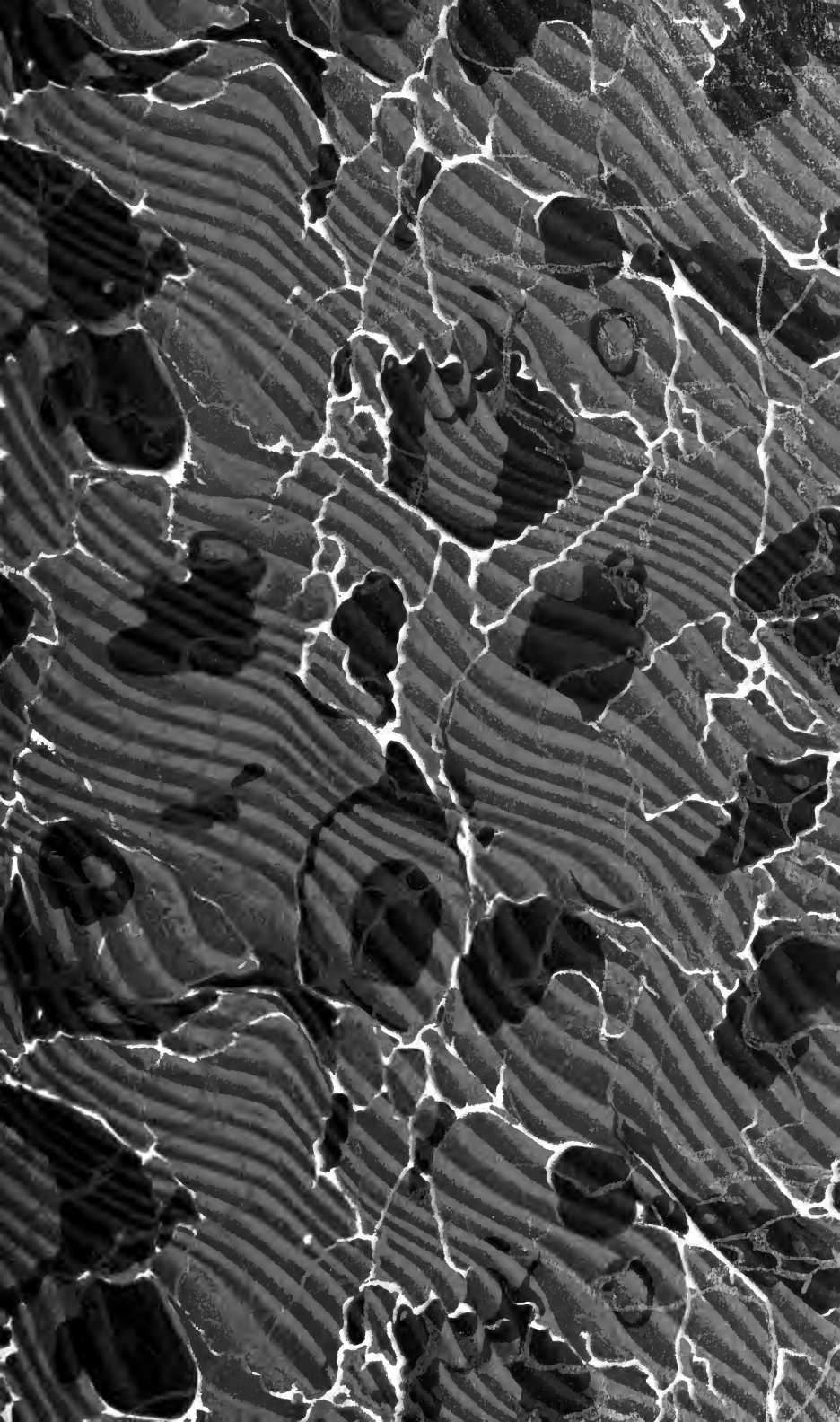


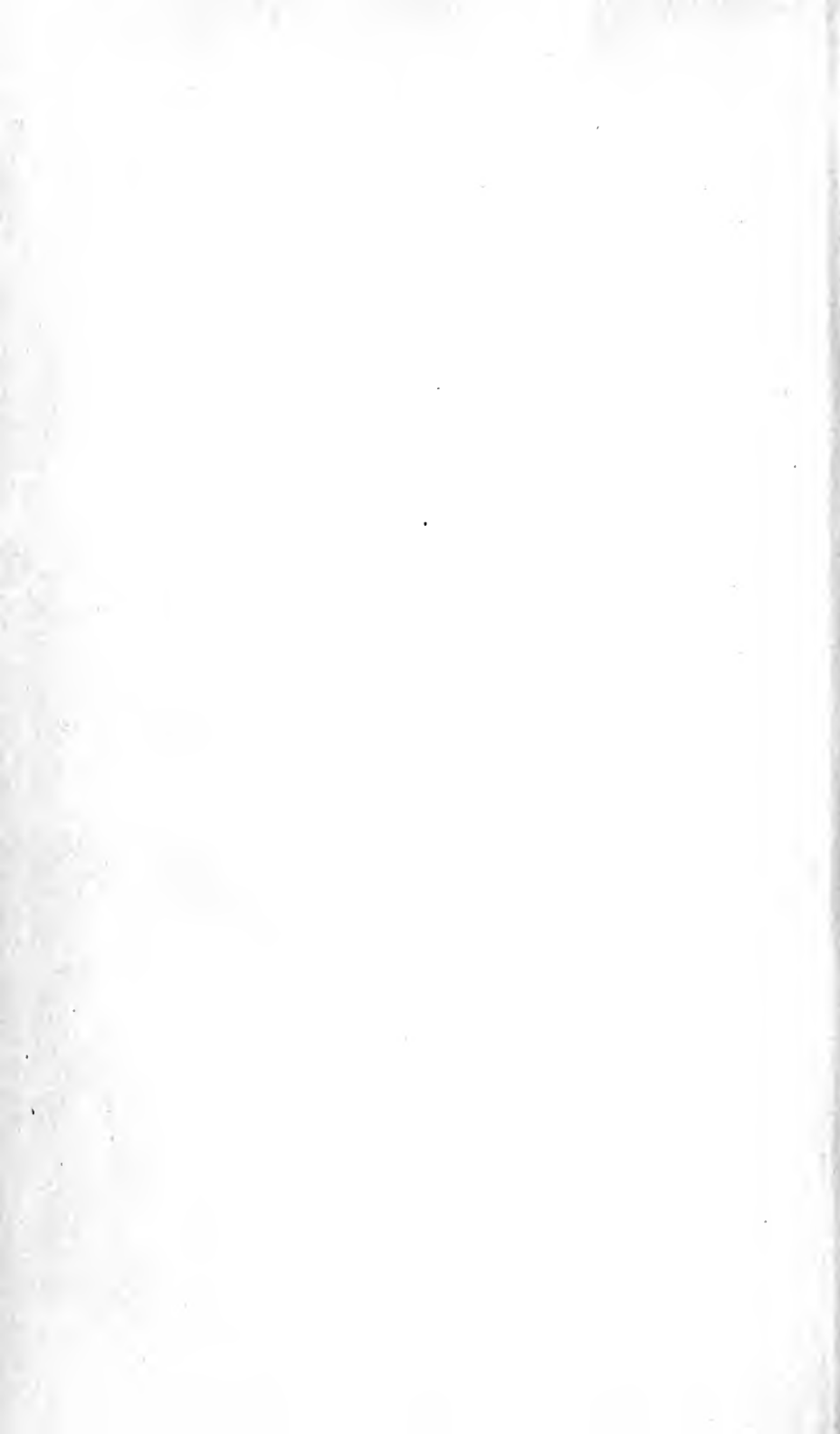


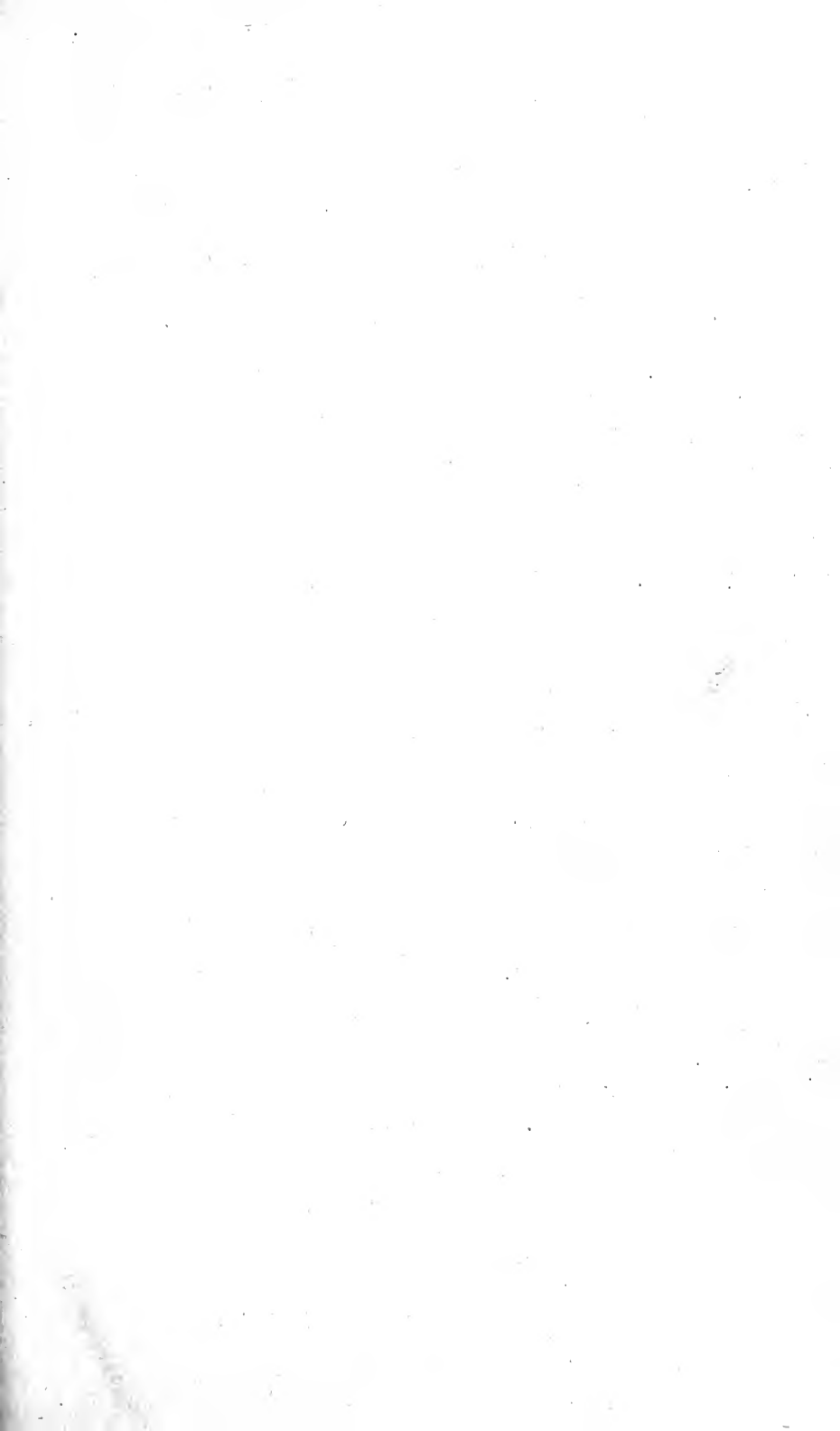


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TOUR  
OVER THE ALPS

AND IN

I T A L Y.

---

BY ALBERT MONTÈMONT.

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*Translated from the French.*

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SIR RICHARD PHILLIPS AND Co.  
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1823.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following work contains much correct information; the occasional observations of a man of taste and learning, addressed to a congenial spirit upon the various materials which, with an easy elegance, in a clear and animated manner, he briefly analyses and examines. In addition to the acquisitions previously communicated by other meritorious writers, he has brought together many facts, characteristic and highly descriptive of the countries and their inhabitants, in the little scenes and incidents which awaited him—the little pleasing pictures which he happily sketches, scattered here and there through the letters.

In an area so crowded with magnificence, intercourse with its novel and curious circumstances, however frequent, varied, and habitual, will never produce satiety—will never lose its hold upon the mind.

The spirit of patriotism and good sense, the impress of generous feelings, which pervade the author's elegant and gentle mind, cannot be more advantageously exhibited than it is throughout the volume. But to enjoy the full force of many particular topics, which give an insinuating interest to the narrative, the inquisitive Reader must apply to the Book itself.

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G. SIDNEY, Printer,  
Northumberland Street, Strand.

TOUR  
OVER THE ALPS,  
AND  
IN ITALY,  
IN LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

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LETTER I.

EXCURSION FROM PARIS TO GENEVA, THROUGH DIJON, DOLE,  
POLIGNY, AND THE MOUNTAINS OF THE JURA.

ON the 9th of August, 1820, our varied perégrination commenced; my companions through the progress of it were two of my pupils, committed to my care by their relations. The first incident that took place was forming an acquaintance with two Scotch gentlemen, whose humour led them to set down minutely, from memoranda on the spot, such observations as would occupy immediate attention, as they successively arose. They wished to accompany us in our route; their remarks on the principal cities, people, and places, that we visited, being such as would interest the general traveller rather than the philosopher. Our curiosity to explore fresh continental scenery, the majestic ruins of Nature, buried in the bosom of Solitude, or the new paths that industry is gradually opening, through the great discoveries and noblest works of art, was no less ardent. Added to which, we meant also to note regularly, to relate and describe unaffectedly, whatever might appear to deserve notice in the various stages of our journey. With such a similarity of tastes, we formed, altogether, one of the completest companionships for such an undertaking that chance could bring together.

These Scotch gentlemen were strangers to the French language, but they brought with them *la bourse bien garnie des guinees*—a necessary interpreter, that will find provisions of due kind and quantity, that will foster an intercourse among different nations, be they ever so dissevered by land and ocean, ever so discordant in manners and religion. But this

VOYAGES and TRAVELS, No. LI, Vol. IX. B

interpreter is sometimes at a loss, and cannot entirely determine about every thing. The two Caledonians could only converse in the idiom of Shakspeare, and they necessarily became our correspondents, in most things acquiescing in our judgment.

Their tour became subordinate to ours, but it was at their own request. We cordially embraced them as descendants from the Braves of Morven, as wanderers, roaming far from the woody hills of their land, from their shining streams that warble ceaseless inspiration. All new and original as they were, we had pleasure in the thoughts of being any ways serviceable to them.

We crossed the plains of Burgundy, where the waving harvests were bending beneath the breeze with extreme rapidity. In two days and two nights we reached Dijon, famed for its groves and arbours of vine-trees—for its wines of choicest store. Here we approached the Saone, in the Stygian gloom of whose lazy current many a son of old Silenus has voluntarily ingulfed himself, anticipating death's domain, to which he must soon have yielded.

We were now landed in a country that must raise respect and admiration, that must command our praise, from the worthies of other years and times—it was the country of Buffon, Cribellon le Noir, Bossuet, and the caustic Piron. After an excellent supper, the fleeting moments passed swiftly—the hoary head, with his wrinkled brow, would have felt his cares most sweetly soothed by the high-flavoured wine of Vougeout. Next morning, ere Sol's sacred lustre had gently brightened into day, we were sweeping over the beautiful landscape, and the opulent city of Dijon, its beauties veiled in the shade, and growing dim to the eye, was disappearing. Speedily we scud across the plains, along the banks of the Saone, the scenery embellished with forms of varied and graceful hue, and the feathered choir enchanting the eye with their beauteous plumage. While contemplating and comfortably enjoying the shifting scenery of the traveller's life, we had entered Auxonne, saluted by some salvos of artillery, and were set down at Dole, on the banks of the Doubs.

Here we had time to rest and refresh ourselves; after breakfast, changing our voiture, we began to ascend and traverse the very wide expanse of the Jura mountains, and had the satisfaction of arriving, in a few hours, at Poligny, built on a lofty, commanding site. From its elevated ground may be seen an extensive tract of country, to great advantage, the eye following the course of it as far as to La Franche Comté.

In the evening we arrived at Champagnole, where the

charms of a siren singer detained us some hours, in festive glee, till the instant of our departure. Our Scotch companions, social in their dispositions, yet detesting dissipation, seemed to be warmed with no common-place feelings of pleasure. Astonished at the harmonious powers which the French language possesses, as varied in the sweetness and melody of her voice, they availed themselves of the opportunity to enjoy her company, and it was evident they were doing no violence to their inclinations. They complimented her with much vivacity, and were happy to do any thing that could be agreeable to the lovely creature.

At half-past eleven at night, we set out from Champagnole, and pursued our rambling; but though all the splendour of the day had fled, it was not a sad lifeless evening shade, set in mists and darkness; the moon's sacred lustre hallowed the dun gloom with its beams, and by the dawn we had reached certain elevated points of the Jura. Wildness is the distinguishing feature of the valley of Lavatay, and in this respect its districts possess and present all that the solitary mind could desire to contemplate. We descend in it as into an abyss. Innumerable blocks of stone, mouldering fragments, and huge ruins of rocks, lie scattered through the valley, but chiefly near the bases of the mountains from which they have fallen. The picturesque effect of this extensive area occupied our imagination for some seconds, and in five or six hours more we reached the heights of Gex, from which we discover in front the lake of Geneva, and the great Chain of the Alps.

Here all was enchanted ground. Had I faith, like the ancients, in the existence of *genii locorum*, I should believe or imagine that the presiding spirit, the genius *Loci* alone could depict the new charms every where diffused on the scenery, could alone impart the solemnity, strength, and elevation, of nature's stately ornaments. But here the grave and lofty subjects, whereon her powers are so peculiarly and expressively displayed, are blended with that liveliness, that great diversity of style and manner which appear, in numberless instances, as marked by the hand of art. Here is no continued, quiescent, irksome monotony; the eye is pleased, *ad infinitum*, with the regularity, copiousness, sweetness, arising from the variations of the latter, inspiring sentiments and emotions of a more delicate texture, while ideas of an order exceedingly different are raised in our minds, while the majestic qualities and characteristic properties, of which nature is susceptible, and herein is fertile, in so eminent a degree, render this spot superior to all others; it is not excelled by any of which we have knowledge, and is, perhaps, the happiest for itinerant contemplation

of any in the known world. The panorama, in its circle of expression, its powers of accommodation suited to different tastes, displays such an evident abundance as I am unable to pourtray at full length.

A near hand view of the country presents the increasing growth of cultivation in spacious plains, fields, and vineyards, of great luxuriance and beauty—innumerable towns, villages, and orchards, which lie all around—dusky groves, and pine forests, that stretch themselves on the sides of the green hills—castles erected on elevated ground, the cantons of Berne, Zurich, Lucerne, &c. inhabited by an active, hardy, industrious people, with different parts of the Valais, and the city of Sion, the capital of its episcopal government. Here Zephyr breathes upon the azure waves of a peaceful ocean, here the heart glows with a softer scene; there, at a distance, under a lowering sky, the savage beauties of the Alps, simple, but grand objects, surprise us with awe. I observe the cloudy heads of those stately piles, those towering rocks, those stony ridges, with the sylvan gloom of the deep valleys extended at their feet; I see the haughty crest of that huge Mount Blanc, scowling to the vast arch of heaven, and involved in endless sleet. His wide stretching arms clasp the boundaries of my view, and a pale zone of unmelting snow closes the fair landscape scenery.

At the foot of the Northern Alps runs a ridge of mountainous wrecks and fragments, more than 5000 feet in height; these are a sort of calcareous tombs, of innumerable generations of marine animals of every description.

And thus, while I felt the influence of grace, beauty, order, on the banks of the lake of Geneva, my wondering eye, filled and charmed with the bright blooming colours of art, the bold air and wild hydra forms of the Alps, overwhelmed my breast with a kind of gloomy night and Gothic horrors.

Descending from the heights of Gex, we arrived at Geneva about sun-set, whence the silvered head of Mount Blanc, irradiated by the sun's departing beams, had all the appearance of a brilliant illumination. But this gave way to other feelings when we found ourselves among a people always distinguished by an ardent love of liberty, in a country where, in the language of the patriarch of Ferney,

On ne méprise point les travaux nécessaires,  
Les états sont égaux, et les hommes sont frères,

where contempt awaits not those whose hours are devoted to labour, where no invidious barrier arises between rank and talents, where, with a jealousy of individual power, the happiness of the community is the hereditary feeling!

I bid you adieu for the present. Let the simple annals of private life recorded in this short epistle, pass for my introduction.

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**LETTER II.**

GENEVA, FERNEY, THE LAKE OF GENEVA, LAUSANNE, VEVEY.

WHAT must a lover of Rousseau tell you, respecting his country, that has not been repeated from one to another by privilege of common-place and monotonous succession? Let me, however, give my opinion on the subject, as, if I do not differ widely from others, I shall aim at being more clear and distinct.

The city of Geneva is situated at the southern extremity of the lake of that name. The Rhone, whose source is hid in the mountains of St. Gothard, after watering all the plain of the Valais, empties itself by several mouths into the same lake at its northern extremity, and issuing from it at Geneva to continue its course, divides the city into two unequal parts. The least considerable, which forms a sort of suburbs, is on the side bordering France. In this part, the house is yet shewn wherein the author of the Social Contract was born. At the entrance of the threshold appears this modest inscription: "Ici est né J. J. Rousseau—Here J. J. Rousseau was born." The street wherein the humble dwelling is situated, has acquired the name of Rue Rousseau. The house is at present tenanted by a watch maker, the profession of Rousseau's father.

The other part of Geneva contains the public establishments, and the finest buildings. The surface of the ground is not every where level, and to promenade the interior parts of the city will be attended with some fatigue. Cæsar mentions Geneva as an ancient city of the Allobroges; he made it a place of arms, and Charlemagne passed through it in 773, when marching with an army into Italy. Clement Marot, when persecuted in his own country, fled hither as a refugee, in 1543, eight years after Calvin's reformation.

Omitting historical details, it is sufficiently obvious that Geneva is one of those places that abound most in instances of literary fecundity. This mental industry, producing the happiest effects, has been fully displayed, not without its due celebrity, in our days. In the admired performances of Saussure, the correct productions of Bonnet, the indefatigable powers of Pictet, with the extensive merits of Bourrit, and a multitude

of other eminent literati, extraordinary efforts of genius have been exhibited. As to Rousseau, he is what he appears, all originality, invention, and fertile imagination; his first thoughts, formed with great facility, have reversed the usual notions and ideas of mankind on points of political economy, and, notwithstanding some extravagancies, the improvisatorial talents with which he was gifted, enforced by vigour of conception, and brilliancy of diction, render the character which he has obtained of the most durable kind. The delirium of love is carried to its highest pitch, in the letters of Julia and St. Preux.

In this metropolis of Calvinism, there is a public library, a museum, and a cathedral, which may be justly recommended to attention; the character and genius of their objects appear to be well consulted. The library contains 50,000 printed volumes, and 200 MSS. Here are 80 volumes of Calvin's sermons, also certain homilies of St. Augustine, written in the sixth century, on papyrus, and a fragment of the book of expenses of Phillipe le Bel, of the year 1314.

The judicious arrangements of the museum make it a pleasing and improving exercise for observation and study. It comprehends five grand divisions—minerals, shells, birds, antiques, and medals and paintings. On the second story are apartments for a literary society, similar to the Royal Atheneum of Paris. This forms a depository for all the various journals, French, German, Italian, and English, with any compositions, literary articles, &c. of real merit and celebrity, as they appear; the library is select and very numerous. The liberal and enlightened members constantly favour the admission of foreigners among them. I was introduced by M. de Chenevière, professor of theology, and a minister of the reformed church. The virtues, amiable manners, and established reputation of this gentleman, as a scholar, entitle him to an honourable testimony.

The cathedral is a large Gothic structure, containing a number of antique monuments. The steeple appears as a prominent object; from its elevation, the eye can survey the town at large, with the whole immense sheet of the Lemane Lake and its crystal-like waters. On the east is seen the village of Carouge; to the south arise the Chain of the Alps, and Mount Blanc, which last seems to lord it paramount over its allied hills, like the Grand Signior over his mistresses and innumerable vassals. In the north we discover Ferney-Voltaire, and the mountains of the Jura; and at about a quarter of a league from Geneva, the junction of the Rhone, and the Arve, which last is a muddy minor stream, and descends from Mount Blanc.

Those who visit Geneva will derive satisfaction from forming an acquaintance with some of the higher classes, among whom



he will find eminent men of various descriptions, though in manners they are very plain. But nothing can exceed, in its proportion, the great mass of information residing in the middle ranks, nor are the lowest sunk into a state of ignorant apathy. Their ancestors valued themselves on the advantages of liberal discussion and extensive inquiry, and the present generation are by no means disposed to resign them.

The citizens have never been backward in patronizing all such inventions, for manufacturing purposes, as may seem to be improvements in mechanics. The horological business, or making of clocks and watches, continues to be a leading object with them, and the Genevese spare no pains to merit this kind of distinction. Connected with the arts is the hydraulic machine, which feeds and supplies the waters of the town. The plans in relievo of the Alps, by M. Gaudin, cannot be contemplated without a degree of wonder—a testimony of approbation. Strangers who visit the botanic garden and the new palace which adjoins it, as also the hall of spectacles, from motives of curiosity, will reap utility as conjoined with it. In a municipal point of view, their *grande rue*, or principal street, is deserving of particular mention; its timber arcades rise, like a Gothic frontispiece, to the very roofs of the houses.

In the town itself is nothing very remarkable; the grand and permanent source of its opulence and prosperity, is the activity and industry of its ingenious mechanics. The intelligent traveller will enlarge his general plan of survey, by extending it to the environs; here he may pursue a vein of prospective discovery in a great variety of situations and points of view. He will find charming promenades along the right bank of the Lemane Lake, and on the side of St. Jean. Near the junction of the Rhone and the Arve, is the beautiful country house of M. Constant, a relation of our celebrated publicist, and at no great distance is the rural seat, Les Delices, that was occupied for some time by Voltaire, before he removed to Lausanne, and finally fixed at Ferney.

To enjoy the magnificent optical illusion of Mount Blanc and its Glaciers, illumined by the setting sun, no spot can be more favourable than a height between the village of Ferney and that of Le Grand Saconney. In the evening of August 15, my companions and I had a fuller and more curious view of that most interesting object than we had before anticipated. We could not contemplate the scene without emotions that excited a sort of soul-transporting enthusiasm. This fine day had passed rapidly away in excursions to satisfy our curiosity, and we set out on our return to enjoy the convenience of rest and refreshments after our fatigues. While night was over-

shadowing us, we often heard the nightingale pouring forth exquisite notes of her delicate, tender, animated composition.

Next day we went to visit Ferney, two little leagues from Geneva. When Voltaire took possession of the property in 1759, here were only eight cottages; at his death nearly a hundred houses, built at his expense, covered the domain, occupied by more than twelve hundred inhabitants. He raised also a manufactory of clocks and watches, and another of earthenware, and procured an exemption from the visits of the officers of the *Douane*.

Here Voltaire afforded an asylum to Delille Desalles, proscribed for his *Philosophie de la Nature*: here he protected Marmontel, a writer of great celebrity, but persecuted likewise for that respectable publication, his *Belisarius*, in which he alluded obliquely to the degenerate and profligate character of some modern governments; here was the retreat of the count Morangies, robbed of his patrimony by usurers. Here also Voltaire revived the memory of Calas, of Sirven, of Martin, of Montbailly, and saved the wife of this last from the scaffold. Here he supported his character, producing a bold and striking apology for the unfortunate Lally, as also for Labarre, and for 12,000 Serfs depending on the canons of St. Claude, in Mount Jura; here he portioned the grand niece of the great Corneille, with a fortune of 90,000 francs, also the daughter of Madame Dupuits with 100,000, and *Belle et Bonne*, when he married her to the marquis de Villette, with 150,000. His old friend Thiriot, after spending a year with him at Ferney, on his return to Paris, found a purse of 50 Louis at the bottom of his trunk, slipped in by Voltaire, and one day when the latter had been to visit Madame Dupuits, then lying-in, he contrived to leave in her buffet a superb silver vase, wherein was a receipt for 12,000 francs that M. Dupuits owed him. A labouring man of Ferney was in prison for 7500 francs; Voltaire had him released by paying the amount; and when informed that this man had a numerous family, and that it would be like throwing money away, he made answer, "Money given in alms is not thrown away, and here I am restoring a father to his family, and a citizen to society." Another labouring man, who was not of Ferney, having lost a law suit in the parliamentary court of Besançon, in his despair had recourse to Voltaire, who examined his papers, and finding his cause good, "Here," said he, bringing three bags of a thousand francs each out of his closet, "with these repair the injuries of justice; go to law no more, and if you are willing to settle on my lands, I shall make it my business to find you employment." The Jesuits of Ornex wished to round their territory, by purchasing land

of some miners that was mortgaged for fifteen thousand francs. The speculation would have been ruinous to the mining concern, but Voltaire laid down the money for them to the bailiage of Gex, and thus rescued their patrimony from the rapacity of the Jesuits.

The anniversary of St. Bartholomew was ever a day of mourning with Voltaire, and on that day, as some will have it, he was more or less subject to a fever.

We approached to the house of this great man with a sort of homage, not unlike the pilgrims of Mecca before the tomb of Mahomet. In due time we arrived at the chateau, and were introduced into the apartments of the monarch of French literature. The bed-chamber and the saloon for receiving company, are just in the state wherein he left them, setting out for Paris, where he died. We found, in his bed-chamber, portraits of the following personages:—Frederick the Great, his early friend; Catherine II., empress of Russia, embroidered in needle work by herself; Voltaire, at the age of thirty-four; the marchioness de Chatelet, or the sublime Emilia; Le Kain, the Talma of his day: more than one amateur had cut away pieces of the canvass to lay by as a relic; Washington, with this inscription in the hand of Voltaire—*Ne quid detrimenti capiat respublica*; Milton, Racine, J. Delille, with this verse of Horace, inscribed by Voltaire—*Nulli flebilior quam mihi, Virgili*; Isaac Newton, who died in 1727, at the age of eighty-five, a bachelor ever retaining his virginity; Benjamin Franklin, born at Boston in 1706; Corneille, Marmontel, La Fayette, the veteran votary of liberty in two hemispheres; Pope Clement XIV, in 1769; Antoine Thomas, Helvetius, Mairan, D'Alembert, le Duc de Choiseul, and Leibnitz. At the bottom of this last, Voltaire has placed this stanza:—

Il fut dans l'univers, connu par ses ouvrages,  
Et dans son Pays meme, il se fit respecter ;  
Il instruisit les Rois, il eclaira les Sages,  
Plus sage qu'eux, il sut douter.

His elaborate compositions were of first-rate merit, and the world did honour to his genius and science. In his own country he was distinguished, and succeeded in a respectable degree. Kings were instructed by his extraordinary learning, and sages by his well-grounded notions in philosophy; and more especially in his valuable performances, he doubts of many things that had received the stamp of authority, herein wiser than those who, wedded to an opinion, will never resign upon knowledge or good reason.

Over a canopy appears "Mes manes sont consolés, puisque  
VOYAGES and TRAVELS, No. LI, Vol. IX. C

mon Cœur est au milieu de vous," and over a sort of urn, "Son esprit est partout, et son Cœur est ici." It is the same image or sentiment, differently appropriated, denoting that his heart is here; but this is no longer the case, as the marchioness de Villette has it in her possession.

The portraits here specified shew the diversified manner wherein Voltaire indulged his taste. This indulgence forms one of the most elegant of literary recreations. Of his well-informed mind, the verses which he addressed, in 1736, to M. de la Roque, editor of the *Mercure de France*, give good evidence.

Vers enchanteurs, exacte prose,  
 Jé ne me borne point à vous,  
 N'avoir qu'un gout, c'est peu de chose,  
 Beaux arts, je vous invoque tous :  
 Musique, danse, architecture,  
 Art de graver, docte peinture,  
 Que vous m'inspirez de desirs !  
 Beaux arts ! vous etes des plaisirs,  
 Il n'en est point qu'on doit exclure.

(Temple du Gout.)

Herein Voltaire displays the riches of his imagination; his genius embraces not merely the individual interests of poetry; his soul is elevated to comprehend the entire mass of the fine arts, music, sculpture, &c., and the philosopher who possesses sensibility will see how his expansive mind knew how to embellish topics suitable to his taste and character.

From the terrace of the garden, we have a prominent view of Mount Blanc. In the garden there runs an alley, a quarter of a league in length, edged with poplars; Voltaire promenaded in it occasionally, but was most partial to an avenue, hedged with a particular sort of elm-trees. There was a little cottage, wherein he spent much of his time, but it is replaced by a plantation of trees.

Voltaire's gardener is still living. He has by him a collection of seals from the letters of his master's correspondents; underneath, for amusement, he would put the names of those correspondents. Under some, in lieu of the names, he put the word "fous, childish, silly." When a letter came, he compared the seal with that on his register; if there was an evident identity, and the fatal epithet appeared, he sent back the letter to the post office without opening it.

This old gardener has also in his possession, Voltaire's bonnet, set with a gold border by Madame Denis. The marchioness de Villette, with strict propriety named *la Belle et*

*Bonne*, has the night gown, and the great armed chair wherein he used to read and write.

In front of his chateau is a church, which he was at the charge of erecting. On the façade we read the following inscription:—*Deo erexit Voltaire.* On the outside, annexed to one of the walls of the temple, is the tomb which he had prepared for himself.

Every object that we saw reminded us of the useful principles which that celebrated man displayed in action, and which the following lines discover, having appeared in some of his writings:—

J'ai fait un peu de bien ; c'est mon meilleur ouvrage,  
Mon séjour est charmant, mais il étoit sauvage ;  
Depuis le grand édit, inculte, inhabité,  
Ignoré des humains, dans sa triste beauté,  
La nature y mourroit, Je lui portai la vie ;  
J'osai ranimer tout. Ma pénible industrie  
Rassembla des colons, par la misère épars,  
J'appellai les métiers qui précèdent les arts ;  
Et pour mieux cimenter mon utile entreprise,  
J'unis le protestant avec ma sainte Eglise.

Here the author, with the frankness of a philosopher, develops certain truths. A person endowed with such a mind, finding no satisfaction in countries where princes are unceasingly occupied in politics, hostile to the interests of their subjects, irritated at the stupor in which the latter are too often plunged, this remarkable man, whose head is replete with energy and sensibility, withdraws himself from a sphere unsuitable to a thinking being, and retires to a simple and happy solitude, to discharge the functions of his self-appointed office, that of doing good.

Voltaire did every thing in his power to decorate his new semibarbarous situation, with all the philanthropic succours of which it stood in need. Facts mark his temper and genius more distinctly than a laboured character. Touched by the art of genius, a new creation appeared around him, exhibited in all the beautiful variety of which the scene was capable. In lieu of a waste and lonely gloom, emerging groves robed in green, and habitations, the asylum of calm domestic life—feeding flocks, flowers, living waters, and waving blades of corn, spring up like an enchanting vision. His was the nobler part of generous friendship, to soothe the anguish of sorrow, to beam chearing smiles round the bed of affliction, to pour consolation where sickness and grief vented their moanings. It was his, too, blessing and blessed, to rear the pile, the altar around which a Christian throng might bend in holy prayer—

be taught to renew the purer heaven-atonings rites of justice, peace, immortal mercy, and all the angel train of charities.

I have since seen at Paris, preserved by the marchioness de Villette, the bed gown, and the gold-laced waistcoat, long worn by Voltaire, as also the crown of laurel adjudged to him at the *Theatre Francois*, in 1778, and the great chair with a writing table and moveable desk attached to it, wherein he often sat.

At length we quitted Ferney and returned to Geneva, to make a tour of the lake in a boat, and survey its beauties nearer. It is 18 leagues in length, but would only be 14, were it in a straight line. Its greatest breadth is about 3 leagues; near Vevey, in the environs of Meillerie, it is 950 feet in depth. The lake never freezes. Its eastern part, or that where the town of Lausanne is situated, is the most interesting. It is fifteen leagues from Vevey to Geneva, but boats, with a favourable wind, will make the passage in four hours. The air is remarkably pure on the banks of the Lemane; it has a sort of flux and reflux depending on the variation of the atmosphere, and its pressure.

Lausanne, capital of the Canton de Vaud, buttressed, as it were, to three hills on the banks of this lake, enjoys a very fine climate, and presents a landscape, wherein the eye may, for ever, trace some new found undiscovered charm. Here are a library, an academy, colleges, two gazettes, &c. Tissot, a celebrated physician, lived here from 1770 to 1776; Voltaire, from 1757 to 1759, and Haller at the same time. M. Ebel assures us, that the great Haller would not visit the author of the *Henriade*. To be in want of the sanction derived from the good opinion of others is an evil, but I presume that many, like myself, will dispute the justness of that sentiment, which prompted the great Haller to such conduct; I have ever hitherto considered it, as an act illiberal and injudicious.

The same M. Ebel supplies us with another anecdote, which it may be useful to detail, remarking, at the same time, that the agents in it have a much better right to censure and disgrace. In 1479, the Bishop of Lausanne and his Chapter cited with due formality, before their tribunal, the May bugs, that were then very troublesome, and as they did not obey the order, they were adjudged contumacious, excommunicated, and banished from the diocese of Lausanne. According to report, the original act of this sentence is preserved with the greatest care.

The ancient parliament of Paris brought themselves into no less disrepute, when, by an arret of February 7, 1314, they confirmed the decision of the Judges of the county de Valois, who, on the deposition of witnesses, had condemned a bull to be hanged for going a young man to death with his horns.

It is with regret we observe the tendency of such superstition,

but I recollect another circumstance which will represent it in the most disgusting light. In Greece, when inundating rivers, at times, carry away the harvest, the inhabitants present a formal request to the Judge, that he would lay an injunction on the insolent stream to withdraw within its channel. A sentence is presently pronounced, in favour of the petitioners, but if the waters still keep rising, the Cadi, accompanied by the complainants, repairs to the scene of desolation and throws a copy of the juridical Act at the rebel current. The people then hurl invectives at the water, shoot at it with volleys of stones, pay the fees of the court, and entertain no doubt on the subject of the effect to be produced, thus betraying the decision of idiots.

The little town of Vevey is placed in a situation more agreeable than even that of Lausanne. Here nature displays a new plan and larger map of the Lake, with the rocks of Meillerie, noticed by Rousseau, the mountains of the Valais, and the glaciers of St. Bernard, including other points of view, characterised by sweetness and novelty.

Let us now return to Geneva, which is the Paris of Switzerland. It is not doing more than justice to the inhabitants to affirm, that they discover much of that spirit of freedom which distinguishes the present race of Frenchmen. In private life, the general cast of their manners is smooth, easy, and interesting. Striking specimens of science, taste, and genius; of diversified ingenuity well judged, and excellently managed, with some strong marks and symptoms of a pleasing experienced affability, every where offer themselves to observation. Here are no poor to be seen, every one is employed, and there is employment for every one. If I were to point out the least excellent part of their character, they are too closely bent on the *utcumque Rem*. To get rich, better his fortune, and promote his family interest, is the motto of the Genevese—"Let those be Spartans, he says, that will."

Here I am constrained to leave them, and to stop my career—you will find more ample details respecting Geneva, in the letters of a recent traveller, M. Raoul-Rochette, who has studied their society, under all the various aspects which arise from the different degrees of its civilization, and from the influence of their Government.

## LETTER III.

FROM GENEVA TO CHAMOUNY BY BONNEVILLE.—CLUZE, THE VALLEY OF MAGLAN.—A VAUCLUSIAN SPRING.—THE BATHS. AND CASCADE OF ST. GERVAIS.—THE LAKES, &C. OF CHEDE. THE GLACIER OF *Les Bossons*, AND THE VALLEY AND VILLAGE OF CHAMOUNY.

A DILIGENCE conducted us from Geneva to Sallenche, that is, about two-thirds of the way to Chamouny; we pass by Bonneville and Cluze. Bonneville is a little town of Savoy, situated on the Arve, about five leagues from Geneva, at the southern foot of the mountain called *le Môle*. The village of Cluze is about three leagues further on, at the foot of woods and rocks extremely picturesque. Here the face and forms of nature exhibit a curious contrast; in one part peaceful groves, and all those charms of softness which please and captivate the eye, in another dire ruins of majestic sternness, monstrous uncouth shapes of rent and fallen rocks, which fill the traveller with a pensive melancholy as he espies them; the scene here glowing with bright colours, there consigned to blank confusion, and terrific to behold. Could a kindred genius, his taste classical and congenial to the landscape, trace it with his pencil, it would exhibit beauties to discover and study, blended with objects, in the same proportion, the most austere and hideous.

We next enter the valley of Maglan, bordered with steep rocks, often well wooded and sometimes naked and bare. Every now and then appear patches cultivated; and sprinkled with dairy houses, holding provisions for the winter, and so contrived as to contain the cattle during the fair season. Such haunts as these, remote from noise and strife, mad ambition would never be tempted to roam in—the tranquil heart only will seek the spot, and call it his home.

Is there any happiness in solitude? Milton says,

—Who can enjoy alone,  
Or all enjoying, what contentment find?

Had he visited this spot he would perhaps have tarried and loved to rest here.

Numberless are the sinuosities in the valley of Maglan, through which, with its rocks descending to their base, their tops seeming to reach the clouds, from the novelty of the imagery and local scenery, the traveller advances, apprehensive that he shall find no outlet.

The Arve, a stream which waters this valley, at times inundates



the whole plain, foaming, dashing, and raging against the road, with his oozy billows ; and at other times withdraws his wide waters.

Near the village of Maglan, above the hamlet of La Balme, we perceive the entrance of a grotto, that penetrates to the depth of 620 feet into the bowels of the mountain. We find also, just before arriving at the village, close to the road side, a spring of water remarkably limpid and no less cooling. It issues in such abundance as to form a little river, which falls into the Arve a little lower down. It forms a miniature of the fountain of Vaucluse, with this difference, that the latter is hid, but this is uncovered and open.

In the same place is an echo, startling the traveller from a hundred giant voices, that seem to grow out of it, repeating the same sound. The rocks resound as with the report of a pistol, while the strolling reverberation trails its slow length along.

Further on, to the left, is a magnificent cascade, the waters of which fall from a height of 800 feet. Its detached features correspond with the general character of the valley, and enhance the effect of the leading circumstances. As an accompaniment, may be added, that its murmurs were audible all the way to Sallenche. This is a little town on the left bank of the Arve ; here we changed our voitures to take caravans, or mules, for the village of Chamouny. Sallenche lies in a vast bason, whence we have a very distinct view of the silvered crest of Mount Blanc. Both the poetical and the common traveller would be surprised at the sublimity with which its highest part soars to the heavens, as if it could not descend an inch below the sun, moon, and stars.

About a league beyond Sallenche we arrive at the baths of St. Gervais, sequestered in the bottom of a valley, agreeably overshadowed with larch trees. Close to the buildings, the Bonhomme, a turbid boisterous torrent, pours a flood of whitish-coloured waters, and behind them is a fall of the stream, forming a grand cascade, the most interesting, perhaps, in all the Alps. Approaching to near the fall, we feel a sudden change of temperature ; a gentle warmth arising from thermal waters in the vicinity alternating with the cold effluvia of the falling spray. The descent is about 300 feet, rushing down with such violence that the leaves of the trees round about are shaken.

For about half a league the darksome torrent rolls through a hollow channel, sunk two hundred feet deep among rocks ; each side is fringed with a wood of larch trees. At the summit of the cascade appears, on the right, a well-turfed parterre, surrounded, as in a plantation, with forest trees.

Both I and my companions were eager to multiply our comparisons, and seeing that nature was lavishing her stores in this climate, we could not miss the opportunity of visiting the

beautiful cascade of Chede, on the left of the Chamouny road. Its limpid waters, in the reflection of the sun's rays, will exhibit, to those who brush the morning dew, a very beautiful rainbow.

Half a league farther on is the charming little lake of Chede, in the pleasing scene of whose surface the azure sky again gaily smiles, while the gloomy shades of the neighbouring mountains yield a prospect of sterner magnificence.

Next appears an agreeable troop of children, with smiling complaisance and songs, offering us cooling draughts out of their cups. Innocence was in their looks, the boys presenting the pure crystal liquid, the girls milk and cream, with such a grace that we found it hard to resist them. Such offers as these we had for four or five leagues, as far as to the village of Chamouny. One of my companions yielded to their solicitations more than twenty times. We repaid their complaisance, which was not wholly disinterested, with several little pieces of money.

A little beyond the lake last mentioned, the traveller should visit the bridge of goats, thrown over the foaming waves of the Arve. Four rams, I think, might pass in front, but if two men should meet on it and neither would retire, they must both fall into the water and make food for fishes. At a little distance from this bridge, as antiquarians report, there was a flourishing town in the time of the Romans, but the traces of it are as hard to ascertain as those of Nineveh and Babylon.

A lengthened ledge of cascades, formed by the Arve, beyond this bridge, in a wild savage retreat, almost as free as nature first made it, gives a picturesque effect very well deserving attention. Near it still appear the ruins of a mountain, the whole of which fell down in 1751, and overwhelmed the valley to the distance of five leagues. As a spectacle of destruction, a great part of it was of a melancholy air, but after happily clearing a dangerous piece of water, called the Black Torrent (very properly so denominated) we came, in time to breakfast, at Sorvez, where are gold and silver mines.

In the subterranean of one of these mines, on the side next Arve, a noise of water is heard, which might be cited as a comprehensive instance of all that is dreadful in the catalogue of sounds. Thunder, or the perpetual confusion of a raging tempest tearing from the mountain's height a ponderous mass of rocks, would produce an effect infinitely inferior. Had Dante been a witness of all the horrors that decorate the scene, he would, doubtless, have placed it at the entrance of his infernal regions. Our guide would by no means let us descend far into the vast labyrinth, his courage seemed to fail him. Amongst other highly unpleasant circumstances which he detailed, as conjoined with the frightful tumult, din, and uproar, was the frequent

falling of stones from the vaulted roof, which might have accelerated our end, as in the case of the king of Epirus. We followed his advice, however, like simple mortals, who value their own lives more than that of any king in the world.

It is time now to tell you of our arrival at Chamouny, but I must stop a little to bring into notice another of the disasters to which human life is exposed. Young Eschen, a Saxon poet, who as such had undoubted claims to superior honour, in the year 1800 fell a victim to his courage, in a crevice of the Glaciers of Buet, obstinately disregarding the advice of his guide. At the moment when the latter was exclaiming, for the last time, "Arretez, stop," the unfortunate youth disappeared, plunging into a dark gulf, which a recent fall of snow had masqued from his view.

From Sorvez to the valley of Chamouny the distance is a small league. Nearly the whole of it is an ascent, with the Arve in view rolling its waves under the long, high, steep brows and ridges of those rude irregular eminences that overhang its banks. We could see through the firs and green swarth with which their dark flanks are garnished. I can but notice what came immediately under our observation; a drawing of the scene would most fully describe the principal subjects of our attention and wonder.

On quitting a little wood and entering some meadows, we found ourselves in the valley of Chamouny. From these meadows it reaches about six leagues, nearly in a right line, to the Col de Balme, on the frontiers of the Valais. It includes several villages, the chief of which has the name of Priory of Chamouny, from a convent of Benedictines, established in 1099, one hundred and odd years after the foundation of the Hospitium of Great St. Bernard. We pass through the villages of Les Onches and Bossons, above which last appears the beautiful Glacier of the same name, at the foot of Mount Blanc. The ardent votary of nature should pay it a transient visit, as its superb and beautiful pyramids of ice, fantastically coloured by the sun's rays, and viewed through the firs, look like a sea of glass with its smiling gay reflections, and are admirably calculated to claim attention. Fancy, in its wildest strains, could not aspire to ornaments more delightful and cheerful, than what an extensive view of the situation commands.

We arrive next, in about half an hour, at the priory; that is, at the village of Chamouny, situated on the Arve, between Mount Blanc and Mount Breven, in the centre of the valley. This last is diversified with woods, meadows, cultivated fields and glaciers. Chamouny is the usual place of departure and return, when travellers make excursions to Mount Blanc or the surrounding mountains. The village contains about 300 houses. We saw

here two cabinets of minerals and birds, including several chamois, with some living young wild goats.

Chamouny is 3174 feet above the level of the sea. The winter lasts here nine months; in the height of summer they are often obliged to kindle fires, the air and its keen blasts are so piercing. Excellent honey is produced here, and the mountains afford pasture for chamois and wild goats. The lower parts of the valley are well turfed with grass, and feed a great number of cattle. Nature, as if to indemnify the inhabitants for the length and sharpness of their winter, confers on their fields and meadows greater powers of vegetation than in our plains. What they sow in June they reap the product of in August. What takes five or six months to ripen throughout Burgundy, is effected in three, in the valley of Chamouny. As the snow falls in large quantities in winter, the inhabitants, to melt it the sooner, cover it with a black earth, this colour being a better conductor of caloric, and absorbing more heat than white. In the fine season, such of the men as are able to work, repair to the lower countries in quest of employment; the women and old men guard the cattle, and labour on the lands. They make their bread to last a year or eighteen months, according to the quantum of their harvests. In winter, the stables serve both for dining and sleeping rooms. A partition is allotted for the cattle, and the rest is occupied by those of the household. The windows are mostly of paper well soaked in oil. On All Saints Day, the people generally kill a cow and a pig, and keep the flesh in salt for Sundays and occasional festivals, living on other days on milk and potatoes. A singular custom prevails here in the mode of their courtship, having the appearance of eccentricity. Ten or a dozen years are lost amidst the wildering mazes of platonic affection; during the nine months of winter, the professed lovers play at cards and other amusements, that with variety may give a little power over the passions. Sometimes instances occur of early marriages, but they are very rare. A girl that should fail herein would be sure to have a nickname fastened on her, that would leave an indelible stain on her character. It is very difficult to account for these peculiarities. Parisians dames, I would, on many accounts, particularly recommend to you not to let that subject of delight, your personal attractions, grow dulled by age, as at Chamouny. Here, however, I must stop for a few days, having other excursions in view.

## LETTER IV.

## MOUNT BLANC, ITS GLACIERS AND AVALANCHES.

THERE are objects that impose on the visual organs, such as those La Fontaine refers to, *De loin c'est quelque chose, et de près, ce n'est rien*; that is, giants at a distance but dwarfs near hand. Just as in common life affectation or pedantry may be mistaken for erroneous dignity, or classic lore, but, with a little familiarity, they soon degenerate into tinsel pertness and clumsiness. But nature, in producing Mount Blanc, has furnished a sample of the true and great sublime, so comprehensive and expressive as to afford a type of majesty in all its qualities and possible shades, exhibited in the scale of still increasing gradation. It is not without a degree of terror, mingled with surprise and admiration, just as when the mind is full of any great event, that the eye measures the aerial throne of this Alpine sovereign resting on mountains of ice, as old as Time.

Mount Blanc rises to the height of 14,700 feet above the level of the sea. The Chimborazo, in America, rises to 19,302 feet, but no mortal has ever yet reached its summit, unless, perhaps, we except M. de Humboldt. Mount Blanc has, several times, been felicitously scaled; its elevation above Chamouny is 300 feet more than that of Chimborazo above its dependant valley of Tapis.

The summit of Mount Blanc has acquired the name of the Dromedary's Back, from a sort of lengthened bunch or ridge running from east to west in a direction nearly horizontal, and very narrow at its highest part. It gets wider as it descends easterly, and forms, in the west, a kind of front roof.

On the side of Italy Mount Blanc is inaccessible; the descent is so steep that snow and ice cannot lodge in it. On the side of Savoy the mountain has gentle declivities, and discovers his flanks covered with eternal glaciers that descend down to the valley of Chamouny.

Although it would be scarcely two leagues in a bird's flight from the village of Chamouny to the summit, it requires, at least, ten hours' march to reach it; dangerous passages are to be avoided by winding circuits, and there are 11,520 feet to ascend. The journey will take up three or four days, and sometimes more, if overtaken by bad weather. A number of unsuccessful trials had been made before the exploit was achieved by an intrepid peasant of the village, named Jacques Balmat, and by a physician of the same village, named Paccard. It was in 1786 that they scaled the prodigious ascent, and thus could assume the merit of being the first mortals that had ever succeeded in the enterprise.

M. de Saussure, a celebrated naturalist, was equally fortunate the year following; he was the first that made scientific experiments on the cimex of that immense aggregate of rocks and ice.

To engage in the hazardous undertaking, one should be inured to a mountainous region, and be able to contemplate the most frightful abysses with sang froid. Provisions for 4 or 5 days will be requisite, as tempestuous weather may occasion delays in the passage. There should be also a ladder to scale the crevices of the glaciers, and ropes that, when tied together, may form a line of communication. Without this precaution, it would be running a tremendous risque of stumbling into precipices concealed by the snow, and formed by the chinks of the glaciers. At making the least false step, the traveller would lose his presence of mind, and perhaps slide from one depth to another, to the base of the mountain, or disappear in one of the gulfs that might be near where he fell. Black crape is also necessary to cover the face with, while the sun is darting his rays on the ice, or we might incur the risk of losing our sight, and having the face well nigh excoriated, from the force of the solar beams. Nor is this all; there must be shoes with large and very sharp-pointed nails, as also a hatchet to make holes in the ice, for the feet to catch in, where the descent is rapid, and large staves pointed with iron, to bear ourselves up in the ascent, and still more in the descent. Also a tent to lodge in on the ice, for at the distance of three leagues from Chamouny, in a gradual scaling of the colossus, we have a series of glaciers to the cimex.

After the first journey we sleep on the ice, at the foot of rocks that are called "The Great Mules." This is after clearing a dangerous glacier, abounding with crevices. It is not above a quarter of a league to the highest part of this glacier, and yet it will take up, sometimes, three tedious hours to accomplish the feat in.

Next day we proceed to one of the shoulders of Mount Blanc, called *le Dome du Gouté*. Near it M. de Saussure fixed his tent in the snow, at the height of 5790 feet above the level of the sea, and 540 feet higher than the Peak of Teneriffe.

On the third day we begin to scramble up to the last plateau. Here great caution is called for, as there are a number of rapid descents, with crevices in the glaciers, hid by recent falls of snow.

The nearer we approach the highest point, the air becomes more rarefied, or, in other terms, the more the azote gas predominates, the more the oxygenated diminishes, or grows subtile. We cannot advance ten paces together, without stopping to take breath; but when the summit is gained, the fertile and active mind, unchecked in its career, contemplates the dimensions of space, expanded in a high degree, and from the situation and characteristic circum-

stances, becomes susceptible of the strongest sensations, and most lasting impressions. The horizon is immense, the eye being lost in its endless range.

When the air is clear, we can see to the distance of 68 leagues. From Lyons and Langres, about 65 leagues distant, in a right line, the cimex may be distinctly marked; and M. de Saussure thinks he has had a glimpse of it from the heights of an eminence near Toulon. M. Bourrit is confident, that from the top of Mount Blanc he has recognised some parts of the Mediterranean.

The wind here is uncommonly sharp, and the cold insupportable, but descending a little to the south, the temperature is not disagreeable. As M. de Saussure observes, if shelter can be obtained from the direct impetus of the wind, it will not be felt. This is reversed in the plain, for though sheltered from its direct action, you feel its reflection; dense air has the effect of repercussion on the wind, which air rarefied has not. As we approach the top the air gets dryer, and we are teased with a sort of unquenchable thirst. Melted snow will only add to it, and the only resource is melted ice, the water of which will be very potable.

On this elevation the appetite loses its relish, and prepared provisions fall into a congealed state. We respire with difficulty, and the pulse beats as quick again as in the plain. The train of epicures, with Vitellius at their head, would here feel an unaccountable aversion to wine and strong liquors. The sky, here, is of a darker blue than in the plain. This circumstance gave rise to a sudden fright in the guides of M. de Saussure; when drawing near the top, the heavens appeared dusky, seen through a sort of embrasure, on a height which they had reached. They started back, taking it for a vast gulf yawning before them.

From the great purity and transparency of the air, the stars may be seen by day-light, if the head be well covered and shaded. But, as if uncongenial with the human frame, we feel uneasiness, a general lassitude prevails, with a want of sleep, an ardent fever, and sometimes fainting fits.

There are many who cannot ascend to above 9000 feet. Mules, at the height of 10,000 feet, on the mountains, feel so stifled, that they utter plaintive moanings. Animals do not force nature, voluntarily, but man forces his, to make experiments and discoveries, or to gratify his vanity. We travellers might have some in our sack, but we felt not its weight, for vanity is light.

At the height of 15,000 feet, under the equator, as M. Ebel reports, any violent exercise will produce fainting: and those who rise to upwards of 17,400 feet, will bleed at the eyes, lips, and gums.

On the cimex of Mount Blanc, we find no traces of any animals.



M. Saussure, who stopped here four hours and a half, saw only a couple of butterflies passing by him.

Sound is very much impaired, the rarity of the air diminishing its elasticity, and the force of its vibrations. An echo is scarcely perceptible; the explosion of a well-loaded pistol would give a report not louder than that of a pop-gun in an apartment.

In these mountains it is the descending winds that bring fair weather; the ascending prelude to rain and tempests.

You may well imagine that glaciers enter, as a capital ingredient, into an account of Mount Blanc, and have obtained a part of its renown. Those of Mount Blanc, like all others of the Alps, are formed by vast masses of snow, that have imbibed water, which becomes congealed in the winter. The figure of these enormous masses depends on the surface whereon they rest. If the soil is a rough declivity, the clefts are numerous, and the glacier will be like the waves of the sea. If it is a valley, pretty level and even, with a gentle declination, the crevices will be few.

In winter, a profound silence reigns among the glaciers; but in spring and summer frightful noises are sometimes heard, attended with vast concussions, that shake the mountain. Every fresh crevice is formed with a noise accompanying it like that of thunder. It is the frequent renovation of these clefts that renders the glaciers so dangerous to the traveller.

From the crevices issue frequent currents of a very cold air, that carry along with them small particles of ice, and scatter them at a distance, just like flakes of snow.

Every where among the glaciers, the murmuring of dashing waters is heard, working passages through the walls of ice. Sometimes we light on wells of a circular form, wrought out vertically, and filled with water to the brim.

The forms of the glaciers get renewed every month, and if any stone or other substance falls into their crevices, it is soon disgorged, and thrown back to the edge of the glacier.

There are many, however, whose surface is impure and blackish, in this respect varying from the rest; it proceeds from the ruins of rocks that the avalanches drag along with them; in decomposition they turn to a slimy or muddy earth. In the course of time the stones are often thrown out of the glacier, or finally form a sort of hills, arising, sometimes, to a hundred feet in height. And very often the astonishing force of the glaciers reduces these very heaps of stones to a sort of sand and gravel, from the compression which they undergo between the ice and the rocks of the mountains. The ice is not compact, like that of rivers and lakes; it consists of pieces and grains, several inches in length and thickness. Their forms are tortuous and odd, and they so dove-



tail into one another, that there is no detaching them from the mass but by breaking several. Hence they acquire a sort of movement, as in the articulations of a limb or member. It is an undulating movement, wherein the lower part comes uppermost, and vice versa.

At the bottom of the glaciers there appear a sort of vaulted archways, which serve as a passage to carry off the waters. They get formed in the winter, but are cleared away when the snow melts. The water is of a whitish blue, and retains its colour for several leagues, if other streams do not mingle with it.

From Mount Blanc to the Tyrol 400 glaciers have been counted, which might, says M. Ebel, form a sea of ice, of more than a hundred square leagues.

The avalanches, so common where there are glaciers, constitute, likewise, one of the most imposing curiosities of the Alps. These add an interest, though of a melancholy tendency, because the chilling impartiality of their history records catastrophes occasioned by them, the superior impression of which is still left. The falls of snow, known by this name, exhibit a phenomenon no less terrible than extraordinary; they take place in winter, spring, and summer.

The winter avalanches are formed of flakes of fresh snow, which, detached by the winds, and falling along the rocks, increase to a frightful volume, and then roll to the bottom of the valleys, dragging along trees and rocks, and changing the course of waters. The winter avalanche, formed of fresh snow, and not hard, is not so dangerous as that of the spring.

This latter is composed of masses of compact snow, that get loose from the rocks, in a thaw. From their weight, or from the impetuous rage of winds, they tumble, with extreme violence, into the lower parts, sometimes overwhelming whole forests, and covering an entire valley with their ruins. The ringing of a bell, or the sound of a voice, the least noise would give them an impulse, and precipitate their fall. In the places where they appear, the traveller must walk quick, and with the greatest silence, setting out early, before the sun has softened the snows. There is no describing the force of the spring and winter avalanches; the air, in their fall, receives so violent a percussion, that sometimes cottages are overset, and men thrown down and stifled, at considerable distances.

The summer avalanches only take place on the highest parts of the mountains. In their fall they might be taken for a river of crystal, pouring down abruptly, with a cloud of fine snow surrounding it. At every descent the mass augments, and a report is heard like thunder. The echoes prolong it, in their extensive route, with many a still lingering note, along those sequestered

haunts. This last kind of avalanche is most to be dreaded in approaching the cimex, and in descending from it. They sometimes fall in the presence of the traveller, and block up his passage, as if indignant at his audacity.

Having mentioned Jacques Balmat as the first who scaled the summit, let me add, that his daughter would accompany him, and actually reached the brow of the colossus. If the attempt was creditable to her courage, it was unhappily contrasted by the event, as she returned almost blind, and was subjected to a weakness that lasted several years.

Enough of Mont Blanc, its glaciers and avalanches: in my next I must report other interesting particulars connected with the valley of Chamouny, for nature, here, is inexhaustible in the general merits of her phenomena, her metamorphoses, and the different objects of her composition.

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## LETTER V.

THE ARVERON, OR FOUNTAIN-HEAD OF THE ARVE.—MONT ENVERS.—THE SEA OF ICE.—CROIX DE FLEGERE.—MONT BREVEN.

THE Valley of Chaumont forms an article which I cannot discuss, as a tourist, without bestowing upon it a considerable portion of praise. To the eye of fancy it presents a grand spectacle of powerful and improving effect, from the variety and well combined structure of its parts; as such, I recommend it to the sedulous attention of tourists. Throughout the whole valley variety is never once lost sight of. Here is greatness of dimension, inspiring ideas of infinity, with terror, stillness, darkness,—rocks of every eccentric form and character, lakes and rivers, deep and majestic water-falls, trees, roughness and irregularity.—These are the obvious and avowed works of simple nature. But combined with this scenery, though subordinate to, and depending, as it is were, on it, art has employed, and, in some degree, displayed effects illustrative and ornamental, in decorations, that by a transition not too sudden seem necessary to please the eye and the mind. Throughout the valley, buildings and the architecture of country towns, &c. improve the landscape in many essential points which enter into the composition of the picturesque. Here are all the metamorphoses of Proteus, blended with a thousand attractions of Vertumnus.

It was in this district, so highly distinguished by the originality of its objects and character, that the author of *La nouvelle Heloise* forgot the fluctuations of his fortune, and supported his character of independence with spirit and consistency. To me it conveyed

pleasing incitements to wisdom and the love of virtue, every thing seemed calculated to improve, entertain, and fortify the mind.

Travellers whose moral or physical constitution will not admit of their ascending Mount Blanc, should not fail to visit an important object, the sources of the Arveron. This is a rapid, boisterous stream, that, within a quarter of a league of its spring head, loses its name in uniting with the Arve. The Arveron descends from a vast glacier, named Les Bois, which communicates with the Sea of Ice. This torrent dashes down from the lower part of the glacier along a great arch of ice, more than a hundred feet high by nearly as many in breadth. It is dangerous approaching too near this superb vault and cavern, as oval arches and blocks of ice are continually tumbling from the heights. The waters of the torrent which carry along with them spangles of gold sand, rush with a foaming and tumultuous rage from the vault, often rolling enormous fragments of ice. The vast mouth of the Arveron is surmounted with lofty pyramids of ice, and encircled, as in a frame, with the beautiful forest trees of mount Envers and Le Bouchard. Here the traveller must be careful not to discharge fire arms, or to make the least noise in the vicinity. A Genevese family disappeared, and was lost among the falling blocks, from accidentally firing a pistol, which shook the vault and unloosed its component parts.

At no great distance is the village of Les Bois, inhabited by Albinos, a race of men that excite compassion rather than envy, from the imbecility of their physical constitution. They seem scarcely able to bear the day-light, and what little work they do is in their houses, to provide subsistence and satisfy their wants, which, happily, are but few.

Mount Envers lies at the foot of another called the Needle of Charmoz, which is contiguous to Mount Blanc, and 5724 feet above the level of the Sea. It is the largest of the glaciers of the Alps, and has acquired the appellation of the sea of Ice. The imagination is dazzled with the naked masses clustering all around this ocean of ice. It is a sort of pompous desert, where an eloquent silence reigns, penetrating the soul with profound and durable emotions. The panorama, from the distinct and exclusive character which it possesses, might seem to belong to a new world.

About half way up, we come to a fountain that yields a very scanty flow of water, but delicious and refreshing. Here there is a sudden and unexpected variation in the view. Every object appears soft and beautiful, light and playful, but it is within a narrow confined circle, as, all around, every thing indicates and represents a wild and desolate scene. Near this fountain we find the amiante, a singular mineral, consisting of delicate threads of

an argentine ash-colour, of which the ancients made a cloth like linen, but incombustible.

Advancing a little higher, the road becomes very dangerous, from the frequent fall of avalanches and pieces of rocks that get loose from the sides of the mountains. All along we have the valley of Chamouny in view.

Having once gained the height, in lieu of beauty or any other qualities which are the foundation of a scene *riante*, we discover a large and extensive valley, entirely of ice, environed with gigantesque mountains, whose crests seem lost in the Heavens. Their bald and arid appearance, blended with their lofty fronts and steep flanks, infused a terror which it was impossible to surmount. If there is a man in whom the sensations and impressions of dread would not be excited by the view, he must have a heart thrice bound with adamant.

On the top of the green swarth which overlooks Mount Envers, is a neat pavilion, erected by M. Felix Desportes, then ambassador from France to Geneva. This little temple, dedicated to Nature, (so the inscription on the front purports) will afford shelter to travellers that may pass the night there.

The Valley of Ice, whose surface resembles that of a sea suddenly frozen, in a moment of calm, is an immense icy plain, of a magnificent green colour, that extends from the glaciers of Les Bois to the Col du Geant, near Cornayeur, in Piedmont, through a space of about ten leagues.

When from the grassy summit of Mount Envers we begin to descend, it is by a very rapid path, among Rhododendrons and Larches, to the brink of the glacier, where enormous accumulations of stone and sand rise to view. We next advance, but with extreme caution, to acquire a just notion of its extent. A piece of the ice gives immediate relief to the head-ache, by preventing the ascension of the blood. The inhabitants of the district make use of it for the purpose. At the southern extremity of the Sea of Ice, an arm of this sea, which has the name of the Glacier of Talefre, becomes exposed to view. The naturalist will there discover useful materials to form an acquisition to his knowledge, and the philosopher, who possesses sensibility, will contemplate the expansive scene with pleasure.

The traveller, here, will make a little turn to the left, passing by pyramids of ice, that threaten to crush any who approach them, and scale a rock called *Le Couvercle*, and after that, ascend a plateau, a sort of oasis or island in the midst of the glacier. This, in the month of August, becomes a parterre of very fine turf, embellished with beautiful alpine flowers. It has obtained the name of the Garden, and has all the appearance of one, being bordered with stones and sand, thrown out of the glaciers, and making a

sort of inclosure about it. This flowery garden rises 8484 feet above the level of the sea, and 936 higher than the Hospitium of great St. Bernard. It lies in the midst of snow and ice, in situations the most arid, and on the highest mountains of the ancient continent.

A curious proof was here exhibited of the fact that glaciers will not retain foreign substances. During the time that French troops held the valley of Chamouny in military occupation, a post of observation was established on Mount Envers, to apprehend deserters, then very numerous. Here, upon information that a party had crossed the Sea of Ice, and that an individual had sought refuge on the Garden, it was resolved to surprise him there. While traversing an ocean of ice, one of them slid into a crevice, hid under recent snow; his comrades make a cord of their handkerchiefs, great coats, &c. and draw him out, but without his fire arms. Sometime after, another party found his fusee on the surface of the glacier.

A tradition is prevalent that the space now covered by the Sea of Ice was once a valley well cultivated and inhabited, and that it formed a passage to go from Chamouny to Piedmont, through Cormayeur.

La Croix de Flegere is one of the finest mountains about the valley of Chamouny. Ladies might ascend it without difficulty, and a great part of it lies through a forest. Having passed all the trees, we soon arrive at a cross, where a view opens that will take in the whole valley, and all the sea of glass, which last appears here in two grand divisions, with lofty precipices every where overhanging them. On the right and left, on the other side of the valley, we can clearly distinguish all the glaciers, the Col de Balme, all the different needles, and Mount Blanc, a bold, unbroken, broad mass, of a magnitude, shape, and features to constitute an order of superior eminence. At an humble, inferior distance, are seen, as permanent parts of the landscape, in this farewell view, rocks and mountains, hanging forests, and sudden precipices, rivers, dingles, cascades and headlong torrents, so mingled with diversities as if nature had studied and consulted this object; and, as before observed, the wildness of nature is, in many parts of the valley, subjugated by art.

Mount Breven is at a little distance from the Cross of Flegere, and rises 7836 feet above the level of the sea. It retains most of the solid features of the last-mentioned landscape, and will command the admiration of every judicious beholder.

My Scotch companions had a spirit of enterprize which these adventures were admirably calculated to excite; their ingenuity and industry were often shewn in them to advantage. Both had cultivated religious sentiments; one of them, from the solemnity

of his demeanour, was the Nestor of the troop. The character of the other, bold, prominent, and decisive, marked him out as our Achilles, and, like Homer's Hero, swift footed. From his agility we called him the Chamois,—but woe to any of those animals that fell within his ken, death or captivity was sure to be their lot.

The eldest of my pupils rivalled our Achilles in vivacity. In bounding over torrents and precipices, he, at times, out stripped the Caledonian, having learned of our famous dancer, Deshayes, to trip it, in all the whirling movements of Vestris and Duport. With constitutions such as to defy all common rules of conduct, incident to the grave manner usual with grave characters, these two might exclaim, with one of Tasso's warriors, 'Fatigues, dangers, I like best to take counsel of you.'

The Caledonian Nestor and my second pupil had a conformity of character, but from the diminished irritability of their nerves, it was in making their advances with calmness. This caution, as any one may think, would be of importance in their case, securing them from little accidents, of which their rivals often incurred the risk and felt the inconvenience, but without material injury.

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## LETTER VI.

FROM CHAMOUNY TO MARTIGNY---THE VALORSINE---TETE NOIR.  
 ---TRIENT---COL DE FORCLAY---A VIEW OF THE RHONE, IN  
 THE VALAIS---ALPINE ANIMALS.

BIDDING adieu to Chamouny, its valley and glaciers, with the earliest tints of dawn we had left the central village, aiming next for the Valorsine and the Col de la Tete Noir, in our way to Martigny en Valais. We came in good time to the hamlet of Trelafin, whence we may discern that of Tour, at the foot of the Col de Balme, where, every winter, snow falls to the depth of 12 or 15 feet. The inhabitants are then obliged every morning to sweep away the snow before their houses. During one very rigorous winter, they remained eight months buried under the snow, deprived of all communication, and not able to pass from one house to another.

To this hamlet of Trelafin we may apply a passage of Voltaire, when, in his Journey to Berlin, he treats of certain countries in Westphalia.

"In some large hovels that I have seen here, called houses, we find animals, called men, that live in the greatest cordiality, and pell-mell with other domestic animals. A certain hard, black, and glutinous substance, made, according to report, of a species of rye, forms the principal sustenance of the inmates."

In my third letter, I noticed a hard kind of bread, made to last for a year or eighteen months,—this is similar to what Voltaire mentions. It is cut with a large knife, like that which wooden shoe-makers use in polishing their shoes. Pieces of it are then thrown into hot water, and when sufficiently steeped, they eat it with cheese and potatoes.

About half a league above Trelafin, we have gained another ascent, and we then enter into the Valorsine, a valley of a much wilder aspect than that of Chamouny, and for this plain reason, because it is more elevated. It stretches from west to east, towards the Valais, and is watered by a torrent that issues from the glaciers of Buet. However wild, it is not without some beauties, skirting the sinuous valley, on either side. Here are diversities of tint, of light as well as shade, so modified as to feast the eye and fill the imagination: pastures, orchard plots, cultivated fields, with the foliage of the larch in its blooming groves, clothe naked nature to the best advantage, at least, as far as the inhabitants know how. Winter continues long, and it is only in the month of June that the snows disappear.

The valley may contain about 600 inhabitants, scattered along the extent of the elevation, in several hamlets depending on the village of Valorsine. During the three months of their fine weather, the men go abroad to seek employment in the Valais and the Tarentaise. The church of the Valorsine is protected by a high mountain that serves it for a rampart against the avalanches, by which, in different situations, it had been more than once overset. There is only one auberge at Valorsine; here a *gastromome* (epicure) would be ill at ease, as he could get nothing but milk, cheese, eggs, and bad wine, with bread a year old. This auberge had no sign, and we gave it a name, calling it the hotel *des vrais amis*, of true friends.

At Valorsine we met with a young person of uncommon personal beauty, that, far enough from being wild, was, however, to a certain degree, timid. Her hair floated in waving ringlets on her shoulders, as blown on by bland zephyrs. Her eyes, under her sunk eye-lids, masked the sweet passion of love in all its sensibilities. Her complexion was the incarnation of the rose blended with ivory. Said I to myself, "Where will this beauty nestle and find a mate?" and I paid her several compliments: among others, "Madam," said I, "you ought, at least, to bear the name of one of the Graces." "Sir," replied she, the carnation glowing on her cheeks, "my name is Cecilia."

She appeared so young that I could not feel it unpolite to ask her age. She said she was sixteen, and was born in the village of Valorsine. The backwardness of the climate prevented her fair alabaster skin from developing the plenitude of its polish.

Her breasts, though rounded by the hands of the Graces, were as yet only budding. They were partly, but not entirely, concealed. No ornaments distinguished her apparel; but the *simplex munditiis* only made her the more attractive. She was the very Galatea, or Estelle, that figures in our romances and idylls, in short, the Shepherdess of the Alps, in the whole range of ideal perfection that the title may seem to import.

One of our Scotch gentlemen asked her if she would accompany us, adding many flattering promises; but the smile that she gave him in return, made it appear that she knew already what it was to love and to be beloved. And, in fact, he saw a very handsome young fellow soon after come and plant himself by her, take her hand and kiss it,---nor would he afterwards leave her. The young Scot, with ardent eyes, coursed over the charming hands, the vermilion lips of this Alpine nymph, whose eyes darted traits of a curious sensibility that were irresistible.

But we must tear ourselves from this dazzling vision, our horses were waiting, and our guide was hastening our departure, fearful of being benighted: so we bid farewell to the fair Cecilia. Her *new* lover clasped her hand, exhaling a sigh that was not echoed, and which flew away on the wings of the light winds.

Quitting Valorsine, we enter next the mountains of the Valais, advancing into the heart of a forest of larches, to visit La Tete Noire. We proceed along a rugged path to a rock shaped as a cavern, where an English lord with his lady passed a disagreeable night, waiting for the parts of his carriage, which had been taken to pieces and carried on the backs of mules, that he might have it said, that a carriage had passed over these frightful solitudes. It was a whim which cost him seven or eight hundred francs.

As we approach Le Col de la Tete Noire, the aspect of the country grows wilder; the road serpentine all along among trees; but it is edged with precipices eight or nine hundred feet in depth, with a deep torrent at the bottom, of a whitish water, foaming and brawling with a deafening roar, over ragged projecting rocks.

On the left we see, on the opposite side of the valley, the village and church of Finio, which look as if suspended in the air. It is difficult to conceive how vegetation and the dwellings of men can be maintained in such an elevation.

At length we arrived at a place called Malpas, or Mapas, with dangerous steps, rudely cut out of the rocks. We were struck with terror, catching a glimpse of the abysses close to the road on the left, and of the rocks on the right, threatening to overwhelm us. This place is called La Tete Noire, (the Black



Head,) it being, in fact, a height every where of that colour from the dark rocks and firs that cover the flank of the mountain.

We come next to a descent, or rough declivity, which leads to the valley of Trient, where we observed peculiar situations, in all the varieties of a most romantic form. As a lover of the picturesque, I remarked also a bridge over the torrent, near a hamlet, and surrounded with trees, green plots, and the majestic perspective of mountain towering above mountain. These little diversities, though of secondary consideration, created attraction. From the valley of Trient we ascend to the Col de Forclay, from the height of which we clearly discover the sinuosities of the Rhone, in the Valais, together with the plain along which it pours, in its serpentine meanders, and the city of Sion, in the centre. The scene is interesting, commanding at one view, the romantic course of the river and a most extensive reach.

The bleak rocks of the Col de Forclay cast their long shadows over an area of more than equal sterility to that of La Tete Noire. Here we find vegetation at a stand, and natural productions shrinking from the stern blasts of winter.

It may afford satisfaction to those curious in natural history to be informed respecting the different animals that inhabit these mountains. I forgot to treat of them when at Chamouny.

Besides most of the quadrupeds and birds common in France and Germany, we find in the Alps, the lynx, the white hare, the black squirrel, the wild goat, the chamois, the black and fallow bear, the marmot, or mountain rat, the great eagle, and the white wood-hen.

Of the lynx, the ancients reported, that his piercing sight could make its way through opaque bodies; this was a fiction. Our lynx cannot see through stone-walls; but his eyes are unusually brilliant: he utters a cry somewhat like that of the wolf. He is not so large, nor does he stand so high on his legs. In general, he is about the size of a fox, but walks and leaps like a cat. He lives by the chase, and pursues his game even to the tops of trees, strangling his victims when seized, and sucking their blood. After opening their heads to devour the brains, he will often abandon them in quest of other prey.

The white hare in his manners resembles the rest of his species; but is wilder.

The black squirrel lodges constantly on the highest trees, and is still more afraid of water than of the ground. He is very sprightly, and remarkably clean. In summer he makes a provision of nuts, and lives on them in winter.

The marmot and the bear pass the winter in abstinence and fasting. When the bad season commences they are very fat; but at the return of spring as lean as cuckows. The marmot

is so torpid in his winter sleep, that when surprised in the earth he may be tossed about, and even torn to pieces, without emerging from his lethargy. When the warm weather returns, he re-assumes his ordinary functions.

The bear is not so lethargic as the marmot; his fat helps him to support hunger, and he seldom quits his lair but when very much pressed by hunger. This animal is capricious and irritable, and dislikes fillips on the nose or muzzle, though not averse to the caresses of women.

A company of French grenadiers patrolling Mount Cenis, one day surprised a bear in the forest dragging a young girl to his lair. He had perched on his two hind legs, and with one of his front paws seemed to be giving her the arm. They surround him and make him let go his prey, presently killing him. The poor girl, half dead with fright, coming to herself, declared that the bear had attempted to do violence to her person. She died eight days after. The Captain of the detachment, M. Turquois, an eye witness, vouched to me for this fact.

Another incident, not less extraordinary, took place in the mountain of Chaillot. A shepherd's daughter, tending her flock, was seized by a bear, and carried away in his paws. Her cries and groans were heard by the shepherds and huntsmen; but they arrived too late. The animal had gratified his brutal passion; but in his rage to be interrupted, he tore the girl to pieces. Another bear came up to the spot, and would dispute the other's claim to the female; but both were cut to pieces by the hunters.

In another mountain of the High Alps, the wife of a shepherd going into the forest was carried away by a bear, and lived for some time in his den. After some months the huntsmen, hearing a bear making dreadful howlings, pursued and killed him. The smell of a corpse exhaling from his cavern, they enter it, and find that of a woman; she was known by the guide of the huntsmen to be the person they had been so long in quest of.

The great eagle of the Alps is four feet four inches in length, and nine feet four inches between the extremities of his wings. He disdains the smaller animals, and contemns their insults. *Aquila non capit muscas*. If he punishes the insolence of the crow and the magpie with death, it is not till they have long teased him with their importunate chattering. He looks for an enemy worthy of his resentment, and has been known to attack oxen, and, as fame reports, to precipitate them from the top of the rocks.

Descending now from the Col de Forclay, we come to Martigny, a little town in the Lower Valais, famous in the time of Cæsar, who took possession of it to secure the passage of the Great St. Bernard.

Martigny stretches along a mountain very near the Rhone. The suburbs border the torrent of the Drance, which descends from St. Bernard and empties itself into the great river. Martigny will be our rallying point in certain excursions in the vicinity.

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LETTER VII.

EXCURSION TO GREAT ST. BERNARD.—VALLEY OF ENTREMONT, &C.—ST. PIERRE.—VAL DE PROU.—HOUSE OF REFUGE.—COL DE ST. BERNARD, &C.

THE passage of Mount St. Bernard was not rendered practicable till the time of Cæsar. That great captain, in spite of the elements, made a road over it, but it was to enslave the free people of the valley of the Rhone and the Allobroges, Geneva being one of their principal cities. The French armies renewed this passage, under the standard and direction of Napoleon Bonaparte.

The torrent of the Drance takes its rise, pouring from a mountain near the Hospitium of Great St. Bernard; it then passes through the valley of Entremont, one of the most interesting among these mountains, and after frequently swelling to a dreadful flood, spreads itself over the surrounding level, till it mingles its whitish waters with the muddy current of the Rhone. It is often destructive in its career.

From Martigny, we proceed to St. Branchier, a village on the banks of the Drance, where the valley of Entremont begins, but reaches four leagues further to the little town of St. Pierre, the last village on the road to the Hospitium of St. Bernard.

Before we enter St. Branchier, we pass under a vaulted roof cut in the live rock, on the right bank of the Drance, in 1818, after that torrent, in its infuriated course, had entirely swept away the road. This was at the time when the ice broke up in the unfortunate valley of Bagne.

Next to St. Branchier we come to the village of Orcieres, and so keep advancing through the valley of Entremont, enlivened with the luxuriance and mellow tints of green meadows, in the middle of which the Drance no longer rages with impetuous eddies, but rolls its silver streams with serenity through a country adorned with golden harvests on the sides of its hills.

After a journey of about an hour and a half we arrive at Liddes, a large village half way between Martigny and the Hospitium, agreeably situated in the midst of meadows. The church steeple bears the date of 1008.

Leaving this village the valley grows wilder. It was here that our artillery was dragged up to the height of St. Bernard by the soldiers and peasants, in an ascent of four leagues across snow and ice. M. Taillard thus describes this operation. A hundred and twenty men harnessed to a long rope, drew along the cannon and their carriage. Besides their arms, ammunition, and provisions for five days, each soldier of the division Watrin carried also the provisions of the division Loison. The weight of this double load was estimated at more than seventy pounds, but the ardour of our men was inconceivable. When benumbed with cold and harassed with fatigue, the volunteers found their courage and strength sinking,—they called out for the drums to beat a charge, and, inspired by their drums and martial songs, they succeeded in reaching at length the summit of St. Bernard. In passing the southern side of the mountain the men slid over the snow to the bottom of the declivity, Bonaparte and all the officers imitating them.

From the hamlet of Alleve, about which Napoleon had placed his cavalry in the month of May, 1800, we ascend to a village called St. Pierre, 5000 feet above the level of the sea. The entrance of this village, on the side next the Hospitium, is defended by a wall, gates, and a bridge of one arch, thrown over a torrent whose deep channel, a quarter of a league higher up, falling from a rock, forms a very fine cascade of 200 feet in its fall.

Having once gained the height of St. Pierre, we have a view of Mount Velan and the Glacier of Menoue, and soon enter into the valley of Great St. Bernard, at the distance of three leagues from the convent.

In tracing a little descent, along which the road goes toward the Drance, we pass the edge of a precipice where the first consul was in danger of perishing, by sliding from his mule into the snow. A peasant caught him by the coat, and received a thousand francs in recompence.

The further we advance the more vegetation degenerates. At Martigny we were gratified with the bloom and foliage of the oak and chesnut trees, and in proceeding to St. Branchier, with groves of beeches and yoke elms. The valley of Entremont had its characteristic charms, its lands being uniformly covered with verdure; but this rich decoration, which has so excellent an external appearance, diminishes in proportion as we ascend. Afterwards, scattered here and there, we see maples, alders, lote trees, and firs. In our next situation we had larches and willows, at the height of 5400 feet above the level of the sea, and after that trees disappeared, and we saw nothing but wild rose plants and rhododendrons. Advancing to an elevation of 8000 feet, we should find nothing but moss and certain Alpine plants, but these,

on reaching a higher story, disappear, and at the height of 10,600 feet would be nothing but lichens overspreading the surface of the rocks, and at another height all vegetation whatever is at a stand.

In proceeding through the valley of St. Bernard we keep along-side of the Drance, among some pasture grounds and dairy houses that belong to the Hospitium, till we come to a plateau named le Prou, whereon we find seven little barns about a hundred paces distant from the great dairy of St. Bernard, wherein cows are kept and cheese is prepared.

On the left, in front, we discover the mountain of the Drome, where three companies of grenadiers passed over snow and ice, 10,800 feet above the sea, to surprise an enemy's post on the southern declivity. At the word of the first consul they darted over the dangerous height, and fortune crowned their enterprize with success.

To approach the Hospitium we keep along the Drance, here only a large brook, 6000 feet above the level of the sea. Soon after vegetation disappears, and a picture of desolation and sterility presents itself hardly to be imagined. We now walk over stones and moss, and in about half an hour come to two little buildings, one of which serves as a house of refuge for travellers, and the other is to preserve, for a time, the bodies of such individuals as perish in the snow.

This place has the name of the hospital, and hither provisions are brought by the dogs of St. Bernard, accompanied by their masters, and, especially in great storms, care being also taken to make out a path for the traveller.

This region is exposed to what is here called a *tourmente*, a hurricane attended with vast shoals of snow, that suddenly in a few seconds, rise to the highest part of the gorges and deep cavities, covering and overwhelming wherever it finds them. A traveller surprised in these openings, is in the greatest danger, for he cannot keep his eyes open so as to explore his way, or if in the plain road, it is soon obstructed, and he is in danger of falling into some abyss. In such cases the intelligent dogs and the worthy religious of St. Bernard, often constitute a resource superior and permanent.

We soon had the satisfaction of accosting those venerable ecclesiastics, so devoted to the kind offices of mercy; every glance, every line and feature of which has its animation and character, eloquent of sympathy, and forming the perfection, the sublime of human nature. Entering their hospitium, it is but justice to remark, that from the active zeal and public spirit which pervade that benevolent institution, we were welcomed like children long absent from their loving parents.

The Hospitium of Great St. Bernard stands on the highest part of a mountain, in a very narrow gorge, between steep and desert rocks, 7560 feet above the level of the sea. Its situation is at a point where the north and south winds meet, with all the varieties of sound, from the faintest murmuring to the sullen roar, and, at times, combating with a boisterous rage and awful impetuosity, not to be conceived by those unacquainted with the scene. We saw no signs of vegetation, excepting some wretched garden plants which the good fathers were trying to raise; and as to their provisions, they fetch them from a distance of four or five leagues. St. Bernard stands on the very point most convenient as a refuge for travellers in a tempest.

This habitation, the most elevated of the old Continent, was founded by St. Bernard, in 962, and he presided, as its warden, for the space of 40 years. It consists of three ranges of buildings, the charms of which depend not upon the accidents of decoration, for the most perfect symmetry, and all its corresponding ornaments, would here be graces of inferior magnitude, and the beauty itself of art, would make but the smaller part of loveliness. The whole beams with expression, abounds with character, descriptive of some kind or elevated passion, with superior charms, that never cloy nor fade.

The *Corps de Logis*, or principal mansion, stands at the end of a very deep lake, frozen over in winter; it is capable of receiving nearly 200 persons at a time. In the right, are offices for the domestics; they are so constructed as to intercept, at one of the angles, any avalanches that from an adjacent mountain might overspread the Hospitium. On the left, and more to the north, is the chapel wherein individuals are deposited that are found dead in the snow. They are ranged one beside another, as in a camp mortuary, the bodies, from the dryness, vivacity, and free circulation of the air, corrupting very slowly. The traits of the countenance remain unaltered for years, and the bodies, when dried, take the semblance of mummies. I noticed some dead three years and more, that still retained their hair, and the skin appeared in good preservation. What seemed the most striking was the body of a mother, with that of her child, both of whom had perished under an avalanche. The mother was clasping the child in her arms, death could not part them.

On the col of St. Bernard, advancing a little towards Italy, they shew a place where, in the time of the Romans, there stood a temple and an Hospitium, dedicated to Jupiter Hospitalis. The mountain was then called *Mons Jovis*, of which was made *Mont Joux*, which it retained till the tenth century. In the ruins have been found *Ex Votos*, or Votive tables, in great numbers, engraved on plates of bronze; they shew that from the earliest times the pas-

sage of St. Bernard was considered dangerous. The Almoner of the convent introduces amateurs to a cabinet that he has formed of the antiquities found in the ruined temple. We noticed a collection of medals of Roman Emperors, many small figures in bronze, two of Hercules and a Mars, a very curious hand, a sculphral lamp, gilded ears of corn, and a little Jupiter holding the thunder. These different objects are distinguished by the variety and perfection of their mechanical improvement, such as give honour and importance to the arts, and also for their excellent conservation.

The church of the Hospitium is a handsome structure. The arched vaulting is of a noble fresco, which has not called for any reparation since 1686, when it was raised. The altar is supported, by four large pillars of black marble, all of a piece.

When entered, we see on the right in the wall, a monument in white marble, representing General Desaix, rendering his last sighs at the battle of Marengo. The work is a master-piece of the sculptor Lemoine. The hero appears in the attitude of uttering the last words which escaped him: 'Go and tell the first consul that I die with regret, not having done enough to immortalize my name with posterity.'

In the chapel we also find several paintings of the great masters, and a beautiful organ, surmounted with an angel.

The dogs of St. Bernard are of a superior description, and very ready to caress strangers. These faithful friends of man, clear the way, in a time of snow, from the Hospitium to the Hospital, and sometimes further, bearing on their necks a flaggon of brandy to offer to the travellers, whose arrival they instinctively can prognosticate at considerable distances. These interesting and intelligent animals never mistake the right road, though overlaid with snow.

At the end of Autumn, in 1820, a domestic of the establishment, going his rounds, observed the dog that he had with him stop suddenly, and barking with all his might, run away in another direction. At the same time, he hears a rumbling noise, and takes a resolution to follow the dog; he thereby avoided an enormous avalanche, wherein he must have been engulfed, had he slighted the foreseeing instinct of his faithful companion.

One of the dogs patrolling the vicinity one day in bad weather, found a child that had taken refuge under a vaulted roof of snow. The mother had just before disappeared under an avalanche, and the child was in danger of perishing. The dog was importunate in his caresses, and the child mounting his back, was brought to the Hospitium, by his sagacious liberator.

These animals do not lose their beneficent instinct by a change of climate. At Lisow Castle, near Liverpool, are two of the St. Bernard dogs, conveyed thither by a Swiss merchant, and

consigned to an aunt of my pupils. One day, some children were hunting for shells on the sea shore, when one of them was caught by the reflux of the tide. This being observed by the others, their piercing cries brought up one of the dogs then in the neighbourhood, which plunging into the water, caught the child by his clothes and brought him safe to land.

All the fathers of St. Bernard go on a mendicant tour, making gatherings to support the expenses of their convent. Their tour does not reach beyond the frontiers of Switzerland, and if other mendicant brothers itinerate further, they are not of this establishment.

As the air is unusually keen on this elevated situation, none of the religious remain here above six years. We find no aged persons, but young men in their full vigour. When age or infirmity approaches, the religious are appointed to serve cures in the villages about the valley of Entremont as far as Martigny, where the Prior of the convent generally resides.

A hundred cows are maintained on the establishment, that supply it with cheese, also fifty horses or mules that go in quest of provisions into Piedmont and Switzerland. Their wood comes from a distance of four leagues, in the valley of Aoste. They have nothing but what is brought from a considerable distance.

We were not a little astonished at our entertainment at supper, which was equal to that of the best auberge in Geneva. After two services, we had the dessert and wine extra, which last was not inferior to Madeira. The religious did the honours of the table with a politeness and kindness not to be expressed. The servants all alert, at the least sign, executed their functions with correct precision. After the dessert coffee was offered us. The gaiety of the place was well adapted to our feelings and to the occasion, with nothing in it to call impropriety; it helped to season our relish, though indeed the appetite never fails here. After the repast, one of the fathers performed on the piano-forte some pleasing melodies, for they all have a taste for music, and listen to it with a cultivated ear. A very agreeable marchioness, that was at supper with us, sung some favourite lively airs of the French music, and I cannot but speak of her efforts in the language of praise; for a moment we fancied ourselves at Paris, in the Theatre Favart.

At length we took leave of this disinterested and patriotic society, wherein good sense, agreeable conversation, and suitable conduct so pleasingly preside, and set out on our return to Martigny, intending to proceed to Simplon.

Previous to our re-visiting the village of Liddes, we noticed, on the side of the road, a large quantity of little black balls rolled up in heaps. Our company then consisted of from 15 to 20 persons, all of whom had been entertained at the convent. One of the



party, 47 years of age; took these little balls for natural productions of the country, and beginning to chew one, presently threw it away, with a sputtering noise, as bitter, or not very pleasant. This traveller might be reckoned not over fastidious; what he thought good fruit, his eye dwelling on it with pleasure, proved to be sheep's dung. This hoggish misadventure not a little entertained the groupe of our fellow travellers, among whom, a young Parisian Marchioness, handsome and amiable, said she should never forget it;—it helped to beguile the time all the way to Martigny.

There we took leave of the fair Parisian, who, with her husband and father, took a different road. One of our Scotchmen, both of whom were distinguished by a cheerful, good-humoured, and obliging disposition, paid his attentions to her, with all the courtesy and urbanity of a well-educated cavalier.

As a postscript to this letter, I add the following observations, from a memoir I have just perused, by M. Parot, Professor of Physics at Dorpat, and Russian Counsellor of State.

The cold and moisture at St. Bernard make it a sort of tomb—this may be attributed to various causes. The buildings are buried in snow, during eight months of the year. The whole region is so wrapped up in mist, that scarcely fifteen days in a year are quite serene. The walls of the convent require an interior lining of bricks and double windows; at present, they are dangerous conductors of both heat and humidity. Other materials for fuel might be had as substitutes for wood, or it might be economised by stoves. At present, the consumption of fuel is considerable, and it takes near five hours and a half to dress victuals, from the diminution of the pressure of the atmosphere.

The religious of this establishment seldom live above five and thirty years, and more die between twenty and thirty, from the effect of cold and the humidity of their habitation. This mortality would be far less rapid, were precautionary measures more extensively contemplated.

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## LETTER VIII.

THE VALAIS, ITS EXTENT, AND SITUATION—THE TOWNS OF ST. MAURICE, MARTIGNY, SION, AND BRIEG—MANNERS OF THE VALAISANS, &c.

THE Valais has been treated of in different publications, and among others in the famous letter of J. J. Rousseau, one of the finest in his *New Heloisa*. He does not enter into the design of St. Preux, which was, to entertain Julia with all the curiosities of the country. "We must, (he says,) reserve our correspondence

for matters the most interesting to ourselves, personally." He merely depicts certain aspects of the country, that present themselves on every side, and communicates some liberal opinions respecting the manners of the people in the Upper Valais. He forbears dwelling on the majestic course of the Rhone, the towns, the natural productions, the resources, the extent, and customs peculiar to the country in general. On these points I shall furnish some details, without omitting those of the great writer last mentioned.

The Valais is the longest and most considerable of all the valleys of Switzerland. The Rhone traverses this Canton through its whole extent, which is 35 leagues, by 1 in breadth. It is surrounded with the highest mountains of the Alps, from St. Maurice, which is at the entrance, to the foot of Le Simplon, at the other extremity.

In this lengthened dale, excavated by nature, between the mountains, appear, at successive distances of from 6 to 8 leagues, four little towns, St. Maurice, Martigny, Sion, and Brieg.

St. Maurice lies in a passage so straitened by parallel mountains, that, with the bridge over the Rhone, it might, as a key, lock up all entrance into the valley. Near this town we find the beautiful cascade of Pissevache, where the water tumbles perpendicularly from a rocky height of 300 feet. The transparent stream, in its headlong fall, takes the appearance of a brilliant gauze, veiling the rock.

Martigny, of which some notice has already been taken, is a little town near the junction of the Drance and the Rhone, at the foot of the valley which leads to Great St. Bernard. It still retains some tourelles, or turretted battlements, which remind us of the feudal prerogatives in old times.

Sion is the capital of the Valais, seated in its central part, between Brieg and Martigny. It is surrounded with ramparts and old towers; these are the ruins of strong castles, constructed by the Romans and their successors. The town lies on the widest part of the valley of the Rhone, buttressed against hills enriched with vineyards.

Brieg, the last town of the Valais, is situated at the foot of Le Simplon, at the entrance of the valley which leads to St. Gothard, and very near the Rhone. Its towers, garnished with enormous globes of tin, give it, at some distance, an air of riches and grandeur; but this idea must be discarded on entering the place.

The Valais is divided into Upper and Lower. In the Lower Valais the French language is universal; in the Upper, German, and a little French, are spoken.

The valley is mostly shaped as a plain, from one end to the other; and the Rhone, which waters it all along, at times, when

swollen and enraged to a high degree, urges, bears down, by its daring torrent, and whirls away every thing in its course, shattering whole plantations, and causing a general wreck. If the inhabitants, however, would combine their efforts, they would succeed in securing the valley from such universal deluges.

It possesses one peculiarity, that is unusually interesting, that of combining the temperature of every climate, from the polar ocean to the torrid equatorial regions. Here is a rapid transition from scenes of terrible and tumultuous grandeur, to mingled impressions of beauty, from viewing, studying, and consulting nature, in her other rich diversities.

This eternally varied line of tints, of light and shade, so modified, was deeply impressed on the imagination of the philosopher of Geneva.

“I was eager,” said he, “to ruminate, but was ever interrupted in my reveries by some unlooked for spectacle. Sometimes, the wild forms of immense rocks and hanging mountains threatened sudden ruin over my head; sometimes, lofty and precipitous cascades, foaming and roaring over ragged strata, besprinkled me with their mingled misty spray. Sometimes, a dashing torrent poured upon us from on high, and laid bare to my view the steep slopes of some dangerous chasm, at the prospect of which the eye sickens, and we dare not look down upon its depth. Sometimes, I lost myself in the long recesses, (gloomy as the darkness of cheerless night,) in the solemn silence of some tufted wood. Sometimes, emerging from a deep hollow, my eye was suddenly feasted with the minuter beauties which constitute the attraction of meadows. The astonishing mixture of wild and cultivated nature: haunts, where one would think man could never penetrate, combined with accidents of less majestic, but beautiful scenery, produce and impress on the solid features of the landscape, independent charms, which nothing can exterminate and destroy.

“Close to the wide expanse of some cavern, we see dwelling-houses, vineyards, where we should look only for brambles, excellent fruits on the slippery summit of rude cliffs, and cultivated fields among high precipices and profound gulfs, whence the shrinking eye recedes.

“It is not the hand of man only that has rendered this singular tract so oddly contrasted. Nature seems to have taken pleasure in appearing in opposition to herself, under different aspects, in one and the same place. Towards the east, the gaiety of spring, or the luxuriance of summer, and mellow fruits of autumn; in a northerly direction, mountains covered with a veil of snow, the atmosphere thick with vapours, the earth locked in icy fetters, the

leafless grove, the dismantled plantation, nature unclathed and with a repelling nakedness, if I may so express myself. In such a country, summer glowing with its yellow harvests, and winter with its howling tempests, have many varieties, and their phenomena are always more or less beautiful and sublime."

Such is the Valais, in which we find nature in her bolder, broader style, happily contrasted, relieved with a vivacious, penetrating effect, by many engaging and animating, sweet and striking touches of art.

With respect to the inhabitants, they leave an interesting impression on the mind, but it is not so gaily conceived. Most of them, men and women, boys and girls, have enormous goitres, that form a great drawback on the general merits of their physical composition. Where these complaints are found incurable, we may see the subjects standing before their doors in summer, in a state of entire listlessness, shewing those disgusting protuberances, with their olive-coloured complexion, and unsightly features. Some of them can apply to certain light labours, but in general they are incapable of any application. When any discourse is addressed to these last, all the answer you can obtain consists in certain inflections of the voice, like the cries of animals, accompanied with a frightful smile.

Their disorder, (called by the author, cretinism,) is attributed partly to heat, partly to the stagnated air, and partly to the quality of the water. It is ascribed also to the want of cleanliness in the inhabitants, they being generally considered as indolent and heavy, and without a proper share of industry. They appear strangers to cheerfulness and gaiety; when at labour they have a melancholy air, and they have not spirits sufficient to enforce, in a due degree, that style of singing airs and songs, which, when persons are at work, is found to produce agreeable and serviceable effects.

During the calamities that befel their native country, in the course of the French Revolution, their apathy seems to have been denounced and banished. In several instances they spurned, with a becoming indignity, at the insolence of oppression, acting with a spirit of manly and laudable independence. They had it not in their power to controul the occupation of their country by France, but, indeed, during that period, many abuses of their civil establishments were reformed, and many useful institutions adopted, which they still retain. Odious distinctions, that had existed for ages in the Upper and Lower Valais, and all along the magnificent route of Le Simplon, were extinguished for ever. A new æra has been established by that revolution, in some respects.

Three leagues from Sion, on the side of Brieg, appears the handsome little town of Sierre, inhabited by the noblesse and

opulent families. It is the first place where we hear the German spoken. The water here is insalubrious, and when drunk cold renders the voice hoarse.

From Sierre there is a ready communication to the baths of Leuk, which are much frequented in the fair season, from the superior efficacy of their waters. The town of Leuk is situated on a height on the right bank of the Rhone, about five leagues from Sierre.

Leaving Sierre we soon enter a forest of larches along the Rhone. At the village of Tourtemagne, there is a very good inn, and a cascade which may vie with that of Pisse Vache near St. Maurice.

As we advance forward the valley grows narrower, and we pass through Viège, a little town that has two Gothic churches, decorated with very odd figures; and lastly appears the town of Brieg, at the foot of Le Simplon, on the left bank of the Rhone.

With the exception of salt, their country supplies the Valaisans with all the necessaries of life. Meadows and their cattle form the principal source of their riches. Generally speaking, they are kind and hospitable, and an equal mediocrity, remote both from misery and luxury, illustrates the character of their domestic economy.

Of the Valaisans, it may be said as of the Athenians, in all things they are too superstitious. A traveller, M. Echasseriaux, as quoted by M. Mallet, takes notice of their hermitages, their ossuaries, or depositaries of relics, their chapels cut in the rock, or scattered about its base, or on the sides and summits of mountains; "these," says he, "contain abundant sketches of the religious humour which pervades the character of the people in the different parts of their country. Here stands a cross in front of the enormous ruins of a mountain overset, there another has been planted before a torrent that menaces devastation;" to which, it is added, that while the house of the citizen is poor, the church of the hamlet is always richly ornamented.

At these chapels, as M. Mallet remarks in one of his interesting letters on the route of Le Simplon, the labourer comes to implore rain for his field, and the shepherd to pray for divine aid against the disease that attacks his flock. The chapel, from which numberless vows are addressed, stands beside a field, dried up with heat in the midst of a pasture ground wherein the flocks are languishing, and not far from the avalanche which had occasioned destruction to one on a contiguous site.

From Martigny to Brieg, we have kept along the valley in the course of the Rhone, sometimes on the right, sometimes on the left, and crossing it over neat wooden bridges. We have been hemmed in with mountains, as in a longitudinal cavity, respiring

an air hot and gross from the concentrated localities. Among the Valaisans there are but few handsome persons, unless, perhaps, in the higher mountains, where the *cretin* does not exist. Julia's lover makes mention of some charming figures there.

We shall now quit the Rhone, which, on our left, descends from Mount Gothard, and proceed to ascend Le Simplon by the new route bearing its name, and forming one of the wonders of our age.

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## LETTER IX.

### OF THE MOUNTAIN LE SIMPLON, AND THE GRAND ROUTE OR ROAD BEARING ITS NAME.

THE new route of Le Simplon is one of the boldest undertakings which the genius of modern times has conceived and executed. To clear a mountain fourteen leagues in extent, to fill up frightful chasms, to pierce through a valley of rocks, striking out a passage therein, to correct or to combat mountainous declivities subject to avalanches, to make a number of turnings in different passages, to mitigate the inclination of the road, to fix bridges over depths which the eye is almost afraid to measure, all these difficulties our engineers surmounted, by the labours and perseverance of somewhat less than five years.

Le Simplon is a mountain situated between Great St. Bernard and St. Gothard. It is rightly considered as one of the most interesting passages of the Chain of the Alps; it is also one of the richest in vegetables. Formerly it was only passable on foot or by mules, and was not a little dangerous in riding along the precipices, and from the risk of avalanches. This passage is now the easiest and most agreeable of any, without even excepting Mount Cenis, the route of which is infinitely inferior in objects that attach the eye and satisfy the mind.

On the side of Switzerland it is entirely covered with larches, even to its crest. On the side of Italy it is much wilder; here the labour of man appears most prominent, here are those immense rocks, through the interior of which the new way has been made to pass.

The route of Le Simplon, ordered by Napoleon in 1801, was completed in 1805. General Thureau, and the engineer in chief, Ceard, traced the plan of the works. The execution was consigned, under the direction of this last, to Messrs. Lescot, Houdard, Cordier, and Poulonceau, for the side of Switzerland, and to Messrs. Duchène, Cournon, Maillard, Gianella, and Bossi, for the Italian part. These are imperial arts, and worthy kings.

The inclination of the road is so gentle, that there is no occasion to trig the wheels; the width is every where about 30 feet. We find pallisades of larchwood, or flat stones guarding the edge of the precipices, and broad ditches on the sides of the mountain to carry off the waters. From one half league to another, both on the northern and southern quarters, are houses of refuge, occupied by cantineers, a sort of publicans, where a traveller may purchase wine, brandy, and provisions, and also procure a lodging. On the highest part of the mountain is an hospitium, and a little lower down, on the side of Italy, is a village with a good inn, and where a traveller may pass the night. Post relays are established along the whole route, where the service is punctually attended to. At certain distances, large poles are planted to point out the road, when the track is buried under snow.

From Brieg it takes us six hours to arrive at le Col du Simplon by the new route. We may set down three hours to pass from the Barrier, near the new hospitium, to the village of Le Simplon, and between five and six from this village to Domo d'Ossola, the first town on our entering Italy. This lies at the foot of the mountain, on the Italian side, as Brieg does on the side of Switzerland. In the passage intervening, we have to clear twenty-two bridges, and seven galleries, or arched vaults, pierced through the interior of the rocks.

The first of these works that appears remarkable, we find on our quitting Glisse, a village near the town of Brieg; here is a superb bridge over the torrent of La Saltine, which descends from Le Simplon, and falls into the Rhone. It is one of the largest along the whole route, but consists of only one arch. It is built of larch wood, as more durable than fir, and is the only bridge under cover; the timber work of the arch is also sheltered from the rains.

Passing this, we ascend insensibly the windings of the route, with a number of little oratories on the right and left, where the inhabitants go on pilgrimage. All along, from the circuitous turnings, the inclination is very gentle, and at times the level is so observed, that we seem travelling on a plain. The first ascent is in the midst of meadows, and afterwards we proceed under the shade of larches till near the summit.

Here, if from the midst of forests we turn our looks backwards, a scene appears which may be viewed with delight and rapture. In tracing the landscape, villages and meadows, with an endless number of streams that pour into the Rhone, combine to adorn, in bright glowing colours, the immense panorama. The Rhone, a king of floods, rolls his expansive and whitish waters, his rapid, high-surgng waves, murmuring across the plain. His banks are enriched with a variety of vegetation. On the flanks of the mountains, we discover smiling cottages surrounded with meadows, and

occasionally several handsome houses, and not inelegant edifices, among cultivated fields and rising grounds, that give a cheerful look to the country; churches add also to its beauty. Above these fields are groves of larch trees; and lastly, we contemplate romantic rocks, naked or covered, with eternal snows bordering the distant perspective.

Nearly about half way, the route passes along the bottom of a valley, wherein the beautiful bridge of Ganter is established over the junction of two torrents, in a place exposed to frequent avalanches; it rises 80 feet in height. The art employed in its construction secures it from those irruptions of snow, and enables it to brave the floods; its elegant architecture is a pleasing novelty after passing through so many surrounding woods.

Works of this description alter the face and appearance of the country, and evidently for the better. Travellers only come here as visitors, when it has burst from the icy chains of winter, and partly assumed the vivid hues of spring—nipping frosts, and the bleak, keen north-east wind, speedily resume their subsequent empire.

In the vicinity, and about the middle of the valley, we still discern the huts that general Bethencourt erected for his men, in the year 1800, when passing Le Simplon, at the same time as the first consul was clearing the passage of Great St. Bernard.

A rough bridge, thrown over an abyss of 60 feet in breadth, had been carried away by an avalanche. Here a grenadier undertakes an hazardous exploit; he fixes his feet in the holes wherein the posts of the bridge had been inserted, and passing from one hole to another, happily arrives at the other end of the precipice. The general passes the second, and all the men imitate him, suspended to a rope between the open air and the cavity, loaded with their knapsacks and arms. Five dogs remained behind, which threw themselves headlong into the chasm; two only emerged from it, and joined their masters besmeared with blood. The names of the officers were engraved on an adjacent rock.

At a little distance from the bridge of Ganter, appears the handsome *chalet*, or cottage of Berenzaal, in a situation very agreeable during the summer. At the end of autumn the shepherds quit their cottages and regain the plains, but the family of Berenzaal remain on the mountain through the winter. A flambeau of resinous larch is kept constantly burning through the long nights. The custom of lighting with wood in lieu of tallow, wax, or oil, is of high antiquity, and noticed by Virgil in that passage, where the lighted cedar beguiles the passing time of Circe, daughter of the Sun, while her industrious and most expert hand is busied in the labours of the loom:—



— tectisque superbis,  
Urit odoratam nocturna in lumina Cedrum,  
Arguto tenues percurrens pectine telas.

Like Circé, the Bärenzaal family are weavers, but not under *tectis superbis*, though the house is solidly built, with capacious barns and out-offices. In the time of the *tourmentes*, and very chilling cold, the traveller here will find a refuge, and bless Providence for affording him a secure shelter and a generous hospitality, in the substantial goodness of its inmates.

On quitting the larches we pass through the first gallery, and the second half a league further on, close to some superb glaciers, the water of which, in its descent, forms cascades of the most imposing effect, to awake the traveller's attention.

From the second glacier we arrive at the barrier, where we pay a toll of six francs per horse, for keeping the route in repairs. This barrier, or gate, is between two ranges of buildings, one of which forms an inn, and the other coach-houses, stabling, &c. On the wall of the latter we read the following inscription:—  
“Hic Bonaparte viam proprio patefecit olympos—Here Bonaparte opened to himself a road to immortality.”

Advancing some paces further, we reach the plateau of the mountain. It is covered with a green parterre, with rhododendrons and Alpine plants, and rises 1168 feet above the level of the sea.

On the left of the road, as we proceed towards Italy, we see the walls of the new Hospitium, which is to be 60 metres in length, and 20 in breadth. The services are to be performed, (or this was the original intention,) by fifteen ecclesiastics of Great St. Bernard, on whose jurisdiction it depends. The emperor Napoleon had endowed it with a revenue of 20,000 francs. The ancient building is seen a little further on, in a hollow recess, to the right of the road. It is built in the form of a tower, and contains six stories; the duties are discharged by two fathers of St. Bernard, who admit poor travellers, and entertain them, gratis, with food and lodging.

The plateau of Le Simplon is contracted in its view, on the side of Italy, by the mountains that rise in front; but towards Switzerland every thing, as before observed, is either grand or romantic, either highly interesting or picturesque, from a more studied culture, as towns approach, and increasing population is more discernible.

The extent of the plateau is pretty considerable. We descend, by a slight declivity, to arrive at the village of Le Simplon, which stands on a height, in a wild place, near a forest of larches, and on the banks of a little torrent, among meadows wherein vegetation languishes. About some of the houses we see little gardens,

with a few kitchen plants and pot-herbs. From the vivacity of the air the inhabitants are obliged to keep up fires all the year round. They have stone stoves, in the shape of pillars. In the three months of the fine season, they tend their flocks, trim their meadows, and some fields which they have, and go in quest of provisions to lay up for winter. In winter they work on the roads blocked up by the snow, and become carriers of goods, merchandise, &c. Potatoes cannot come to maturity in a climate so rigorous. But notwithstanding these disadvantages, in the months of July and August the eye will dwell, with a degree of pleasure, on such few varieties of fertility and vegetation as the environs may appear enriched with.

As already observed, it is generally three hours' travelling from the Barrier to the village of Simplon. Our voiturier, (driver,) a merry fellow, and everlasting votary of Bacchus, traversed this distance in less than an hour, to reach the inn before other carriages on the road, and to secure the best beds. Our entertainment was excellent, but dear enough, according to custom. He had taken a glass extra, to sleep the better, but had left in the stable a lamp, which set fire to some straw. Luckily, the master of the house, going his usual rounds, discovered it time enough to give the alarm of fire! His cries, with a voice like thunder, roused every one from sleep. Our voiturier comes down, in his shirt, bringing with him the servant maid Louisa, from an upper garret. The landlord falls upon and beats him, rolling him in the straw that had caught fire, and water arriving from all quarters, the poor culprit was so inundated, that he thought the heavens were opening for another deluge; as yet he had scarcely come to himself. The landlady falls on the servant, with heavy blows, that fearfully resounded. We get the flames under, while the two lovers are thus doing penance, and as we had further occasion for one of them, we petitioned for pardon for both, which was granted, with some reluctance. The whole furnished a comic scene, that reminded us of the droll interchange of pugilistic blows between the Hero of La Mancha, the Muleteer, and Sancho, in an inn, where a female servant gave occasion to the adventure.

Leaving the village of Simplon, as we proceeded towards Italy we wind about a long circuit of road, to soften the descent. It leads to the entrance of a wild gorge into which the torrents of La Dovina fall, the road inclining to it, as towards an abyss.

Here we immediately enter into the first gallery on the side of Italy; passing it we come to a Cantine or house of refuge, which serves also for an asylum to passengers, when exposed to the *tourmentes* and the inclemencies of bad weather.

Here we contemplate a scene of great and infinite terror; the imagination takes flight, soaring on the wings of wonder, at the

vast climax, the continued chain of horrors. The Gorge is extremely narrow, the whole breadth of it being occupied by the channel of the torrent; not the slightest trace of vegetation; immense rocks rise on each side, that seem to touch the skies; they resemble two parallel walls, between which we advance, as through a prison. Sterility pervades the entire solitude, and the sun-beams never penetrate.

The road continues along the Live Rock, sometimes on the left, sometimes on the right of the torrent, passing over some neat stone bridges, till we arrive at the Second Cantine, and then at the Grand Gallery. It extends 200 metres in length, is 30 feet high, and 30 feet broad, with two vast apertures over the abyss, to let in day-light. The rock, through the interior of which it penetrates, loses its head in the clouds, while its base reposes at the bottom of an abyss, the depth of which the eye dares not measure. In the execution of this enterprise, war was, as it were, declared, not only against the torrent, but against the terrific masses of the rock itself. Security has been thereby afforded, against avalanches, and the danger of floods.

The resounding of the horses' feet, and the wheels of carriages, under this superb vault, ring a change on the ear, the combined effect of which is so powerful as to render it attractive and pleasing. At its exit, or lower entrance, we discover a very fine bridge over a torrent that forms a lengthened cascade, and plunges into La Doveria, at the bottom of the abyss.

On the vault of the gallery we read this simple inscription: "Ære Italo, 1805;" that is, the expenses of this construction defrayed from the Italian revenue. In this the name of Bonaparte appears prominent, and may be adverted to with the alluring contemplation of a tutelary genius, a wise and benevolent benefactor.

Going out of the great gallery, we continue descending along the torrent, between bare, perpendicular rocks, of a sombrous colour; these are called the Solitudes of Gondo. Vegetation and life, are here unknown, but after three hours' journey the traveller arrives at Gondo, a wretched village, the buildings of which are oddly constructed, and the inn, with its eight stories, and little iron grated windows, looks like a prison. Under the village, some scattered sun-beams glance, as by stealth, from the tops of the rocks, to animate some little gardens, the leguminous plants of which seldom arrive at maturity.

A quarter of a league lower, we pass by a chapel built on the borders between Italy and the Valais.

In the contours of the road, should a number of carriages be successively moving forward, at due distances, they would, in the range of the eye, appear to be one above another.

Half a league beyond the last-mentioned chapel is the village of Issel, where Piedmontese Douaniers politely search your effects, but are often troublesome enough. Here it is satisfactory to behold nature somewhat improving, and the hand of man somewhat more successful, in fertilizing all around him. But every where about the torrent it is still the contemplation of nature; we perceive birch-trees, smiling grass-plats, and, higher up, some woods and copses of larch, with an endless number of cascades and running waters, sportively bounding, in every possible direction.

Soon after, we survey the delightful valley of Frontano, and the village of that name situated in a bason enriched with vegetation in a country profusely covered with farm-houses, cottages, arable-lands, trees of all kinds, orchards, and a never-ceasing variety of an increased population, and consequently cultured and fertile spots. There is an alteration for elegance in the appearance of handsome houses and spacious edifices; architecture appears to predominate as one of the characteristic traits of fair Italy.

To this consoling view succeeds another ordinary, meagre, hard-featured, and coarse, which I shall call the last scene of horror; it adjoins the last gallery, which has a large window over the torrent.

On clearing this gallery, the rocks, hitherto contiguous, widen gradually and open to us a view of the magnificent bridge of Crevola, extending from one mountain to the other, and closing up the valley. It constitutes the last of the labours of Le Simplon.

From the bridge of Crevola we discover, at the end of a long line of road, the town of Domo D'Ossola, small but very commercial, and, as already observed, the first that can be called a town of Italy, to those advancing along the new road.

I should have mentioned certain auxiliaries or appendages to the route of Le Simplon, wherein the labours have been very considerable and costly. As in the lower Valais, blowing up the rocks of Meillerie, and raising a causeway, 1500 feet in depth, along rocks, on the banks of the Lemane Lake. I can but barely allude to the enormous expenditure in erecting a causeway from Domo D'Ossola to Sesto Calende, above lake Major; the road rises along it, 15 feet above the water, and it is protected with a wall against the overflowing of the lake. In short, the works of Le Simplon, and improvements of the route, speaking generally, from Geneva to Milan, have cost upwards of twenty millions of francs.

The route from Paris to Geneva is 103 leagues, and from Geneva to Milan 74.

From Domo D'Ossola to Bavena, a town on the northern bank of lake Major, is a distance of six leagues, through a fine open champaign country.

## LETTER X.

LAKE MAJOR—THE BOROMEIO ISLES—STATUE OF ST. CHARLES  
BOROMEIO—THE LAKE OF COMO.

ARRIVING, at length, on the banks of Lake Como, where both the towns and country assume a more cheerful look, where the site of every place renders it pleasanter and more healthful, I find my spirits cheered, and my toils repaid. Here, while taking delightful walks on its shore, the sky unclouded, while commanding a fine view of the water, and its fertile banks, I seem to have burst, as it were, by enchantment, into a fairy-land. This azure expanse stretches over an extent of from fifteen to sixteen leagues. All around it appear towns and villages, hamlets, and country-houses, with hillocks rich in the blessings of Ceres, Bacchus, and all the rural gods. To these hillocks succeed, in the back-ground, high mountains of the chain of the Alps, which, at the east and south, lower by degrees down to the plains of Lombardy; towards the north they extend, with an augmenting elevation, as far as to the silvered cimex of Mount Rose, almost as high as Mount Blanc.

This ocean is not quite so tranquil as that of the Lemane Lake. It is subject to storms, as is the Lake of Como. It is, however, more abundant in fish, particularly excellent trouts, and eels of unusual magnitude. Its greatest breadth is two leagues and a half, a league less than that of the Lake of Geneva.

Lake Major receives a number of rivers, that appear to be engulfed in its depths. These are waters that issue from the vast contour of mountains, stretching from Mount Rose to St. Gothard to Le Simplon, to Le Bernardin, and Le Jorisberg. The Tesin (Ticinus) issues from a lake to the S.E. near Sesto Calende, and expanding into a wide channel, falls into the Po, a little below Pavia.

Lake Major branches itself out into two parts. In the centre of the northern branch, looking towards Le Simplon, appear the delightful Boromeo Islands: they seemingly owe every thing to nature, but in reality owe much to the curious works, &c. which art has constructed in imitation.

The Boromeo Isles are three in number—Isola Bella, the beautiful island Isola Madre, Mother Island, and Isola dei Pescatori, Fisherman's Island. They were naked barren rocks, when, in 1671, Prince Vitalien Boromeo, of Milan, had them covered with earth, and decorated with ornaments, profusely flowing, that form a living picture, that charm us with their cheering

smiles, their flowery wreathes, the lovely dyes of rising spring and summer.

Isola Bella is within musket shot of the Road; when first discovered, it might seem an enchanted island, so much does exulting genius glory in the graces, order, beauty of its ductile earth, of its forms and shapes, in which art successfully moulds and polishes fair nature, invoking the poets' song, and the plaudits of the critic. Palaces, magnificent gardens, odoriferous trees, among which the winds whisper gently, crystalline fountains, statues, groves, flowers and flowering shrubs exceedingly beautiful—every thing here has felt the influence of man, freely and frequently indulging in such novelties, variations, and inventions, as the most fertile imagination can abound in. The variety of sights, and the mixture of trees and vaulted terraces, rising one above another, gradually lessening and forming a sort of pyramid, on the southern side, fully display views on which the eye may gaze with rapture.

Approaching the Isola Bella we breathe an air embalmed with the gales of Eden, the sweet perfumes of plants, our surprise at which is so great, that the observation may be regarded, at first, as among the most predominant of this place. The whole island about the palace is covered with groves and enrobed in springing green plantations of orange and citron-trees, cedar, laurel, cypress, rose bushes, myrrh, jasmine, and a thousand other sweet-scented shrubs, of different colours, and young flowers that seem always new. Oranges and citrons thrive here as well as in Sicily, notwithstanding the difference of climate. The Acanthus, Valerian, and Caper-tree grow naturally on the walls and gardens. The vine also appears on the walls of the houses.

The art which created these beauties has taken no fleeting stand here, but dwells, as in a safe retreat—art concealing art.

The interior of the palace breathes an air of luxury and Asiatic magnificence. The apartments, in whose storied walls the polished fancy may for ever trace, clothing some new charm, the brilliant execution and highly-finished drawings of the great masters, are not too highly elaborate for the general cast of the buildings, but flow into each other with much ease,—great skill and contrivance appear in their construction. The grand saloon, newly embellished, offers striking specimens of the architect's science and taste. But the most remarkable part of the palace is a subterranean apartment, the columns, walls, and ceiling of which are lined with mosaics. On the floor, are statues of white marble; one of them represents a dolphin ejecting a fountain. The whole palace and the ten terraces, the highest of which rises a hundred and twenty feet above the surface of the lake, are supported by arched vaults that here take the name of carcase of the island.

From these terraces we discover, on the south, Lavene, on the

east, the hills of Varese and the beginning of the plains of Lombardy on the west, the Fisherman's Island, and on the north, the icy summits of Mount Rose, Le Simplon, and certain points of St. Gothard.

Near the palace of the Isola Bella, which the Boromeo family repair to, in the fine season, is a little village consisting of Fishermen's houses; among them we find a pretty good inn.

In the vicinity, but nearer to Baveno, is the Fisherman's Island, which, from the uncommonly simple style of its buildings, agreeably and happily contrasts with the spirited excellence and uniform magnificence which in general characterise the Isola Bella. The inhabitants live on the produce of their nets, but the fish of Lake Major are not so docile to the hook, as some noticed by Ariosto were to the voice of the fairy Alcina, though she had neither net nor bait.

The houses of the Fisherman's Isle so press on rocks, that there would hardly be the means of raising a vine arbour before them. They are overlooked by a steeple, which forms the prominent object, and in the progression of curiosity, though it possesses nothing very new, seems pleasingly conceived to close the scene. The manners of the inhabitants are strongly interesting, and discover much of that original simplicity which so pleasingly accords with the subject of their labours.

Very few that visit the Boromeo Isles, deign to notice the Fisherman's—but had I a statue to erect to Happiness, I would consign it with contentment, a certain quantity of which I have calculated, to the worthy inhabitants of this island. Relief is afforded to their few wants, and hence a relative union is introduced between a satisfaction far above mediocrity, and the whole of the temper that distinguishes and accompanies them,

“ *Latus regnes, avidum domando*

“ *Spiritum, quam si Libyam remotis*

“ *Gadibus jungas, et uterque Pœnus*

“ *Serviat uni.*”

Command your desires, says Horace, and you will possess an empire more spacious than if you had Libya added to the distant Cadiz, and both African and Spanish Carthage formed a part of your dominion.

The third of the Boromeo Islands, Isola Madre, distant about half a league from Isola Bella, towards the N.E. contains seven terraces on which a palace has been raised. The climate is still milder than that of Isola Bella, as under better shelter from boisterous winds, so that there is no need for covering the orange groves in winter. It is thickly planted with groves of orange and laurel trees; we find also the superb cypress and rosemary trees

of a considerable size. Pheasants and pinkadoes are pretty numerous. The rural simplicity, rather familiar, of the island is of a most popular cast, though without that importance and dignity which result from the majestic march of grandeur, in the great labours of the stately piles of Isola Bella.

J. J. Rousseau was for making the Boromeo Islands the residence of his Julia, but, from finding too much of the art of man in them, he gave preference to the Isle Bienna. So Voltaire preferred the lake of Geneva, for a better reason, that a sage liberty fertilizes its contiguous districts. In lake Major you see poverty on one hand and excessive opulence on the other; the privileges of the highest classes, and the people subject to humiliating distinctions which degrade the condition of man. Equality of fortunes is an idea that I scout, but equality before the law, the right of being subject to it alone, that of expressing and writing our opinions, of chusing our vocation and disposing of our property, of going and coming without having to ask permission of a priest, the right of assembling with other individuals to deliberate about our common interests, and lastly, the right of every man to share in civil functions, as well as another, be his rank or birth what it may, these are no longer chimeras, but what we have reason to expect, and may confidently look for, though from the ferocious and treacherous character of despots, such an event may be retarded. The French Revolution has left on the mind and heart, exalted, fervent, characteristic impressions, grave and slow in ripening, but greatly superior to the light, transient, and volatile effects flowing from the political manœuvres of certain privileged families.

Night is coming on, and we must pay a visit to the statue of St. Charles Boromeo, which I espy on an eminence close to the road. This colossal statue, representing a Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, whose memory is held in great veneration throughout the north of Italy, was erected about the year 1697. It is 66 feet in height, and the pedestal on which it rests has 46 additional. The head, feet, and hands are of bronze, the rest of the body is copper; withinside is a mass of weighty stones to give stability to the figure. It contains also an escalier to lead to the head. The hollow of one of the little fingers is almost wide enough to include a man.

Hence we returned to the Route of Le Simplon, intending for Sesto Calende, a little town of Lombardy, eight leagues from Milan, at the southern extremity of Lake Major, seated on the left bank of the Tesin, which we pass over by a boat for want of a bridge.

It will be long ere I forget the delicious spectacle, the gay changing scene we had, the same evening, from a window of our inn at Sesto. By moon light we could distinctly recognize, to an immense extent, the fair expanse of Heaven's blue vault, the bright



tints of that clear mirror of Lake Major, with fishing vessels gliding through the smiling vale o'er the soft breast of the Tesin, their crews chanting evening songs, bold and unrestrained, as they paced along its silver winding stream. To us, there dwelt a charm in the free musings of their sweet voices.

The Lake of Como is but three or four leagues from Lake Major; it is 9 or 10 in length, and as many in breadth. It is surrounded with mountains, and a number of rivers, the principal of which, the Adda, the Lira, and the Mera, flow into it. The scenery of nature is grand, and all around the champain forms an enchanting scene, when we survey the cultured gardens, the verdant lawns, the soil which art has known how to chuse, as its fairest, favourite residence for nobler man. Navigation on the lake is dangerous, from the squalls and pelting storms of wind that, at times, ride over it.

Caroline, Queen of England, here courted the silent, calm retreats of contemplation. She has been charged with levities and little immoralities, but these were surely gross and wilful misrepresentations, which we may attribute to certain designs, unjust and insidious, fomented by those who had not the power to resist corruption. Such a set of witnesses, in whom it was impossible to place implicit confidence, nor could any one be convinced, or determined, by their testimony—unsanctioned, too, by the names of any one person of character. As a matter of enquiry, the case was not fully investigated, in behalf of the defendant. And what could be expected by such as were anxious to know the truth and had no other object in view, but a quashing of the prosecution? The dry non-solicited answer of *Non mi Recordo*, when the arguments evidently applied to the circumstances and situations, will not easily be forgotten:—none of us may live to witness the like again.

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## LETTER XI.

MILAN, ITS SITUATION, CLIMATE, INDUSTRY, PUBLIC ESTABLISHMENTS, CHURCHES, PALACES, &c. PAVIA.

IN approaching Milan, the triumphal arches at the gates announce, in an imposing manner, the *grandiose* of the interior. It is situated in the midst of a vast plain, watered by the Adda, the Tesin, and a prodigious number of artificial canals. The city was originally built by the Gauls, who, under Bellovasus, fixed themselves in Italy, about the year of Rome, 170. After the third Punic war, it was reduced, by the Romans, and was long considered as their second city. Milan became, afterwards, that

theatre of bloody wars, being several times taken and destroyed, but ever rising again from its ashes. As Hannibal, in Horace, says of Rome, 'Merses profundo, pulchrior evenit.' The city was destroyed, by Attila, king of the Huns, afterwards taken by the Goths, who massacred most of its inhabitants, was raised again by Narses, taken by Belisarius, from the Ostrogoths, and recovered by the latter in 539, who, by the sword and famine, cut off 300,000 inhabitants.

After the reign of Charlemagne, the city flourished some time in prosperity. In 1162, it was besieged, by the Emperor Frederick the First, surnamed Barbarossa, who razed it to the foundations, on which he plowed and sowed salt. Under the protection of Pope Alexandria, in 1171, it appeared again, as in triumph over Barbarossa, and adopted a Republican Government. In toto, the city sustained 42 sieges, and was taken 24 times.

In 1796, the French established a republic here, under the name of Cisalpine; in 1805, it was transformed into a monarchy, and in 1814, Lombardy again passed under the Austrian dominion.

The territory of Milan resembles a delightful garden. The soil is fertile, the air salubrious, though moist at times from the rivers and canals that water it; but these give it the appearance of spring even in winter. Vegetables of all climates will readily thrive there.

In respect of trade and manufactures, Milan is still one of the first cities of Italy. Here are fabrics of steel, alabasters, leather, ivory, silk, cotton, bronze, gilding and for goldsmith's work, also for making chocolate, hats, wax, corals, cutlery, cylinders, woollen cloths, Cologne water, aqua-fortis, delft ware, paper, glass, &c. Mathematical and astronomical instruments are brought here to great perfection. Carving, engraving and sculpture, as also the bookselling and printing businesses, are in a flourishing condition.

The palaces, churches, and public establishments, are very numerous. The Cathedral, Palace of Arts, and the Theatre of La Scala, are master-pieces of architecture. Here are public and private libraries, cabinets of physics, observatories, lyceums, and schools of every description.

The new monuments may contest the palm of splendour with the ancient, and it is difficult to conceive how, in less than twelve years, labour so considerable have been erected.

There are a number of hospitals for the sick and indigent, and we see no shocking extremes of opulence and misery, Milan being rather a city of industry than of luxury.

The Milanese is gentle, gay, sensible, and free, but without rudeness. He has a taste and aptitude for the sciences and arts. He receives strangers with politeness, is not averse to good cheer, and enjoys public spectacles. Towards evening, in the prome-

nade, 500 coaches, of superior elegance, may be seen at a time. The women are, in general, small but handsome. In summer they hide half of their face with a veil to prevent being sun-burnt, and to keep off insects. Their complexion is not so fair as that of our Parisian belles.

The city is about 30,000 feet in circumference, and 9240 in length. Its boulevards serves for promenades. The streets have flagging for foot passengers, and the middle is so contrived that carriages make no rattling noise.

The population is about 140,000. The hotels for lodging and eating, in public or in private, are of all sizes and descriptions. In a thousand other respects Milan may be hailed as the Paris of Italy, the manners and fashions of Paris being also very prevalent.

The windows of the apartments which we occupied in the hotel de l'Europe, in the centre of Milan, looked down on the boudoir of a young Italian lady, that had but just reached her fifteenth year. One of our fellow tourists was not the last to remark this circumstance, and taking counsel only of that little urchin cupid, he contrived to insinuate himself into her company, and, as it should seem, to touch her sensibilities. He frequently visited her, and as an obsequious cavalier, escorted her to the promenades and spectacles. She spoke English, French, and Italian fluently, which enhanced the satisfaction of her admirer. Every morning early he might be seen, in a dishabille, under her window, with his guitar, serenading the idol of his heart.

Something may be added in respect of the edifices. In the palace of the Viceroy the interior is most magnificent. The paintings, in fresco and other similar embellishments, were executed under the government of Prince Eugene, whose memory is held dear throughout Italy. The palace of sciences and arts is the most beautiful and interesting in Milan. A portico of the Doric order, and the grand staircase, are of a very superior architecture. The library contains about a hundred thousand volumes, and many valuable MSS. Next to the library is the school of engravings; it has a collection of very interesting designs. The palace of arts was distinguished by nothing remarkable till the arrival of the French in Italy; it owes its present consequence to Napoleon and Prince Eugene. The cathedral looks like an immense quarry of marble, worked into shape; it is in the Gothic style, the architecture appearing rather odd than elegant. The foundation was laid in 1386, but it is not yet finished. The immensity of the labours lavished on it by Napoleon is indescribable. The dome, or cupola, overlooks 5000 pyramids, with a multitude of statues and other embellishments drawn from the sacred history.

Of seventy churches in Milan, next to the cathedral, the most

remarkable is that of St. Alexander. The façade has marble steps to it, and the principal altar is sprinkled with oriental agates, jasper, and other precious stones. The Ambrosian library is one of the most ancient of Italy. Besides a number of MSS. here is a volume of the history of Josephus, on Egyptian papyrus, a Virgil with notes, in the hand of Petrarch, the code of Leonard de Vinci, some MSS. of Pindar, Sophocles, Eschylus, and Euripides, the original Cartoon of the school of Athens, by Raphael. Some paintings of Michael Angelo, &c. The library contains about 100,000 volumes.

The Great Theatre is one of the first in Europe, for extent, richness of decorations, spectacles, dances, ballets, and the skillful selection of the orchestra. There are six rows of boxes, large, convenient, and superb in their ornaments. One might lose one's self in the parterre (pit), and I was struck with astonishment on entering it.

In the Champ de Mars, where 80,000 men might manoeuvre, is a noble amphitheatre, one side of which commands a view of the troops, and the other that of the horse races and gymnastic exercises. It may hold 30,000 spectators, on ten rows of seats, and was built by order of Napoleon.

In the environs of Milan, distant about half a league, is an echo of a truly singular description. It proceeds from an old charter house now abandoned, and when any sound is emitted from the window of a second story (for anywhere else it is mute) the repetitions are so rapid and frequent that, sometimes, it is hard to count them. The voice will be heard again, at least, ten times, and the report of a musket thirty-six.

Beyond the echo, at the distance of another half league, is the country house of the Litta family. It would require a volume to describe the riches of art and nature displayed in the palace and adjacent grounds. The grottoes reminded me of those depicted by Fenelon, as occupied by Calypso and her nymphs.

At Somma we are shewn an enormous cyprus tree, the trunk of which measures thirteen feet in circumference. Near it, according to the report of tradition, 230 years prior to the christian æra, Hannibal, with his elephants and a numerous cavalry, passed the Ticinus, wounded one of the Scipios, and drove his army out of the field.

The city of Pavia is about ten little leagues from Milan. We proceed to it along a very noble road well shaded. All around appear canals of irrigation, which diffuse coolness and fertility throughout the country. About three leagues from Binasco, on the left of the road, is the Charter House of Pavia, an immense structure, commenced in 1396, and not finished till some ages after, but now deserted. It was one of the finest residences in

Lombardy. Two leagues further on is the city of Pavia, situated in a vast plain on the banks of the Tesin. The Tower is yet to be seen, wherein the unfortunate Boethius was confined. The ferocious Theodorick, of odious memory, after putting to death the father of the poet, was seized with remorse, and, according to common fame, thought he saw the head of his victim in that of a pike served up at his table next day.

Pavia has some fine buildings, the streets are broad and straight. The University contains a rich library, a museum, a cabinet of physics, and a garden of plants. The territory is so fertile that it is commonly called the garden of the Milanese.

Why, alas! in these fine countries, should the public spirit be corrupted, the only sources of moral and political instruction be diverted from their purposes, so as to deteriorate the general character of the inhabitants, merely to cloke the faults of inefficient and unprincipled governments?

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## LETTER XII.

FROM MILAN TO TURIN—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS—NOVARE.  
VERCELL—TURIN, AND ITS ENVIRONS—MILITARY RECOL-  
LECTIONS IN PIEDMONT.

QUITTING the capital of Lombardy, our next route will be that of Piedmont. From Milan to Turin commonly passes for one day's post travelling. Nothing remarkable appears on the road, and the sooner we traverse it the better. Beggars innumerable assail you, of every description, at and in the inns, at the ferries, with postillions and their masters, &c. &c. To come here without money a traveller would hardly escape dying of famine. What a fine climate but what an expenditure of money, what an exhaustion of chagrin to pass through it; Montesquieu says, "see Italy in a transient visit, think and meditate in England, travel in Germany, but live in France." "Voyez l'Italie, pensez en Angleterre, voyagez en Allemagne, et vivez en France."

The author of the Spirit of Laws had a purse open for the wretched, but was not fond of plenary indulgences that were to be paid for. Before he left Rome he went to take leave of Pope Benedict XIV., who felt an esteem for his personal and intellectual merits. Said the Pontiff, "my dear president, before we part, accept some pledge of my friendship. I authorize you, *de faire gras*, to be excused from meagre days for the rest of your life. Montesquieu thanked the pope, and bade him adieu. The chamberlain bishop then conducted him to the

Datary's Office, where the bull of dispensation was expedited for him, accompanied with a rather chargeable note of expenses for this singular privilege. Montesquieu alarmed at the amount returns the brevet to the secretary, with these words; "I thank his holiness for his benevolence, but the Pope is of a truly honourable character—I refer to his word, and my conscience will sanction me herein."

Madame de Frenoy, in one of her novels, considers Italy as a place of exile to a Frenchman. She was delighted with the country of Lombardy, and thought it another Eden—but every where, even at Milan, with the music celestial of its opera, with all the magnificence of its entertainments, the monotonous ceremonial of the people wearied her. The most exquisite wine could not elicit from them a sprightly sally or repartee, and she regretted the dinners of Paris. The Milanese ladies, she says, have more beauty than grace; they excite admiration but do not please. In the theatres the actors were always actors, and never the characters they would represent.

What would she have said had she been exposed as we were to the rapacity of Cisalpine and Piedmontese vultures?

The first town on the road from Milan to Turin is Novare, or Novara. It is far, indeed, from being handsome, but contains streets of considerable length. Whether arising from taxes, or other circumstances, the inhabitants bear the impress of such as find themselves in no pleasant situation, with but a scanty stock of individual enjoyments.

We breakfasted at Verceil, the head place of the ancient department of La Sesia. It is a pretty large town, but dirty enough and ill built. We paid dear at the Auberge, being taken for English, who are always charged dearer than others.

We arrived at Turin on the same day, and alighted at the *hotel de l'Univers*. Here the entertainment corresponded with exterior appearances. Splendid apartments, rich furniture, exquisite perfumes to regale the sense, highly flavoured meats, for epicures, with the wines of Asti and Casal, and the delicious liqueurs of Turin.

This metropolis is regularly built, very handsome, and perhaps, the most elegant of all the cities of Italy. The situation is in a charming plain, at the confluence of the Doira and the Po; running water is distributed from a sluice, and the streets are kept constantly clean. They are uniformly straight, and the principal ones lead up to the grand place *de la Cour*, where—in our inn was situated. In the centre of this is a palace, which would be better elsewhere than here. About it, embanked against two of its walls, are barracks, rather offensive from misery being so nearly contrasted with opulence.

The street of the Po has arcades very convenient, and well set out with shops; it leads to the new bridge over the river, constructed in the time of the French. It is a magnificent work, entirely in the Roman style. A report prevails, that the king of Sardinia, in 1814, returning from the island of that name, would not pass over it because it was a monument of the usurper. If this anecdote be stated right, it was not in the natural order of things, and does not savour much of magnanimity.

The street of La Doira is very long, and has neat flagging for foot passengers; with its reverberating lamps, especially on the night of an illumination, joined to other accidental ornaments, an effect is produced that may be counted truly elegant.

The promenades may rival those of Milan in beauty, both on the side of Rivoli, and along the banks of the ancient Eridanus, which rolls majestically, scattering plenty through the plains of Piedmont. The great theatre is not so spacious as that of Milan, and is but seldom opened. Taste and coolness reign in the interior. The little theatre of Carignan is open every night. The architecture of the palaces and houses is every where excellent, and the environs of the town prove a rich collection of new kinds of objects to characterise and illustrate the survey. The palace of Stupinis, three little leagues from the city, is uncommonly handsome, and becomes the residence of the court in summer. The chateau of La Superga, on an eminence on the other side of the river, is well deserving of attention: it is the burying place of the sovereigns of Piedmont.

In the city is a public library, and an academy, which has been dignified by the learned and scientific labours of many eminent characters. Medicine is cultivated here very successfully, and the arsenal and printing offices will repay the trouble of inspection. But what a disproportion between the industry of this city and that of Milan. Comparatively speaking, the streets of the former seem deserted, while the latter are every where thronged with the busy hum of men. In point of extent, Milan occupies more than twice as much ground as Turin; Milan is all business and life, Turin a beautiful statue, but cold and inanimate. Its scientific establishments are also few in number. If we rate Milan as the Paris of Italy, Turin may be its Nancy or Manheim.

The women at Turin are generally handsome and amiable, nor are they deficient in wit, but their Piedmontese jargon and disagreeable accent, repel the magic charm of their impressive tongues, and forbid the high-prized beauty to point the dart, to thrill the bosom, to ensnare and wound the breast of taste. A secret also may be found in the vivacity of the

Milanese ladies ; with a due leaning, however, to the liberal side, the characters of the Piedmontese belles are not entirely devoid of it.

Turin was formerly encircled with ramparts. The French demolished or converted them into promenades. Nothing of its fortifications remains, but the citadel raised on a little rising ground near the city.

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### LETTER XIII.

#### GENOA AND ITS ENVIRONS—GULF OF SPEZZIO—ALEXANDRIA AND MARENGO.

OUR original intention was to return from Turin directly into France, but recollecting the little distance to Genoa, and that we had felt regret for not visiting Venice, we changed our preconcerted resolution.

A striking analogy pervaded the character of the two cities ; both had upheld a distinguished figure in modern history, their forms of government were similar, both had been pursuing the career of commercial and naval grandeur, both had magnificent ports and buildings in accordance with their pristine opulence, and both had acquired foreign dominion in the east and in the Mediterranean. Both cities had at times changed masters, and both had now passed under a foreign yoke.

Genoa is raised on the shores of the Mediterranean, at the extremity of a gulf, to which it gives its name. It is embanked against a mountain of the Apennines, and appears like an amphitheatre, placed between two torrents, or rivers, one called Bisagno, and the other Polcevera. The eastern coast extends to the gulf of Spezzia, and the western to the principality of Monaco. From whatever quarter we arrive at the capital of Liguria, either by water or land, the perspective is admirable. This effect is produced by the number of palaces and houses of pleasure, or country houses, that look down from the eminences, and seem to form a part of the city. Round about the port it is semicircular, and the unevenness of the surface gives to the whole the look of an amphitheatre. Its tide-washed shore, decked with towers, art screening and shadowing naked nature with many a touch of her hand, so as to disclose a general metamorphosis, will appear to the greatest advantage at the distance of about a mile at sea. Surveyed hence, it would be unjust to refuse it the title of *superb*, which it enjoyed in the days of its independence and prosperity.



Genoa, besides some fortifications, has two walls. The outer one, begun in 1626, takes in a compass of twelve miles on the elevations of the mountain. The interior one is of about six miles. Between the two walls are different forts, known by the names of Richlieu, Les Eperons, Les Rats, &c. In 1800, the city sustained a siege under Massena, nor would he capitulate to the Austrians and lord Keith, till reduced to the last extremity by disease and hunger.

The streets are remarkably narrow, and it is but in a few of them that carriages can pass. The houses rise to the height of six stories; hence the sun-beams never irradiate the ground or level of the streets. In this respect it is the Grand Cairo of Italy, for there the streets are also very narrow, and the houses very high. Formerly all the houses were decorated in front, with paintings in fresco, but of these nothing is now seen but a few fragments. On the tops of the houses is a terrace in lieu of roofing. In the evenings they take the fresh air there, and have little beds of orange and citron trees, with flowers that, at Genoa, thrive in all seasons. There are three streets remarkable for their extent and beauty, and may, in fact, be said to constitute one, from the Gate St. Thomas to that of L'Acqua Sola. These three become promenades, and have a sort of causeways, but not raised. The first is called Strada Balbi, the second Strada Novissima, and the third Strada Nuova. It is this last that Dupaty, in his letters on Italy, considers as the finest on the surface of our globe. These, and the others, are in general paved with broad flag stones, as in the galleries of the Palais Royal at Paris. Fame reports that these formerly were of the lavas of Mount Vesuvius. The streets are always clean, from a number of gutters and common sewers that have their outlets in the sea.

The air here is very pure, and the water is excellent; this last is conveyed by a superb aqueduct, about four leagues in length. A number of monumental fountains recall some subject of mythology; besides which, there are, as at London, conduits, or works, which sometimes furnish a sufficient quantum to every house.

The port is very capacious, and the largest ships of war might find anchorage in it. On the top of a high tower, mounted on a rock, appears a pharos, or light-house, for vessels that arrive in the night; near it is the lazaretto, which exhibits nothing remarkable.

In the eastern part of the harbour is the "Free Port," where the merchants have their magazines. It is encompassed with walls, and may be considered as isolated. It forms the entrepôt of all foreign merchandise that comes to Genoa, and is

hence transported to Switzerland and Germany. The porters here are very troublesome, elbowing and pushing, loaded or not, and turning out of the way for none.

The arsenal still retains the arms and cuirasses of certain Genoese dames that had taken the cross, in 1301, on a military pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The pope advised them to contribute, by their purses; he was thinking of money, their enthusiasm was aspiring to deeds of heroism. Here is the rostrum of a vessel of antiquity, and a sample of leather, of the most original invention.

The churches are thirty-nine or forty in number; all are handsome, but those of St. Lawrence and Carignan are the most distinguished. The former is as old as the year 260 of the Christian æra; it is faced with black and white marble within and without, and paved with the same. In the sacristy they pretend to shew the emerald vase that formed a part of the presents offered by the queen of Sheba to Solomon. Marvellous cures and conversions were ascribed to it. The Carignan is one of the masterpieces of Perugino, and stands on a height which overlooks the sea and the whole amphitheatre of Genoa. Its architecture and ornaments are noble and solid; the form is that of a Greek cross. Before the principal entrance appears a bridge of several arches, connecting the hill of Carignan with that of Sarzano. It was raised at the charge of a descendant of the founders of the church. Its height is so considerable, that all the houses underneath, which are six or seven stories high, do not reach to the twentieth part of it. In the church of the Annunciad, I observed the tomb of the Duc de Boufflers, who died at Genoa, in 1747, commanding a body of French troops sent to succour the republic.

There are several charitable foundations at Genoa; the principal is the *albergo dei poveri*, or asylum for the poor. The profusion of marble columns, staircases, statues, &c. is wonderful. They are ascribed to the ostentation of certain Patrician families, that would successively commemorate individual benefactors. The *albergo* is an immense building, and serves both for a house of charity and one of correction. Some parts are appropriated to licentious females.

As to palaces, forty or fifty are reckoned within the city. The palace Negro is all of marble; that of the mint has some valuable antiquities, that of the Jesuits is no less beautiful than spacious; the inner court is embellished with marble columns, escaliers, and galleries of the greatest magnificence. The front of the palace Durazzo seems immense, and looks like the residence of a sovereign prince rather than of a private person. The palace Carega carries also a royal splendour with it, and

the same may be said of the palace Doria; the situation of the last is one of the finest in the world. The theatres do not correspond with the elegance of the other buildings; they are alike incommodious for the spectator and the spectacle.

Commerce and industry are the deities of the Genoese; they excel in working silk, velvet, and hosiery; their artificial flowers are in high vogue throughout the continent. Oils, oranges, and citrons, form a considerable branch of commerce. Cedrats, an ever-green, ever loaded with flowers and fruit, and of an odoriferous scent, constitute the chief ornaments of their gardens.

The inhabitants are devotees in appearance, but sceptics in reality, and ardent votaries of Plutus. In former times, stilletoes were instruments of many illegal acts, and *sicaires*, professional assassins, here, as in some other countries of Italy, were ready to execute any order of a noble, inscribed in the golden book. The nobles had also satellites, called Sbirri, who, though a part of the police and guard, would ever second the hostile animosities of their masters. The wives and daughters of these Sbirri were subservient to the debauches of the noble class, and popular prejudices existed in favour of those Genoese houries. The Sbirri formed an isolated cast, but such distinctions have now disappeared; thanks to the French Revolution, and to the light which it has diffused.

The Genoese ladies copy the Parisian modes; their dress, in general, is truly neat and elegant. There is no want of diamonds and jewels, but the parade dress is black. They are remarkable for a veil called *mezzaro*, which forms a substitute for the hat of the French ladies. They are addicted to still, rather than bustling pleasures; their eyes and complexion enhance their other embellishments.

The man of their confidence is here called their *sigisbeo*, or *patito*; he ministers to their pleasures, and becomes a major domo. But they have credit for entertaining correspondence with others, unknown to their confidant. After about a year's marriage, the wives seldom stay with their husbands, who, moreover, are sure to set the example of parting.

The priests maintain a considerable influence over the common people. They reckon at Genoa 21 confreries, that every 3rd of May march in grand procession about a large machine, called the *cassa*, that is surmounted with statues, and with its accompaniments, makes a weight that 30 men scarcely carry.

In the time of the Republic, the Doge possessed great authority, but his responsibility was no less. His election was only for three years. In the hour wherein his functions ex-

pired, at the sounding of a great bell, he threw off his robes of dignity, and, clad as a simple citizen, appeared at the bar of the Senate, in the presence of the assembled people. There he was bound to reply to any accusations that might be urged, and if convicted of injustice, be the complainant who he might, he must make reparation on the spot.

The environs of Genoa are extremely picturesque. The valley of Bisagno and that of Polcevera are overspread with palaces and country houses, many of which are from designs, by Michael Angelo, especially that called Paradise.

Not far from Genoa is the Gulf of Spezzia, completely a work of nature, and every where deep enough for the reception of vessels of the largest dimensions; according to some histories it was the port of the ancient city of Luni, a flourishing Etrurian colony, till swallowed up by the sea.

Now, again, we resume the route of Turin, leaving some towns on the right and left, but tarrying for a moment at Alexandria. It is situated on the Tanaro, and passes for one of the strongest places in Europe. For this it is indebted to the French, but nothing else appears remarkable, except the hotel de Ville, or Town Hall, which is a decent structure. Near Alexandria was fought the battle of Marengo, which decided the fate of Italy, and compelled Austria and Naples to sue for peace.

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#### LETTER XIV.

RETURNING TO FRANCE BY MOUNT GENEVRE, PIGNEROL, PE-ROUSA, &C.—FENESTRELLE, &C.—MOUNT GENEVRE—THE HOSPITIUM—SOURCE OF THE DURANCE AND THE DOIRE—EMBRUN—GAP—FROM GAP TO GRENOBLE.

To return hence into France, there are two roads: one passes from Mount Cenis, through Savoy, the other from Mount Genève, through the department of the Upper Alps. The former is the finest and most frequented, the other exhibits more of nature's various and original models. Of these, from the liveliness of our imaginations, we had become passionately enamoured, and led on by our love for the wonderful, we gave preference to the latter. Mount Cenis is but a miniature of Le Similon, and besides, curiosity pressingly solicited us to undertake another and different excursion, to Briançon and Grenoble, as containing materials more interesting to the general tourist than Chamberry.

We then hired a voiture, that through the valley of Pignerol conveyed us in two days from Turin to Briançon, a fortified place in the northern flank of Mount Genève, the distance about 20 leagues.

On the first day we breakfasted at Pignerol, a town of Piedmont, agreeably situated in a fertile valley of the same name. It is rather small, but very commercial, and the inhabitants feel the full effect of their activity in the valuable benefits which it produces, comfortably enjoying the fruits of their industry.

Proceeding from Pignerol to Fenestrelle, we observed, with singular pleasure, the views improving, into the spirit of which we could well enter.

Half way from Pignerol to Fenestrelle, we come to the village of Perousa, Mount Viso terminating one extremity of its valley. This gigantesque mountain, whose inaccessible peak is constantly covered with snow, may be seen at very great distances in the interior of Italy. At the foot of this peak are the sources of the Po, issuing from a rock; its waters at first, distinguished by their easy flow, descend into the Valley of Saluce, increasing into a large brook, then a river, and soon, by tributary torrents, that pour from every quarter into it, become a King of Floods, bounding through the plains of Piedmont till finally absorbed in the Adriatic.

The Col of Mount Viso, close to the peak, is also covered with snow throughout the year. This proving an inconvenience to travellers, the Princes of Saluce, about the year 1100 caused a vaulted way to be cut through the mountain, about half a league from its cimex, that is where the snow begins, so as not to be obliged to clear it. This subterraneous route, which is now abandoned, is 8 feet high by as many broad; in length, it extends nearly a quarter of a league.

It was in the valley of Perousa and Pignerot, that a number of French Protestants took refuge, when persecuted, after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

From Perousa it is but two or three hours' journey to Fenestrelle, a large village at the foot of the mountain of Sestriere. It is a strong place, and guards the entrance of Piedmont, being also a receptacle for state prisoners. Luckily we only stopped a night in it, lodging in a wretched auberge, pell mell, with soldiers, peasants, and drunken fellows. The mistress helped us to a supper and some wine, called by the name of the country, but both alike detestable.

At Fenestrelle nature appears almost as savage as the jailer of the prison and the inhabitants; but leaving the village and ascending the Col of Sestriere, we find a more pleasing vein

and agreeable turns of her fancy, smooth, placid, and easy, if not particularly engaging, in sequestered groves of larches, meadows, fields and attractive verdure.

From Fenestrelle to Briançon, we have to pass two Cols, that of Sestriere, and that of Mount Genève. Here we have to ascend, descend, re-ascend and re-descend.

It is three hours' journey from Fenestrelle to the top of the Col de Sestriere; it takes nearly the same time in the descent, when we find ourselves at Sezanne, a Piedmontese village at the foot of Mount Genève. It has acquired notoriety from the rigour of the *Douane* officers, in their official visits, and its terrible swarms of lice. At breakfast, our whole company was placed in a state of siege! lice were running about and getting under the petticoats of some ladies that were with us. In all haste, we took leave of this fatal village.

Ascending through woods of larches, in about two hours, we arrive at the top of the Col de Genève. Here we find two villages, one on the side of Italy, and the other on the French part. We halted at this last to undergo examination by the Gallican *Douaniers*, who were not quite so rough as their neighbours.

Near the village of Mount Genève stands an obelisk, commemorating the opening of the new road by Napoleon, that passes over the mountain. Opposite, and concealed in a grove of larches, is the source of the Durance and the Doira; both issue hence, the former proceeding towards France, and the latter towards Piedmont.

In this village is an hospitium, where, as at St. Bernard, Le Simplon, and Mount Cenis, travellers that call are entertained with cordial hospitality.

While the *Douaniers* were inspecting our carriage, a man, who called himself a soldier and an ex-courier, accosted us, telling us we must make haste, if intending for Briançon that night, for, added he, the gates will be shut very early. I was no stranger to the distance, and well knowing that there was no auberge about Briançon, except one or two little pot-houses in a village called St. Margaret, and both I and my companions being surfeited with the fare of some wretched hotelleries, we accepted the offer of the ex-courier, who proposed to lead us. He sets off like lightning, we follow him at a distance, along numerous turnings made by the road, which descends the northern flank of Mount Genève. In less than an hour our man arrives at the end of his course, and waiting on the king's lieutenant in a vein of ill-timed pleasantry, would have him believe that we were personages of superior consequence, and desiring that the gates might be kept open some time longer.

The fellow persuades almost as readily as Nestor would of old. The good-natured commandant, willing to oblige, dispatches his adjutant with orders to shut the gate of Italy half an hour later.

The lieutenant was preparing to compliment our highnesses, while, in the mean time, we had arrived at the foot of the ramparts, with a very indifferent dismantled voiture, and two sorry jades of horses.

It was the hour of the Angelus; the bells were ringing their double chimes, the drums were beating the retreat, and the soldiers of the post were under arms. We make our entrance, the courier being a little at the head of our carriage. No sooner was the gate opened, than we were beset like strange wild beasts, but with respect, the military being anxious to learn where we wished to lodge. We refer to an hotel that I well knew, and they attend us thither, people of all ranks going and coming, with a sort of distracted attention. We knew not what to make of this bustle, but coming to within a few steps of the hotel, we were forced to alight, from the cragged nature of the streets of Briançon. The hotel was thronged, and we had to force our passage through. The master comes to salute us, hat in hand, with profound reverences. He instantly knows me, and introduces us. "Ah, Sir," he exclaimed, "you are become a prince!" "How! explain yourself," I rejoined. "Your courier has announced you as relations of the royal family."

We laughed heartily at this *mauvaise plaisanterie*, but immediately sent forward our passports to the commandant, then attired in his grand uniform, and preparing to harangue our highnesses. On reading the passports, and learning the real particulars from our maitre d'hotel, he fell into a violent fit of laughter, but the author of the joke had to pass a night in prison for his pains, our intercession for the culprit proving fruitless.

Briançon is a very strong place, having on its ramparts and in its forts, three hundred pieces of cannon. The principal forts are on the flank of a mountain, the crest of which is 7800 feet above the level of the sea; it has a fort on it. A superb bridge of a single arch, over the Durance, forms a communication between the town and the forts. The town is built on rocks, so steep that carriages cannot descend them; they stop near the church, in the higher part of the town.

The inhabitants are very industrious, and with much information have no less address. They breathe a pure air in these mountains, and are strangers to provincial vices. A love of liberty pervades their character.

In the fair season the men go abroad for employment, in countries more favoured by nature; the old men and wives cultivate the lands. The women, with a cart and an ass, do the heaviest work nearly as well as the men.

In the Upper Briançonnois bread is made for a year. In winter the inhabitants have their kitchens and beds close to the cattle and stables. Their bed clothes are mostly woollen cloths, washed only every six months; owing to the rigour of the season, which keeps the waters frozen, and will not allow the bleaching of linen.

Towards Le Lotaré wood is so scarce that they make a sort of cakes of cow-dung for winter fuel.

It would be difficult to express the satisfaction with which the natives return to their rocks and cabins after a temporary absence. In the long evenings they rehearse what they have seen and heard, and thus beguile the tardy hours.

Departing from Briançon to proceed for Embrun, we took no small delight in contemplating, above the village of Labecey, some traces that were shewn us of the route that Hannibal had taken.

From La Roche, a little village famous for its trout, where we breakfasted, we passed on to Fort Mount Dauphin, a work of the famous Vauban, as are those of Briançon. It defends the plain on the side of the Durance, as it does also the valley of Queyras, one of the wildest but most interesting of the Upper Alps. The rocks approach so close, in the passage from Guillestre, to Fort Queyras, that they threaten a downfall on the traveller's head. In winter this passage is very dangerous from the very frequent fall of avalanches. This valley brings to mind the solitudes of Gondo, in Le Simplon.

From Mount Dauphin we descend to Embrun, a town containing about 3000 inhabitants; it is built on the back of a vast rock, washed by the Durance. Here was formerly an archbishop, who, at one time, bore the title of Primate of the Gauls. At present it seems only a remnant of its ancient splendour.

Proceeding through the large village of Gorge, about three leagues below Embrun, and reported to have been a considerable place in the time of the Romans, the first town we come to is Gap, head place of the department of the Upper Alps. It is ill built but has fine walks about it. In the chapel of the church is a superb marble monument to the memory of the Constable de Lesdiguières, who was born in the environs.

It was through the town of Gap, lying on the high road from Marseilles to Grenoble, that Napoleon passed, in 1815, when returning from the Isle of Elba.



The passage from Gap to Grenoble is altogether mountainous, over a very fine road but bordered with tremendous precipices. Here are points where fifty men with cannon might repel a whole army. My companions were not backward in remarking this, and wondered that he was not arrested in his march. I was at that time employed in the Alps, and can vouch for the following fact.

A battalion of 600 men of royal guards, was stationed at this Gallic Thermopylæ. General Cambrone, their commander, retreated, having orders not to oppose force to force. Bonaparte advances, *solus*, to the 600 men. "Qui vive?" they cry "Napoleon," said he. While the commandant was recalling the men to their duty, the ex-emperor opens his breast, and crossing his hands over his head, "if you do not recollect," said he, "your general, who has so often led you to victory, he is here, fire." At these words the battalion disbands and speedily appears under the colours of the usurper.

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## LETTER XV.

### GRENOBLE, ITS ENVIRONS, AND THE GREAT CHARTREUSE.

NEXT day after our arrival we set out to survey the town of Grenoble at our ease. It is fertile enough in sources of amusement, though there might not be sufficient to gratify a Sybarite. It is in one of the most agreeable situations to the amateurs of embellished nature, and the mountains that surround it on all sides, are cultivated to their very tops. The basin of Grenoble makes a part of that valley, wherein the river of Isere meanders, in a thousand turns, to join the Drac, a wild and muddy torrent.

The capital of Dauphine is surrounded with ramparts. The Isere divides it into two parts; one, consisting of suburbs, is hemmed in between the mountain and the river; and the other, which composes the town, lies in the plain between the Drac and the Isere.

There are some very good buildings, such as the Prefecture, the Cathedral, the Bishop's Palace, the School of Law, and the Court of Justice.

Here are a great number of manufactories and workshops. Works in metal of all kinds, with gloves and ratifiat, are in high reputation. The wines and liqueurs are excellent; plantations of vineyards appear in every direction.

Grenoble has produced a number of men celebrated in the sciences and arts, or for their military genius; Bayard, the pink of French chivalry, the profound Condillac, Vaucanson the mechanist, Mably the historian, and others.

The Library here is capacious and well constructed; the Museum contains valuable drawings; the cabinet of medals is very rich, and there are several literary cabinets, with capital printing offices, and private libraries. There is an old proverb, "*Dauphinois, fin, fourbe et courtois.*" "The Dauphinese are courteous, but sly and roguish." I shall give them credit, however, for a great deal of courtesy, urbanity, and wit.

The ladies possess vivacity and grace; in general they are of a frolicsome or waggish humour, and very volatile. Among them are fine shapes, clumsy shapes, Hebes, Venuses, and cruel Dianas. Some of these last, the missionaries have converted, and by teaching them to love God, have taught them also to love their neighbour.

Society here is divided between the noblesse and the bourgeoisie. The ancient dowagers are said to be too nice in their selection of visitors; but I am persuaded that Fame herein overshoots the mark; for education may often compensate for the absence of fortune; and, after all, as Juvenal says,—"*Nobilitas sola atque unica virtus,*"—True nobility consists in virtue alone.

The Grotto Notre Dame, and the bridge of Cleye, about a league from Grenoble, are well worth seeing. The latter consists of a single arch, very bold and very large. It rises over the torrent of the Drac, at the end of a delightful plain, which serves for a public promenade.

These two last are included within the seven wonders, assigned by common fame to Grenoble. The other five are beneath notice, but there is one truly great wonder, in the environs,—the Chartreuse, founded by St. Bruno, and on which were dependent all the Chartreuses of Germany, France, and Italy.

This ancient monastery stands about five leagues from the town, in the midst of a desert, shut up on all sides by inaccessible rocks. Two roads lead to it. I had contemplated, among the Alps, scenes as solemn, romantic, and stupendous as I could conceive possible; but in the solitudes of the great Chartreuse, I found expressions of nature no less forcible, and the combined effect of her productions, her highly elaborate compositions, no less powerful.

Going from Grenoble to the Great Chartreuse, and scaling the first ascent, we see under our feet the town of Grenoble, the valley of Isere, wherein that river, like the Firth of Forth, in Scotland, has a thousand sinuosities and replications, with the whole

bason of Grenoble. Continuing to ascend, at the end of an hour and a half we come to the village of Sapey, among meadows scattered about it.

We then descend into a thick forest, for about an hour, and leaving the woods, we advance, as in a plain, to the entrance of the convent.

This entrance is by two perpendicular rocks, of a tremendous height, and so close to each other, that a couple of wicket gates, fixed on each side, completely block up the passage, with the help of a bridge thrown over the torrent that rolls at the bottom. When these gates are closed, there can be no entering, and the eye is lost among perpendicular rocks, that seem to touch the skies. Prior to the Revolution women were not allowed to pass this entrance, but now they may advance to the gate of the convent, but are not to enter.

From these gates to the monastery is about an hour's walk. We leave the torrent on the left, and move along a rugged road, through a thick forest of beeches and firs. Every thing here appears so gloomy, that at mid-day, we might think it was midnight.

Quitting this, we arrive at an immense meadow, and there discover the first building of the monastery, that is, a vast range of cow-houses, for keeping cattle and preparing milk. On one side, below the road, is the cemetery of the servants and domestics.

Keeping along the meadow, we discover, at last, at the other extremity, the convent itself, and its roofs surmounted with a multitude of turrets and steeples. It stands exactly at the entrance of another forest, overlooked by frowning desert rocks, whose prodigious height is not a little alarming. All around we see nothing but these, excepting that some of them are wooded. In the middle of the meadow, we seem as if landed in the infernal regions of Danté, or in some prison, whose walls are joined to the skies. It might seem to be an immense fortress, built by Nature, and needing no other guardians than its two entrances. The woods, the meadows, the rocks, the dwellings, and the inhabitants, every thing here has a sombrous aspect. No pleasing productions of art are introduced, which might contrast agreeably with the other objects, except a few shady bowers, with some pellucid streams, and beds of flowers, on which the star of day is not niggardly of his beams. The only cultivated grounds are the gardens, which are inclosed within the area of the convent. Every where else, we have meadows, forests, or rocks, composing a savage spectacle, and supplying only grave materials for thinking.

At our entrance a grave porter gravely opens the door; I thought he had the look of a magician. We cross an adjoining court, when a corridor expands to view that we might have taken for a part of the Chinese wall. Our guide moves for-

ward, and the principal friar on duty slowly paces towards us, from the lower end of the immense corridor. Apartments are then opened, but in a profound silence; and lastly, a little fire is made for us in a large chamber, with five closets attached, and a bed in each. At a large table, a little supper is served up for us, but without flesh meat, which the chartreux, and all belonging to the establishment, abstain from, and visitors must submit to this restriction. Our supper consisted of an omelette, of fish, fried potatoes, cheese, fruits, bread, and wine. Supper ended, every one repairs to his cabinet to repose on beds not quite so soft as one might have wished.

As soon as rosy-fingered Aurora had opened the gates of the morning, and the porter those of the monastery, we walked out to visit the chapel and haunts of St. Bruno, sequestered further up in the forest. There the solitaire, at the foot of a naked rock, lived on vegetables, with a streamlet of spring water that ran by him, serving him for beverage.

He might then say, with the vicar of Wakefield,

No flocks that range the valley free,  
 To slaughter I condemn,  
 Taught by that power that pities me,  
 I learn to pity them.  
 But from the mountain's grassy side,  
 A guiltless feast I bring,  
 A scrip with herbs and fruit supplied,  
 And water from the spring.

On a nearer view of this rock, where St. Bruno spent most of his days, both when the season was fair and otherwise, our eager fancy was alive to depict, in a pensive mood and with silent thought, the mournful doom of one who could lonely seek such a state of torpid existence. Voltaire says—"C'est n'être bon à rien de n'être bon qu'à soi—To be of use only to one's self, is to trifle the hours of life away in dullness and insipidity."

What a difference between the sweet sympathies with which mercy gilds the seat of St. Bernard, among those who know how to live in the tempest, and come as mild companions to the sufferer, often wandering over the trackless waste, and the unfeeling gaze of the useless inmates of the Chartreuse; their looks cheerless and dark as winter, unblest with companionship, one charm of life, as they seem scarcely to know one another. No voices to touch the ear, no soul-inspiring accents of benevolence and tenderness, but as if shrinking from visitors that wander thither with intrusive feet, making them pay dear for the hospitalities conferred.

On returning from the chapel to the monastery, a domestic shewed us the principal apartments. The fathers were walk-

ing up and down in long corridors, wrapped up in woollen gowns, and with hoods on their heads. Instantly on seeing us, they disappeared, each one retiring to his cell.

The church, which stands in the middle of the other buildings, is very handsome. We visited, successively, the apartments of the superior, while he was at prayers with the other chartreux; the library, which is already pretty well filled, considering the little time that it has been re-established, that is, since 1814, and the great hall of audience, wherein all the generals of the order assemble once a year. It is very extensive, and is not unlike the hall of the marshals of France in the Tuilleries. As the portraits of the French captains are placed one beside another, so the generals of the order are painted, one after another, on the walls of the great saloon.

As to the extent of the principal range of buildings, they make up nearly a league in circumference. They form an oblong square of one quarter of a league, in a right line, and two principal corridors reach from one extremity to the other.

The gardens are cultivated exclusively by the chartreux; each has his particular portion on the terraces of the convent.

This vast structure was rebuilt eight or nine years before the revolution, at the charge of upwards of a million, but the riches of the chartreux were then immense, as they had in possession eighty leagues of forests. The buildings have suffered nothing from the revolution, being remote from all communication. The architecture is simple, noble, and solid.

The fathers can only converse together on Sundays and holidays. It is on such days only that they eat together, at other times they eat in their own cells. Flesh meat is never seen among them, being prohibited by their regulations, but fish, vegetables, eggs, cheese, wine, &c. are not wanting.

In lieu of shirts, the chartreux wear woollen robes; for beds, they have mattresses of bulrushes. They rise every night at eleven, and attend prayers till one in the morning. This interruption of sleep must be inconvenient, but custom diminishes the effect of it.

We quitted this solitude with pleasure, and took the road of St. Laurent and Voreppe. At every step we pass along frightful precipices, and after an hour's walk arrive at the principal entrance of the monastery. Here are large gates and a porter's lodge; all the circumstances and situations are wild and savage as a desert. At a bridge which passes over the torrent, the view is appalling. All the entrances lie through narrow passages of high parallel rocks, with bridges and gates in conformity with the situations, and the roads at times cut out of the rock itself.

Emerging from the possessions of the monastery, we first notice the hamlet of Les Charbonniers, where a number of saw-pits are at work.

Let me take here a retrospective view of the particulars, as there is scarcely a parallel for the grand Chartreuse, to be found in the world. We descended through thick forests, under perpendicular rocks, between two parallel heights, but then every where wooded. We had next to cross a dangerous torrent, which receives all the waters of the desert, and carries them to the valley of St. Laurent. In this part many grand cascades water the road, and we proceed among precipices 5 or 600 feet in depth. This passage is very dangerous in rainy weather, or at the melting of the snow. Stones and avalanches fall frequently, at such times, and block up the road. The cascades then are so impetuous, that an effort is required to resist them. The summer season is the only time to visit the great Chartreuse.

From the first entrance of the monastery, which is only a little distance from the greater one, we go in about an hour to the village of St. Laurent, where the generals of the order leave their voitures. From this village to the convent we must pass on foot or on horseback, a distance of three leagues.

From St. Laurent to Voreppe, there are five or six dangerous torrents to cross: the distance is three leagues. Two of these we pass on a plain, the third is over a pretty rapid descent. We then enter again the high road to Voreppe, and can procure Diligences for Grenoble, which is also about three leagues distant.

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## LETTER XVI.

LYONS—THE BANKS OF THE SAONE—CHALONS SUR SAONE, &c.

RETURNING at length from the great Chartreuse to Grenoble, and thence resuming the route of the capital, we again took our departure in the Lyons Diligence.

Between Grenoble and Lyons the only town is Burgoin. It is a small place, but the people, as throughout the fertile plains of Dauphiné, are of an industrious character and seem to live comfortably.

Our diligence broke down on the road, but it was in the night; our entrance into Lyons was thereby retarded, as we should otherwise have arrived at break of day. But arriving

some hours later, we had a far better opportunity of reconnoitring the environs of the city.

The plains of Dauphiné and La Bresse lay like a map before us, stretching out to an immense horizon. Behind us the Alps were plainly in view, the considerable distance intervening only adding to their majesty. At length we reach a plateau, whence we have a noble view of the second city of France. It is seated at the confluence of the Soane and the Rhone, and at the foot of the hillocks of Le Beaujelet. The distance is about two leagues from Lyons, but there is no point where the varied magnificence, the noble grandeur of the spectacle, can be better assumed.

We descended, however, from the plateau and arrived at Lyons, through the suburb de la Guillotière, separated from the town by the Rhone. It was Sunday; immense crowds, in elegant apparel, were promenading, with a sort of busy throng and bustle, along the gentle Saone and the Rhone; the scene illumined by the frank and amiable graces of the young and fair, and gay, thrilled harmony, joy, and ecstacy through our faculties. My companions bore an honourable testimony to these attractive and pleasing circumstances, having before adopted erroneous and illiberal prejudices concerning Lyons and its people.

The next day after our arrival we visited the principal curiosities. The hotel de Ville is a superb building, in the place *des Terreaux*; the ascent to it is by a large escalier. In the vestibule we observe a magnificent antique Tourobole, or Sacrifice of Bulls, with a table of bronze, on which is engraved a speech of the Emperor Claudius to the Roman senate, in behalf of the inhabitants of Lugdunum.

The Great Theatre, behind the hotel de Ville, is very elegant, but has no seats in the parterre or pit. It is open every night, as is also the little theatre *des Celestins*.

On the place *des Terreaux* is the Museum of Arts and Commerce. It contains some valuable antiquities, large paintings, a mosaic, hardly to be matched, found in the environs of the city, and a cabinet of birds.

The City Library is well situated on the banks of the Rhone, and may well be distinguished by the choice and number of works that it contains, about one hundred thousand volumes.

The Cathedral also is well worth seeing; we noticed an ancient clock in it, of a very ingenious construction.

The Grand Hospital, as a building, may vie with the hotel de Ville; the inside is much more respectable, in point of grandeur, ornament, and beauty, and its distributions are more judiciously planned. A number of sisters (a religious coterie)

wait on the patients, in their tedious and painful indispositions, as friends, benefactors, preservers. Every candid and judicious traveller must be sensible of the irreproachable character and amiable demeanour of those kind females, in general, as united in the bonds of peace, and stretching out their friendly arms to the distressed.

To the amateurs of expanded views I would recommend to ascend the dome of this structure. I should have mentioned that a crocodile was once taken in the Rhone, under the bridge *de la Guillotière*, which is now suspended to the vault of the dome of the hospital.

We proceeded next to visit *la Salle Gallier*, the most spacious and beautiful coffee-house in Europe, next the juncture of the Rhone and the Saone, then the elegant bridges thrown over this last river, as also the place Bellecour and Fourvières, where the prospect is still more comprehensive than from the dome of the hospital.

We did not fail to pay our respects to the manufactories and workshops, which I should not only praise but hasten and delight to praise. It may be justly remarked, that in this distinct view the city possesses a peculiar and durable fame. Here are very considerable fabrics of stuffs in gold, silver, and silk, also of lace, hosiery, ribands, hats, &c.

Having heard of the banks of the Saone, as characterized by much sweetness and novelty, from Lyons to Chalou, we entered a great barge, which conveys passengers from one place to the other. Here we passed by a grotto wherein the philosopher of Geneva passed a night with six splendid shillings in his pocket. It is included within a garden, and a very limpid spring of water issues from it.

At Chalons sur Saone we quitted the high road for Paris, to spend a few days in the country of the Abbé Geoffroy and Madame de Genlis, near Marcigny, where the amiable author of *la Gastronomie* resides. Here also we parted with our Scotch fellow tourists, of whom it may be said, that they judiciously knew how to realize and practise those rules to which travellers should not be inattentive. As men they were sensible and affable, of a mild and polite demeanour, of a communicative turn and liberal opinions, and never assuming supercilious airs.

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