have no milk; weak sour wine, or water, is their drink. One result of this bad fare is the mortality among the children. My Juno-looking guide had had four children: one only survived. Poor little fellow! he ran beside his mother; and she looked on him with anxious fondness, for his complexion and figure all spoke disease.

To suffer is a different thing under this sky. They have had food, they work hard; but Nature is their friend; they are not pinched with cold nor racked by rheumatic pains. Thus my poor woman, in whom I grew interested, had nothing morose—scarcely anything plaintive—about her. "Sono sempre allegra," she said. "I am gay—we ought to be gay." "Siamo come Dio vuole." "We live as God pleases, and must not complain. My heart aches when I remember my poor children now in Paradise; I cry when I think of them; and that little fellow," and she cast an anxious, maternal glance on him—"he is not well" (heaven knows, he was not). "Ma, allegra, Signora"—"the Virgin will help us;" and she began, in a sweet voice, to sing a plaintive hymn to the Virgin. Poor people! their religion is hung round with falsehood; but it is a great, a real comfort, to them. Sickness and all evil comes from

God, and must be home, therefore, with patience; and the great duty is to be gay under all, and to serve God with a cheerful, as well as a pure, heart. I should have liked to have tried, at least, to have done some real good to this woman, whose countenance, and voice, and conversation, gave her distinction. Nothing could be more simple and unpretending than her talk; but it had a stamp of heart, joined to that touch of the imaginative, peculiar to the Italian peasantry.

English tourists get very angry at the perpetual demands made on their purses during their excursions. “Dammi qualche co’,” salutes our ear too often. But, poor people, who can wonder! I have told you how they fare. At Sorrento oranges are the staple of the place—that and hewn stones; the poor man who has a mule considers himself comparatively well off; he and his mule carrying oranges and stones, support his family. They often work all night, lading the boats going to Naples with oranges, and by day they labour at the quarries. The nobles do not reside on their estates, and there is no help for the poor; there are many convents, but none among them are charitably disposed, so that, except the archbishop, there is not a single individual or community that turns a pitying eye on the ill-paid, over-worked labourers of the soil; while the abundant riches that flow from this soil and from their ceaseless industry, are drained away to Naples. The people are particularly handsome; even the old are good-looking: they say there is something in the soil and air particularly good for health and comeliness. I have seen no hags. Old women, with happy-looking faces, graced by the placid picturesque beauty of age, sit at their doors spinning. No one can talk to them without perceiving latent, under ignorance and superstition, great natural abilities, and that heartfelt piety which springs (as our higher virtues do,) from the imagination which warms and colours their faith. Poor people! how I long for a fairy wand which would make them proprietors of the earth which they till, but must not reap. How sad a thing is human society: yet it is comforting, even where we find the laws by which it is said to be held together—but which ought rather to be likened to an iron yoke, pressing it down and depriving it of its native strength

and elasticity—yet, I say, it warms my heart when I find the individuals that compose a population, poor, humble, ignorant, misguided, yet endowed with some of the brightest gifts of our nature, and hearing in their faces the stamp of intelligence and feeling. I never lived among a people I liked so well as these Sorrentines. I hope I am not deceived: but Mr. Cooper, who sojourned here a few months, and Mrs. Starke, who lived here for years, evidently regard them with more liking and esteem than the poorer classes usually inspire.

June 15th.

Our way of life is regular enough, as in hot countries it always must be. The mornings are cool and pleasant: my bed-room window, with a balcony, looks on the northern mountains; and the first opening of my eyes is upon orange gardens, shadowy groves, and green mountain-tops, with peeps of the sea between. At noon, when the sea-breeze rises, my friends sail; sometimes, when the breeze is not too stiff, I join them, and we stretch out till the whole of Capri opens on us. When I am not there they venture further, and they bathe: the sea is so inviting, that they spend an hour or two in the water. We dine (and our cook being good and the viands excellent, we dine well) at two. At four or five we either betake ourselves to the boat, and cross the bay to the Temple of Neptune, which is at the point of the first headland—or the mules come to the door, and we take various rides; or, if we at times repeat the same, its beauty always seems new. We are shut out from walks in the immediate vicinity—as to trudge between high stone walls is not pleasant; but in our excursions we find plenty of occasion to clamber up and down the steep mountain-paths. The hills are bright with the broom in full flower, and the myrtle begins to show its stars among its bright-pointed leaves. On the plains, which are often found near the summits of the hills—the rocky crags rising higher round as a hedge and shelter, wheat is sown, and flourishes. One of our favourite rides is to the other side of the promontory, where a natural arch once stood, resembling the Presbisch Thor of the Saxon Switzerland; it is now broken and ruined. Once, going

there, my friends thought that they could easily reach the sands beneath and bathe, or find a boat to take them to the rocks of the Syrens; but after a rough precipitous descent of some length, they found the way grow on them: they were apparently as far off as ever from the sea, and they returned.

I spend the evenings on our terrace. The nights here are wonderful; and I am never weary of observing the loveliness of the skies. Twenty-four o'clock, a moveable hour which is fixed for half an hour after sunset, never, in this climate, falls later than half-past eight. By that time it is night; but the extreme purity of the atmosphere gives to darkness a sort of brilliancy, such as a black shining object has. The sea is dark and bright at the same time; the high coast around does not assume that gigantic, misty appearance, hills do in the North during dusk, but they stand out as well defined as by day. If there be a moon, we see it floating in mid-air. We perceive at once that it is not a shining shape, plastered, as it were, against the sky; but a ball which, all bright, or partly dusky, hangs pendant. Its light is painfully bright; the extreme glittering whiteness fatigues the eye more than daylight. In the North, we often repine that we have not two moons, so always to enjoy the use of our eyes in the absence of the sun; in the South, the interlunar nights are an agreeable change, at times almost a relief. By the moonlight we can perceive the smoke ascend from the crater of Vesuvius; if she desert the night, a lambent flame shoots up at intervals. I may have wearied you by my various accounts of the evening hours which, to a lover of nature, are so enchanting. In other places a sense of tenderness, a softening influence, has fallen on my heart at that time; but here, the glory of absolute immeasurable beauty mantles all things at all times.

June 20.

——Yet not so. Lo! a scirocco comes to blot the scene. Nothing can be stranger than this scirocco: at its first breath, the sea grows dull, leaden, slate-coloured—all its transparency is gone. The view of the opposite shore is hidden in mist. The near

mountains wear a deeper green, but have lost all brightness and cast wierd shadows on the dull waters. This wind coming from the south-east is with us a land wind. It rolls huge waves on the beach of Naples; but beneath our cliffs the sea is calm—such a calm!—it looks so treacherous, that even if you did not hear of the true state of things, you would hesitate to trust yourself to it. At a short distance from the shore the wind plays wild pranks; here and there it seizes the water as a whirlwind, and you see circles emerge from a centre, spread round and fade away. P—— went out in his boat about a hundred yards from our cavern; even there, though in apparent calm, the skiff was whirled round, and nothing but letting go the sheet on the instant prevented her from being capsized.

The heat is excessive. Every one appears to be seized with feverish illness: nobody wishes to eat or move. The early setting and late rising of the sun in this high latitude, making the nights long, gives the earth and atmosphere time to cool; and it is thus that the heat of summer is often not so oppressive as in the North; otherwise it would be intolerable. Imagine our Dresden length of day with a Neapolitan temperature: no one could bear it and live. But our nights are cool; our early mornings even chill, and thus nature is refreshed: only, this does not occur during the periods of scirocco; then, night and day, the heat lies like a heavy garment round our limbs. Fortunately, three days is its utmost, one or two its usual, extent; it vanishes as it came, no one knows how. Nature and our human spirits come forth as after an eclipse; the world revived looks up and resumes its natural healthy appearance.

June 23.

We have visited Pompeii. A greater extent of the city has been dug out and laid open since I was there before, so that it has now much more the appearance of a town of the dead. You may ramble about and lose yourself in the many streets. Bulwer, too, has peopled its silence. I have been reading his hook, and I have felt on visiting the

place much more as if really it had been once full of stirring life, now that he has attributed names and possessors to its houses, passengers to its streets. Such is the power of the imagination. It can not only give “a local habitation and a name” to the airy creations of the fancy and the abstract ideas of the mind, but it can put a soul into stones, and hang the vivid interest of our passions and our hopes upon objects otherwise vacant of name or sympathy. Not indeed that Pompeii could be such, but the account of its “Last Days” has cast over it a more familiar garb, and peopled its desert streets with associations that greatly add to their interest.

LETTER XXIII. Excursion to Amalfi.

July 10th.

I have always had a great desire to penetrate into the south of Italy, which I believe to be the most beautiful country in the world; joining the rich aspect of culture to the graces of nature,

“In all her wildness, all her majesty,

As in that elder time, ere man was made.”[41]

If I were a man, I know of no enterprise that would please my imagination more than seeking, in this district, for the traces of lost wealth, science, and civilisation. These blessings flourished in this neighbourhood at two distinct periods, apparently widely separated from each other; yet, if examined, we might find that the link had never been broken. Magna Grecia was the mother of many philosophers, and the richest portion of ancient Italy; and there is nothing violent in the supposition, that Amalfi, hemmed in by mountains, and Salerno, almost equally sheltered, should have preserved and extended, rather than originated, the trade and science which rendered them famous at a time when, all around, every effort of human enterprise was merged in offensive and defensive wars.

Amalfi was the first republic of modern Italy. As the power of the Roman Empire

waxed weak, and the transplanting of the seat of empire to Constantinople, placed Italy in the novel position of a distant neglected province, frequently invaded by barbarians, the fabric of national government fell to pieces, while municipal communities remained. Two of these, from their happy position on the sea, and the great traffic there carried on by means of the Mediterranean, were eminently prosperous. One in the north, Venice, acquired power, and preserved its independence for centuries; the other in the south, Amalfi, was swallowed up by the kingdom of Naples, after having been pillaged by the Pisans in 1137—for thus early did municipal rivalry, the bane of Italy, begin to divide and ravage the peninsula. It seems to me that sound knowledge of the results of political institutions might be gathered from studying the state of society in a town whose citizens were, when free, intelligent and courageous—whose maritime laws, instituted at a time (the ninth century) when Europe was sunk in barbarism, has served as a basis for every subsequent commercial code—who covered the sea with their ships—who almost discovered the mariner's compass. What are they now?

Their intelligence, their capacities, I am sure remain; their affections also must warm their hearts as kindly; must we not seek in their political history for the causes wherefore superstition and vice have replaced ardour for science and the virtues of industrious and brave citizens?

Though I could not fulfil in any way a favourite design of visiting Calabria, yet we have crept on as far as Amalfi. It had been my idea to spend a month in this town, when I could have told you more of the present state of its inhabitants. I was not able to do this; so, can only mention the impression made by the visit of a day.[42]

We had secured a boat to be ready for us at the Marinella, on the other side of the promontory, and set out on mules for the Scaricatojo, the name given to the descent from the mountain that overhangs the eastern sea. We reached the height which we had often before visited, whence a view is commanded of the two seas. To the west

the Bay of Naples, landlocked, as we looked on it, by the islands of Ischia and Procida, and the promontory of Misenum; while, more to the north, the shining edifices of the city of Naples are distinctly visible, and in the depth of the bay, Vesuvius rises up immediately from the shore. On the other side, the eye plunged down from the height of the myrtle-clothed mountain on which we stood, to the sea far below, gleaming at the foot of the precipices—vexing itself against the rocks of the Syrens: eastward, the coast that runs in a long line to the south; the lowlands on which Pæstum is situated, with the back-ground of lofty mountains, was this day—as it almost always is—hidden in mist.

The descent of the Scaricatojo is very steep, and long and fatiguing. At first we made light of it; but as we went on under a burning sun, the path grew more craggy and precipitous: sometimes it was formed only of a rough sort of steps cut in the mountain side, or constructed of shattered masses of rock; or of zigzags, which grew shorter, more numerous, more precipitous, and more slippery, till we despaired of ever reaching the beach.

But all things human end; and at last—most agreeable change!—we were seated in a boat beneath the lofty inaccessible hills that rise almost sheer from the water, with here and there a little break, where a brief space of beach intervenes, and a town or village rises beside it. The voyage was not quite as agreeable as it might have been, for there was a swell of the sea, and our little boat was deeply laden with people. We were glad to see Amalfi open on us. Salvator Rosa best represents the peculiar beauty of the southern Italian coast; its steep promontories, the varied breaks of its mountainous shores, all green with forest-trees, adorned by isolated ruins, and clothed with a radiance which is the peculiar gift of the atmosphere of this clime; encircled by the lucid transparency of the tideless sea—for it was here that he often retreated, leading, some have said, a bandit’s life,[43] but most surely a lover and studier of nature; his landscapes are so many exquisite views taken from this part of the country. Look at them, wherever you can, and learn in what its loveliness

consists. The landing-place of the town is open, busy, and cheerful. There is a Capuchin convent most beautifully situated near the sea; it was secularised by the French, and long served for an hotel. The mother of the present King of Naples often visited Amalfi, and slept at this inn. The expelled monks gathered round her, and led her to consider it a matter of conscience that they should be reinstated. She obtained this favour from her son before she died; the Capuchins are come back; and travellers are turned out from what may be fairly named the most beautiful inn in the world. The present house, however, is by no means bad, and overlooks the Marina. We obtained good rooms and a tolerable dinner, being waited on by three sons of the host—handy little fellows, from ten to fifteen, who performed their duties promptly and quietly.

As soon as we had rested and were refreshed, we wished, though still much fatigued, to see something of the place. We visited the cathedral, an ancient edifice, built upon the site of a pagan temple, and rambled about the town, which is busy. Though fallen from the commercial prosperity it enjoyed twelve centuries ago, Amalfi carries on considerable traffic, and its citizens are well to do. There is a large manufacture of maccaroni, another of paper, another for working the iron of Elba. Every one can find work, living is cheap, and want is happily unknown.

The paper-mills are picturesquely situated in a ravine, shut in by lofty mountains, beside a cascade; it was not so far but that we might visit them during the evening. Two donkeys were brought to carry us thither. Accustomed to the excellent mules of Sorrento, we were not prepared for the poor little creatures, with things on their backs which it was ridiculous to call saddles. However, I and a young lady who accompanied me mounted. If you have the book, look at the vignette to “Italy” of Amalfi; you will perceive its situation, and how just behind the town the mountains are cloven and divided by a deep ravine—our way led up this narrow pass, down which sped a torrent, whose “inland murmur,” or rather dashing, was grateful to our ears, long accustomed only to the roaring of the surges of the sea.

The scene was wholly different from anything near Sorrento. The valley and the mountain sides were beautifully green and fresh—grassy uplands shone between groves of forest-trees, and villages with their churches here and there peeped out—while the torrent dashed over the rocks, sparkling and foaming—and dressing its banks, which grew higher and more rocky as we ascended the pass, in luxuriant and bright verdure. Our first visit was to a paper-mill, whence a view of the ravine is commanded—and then we clambered up the hill-side to the road above. Golden evening gave a refreshing coolness to the air, and picturesque shadows to the hills. It was a scene,—an hour,—when Nature imparts a quick and living enjoyment akin to the transports of love and the ecstacy of music—it touches a chord whose vibration is happiness. Faint from excessive weariness, yet with regret I consented to return. Night with her stars gathered round us, and with much difficulty our poor little stumbling animals carried us back to the town.

This same evening we wished to prepare for our excursion on the morrow; the plan of which was to visit Ravello, and then to descend the mountain to the sea-shore—take boat, and sail to Salerno, and after dinner to drive back to Sorrento.

Our evening's experience showed that the poor little asses were not fit for such an expedition—we must have recourse to the other alternative, portantini,—arm-chairs placed on poles, borne by two men; we required three, for the three ladies of the party. P——, and his friend, were to walk.

We were told —— but, remember, I consider all that we heard as very problematical as regards truth—we had no time to learn the real state of things, and I relate the story more to show the sort of wild excuses the Italians make when they want to carry a point profitable to themselves—losing to us. We were told that the bearers of the portantini all belonged to a village, Vettici, some miles up the mountain—that when these were wanted they were sent for the previous evening—locked up all night at Amalfi, to prevent them from being enticed away, I don't why or by whom.

We were told that we had arrived too late to get these men; that we must engage some of the town's-people. We ought to have four bearers to each chair; thirty men came forward to claim the employment—and the polizia begged us to choose twelve from among them. My friends went to the polizia for this purpose—the scene was highly comic. Thirty men vociferating, insisting, supplicating—eager. Among these was the master of the boat who was to take us to Salerno, and his three sons—they were evidently respectable men, and at once selected—but among the rest who could choose? My friends could only laugh; they pointed out a dozen as possessing the best physiognomies.

We were to set out early, and therefore retired early. Night scarcely veiled the sea. The quay had been busy all day, lading ships with grain; several parties of men were still at work. It was a lively scene compared with the quiet of the Cocumella, yet so unlike were the tiny barks in the offing, and appearance of the men at work, lading and unlading vessels, from anything one is accustomed to that the ancient times of Magna Græcia, when the busy ports sent corn to Rome, occurred; or rather, I confess, that with me another association was awakened. When excited, the mind is apt to recur to the impressions of childhood—like sympathetic ink exposed to fire—the covert but not expunged pictures which the soul first received, revive and become visible. Les Aventures de Télémaque recurred to my mind. I was haunted by the description therein given of the busy sea-ports of Tyre and Crete. The broad luminous sea before, the jutting headlands, the not inharmonious cries of the men at work, the frequent tread of their feet, formed a sort of picture which it seemed to me I had seen in childhood drawn by the pen of Fénelon. I went to sleep while it still flitted, as it were, beneath my closed eyelids.

The morrow came, and with it our guide, our chairs, our bearers—such a crowd. The thirty men had been disputing all night as to which among them had been chosen; the conclusion they came to was, that they would all go. Travellers often (I among the number) have had the whole pleasure of an excursion marred by a struggle with

guides, muleteers, &c. It is often necessary to contest a thousand points, and to resist exactions, and the temper gets soured, and the divine influence of nature on the mind is marred. I was determined that I would not lose the pleasure I might snatch during my hasty visit to the outskirts of Calabria, by tormenting myself with these people; for being the one of our party most conversant with Italian, the brunt of the battle must fall upon me. I made up my mind at once that these fellows should have their way, and I would be entertained instead of annoyed by exactions of all kinds.

We had our guide—an erect old man, loquacious enough, with a very amusing assumption of dignity towards the other men. We had our thirty bearers, and in addition (recommended by the police, to keep so large a band in order) two police-officers, with unloaded muskets and cartouche-boxes innocent of ammunition. Eight men devoted themselves to my chair—the best of the number, I believe; and away we went, up the rocky path through the ravine, beside the torrent, beneath the chesnut woods, climbing higher and higher up the mountain side, the bright golden morning sun flinging long shadows from the hills.

The scenery is quite unlike Sorrento; as far as earth is concerned, it is far more sublime. The mountains are loftier, and more picturesque, parted by deeper and wider ravines, terminated in abrupter peaks, their sides clothed by magnificent forest-trees; and when we reached a summit and looked around—travellers visit Switzerland and speak of the sublime works of creation among seas of ice and avalanches and towering Alps, bare and craggy, crested with perpetual snow; there, nature is sublime, but she shows the power and the will to harm; here she is gracious as well as glorious; she is our friend, or rather our exalted and munificent queen and benefactress.[44]

From the height of Ravello we gazed on a wide and various panorama of vale and mountain, spread in picturesque and infinite variety around; deep below was a sunny beach, shut in by steep headlands, and a placid, widespread southern sea, basking in

the noontide heat. The cathedral of Ravello is an ancient, venerable edifice. In the sacristy were some old paintings of what may be called the seraphic school, such as I had admired at Florence. Saints, whose countenances show that they are blessed; virgins, whose gentleness is full of majesty, whose humility is that of one who, placing herself last, shall be first. Since those days men have lost the power of portraying the passion of adoration in the countenance. Either in venerable age or beautiful youth, what specimens there are in the first painters of great and good beings absorbed by grateful, joyful worship of the greatest and best of all. One of the most charming of the pictures at Ravello was an Annunciation;—the beaming sweetness of the angel, the chaste joy of Mary, spread a halo over the canvas. They told us that an Englishman had wished to buy these pictures, but the Bishop had very properly refused to commit the sacrilege of selling them.

The unclouded sun shone hotly above; there was a breeze, however, and the landscape showed green and fresh. Sometimes our numerous party were clamorous among one another, disputing how their pay should be shared; when the confusion grew high, our old guide—sovereign over all in his own conceit—cried, “Silenzio! silenzio!” in an authoritative voice, and the stream of sound was, for a moment, checked. They were all well-behaved towards us. We asked our good-natured sbirri, with their harmless guns, whether there were any banditti now in Calabria? All, they assured us, was safe and quiet; or if there was any disturbance, they were sent, and order was restored—by what means I cannot guess, except that the aspects of these men were peculiarly placid and peaceful.

The descent was very precipitous, much of it being down flight after flight of steep steps, cut in the rock. It was far too warm and fatiguing to think of walking, and rather frightful to be carried down. However, by turning the chair, and riding backwards, we got through it without much alarm.

The Ponente had risen as we reached the beach. The sea sparkled fresh and free. The

boat was large and commodious. The master-boatman had a great sense of his own respectability and that of his sons, and of the excellence of his vessel. He spoke his own praises in a sonorous voice, keeping time to his speech with the strokes of his oar:—"Sarete contenti di me, Signori. Io sono un' galant' uomo: miei figli sono galant' uomini: la mia barca è buona e bella. Tutti i Signori forestieri sono contenti di me."

As soon as we had made something of an offing, the sails were set, and we changed our marinaro's rhapsody of self-eulogy to some national airs sung by his sons. Their voices were good, and our navigation was prosperous and pleasant.

We were thoroughly tired out when we arrived at Salerno, which is less picturesquely situated than Amalfi, the shore around being low. When Amalfi was a great commercial sea-port, the medical school of Salerno was famous for its knowledge of the healing art. The students went to study in Arabia and Spain; and they returned to their native town to dispense, among crowds of rich and noble patients, the treasures of their skill. Salerno in those days was regarded as illustrious among the cities of modern Italy—the women were beautiful, and the men were honest; thus Gibbon transcribes the praise of William of Apulia—

"Urbs Latii non est hac delitiosor urbe:

Frugibus, arboribus, vinoque redundat; et unde

Non tibi poma, nuces, non pulchra palatia desunt

Non species muliebris abest probitasque virorum."

But we saw less of the remnants of this magnificence than even of Amalfi, for we arrived fatigued; and after a few hours' repose and dinner, we set out in a carriage homewards. We drove through a beautiful valley towards Castelamare, between wooded hills. There is a very pretty hotel at Cava, where travellers often remain several weeks. I should prefer, however, the sea-shore at Amalfi. Castelamare is a busy town on the beach, in the very depth of the bay. Numbers of villas are scattered

over the wooded sides of the mountains and through the shady valley. There is a good railroad to Naples: the distance, rather more than twenty miles, is performed in about an hour and a half. Castelamare is a more fashionable resort than Sorrento. The villas are more numerous and more elegant; the rides more diversified; the intercourse with the capital easier. It is not so well suited for a short stay, for the hotels are all in the midst of a noisy town; and the villas, which let at a high price, can only be taken for the season—six, or at least, four months. On the other hand, for excursions on the sea, Sorrento is very far to be preferred. Castelamare, at the depth of the bay, affords only a small lake-like basin for boating. To view the shores, or visit the islands, east or west, you must first reach Sorrento or Naples. In the former, you seem happily placed, as in a centre, to diverge at will in excursions on the water. Sorrento is in every way cheaper and more practicable for those who are not rich.

The road from Castelamare to Sorrento, about twenty miles, is excellent, constructed on the edge of the cliffs overhanging the sea. As we proceeded we gladly hailed our return to a familiar scene, and welcomed various glimpses of views which we looked on as peculiarly our own. We passed Vico—halfway—and then turning the shoulder of a headland, rattled down towards the populous plain of Sorrento—with its many villages, its orange gardens and sheltering hills—and reached our quiet hotel, where we were gladly welcomed. The Cocumella has become a home—it is a joy to return to our terrace, to breathe the fragrance of the orange-flowers—to see the calm sea spread out at our feet, as we look over the bay to Naples—while above us bends a sky—in whose pure depths ship-like clouds glide—and the moon hangs luminous, a pendant sphere of silver fire.

1. In preparing these letters for the press, I have consulted some papers entitled “Sketches of Bohemia and the Sclavonian Provinces of the Austrian Empire,” by Henry Reeve, Esq., published in the 18th and 19th vols. of the Metropolitan Magazine. They are admirably written, and it is greatly to be regretted that they do

not proceed to a greater length, and are lost in a Magazine.

2. Mr. Reeve.

3. Life of Wallenstein, by Colonel Mitchell.

4. Rogers's "Italy."

5. Mr. Reeve.

6. Paradise Regained.

7. Milton. Do these lines, in the "Paradise Lost," refer in the poet's mind to his first view of Florence? It seems very probable.

8. Wordsworth.

9. Addison.

10. On this subject only Murray's Hand-book seems to run faulty—a lower price for voiture travelling is always named than I have found it possible to attain. It is easy to allege that we were imposed upon. It may be so; but it was difficult to believe this in some instances, where the bargain was made for us by friends, natives of the country. In the Hand-book of Italy this is the more remarkable, and I can speak with greater certainty. I do not know how it may be with a single man taking his place,—one among many, as it may chance,—but for a party, like ourselves, taking a whole carriage, the expense in proportion is far higher than he mentions.

11. Alison's History of Europe.

12.

AD SIRMIONEM PENINSULAM

Peninsularum, Sirmio, insularumque

Ocelle, quascunque in liquentibus stagnis,

Marique vasto fert uterque Neptunus;

Quam te libenter, quamque lætus inviso,

Vix mî ipse credens Thyniam, atque Bithynos

Liquisse campos, et videre te in tuto.

O quid solutis est beatius curis

Cum mens onus reponit, ac peregrino

Labore fessi venimus larem ad nostrum,

Desideratoque acquiescimus lecto?

Hoc est quod unum est pro laboribus tantis.

Salve, O venusta Sirmio, atque hero gaude;

Gaudete, vosque Lariæ lacus undæ:

Ridete quidquid est domi cachinnorum.

The above translation, from the verses of Catullus, is by Mr. Leigh Hunt.

13. Rogers's "Italy."

14. De la Poésie Chrétienne.

15. I remember an instance of the sort of interference which occurred in Tuscany, at the University of Pisa, during the mild and comparatively liberal reign of Ferdinand. It is well known that during the Carnival the people promenade in particular streets (in Pisa on the Lungo l'Arno), the gentry in their carriages, and often masked. The students at Pisa got up a masque of an elaborate kind, I think of heathen gods and goddesses, or some such thing. The following Carnival, the professors, wishing to turn this play to nobler uses, combined with the students to get up a procession of masks personating all the illustrious men of Italian history. Government considered this a dangerous reminiscence of past glory, and forbade it.

16. All the aristocracy—or as they call it, the famiglie tribunizie of Venice, consider themselves descended from old Roman families of the Equestrian order, and the names of several seem to attest the validity of this pretension. Padua sent a colony to the island of Rivo Alto, or Rialto, in 421; and the command for the building of the

new city was entrusted to Alberto Faliero, Tommaso Candiano, and Cenone Daulo, or Dandolo. Hence it appears probable that the families of Faliero, Candiano, and Dandolo are descended from the Roman patricians who were present at the first building of the city of Rialto. In the ninth century the seat of Venetian government was transferred from the island of Rialto to Eraclea, and the independence of Venice was established. Now, before and after that epoch it may be said Venice was the only city in Europe, which from its foundation for fourteen centuries never submitted to a foreign yoke; and it is said that the old Venetian families have preserved in their lineaments the primitive character of the race whence they sprung. Dr. Edwards having examined carefully the portraits of the series of doges, and compared them with the countenances of their actual descendants, comes to this conclusion.

17. Shelley's "Defence of Poetry."

18. "What were the turkeys a pound?" asked our guide of some peasants returning from the fair. "Seventeen quatrini," was the reply. It requires a complex sum to reduce this to English value. There are five quatrini to a crazie—eight crazie in a panl—and a panl is about 5¼d; in addition, the turkeys were bought alive with their feathers on, and the Italian pound contains only twelve ounces. This was the market price in the country. Every edible pays a duty on entering Florence.

19. "Paradise Regained."

20. "The compunction of man's heart—its aspirations towards God—the rapt ecstacy—a foretaste of celestial beatitude—all that class of profound and exalted emotions which no artist can represent without having previously experienced them, formed, as it were, the mysterious circle which the genius of Fra Angelico delighted to follow, and when ended, he recommenced with renewed delight."—La Poésie Chrétienne.

21. "The Guide-Book of Florence," by Fantozzi, is very complete, but it wants an

index of the names of the artists, with the numbers of the pages in which they are mentioned, cited, to enable the amateur at once to learn where to find their various works.

22. The eight which M. Rio mentions as having seen himself, and as forming the glory of Raphael, as a painter of ideal and pure beauty, are—the Virgin, of the Duke of Alba—purchased afterwards by Mr. Coswelt, and brought to London.—The Virgin, known under the name of La Belle Jardinière, now in the Louvre.—The Virgin of Palazzo Tempi, now at Munich.—The Virgin of Canigiani, at Munich.—The two in the gallery of Florence, which, for the lovers of this style, dim the glory of every other picture—especially that named the Madonna of the Goldfinch.—Of this M. Rio says, "It may be boldly affirmed that Christian art never rose to a greater height."—The Virgin of the Colonna Palace, now at Berlin; that of the Palazzo Gregori; and the Madonna of Pescia, known as the Madonna del Baldachino.

23. Rogers's "Italy."

24. The common prints taken from this picture are very unworthy of it; they seem to substitute sensuality for sensibility, in the lines of the countenance. Mr. Kirkup's drawing, made for Lord Vernon, is excellent. Unfortunately, in removing the whitewash or plaster, a slight injury was done to the eye in the picture. The painter employed by the Grand Duke has restored this; but Mr. Kirkup is indignant with the restoration; and the print, taken from his drawing, exhibits the blemish. I confess, that to me the restoration seems judicious. The ball of the eye alone was injured; and as the colour of Dante's eyes was known from other pictures, the portrait has gained in expression, and not lost in authenticity by its being repainted.

25. Colletta, Storia del Reame di Napoli, dal 1735, sino al 1825. Libro vii. cap. 53.

26. A young aspirant was asked, during the progress of his initiation, whether, if commanded by the society, he would put his own father to death. He answered,

"Yes." He was taken to a room where, by some contrivance it seemed to him that he saw his father sitting at a table shading his eyes with his hand. A dagger was given him: "Your father is a traitor to the sect," he was told, "strike!" The weapon fell from the youth's hand; in an instant he was blind-folded—hurried away—set free in some distant spot—rejected from the sect, as incapable of that devotion to the cause which was demanded of its members.

27. The spots where the Carbonari assembled were called Vendite—or Places for Sale—in accordance with the fiction of their being sellers of charcoal. Thus, as we should write over a shop "Charcoal sold here;" in Italian, the phrase is, "Vendita di Carbone." Where there was one Vendita, there could be no other within four miles;—if another was established within these limits, a schism ensued, and every endeavour was made to put it down.

28. Rogers's "Italy."

29. In the same manner his tragedy, lately published, "Arnaldo da Brescia," is a splendid protest against the temporal dominion of the Pope and the abuse of the power of the church.

30. This work was first published at Palermo about two years ago, under the title of "Un Periodo delle Istorie Siciliane del secolo 13mo." The manuscript was of course submitted to the censor of the press, who permitted its publication. It acquired universal reputation, and was enthusiastically received in the kingdom of Naples. As soon as public attention was excited, the police of that state grew suspicious and fearful. The book was prohibited, the remaining copies were sequestrated, and all notice of it in newspapers and periodical works, which had already begun to praise the author and give an account of his book, was forbidden. The persecution did not cease here; influenced by some sinister, and, as is supposed, personal motive, Del Carretto, director or minister of the police, gave orders that Amari should be dismissed from an employment he held in a government office, and sent to Naples.

Signor Amari was warned in time, and convinced that a long and severe imprisonment awaited him at the capital, he preferred going into voluntary exile from his country, to falling into the hands of a cruel enemy. Signor Amari is at present living in Paris, where he published, about a year ago, a second edition of his work, under the amended title of “Guerra del Vespro Siciliano,” with corrections and additions. He is at present occupied in collecting materials for the compilation of a history of Sicily, from the occupation of the Saracens; for which, as he must consult Arabic documents, he is studying with unwearied ardour; he thus adds another proof that the Italians of the present day are capable of severe application and learned research, in addition to the frequent gift of remarkable talents.—1844.

31. Plato’s Ion. Shelley’s Essays.

32. M. Rio.

33. Maccabees, ii. 3.

34. Childe Harold, Canto IV.

35. Rome in the Nineteenth Century.

36. The want of conventual charities, whose funds, on the Reformation, were greedily appropriated by the laity, forced Queen Elizabeth to institute the Poor-Laws.

37. Arnaldo da Brescia.

38.

“Ahi, la vedete;

Di porpora è vestita; oro, monili,

Gemme tutta l’ aggravano; le bianche

Vesti, delizia del primier marito,

Che or sta nel cielo, ella perdè nel fango.

Però di nomi e di blasfemi è piena,

E nella fronte sua scrisse; Mistero.
Ahi, la sua voce a consolar gli afflitti
Non s’ ode più; tutti minaccia, e crea
Con perenni anatèmi all’ alme incerte
Ineffabili pene; gl’ infelici,
Qui lo siam tutti, nel commun dolore
Correano ad abbracisarsi, e la crudele
Di Cristo in nome gli ha divisi; i padri
Inimica coi figli, e le consorti
Dai mariti disgiunge, e pon la guerra
Fra unanimi fratelli: è del Vangelo
Interprete crudel: l’ odio s’ impara
Nel libro dell’ amor.”
. . . . .
——“il mondo ignora
S’ ella più d’ oro o più di sangue ha sete.
Perchè salì costei dalle profonde
Viscere della terra al Campidoglio?
Fu bella e grande nelle sue prigioni.”
Niccolini; Arnaldo da Brescia.
39.
“—— Nelle chiese—
I più astuti del clero a udir son posti,
Gli altrui peccati, e li sommesse, arcane

Parole mormorate ai proni orecchi

Sono alla nostra libertà fatali.

Perchè nuda e tremante al lor corpetto

Ogni alma è tratta dalle sue lattèbre,

E assoluto non è chi si confessa

Se gli altri non accusa.”

Niccolini; Arnaldo da Brescia.

40. Mrs. Starke lived for some years at the Cocumella, at Sorrento. Her account of the place and scenery around, is both accurate and well written, and for this part of Italy she is an excellent guide. Mr. Cooper, the author of “The Spy,” has written very agreeable “Excursions in Italy,” the most interesting portion of which regards Sorrento.

41. Rogers’s Italy.

42. Among modern historians Sismondi and Gibbon dwelt with pleasure on the commerce and prosperity of Amalfi. It was an oasis where the mind of the historian reposed, fatigued by barbarous wars and innumerable acts of cruelty. Gibbon quotes the description given by Guglielmus Apulus—

“Nulla magis locuples argento, vestibus, oro,

Pontibus innumeris; hâc plurimus urbe moratur

Nauta maris cœlique vias aperire peritus.

Huc et Alexandri diversa feruntur ab urbe

Regis, et Antiochi. Quis hæc freta plurima transit.

His Arabes, Indi, Siculi nascuntur et Afri.

Hæc gens est totum prope nobilitata per orbem

Et mercando ferens, et amans mercata referre.”

43. Rogers's Italy.

44. "Until that moment I was not fully sensible of the vast superiority of the Italian landscapes over all others. Switzerland astonishes, and it even often delights; but Italian nature wins upon you until you come to love it as a friend. I can only liken the perfection of the scene we gazed upon this evening to a feeling almost allied to transport; to the manner in which we dwell upon the serene expression of a beloved and lovely countenance. Other scenes have the tints, the hues, the outlines, the proportions, the grandeur, and even the softness of beauty; but these have the character that marks the existence of a soul. The effect is to pour a flood of sensations on the mind, that are distinct from the commoner feelings of wonder that are excited by vastness and magnificence. The refinement of Italian nature appears to distinguish it as much from that of other countries, as the quality distinguishes the scene of sentiment and intellect from the man of mere interests. In sublimity of a certain sort—more especially in the sublimity of desolation, Switzerland probably has no equal on earth; and perhaps to this may be added a certain unearthly aspect which the glaciers assume in particular conditions of the atmosphere; but these Italian scenes rise to a sublimity of a different kinds, which, though it does not awe, leaves behind it a tender sensation allied to that of love. I can conceive even an ardent admirer of nature wearying in time of the grandeur of the Alps; but I can scarce imagine one who could ever tire of the witchery of Italy."—C. F. Cooper; "Excursions in Italy." Vol. I.; Letter XIV.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

Page Changed from Changed to 4 and trading Alstadt, and crossed the bridge which and trading Altstadt, and crossed the bridge which 11 words; schmuzig, or dirty, applied to the sheet words; schmutzig, or dirty, applied to the sheet 23 I should liked to have stayed some days at I should have liked to have stayed some days at Typos fixed; non-standard spelling and dialect retained. Used numbers for footnotes,

placing them all at the end of the last chapter.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK RAMBLES IN GERMANY AND ITALY IN 1840, 1842, AND 1843, VOL. 2 OF 2 ***

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