

LETTERS

FROM

SWITZERLAND AND ITALY,

DURING A LATE TOUR.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

'LETTERS FROM THE EAST,' & 'TRAVELS IN THE EAST.'

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TO HIS FRIEND

THE REV. HENRY COULSON, M. A.

RECTOR OF RUAN AND LANDEWEDNAC,

THESE LIGHT AND HASTY SKETCHES

ARE INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

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LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I.

Valley of Thun.—Castle of Wemmis.—A Religious Philanthropist.—Swiss enthusiast—His missionary expedition to Syria.—State of Religion at Geneva.—A Village Pastor.—Lauterbrunnen.—Destitute condition of the Inhabitants.—A Swiss Crusoe imprisoned by Snow.—Neuhaus.—Swiss Cookery.

THE position of the valley of Thun, one of the most central in Switzerland, induced us to fix on it as a winter residence. Its severe clime, as well as deep seclusion, are counterbalanced by the splendour of the scenes in the immediate vicinity. During several months, the world is almost shut out from the little iron-clad territory: strangers cease to arrive; the few who passed the summer and autumn beside the lake have fled ere the first fall of snow; and the “climate

of the bears," as Professor Wittenbach called it, gathers fast and pitilessly round the dwelling.

It was not to remain within our parlours, which however were carpeted, or to gather eagerly round the hearth, with its noble pile of wood, that we had chosen to winter it at the foot of the mountains. Out of doors there were many excitements to exercise: the woods always retain their gloomy foliage; there was little rain or fogs, the chief excellence of the Swiss climate, in winter, being its dryness.

The season took little of their beauty from the castle and domain of Wemmis: situated in a splendid gorge of the mountains, between the Niesen and Stockhorn, the valley of the Simmenthal opens close behind, and the Kander flows near its walls. It stood on a low, wooded hill, and the forests gathered deep and dark. We thought, while gazing on the excessive beauties around this spot, that it was singular our own countrymen diverge so little from the beaten track, and leave so many treasures unexplored. The wild path through the wood was silent and

solitary; enormous masses of rock, that had fallen from the mountains above, lay here and there, and the trees had sprung in the most fantastic shapes from their bosom and sides. A few miles distant was a different abode, tenanted some years ago by an English gentleman; a far less attractive spot than Wemmis, where any man, with a few books and a few friends, and health for the bold excursions around, might have spent years. It was a low, rambling, gloomy, brick building, with no feeling of home about it.

Near the dwelling was a still, marshy, and green-looking lake, on the banks of which no feeling of romance could kindle — no beautiful imagination could repose; the bare precipices of the Stockhorn rose above. A wealthy and zealous individual for two years made it his abode, with the view chiefly of enlightening the natives of Switzerland in respect to their best interests. To accomplish this end, neither time, nor zeal, nor expense, was spared; private visits, as well as the circulation of pamphlets, were

resorted to. There was self-denial as well as enthusiasm in this. Dreary and solitary ; three or four poor cottages near by, tenanted by coarse Swiss peasants ; not one intellectual being within reach, far or near. Had he been an ardent lover of Nature, the fixing on so remote a place of abode had not been so extraordinary, as, though it possessed no beauty in itself, many of the loveliest scenes of Switzerland were within a few miles ; but these occupied a small share of the attention of the recluse. His great and constant aim, by night and day, it might be said, was to instil purer and more correct views and feelings of religion, as he deemed it, into the minds of the natives, of the lower as well as higher classes. With this purpose was mingled, perhaps, a thirst to inspire others with his own peculiar sentiments — a love of proselytism. His benevolence and kindness to the poor were without a question. The dull, green lake ; the mountain gorge ; the chill, penurious look of the many chambers that had never known a wealthy tenant before—all were sufficient to bid

the foot of the stranger retreat and tarry not. Perhaps he chose a spot where no luxury, either of eye, ear, or of any sense, could come.

From this deep solitude issued many a voice, that called (as far and loudly as the press, and a few zealous agents could enable it to call) the people of the land to awake from their errors of sentiment and insensibility of feeling. Some listened to the voice, and obeyed it with earnestness; but the success did not answer the expectation of those individuals who gave so much time and expense to promote it.

His ambition was less lofty and extensive than that of a Swiss gentleman with whom we once met on the mountains of Syria. The wealthy Englishman came and dwelt two years in the valley of Thun, in order to give its people, as he conceived, a more pure and exclusive faith: but the Swiss left Geneva, and landed in the East, with the full resolve to convert all its heathen natives. He was a mild, pale, and enduring man; with a spirit nerved to its high purpose, but a mind all unqualified; ready and willing to meet

a martyr's fate, he bore stripes and abuse, hunger and weariness, with patience.

Our concern for his destitute condition was soon changed into feelings bordering on the ludicrous, when we found that he had made his way among the Arabs of the hills, to rescue them from darkness, without being able to speak a word of their language, or of any other tongue used in the land. The unfortunate man had not counted the cost, or considered that French and German would not avail to overthrow Mahometanism: his money was all spent; he had no friend or comforter in the land, and every door of the natives was closed against him. In despair, he turned his back at last on the cedars of Lebanon, and the rocks and streams so famous of old, on whose banks he was driven forth as an outcast, and nearly beaten to death. We advised him to embark without delay for his native land of snows and storms, and be thankful that he had not been martyred; yet, ere he went, he spoke often and fervently of his baffled hopes, and his pale cheek was flushed, as the

phantom scene of his conversions still rose before him. Never did a missionary go forth with so wild an air and so unprepared a mind. Was there no field for the exercise of zeal, and knowledge, and skill, even of the utmost, in his own city of Geneva, where the pure and beautiful doctrines of Christ have of late been so invaded, so darkened, even by the hands of the pastors? Socinianism has long been prevalent in that city, as well as on the shores of the lake; but now, the majority of the ministers have publicly renounced some of the most consoling and essential articles of their faith. It is chiefly in the country, in hamlet and village, that the simple and sincere influence of religion is to be sought, both in teacher and people.

Farther up the valley, to the north, was a little village, with a comfortable auberge: each cottage had its garden, neatly laid out. Taking some provisions and wine, we passed an afternoon in this secluded spot. The church stood apart, and the spire rose almost at the base of the cliff. Close by was the pastor's dwelling; the parlour, with

its cold naked floor, and the carpetless and grateless aspect of all the apartments;—the season required more comfort. He was greatly respected by his people, and was one who had mingled little in the world, and clung to the calm and happy ignorance of his lonely charge. One of the objects of our visit was a beautiful waterfall, that fell down the face of the rock, full in view, and almost within hearing.

To our home it was grateful to return, as night drew on; not heeding the cold, of such severity as is never felt in England; nor the keen wind, that came fresh from the snowy peaks opposite. Being surrounded by forests, a noble pile of wood was never spared on the hearth. The broad lake had hardly a murmur. The passing tread of the mountaineer on the frosty soil, the distant bark of the watch-dog, or some hollow and presaging sound from the precipices of snow, were heard at intervals.

Desirous at this time of the year of visiting the celebrated vale of Lauterbrunnen, we embarked for Neuhaus. It was with great dif-

ficulty that the mules could proceed ; the exclamations of the peasantry, at the curiosity of the English, as they looked out of their dark chalets, was very amusing. And there were moments when we could not help envying the shelter of their warm roofs, which we were obliged to seek more than once in our own defence. But, as we advanced, the scene was one of the most singular imaginable ; the extreme narrowness of the valley, that was nearly choked with snow, the tops of the tall trees at intervals breaking forth from their white shrouds, the jagged precipices, many thousand feet above our heads, each point, each crag, distinctly visible, such was the excessive clearness of the atmosphere. All life and animation had fled from the scene ; the hamlet of Lauterbrunnen was half buried in the snow, and part of the roof and the chimney of the auberge were seen mocking the traveller as he passed. We wished to have proceeded to the Smadribach, but it was impossible, and were obliged to content ourselves with gazing for some time on that phantom cataract,

the Staubbach. The inhabitants of this valley, as well as of some similar situations, are sadly off at this season; poverty and privation, when they come, fall unusually bitter, on account of the solitude and friendlessness of the scene.

Nothing could be more wretched than the interior of its dwellings; a destitution, not only of every comfort, but almost of every necessary of life—even the fuel did not seem very abundant; and the shivering and half-starved groups were gathered round the hearths. No one, who has not wintered in the land, can be fairly aware of the exquisite value and luxury of fuel, *à discretion*. Often, when passing by the Bernese farm-houses, around which the large broad white logs, cut from the noblest forest-trees, were piled in wanton and tempting array, even as high as the roofs—it was impossible to gaze on them without envy and desire; they seemed as precious almost as gold.

There was no bread in these homes of Lauterbrunnen, unless the hard and unwholesome cakes made of Indian corn may be called by that

name; all labour out of doors was at an end, and the people are so poor, that they are allowed one suit of clothes annually by the commune. One cause of this condition is, that the soil of the valley is rocky, and hard to cultivate; another is, that many strangers from other cantons take up their abode here, and are not entitled to the assistance of the commune.

To pass the night here was by no means desirable or indeed possible. We fortunately possessed one inestimable gift, the want of which so often robs the wanderer of half his pleasures—time! There was no burden, so heavy to be borne, of counted days and hours laid upon us; whereby the sole hurried visit must be paid in storm, or clouds, or rain, whatever may befall. In the full hope that the next visit would bring us fairer skies and softer airs, we retraced our steps.

Five years ago my companion, then resident in Switzerland, explored the higher part of the valley of Lauterbrunnen very early in the season; the snows had recently melted, and his object

was to observe the appearance of the Ammertenthal, as this part is called, ere the winter was quite gone. To his great surprise, in a lonely chalet near the extremity, which he had great difficulty in reaching, he found a peasant, whose situation was a little like that of Crusoe, in his lonely isle, save that no groves, or orange trees were here.

The man was not a native of Lauterbrunnen, but of a distant canton, which may account partly for his being left in so deserted a state. During the last days of the preceding autumn, he had watched a few goats feeding on the pastures, when the snows fell so suddenly and heavily, that he was compelled to take refuge in the chalet, in the hope that they would disappear ere long. In this hope he was disappointed; the winter set in yet more severely, and the snows continued to fall and remain, to such a depth, that his chalet was converted into a prison. Here he had lived for five months; his only companions were two goats, whose sustenance was the mountain moss, and a little dried herbage,

which he had preserved. His own food was some goat's-milk cheese ; at last he killed one of the animals, and dried the flesh. A little Indian corn which he had at the commencement was some help for awhile.

The appearance of the dwelling was as dirty and squalid as possible ; the man, the goat, and the chalet, all looked black as if they had ascended from the regions below ; he had a long beard, and seemed an utter stranger to the blessing of fresh water—his drink was furnished by the melted snow. The only luxury the poor fellow enjoyed, and in which he revelled, was a good fire. Fancy could hardly picture a more wild imprisonment : how wistfully the lonely man must have looked forth, day after day, through the bars of his chalet, on the ocean that slept deep and calmly around ! And, when at last the snows rose high above the roof, and shut out the light of earth and sky, his despair was great.

Day and night came and went—he knew no difference ; neither the sun-beams gleaming

fiercely on the surface, nor the softer moonlight, could penetrate the thick canopy of snows. He heard no sounds, nor could he tell the passage of time; for, like a Kamtschadale, he slept away as much as he could, and the sleep was more welcome than the waking; when, crouching by his fire, husbanding the sustenance of his poor goat and himself, pacing to and fro the little interior of his chalet—a few steps would suffice—were all his occupations. He drank eagerly and with gratitude of the horn of brandy that was offered. His solitary goat was to journey forth with him.

The shelter of the little inn at Nieuhaus was very welcome on our return to the lake side; the attendant was a tall, stout, young woman, with a fair complexion, good eyes, and the thorough kindness of feature that so often seems an attribute of the young Swiss woman.

The girl of Nieuhaus, who was the daughter of the hostess, set before us some tea, bread, and excellent butter, and gruyère cheese. A custom prevails in some of the cantons, par-

ticularly in the Oberland, of putting cinnamon in the tea; often, when the traveller comes weary and thirsty to an inn, and calls for his favourite beverage, he is nauseated with the villanous mixture. The wine of the country is also to be anxiously avoided—a thin, sharp, and perilous drink; even the very few superior kinds have little body or richness. To an epicure, a more distressing change than from the French to this side of the Jura can hardly be imagined; the cookery cannot be praised, so many of the dishes being poisoned by acids: even the hares are brought with sharp sauce, and thickly covered with slices of lemon; and as to the soups, let them be kept at an awful distance, without a single exception. The fish is excellent on all the lakes, and well-dressed; but the supply is uncertain.

LETTER II.

Unfavourable Weather.—English Captain resident at Hasli.—His fondness for Chamois-hunting.—Forest Scenery.—Bernese Peasantry.—A magnanimous Bear.—“The Englishman’s Mountain.”—Sunset in Winter.—The Valley between the Lakes of Thun and Brienz.—Night.—The Jungfrau.—The “Mountain Spirits.”—Dreary Chateau inhabited by a friend of the Author’s.—Delights of Authorship.

WE embarked again at Neuhaus, but, ere the rowers had made half the passage, the clouds began to gather, the wind blew wildly, and brought with it a chilling rain. Many days succeeded, without a gleam of sunshine; they were not easy to bear, for the chief refuge was to walk for hours up and down the corridor; or, during the few pauses in the weather, to ascend the hill that rose steeply above the garden, and was thickly covered to the top with wood;

so close were the trees, as to afford a screen from the sharp showers. The Swiss, with reason, prefer any weather to this; the hunter, the shepherd, the woodsman, all are at fault.

Yet we were better off than a captain in the English navy, whom we met with not long after; he resided in the valley of Hasli, and in the village of Meyringen, the situation of which is very beautiful. His chief preference for this secluded scene was to indulge in hunting the chamois, of which he was passionately fond. He was lodged and boarded in the house of a native, for three francs a day; society, of course, there was none, save that of the villagers, or the chamois-hunters. Whole days and nights he passed with them in the chase, amidst many perils and excessive fatigue, enjoying the wild sport with all the keen delight of an Indian savage. Rain alone, that foe, "so stanch to its purpose," of the hunter and the tourist, completely threw him out; and, as he sat in his chamber, and gazed through the window on the dripping forests and rocks, and listened to the

sharp voices and steps of the noisy children of his host; he could not help longing sometimes that the tempest was around him, and he again on his own deck. But his excellent temper and animal spirits brought him through; he was a prisoner of his own free will, and this makes all the difference. He had attained to great expertness in the chamois chase, and his name already began to be held in honour among the oldest sportsmen of the valley. It was easy to perceive that this was the ruling passion; for the indulgence of which, a short, round, active frame, a firm step and cool daring, were no bad qualifications. His unfailing resource against fatigue, or privation, was not the usual flask of brandy or kirschwasser, but a large lump of white sugar, the virtues of which he extolled to the skies: when hungry or exhausted, he sat down by a brook, and devoured a piece of this talisman, and soon went on with fresh vigour and energy. The description of a night bivouac with the hunters in some lonely chalet, far up the mountains, at the foot of a precipice, or on the beds

of snow, over which their huge log fire cast its glare, was interesting.

Directly above our dwelling, on the lake, was a hill, that in our own land would pass for a mountain; it was covered by a forest, in the open places of which were one or two little chateaus, closed at present, for their owners had sought refuge in the town. It was solemn to walk in the forest, though no summer sun gave its warmth, or rich hues of autumn were shed around. In one part was a little hamlet in a ravine, over whose stream a rude bridge was flung: the cottages were neat and clean; and the people industrious. From an open plateau before these cottages you can distinctly trace five cantons. When the Sunday came, it was curious to see the peasantry going forth from their homes, and passing down the gloomy avenues of the trees as gaily as if they were going to a festival. The women wore the fantastic head-dress of the canton of Berne, spreading like wings from the hair. It was to them a day of excitement; for it brought to-

gether the people of neighbouring mountains and distant hamlets, who else but rarely met. The tones of the distant bell pealed up the frozen wastes, the only sound that broke their stillness. The scene was better suited to visions of sorrow than of peace.

The condition of the peasantry in Berne has perhaps more comfort and competency than in most of the other cantons. Each peasant in that rich and powerful canton has a little allotment of land, in which he cultivates flax, hemp, Indian corn, and vegetables, for his family; he is also allowed sufficient wood from the forest for his use. Distress is a stranger to their dwellings; but cleanliness is often equally so; and the smoke sadly impregnates the ceilings, walls, and floors, which are all of wood. The rooms are also in general very low, and carefully closed during the winter; yet contentment often dwells here: why should wasting care, or a fearful looking towards the future be felt, where there is ample maintenance and employment for families, however numerous.

Very little taxes are paid : their numerous flocks, forests, and pastures, are unfailing resources. The cottages and hamlets, so often shaded by large walnut-trees ; and the strong, athletic, independent-looking men, seated at the doors, present an image of the comfort and plenty of the canton.

The weather still continued cold, and was felt by the wilder tenants of the mountains. A bear came down one day from his lair into a small valley branching from the Simmenthal, and walked peaceably along towards a village, and a child at play, at a short distance, approached the animal, unconscious of danger : he passed on, however, with no small magnanimity, and spared the infant : when within a few moments only of reaching the dwellings, he was espied by two of the villagers, who ran for their rifles ; at the first fire he fell dead. It was no small prize, the sum of fifty crowns being paid by the government for the slaying of a bear.

Soon after, the snow began to disappear from the base and sides of the mountains : on “ the

Englishman’s mountain” the patches of green were here and there visible. The rich and lofty eminence known by this name, is near the Niesen, and passes for a mere hill here, but would elsewhere be considered a fine mountain; and the people give it this appellation in derision, either for its lowness or smoothness. Certainly there are no rugged precipices, or glaciers of ages on its bosom; but in our eye, when its winter canopy was gone, it always looked smiling, soft, and beautiful; in such perfect contrast with its rich grassy slopes, woods, and glades, to its more stern and terrific neighbours. It is strange with what vividness the thoughts of home come over the memory in a foreign winter, where “the bars and bolts” of nature shut out all return. Scenes of wildness and even barrenness, long loved and trodden, rise up with a phantom beauty; the sea-shore, and its dark range of cliffs, with many a rude vale opening on the beach—they live again before the eye with such reality, that the dash of the surges almost breaks on the ear, and the shriek of the sea-birds, with

the more low and hushed sounds of the fisherman's oar.

The richest pleasure the season afforded, was to witness the decline of day on the noble mountains opposite: the Jungfrau, the two Eigers, &c. As the weather was in general clear, with little fog or mist, disappointment seldom came. The sun-sets, at all times glorious in this country, are finer in winter than at any other season; when the last rays have a more fiery red, and the keen *bise* wind gives the atmosphere such an uncommon purity. Beneath some walnut and sycamore trees on the edge of the lake, was a rude seat, and here we sat long, never wearied with that closing scene: it was like the dying throes of a volcano—again, again—fiercer, and yet fiercer still; and then a sudden whiteness fell, like death.

The valley that divides the lakes of Thun and Brienz was formerly an expanse of water; at least, so says tradition, which in this case has some show of probability. Should a second overflow take place, the innumerable wanderers

would then be deprived of their favourite place of rest. Interlacken and its boarding-houses, amidst groups of trees; Unterseen and its wild stream; the puny ruins; the Aar of purest blue—the whole domain looks like a wide and rich garden, shut out, like the happy valley of Rasselas, from the world. At present all was desolate. The beauty, called the “*belle bateliere*” of Unterseen, looked forth from her casement windows in vain, to descry the welcome rolling of the chariot-wheels and the wearied faces from the distant isle.

The season—a word that has as much power at the foot of the Jungfrau as in Pall-Mall or at Brighton—had not yet commenced. There is a peculiar loveliness in the night in these valleys: such was the one that followed, with a moonlight of a lustre and power more resembling an eastern than an Alpine clime. The rock and tower of the castle of Renggenburg, and the water hushed at their feet; the quick and exquisite passing of the faintest sound through the narrow vale; then the hollow and trembling

roar of the avalanche, that fell often on the Jungfrau ; that noble mountain, on which the eye gazes without weariness, till it loves its white wastes and cliffs dearer than grove or pasture ! No landscape can ever be perfect without a snowy mountain, the freshest, the purest contrast to the rich and various hues of groves, and gardens, and vales. Had Mahomet been aware of the power of contrast in scenery, he would have placed some cold and dazzling peaks in his paradise, to have made the faithful love their shades and bowers the more. The splendid plain of Damascus would have less enchantment, if the great Sheich mountain, covered with snow, were not always in view. .

It was a night for wild and superstitious fancies. The belief is cherished by the peasantry in the " spirits of the mountain," or *berg-geister*, as they are called, who have their dwelling in the glen or the precipice. They are seen by the chamois-hunter, when daylight is fading, to point out the path of safety, or at other times to lure him into the abyss. On the

imagination of the mountaineers this fancy has a strong hold. Like the brownie of Scotland, it is said the berggeister have sometimes come to the lonely farm-house, and lent their good help in the duties of the household, and gone their way again, no man knew whither.

There are enough of desolate and ancient dwellings for a whole race of phantoms or fairies. One of these was inhabited by a friend of mine; a fine château, with gardens, and raised terraces: fountains there were of old, but they were now dry. The whole was let for twelve pounds a year, a thing incredibly cheap. He and his family could tenant only a portion of the mansion: many a desolate chamber and vaulted passage were untrodden, as well as the dungeons beneath. And in winter, the winds howled fearfully round the massive walls, and the jarring of a door was echoed through each long and dreary passage. There was a half-ruined wall without, and a dry and deep moat, both covered with grass and weeds; yet it was admirable to see how cheerfully he passed his

time, though no sportsman, or even enthusiast of scenery: it was a solitude, for no other Englishman was within reach, and the Swiss of the vicinity were not men of cultivated minds.

What was then the spell that gladdened his loneliness? He wrote a romance! The long nights of winter, and even the beautiful summer days, were thus occupied: a whole year was so beguiled. It was characteristic to see him bending, with all the fondness of first authorship, over the sheets, which were spread on the table during more than half the day: his eyes flashed, as he read passages of power or of horror; of the latter there was no dearth. He was a man who had seen much of the world, and proved its bitters; full of anecdote and tale; and seldom have we passed more exciting moments than when the table was drawn near the hearth, whose flame glanced fiercely over the lofty walls and ceiling of the old castle, while the tea was dispensed, and the talk ran wholly of other and warmer lands, for he had travelled much, or of the deeds formerly done within these walls.

There was a glimpse from the garden of the distant Alps, otherwise the site had no beauty — in a vale, with low hills around, and near by was a small sedgy lake.

LETTER III.

Return of Spring.—Village of Biel, buried by an avalanche.—The Simmenthal.—Baths of Weissenburg.—Emigration to the Mountains.—The Pastor's Daughter.—Zweysimmen.—Gessenai.—Chateau d'Oex.—Monte Bovon.—Castle of Gruyère.—Urseins.—A Character.—Kandersteg.—Oeschenenthal.—Public Education.—Descent of the Gemmi.—Baths.—Mountain Villages.—Fair of Thun.—Swiss Beauty—Habitations—Courtship.—The Keily Mountain.—Cottage Entertainment.—St. Gingouph.—A Catholic Priest.—Visit to a Lonely Lake.—Cheese-making.

THE streams of the Kander and the Aar were now swollen by the thaw on the mountains. Some of the wild valleys of the Simmenthal were again visitable; but the gloomy baths of Weissenburg were as yet sealed to the foot. It was a grand thing to see the rapid transition from winter to spring. The snows disappear, and the flowers are in full bloom; the trees

start into blossom. There is no damp, chilling thaw, that enters the very soul, as we have in England. In many parts, however, the people complained of the severity of the past season, that had entailed suffering on many parts of the country.

The fate that befel the village of Biel, situated in one of the lateral valleys in the upper part of the Valais, was singular and appalling. It contained three or four hundred inhabitants, an industrious race, who cultivated their little territory, and lived almost wholly on its produce.

Many a wild vale, and tract even of beauty, in this land, lies so remote from the beaten track of travellers, as rarely to be visited ; one of these was shut in on three sides by lofty mountains, covered with snow the greater part of the year. It was a savage and lonely abode, but its people were deeply attached to their homes ; and though, like many of the Swiss peasantry, they might murmur at times at their lot, they would have refused to exchange it for a more flattering one in another land. The accident that deso-

lated every hearth, and crushed all their hopes and toils, occurred in the midst of winter.

The village was encompassed by mountains, from which the oldest inhabitants had never known any avalanches fall, or had ever heard their fathers speak of such an event; so that the people dwelt in security, nor dreamed of a swift and terrible destruction.

One morning most of the men were at work in the fields; few, except the women, or the aged and the sick, remained within doors, and the former were busied in their household occupations. The fall of snow this year had been unusually heavy, but it could not be conceived that death was to be hurled from the distance of two leagues; from a summit that was not even visible—yet so it was. The morning was a clear and beautiful one, when those who were at work in the fields suddenly heard a rushing sound, and, looking back, saw an immense body of snow issue forth from the mouth of a ravine; it had travelled six miles through this ravine from the precipice where it fell. The village lay directly

beneath, and the avalanche buried it : cottages, gardens, and trees, all disappeared. It was but the work of a few moments, for the loosened mass fell with the rapidity of a cataract ; and the wretched villagers looked on the calm and dazzling surface of snow that slept horribly on their hearths and homes beneath : the shouts of the children, the cheerful call of the mother, the guardian cry of the village dog, were hushed now.

They gathered quickly round, and plied every effort of strength and skill to remove the snow. The peasants from the nearest hamlets hastened to assist ; but the snow lay on the roofs to the depth of many hundred feet, and for a long time their efforts were in vain. It was a lingering and miserable work, for no one knew the fate of those who were beneath. The father knew not if he were childless, or the husband if he should find his wife living or slain. They called aloud, and shouted during their toil, but nothing, save some faint cries or groans, could be heard. They were like gamblers, frenzied with the hopes and fears of each cast,

and bending in agony over the yet unclaimed piles of gold. Had a great painter been at the foot of the mountain, he would have loved to trace the scene. The agitated groups of peasantry, digging into the heart of the fatal avalanche, and each drawing nearer and nearer at every stroke to his own home, that he panted yet dreaded to see.

And when the canopy of snow was removed, and this was the work of some days, it seemed that the dead were more happy than the living who were found. The latter were miserably maimed and crushed, and they had remained long beneath the snow, without food, or light, or motion; for the darkness, they said, was dreadful to bear. Numbers lay dead; some in the chambers that were shattered above them; some without doors, in their little gardens, or wherever the destruction found them. They had either lingered or died alone, for none, in the sudden darkness and terror, could help the other. Sixty or eighty of the wounded were carried to the nearest hospital; and poverty and sorrow

came on every family, and that greatest curse of the peasant—loneliness.

The roof that was destroyed, and the little garden that was laid waste, might be raised again; but who could restore the lost wife and children? who could bring again the little circle that gathered round the hearth at morn and eve? “The golden bowl” of the poor Swiss was rudely “broken in pieces,” and his heart was almost seared by the blow, that took all, even all, from him—not one was left behind.

It so happened, however, that *one* was left: a little boy five years of age was found alive and unharmed, clinging to the neck and body of a faithful dog. When the mass of snow fell, and his mother and the other children perished, he had clasped in his terror the large dog who chanced to be close to him at the moment. The sagacious animal covered him with his body, and lay gently down beside him during the long darkness; the warmth of his body, as well as his companionship, cheered the little fellow through the trying scene. He gave a simple

and touching detail of his own feelings, and the sounds of anguish and despair that he had heard from hour to hour.

A subscription was afterwards made through part of Switzerland for the relief of the survivors, for the event excited great sympathy and compassion.

The season was now so inviting, that we did not delay to take advantage of it. One day we took a cabriolet to visit the Simmenthal, and the baths of Weissenburg. The former is entered at the foot of the mountain Niesen, that descends nearly into the lake; and the rapid river Kander rushes out between banks of great height, along which the road lies, and is nearly overhung by the mountain-barriers on each side. A few leagues brought us to the village of Weissenburg; and we ascended the hill on the right, and passed about a mile and a half along a winding path to the spot. The baths are immediately approached by a very narrow ravine, inclosed by steep rocks on each side, and as you advance, the

glen, instead of widening, becomes yet closer at the spot where the baths and the mansion that contains them are situated. It is a place for despair; its very aspect is enough to induce the wretched invalid to dream no more of the gay face of the world or its lovely sights, but to sit down and die, for hope cannot find its way hither. The waters have a high mineral virtue, and are conveyed in pipes down the face of the precipices that hang over the dwelling, which is resorted to by a number of invalids, chiefly for pulmonary complaints; but they must be content to sit on the rock beside the stream that hurries by, or on the bench placed in front upon the very small space of earth that the frowning precipices allow to exist beneath. There are no paths to traverse,—no leaving this gloomy prison of nature, except by the narrow and wild avenue by which it is entered, or by the ladders which are placed on the face of the rock behind the house, which, however, are somewhat perilous to venture upon. The crags at the top of the precipices overhead look as if the first tempest

would topple them down on patient, surgeon, and hotel, if so it may be called. In a time of long and heavy rains, or of high and incessant winds, let no despondent or heart-stricken man dwell in the baths of Weissenburg.

We dined in the salon, and strove to be pleased and in good spirits: men are more dependent, however, on the influence of situation, than they are conscious of; the most sublime as well as the saddest scene, if its limits are confined, and nature has drawn her barriers fiercely around, soon produces a sentiment of weariness and melancholy. A stay of a few days in the valley of Lauterbrunnen and many others similar to it, or in the more spacious one of Domo d'Ossola, would prostrate the highest enthusiasm.

In the evening we quitted this retreat, and returned to the village, between which and Zweysimmen the scenery of the Simmenthal is fine. We met on this and the following day, in particular, immense numbers of cattle going to the mountains. These cattle looked the finest and handsomest in the world: it was a complete

emigration; fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, many of them just able to walk, trudged beside the cows, to take up their abode in the slender chalets, till winter's approach should force them to descend again. It is a welcome time, however, to a great part of the population: it is a change of abode and scene, which habit makes at last as dear and necessary to the peasant as to the man whose profession is travelling. The organ of wandering, and the love thereof, would assuredly be found by a phrenologist in the skulls of every class of society.

No people are more attached to their homes than the Swiss, and none delight more in leaving them for other lands, to see the world as well as to seek employment and fortune. With eagerness and activity, group after group passed on to the rich and green slopes and pastures, far up the mountains as the eye could reach. To breathe the free air of those lofty summits—to rove at will, after six months' dwelling in the calm and sheltered valley, was like freedom to

the exile. We could trace them far up the ascents, singing their wild airs as they went.

Not far from the village of Rougemont, we met a pale and interesting girl, riding on a mule, which was led by a servant. She was slowly passing a bridge, that crossed a wild stream; and we paused on the other side to observe her attentively, for the history of her family was a melancholy one. Her father, the pastor of the village, had two daughters, both of them highly educated. The younger had formed a passionate attachment to an officer in the French army, the son of an old friend of her father's.

An English family of some distinction, travelling in Switzerland, chanced to meet these two young ladies, who were on a visit to a relation. They were greatly struck with the simplicity of manners and accomplished minds of the sisters, and were desirous of taking the younger to England, as a companion and governess to their children.

The curé was a widower, and thinking the proposal greatly to his daughter's advantage, to

introduce her into the world, which her native mountains could not allow, he gave his consent. As the time of departure drew near, her reluctance increased; the wish alone of obliging her father at last prevailed; and with a heavy heart she quitted the Simmenthal, for the first time in her life.

After spending some time in the gaieties of Paris, the family arrived in London, at their home of luxury and comfort. Unlike so many of the English families who take governesses, they treated this girl with the greatest kindness and attachment, as if she had been a relative, rather than a dependent exposed to daily caprice and despotism. Her mind was not a common one; she had been most carefully brought up by her pious and excellent father, for she was his favourite child. The high expectations of the family were richly fulfilled; and so endearing was her temper, that the childrens' affections became almost equally divided between their mother and the beautiful Swiss.

A portionless girl, from the wild valley of the Simmenthal, was little likely to make conquests in the circles of the west end ; yet so it was, that a man of fortune, won by her attractions, made her an offer of his hand. But her lover's image was never absent from her mind ; in the midst of all the vivid excitements of a gay and affluent life, it was evident that she loved them not, but often gave way to dejection ; some said it was the *maladie du pays*, the strange thirst for their country, that is like a spell on the Swiss.

Just at this period she received letters from France, that her lover was seized with a dangerous fever ; he wrote however, that the crisis was past, and that his speedy recovery was at hand. It never came ; the next letter was in a stranger's hand, and told of his death. Her way, that had known no trouble, was darkened for ever. Her heart, over whose peace others had watched so fondly, was now broken ! No entreaties or persuasions could avail to prolong her residence in England till that grief should be softened and its bitterness be past. The

poor Swiss, in the midst of the warmest sympathy and unceasing attentions, felt an inexpressible loneliness. Oh! in what mournful beauty, what colours of hope and peace, did Rougemont and its valley rise before her!

She hastened to return; time was indeed precious, and every hour grew yet more so, for the strength was decaying fast; the frame and the spirit were breaking together. When the parting came, her gratitude was very great; the children wept for her loss, and she wept over them; in the desolation of her heart, they wound around it dearly, strangely: they were little exquisite ties, the "silver cords," that she would fain not have severed.

At the expense of the family, and by easy journeys, she was conveyed to Switzerland, and, when the carriage entered the Simmenthal, her strength was quite exhausted. But that moment was, perhaps, the happiest of her life; the rush of her native stream, the dark face of the precipices, the wild pasture-land and its many flocks, were around her. She never knew be-

fore how greatly she loved them—nor how inexpressibly beautiful they were.

The shepherd's song passed from height to height; and afar off was the spire of Rougemont, and the church, where she had so often heard her father dwell on the blessings of religion. She never took her eyes from them, for, in the fulness of our heart, and the pride of our strength, we cannot so cling to our native scenes as when we are about to leave them for ever—it was like Christian pressing to the end of his journey; earth grew lovelier at the last, and the land of Beulah was where he would have rested, so lovely were all its sights and sounds, but for the everlasting shore that was at hand. So felt the dying girl; exquisite sorrow but turned her heart more intensely to God; and now the first wish of that heart was, to die in the arms of her father and sister, and to hear his voice cheer her to the last struggle. They had come part of the way to meet her, for the carriage had been descried at a distance. The curé's firmness was tried to the uttermost, when

he lifted the wasted form in his arms, and laid it on the bed, from which it was soon to rise no more.

It was said that her beauty remained to the last. As long as she was able, and it was not long, her great delight was to ride gently forth into the valley, to look upon its wildness and its magnificence, and trace the wanderings of her past years. As the scene drew to its close, the pastor was quite unmanned, and the child became the father's comforter, and breathed her last blessing.

The sister never recovered the shock; her health had ever since sunk gradually, and it was probable she would soon follow; and the poor curé, though he rallied his firmness at last, felt that his home was no longer the same. Sometimes he mourned his ambition for his child's welfare; had she not left her own home, he would say, perhaps she would not have died!

At Zweysimmen we stopped to dine. The place was only resorted to on account of the fairs near, and the cheer could not be praised.

As evening approached, the air grew very chill on the wild heights we were traversing, and the gathering clouds added to the desolate appearance of the country. The cottages, scattered at intervals, had even their corridors closely boarded up, in order to defend them from the external air,—a proof how severe the climate is in this tract in winter.

The day was closing when we came to Gesse-nai, a mean, melancholy village, standing in a bare and wide gorge of the mountains, and open to the piercing winds from almost every direction. At the door of the inn we were welcomed, to our surprise, by the voice of an English-woman, who conducted us up many flights of steps and many a dark passage to a sad-looking room. We requested to have a fire; and a pile of wood soon blazed in the chimney, which, however, from its unfortunate situation, sent out thick and rapid volumes of smoke. Nevertheless, this was better than utter cheerlessness and cold. We formed a circle round the hearth, and gladly withdrew from the windows, that

looked out only on the miserable street with its squalid houses, and the cold naked face of the precipices that almost hung over them; while the wind howled up the desolate valley with a mournful sound.

The Englishwoman who attended us had married a Swiss in her own country, and in the course of two years they resolved to come to this valley as to a land of Goshen. They arrived during the season of famine that occurred many years since; and from a respectable situation and plenty, in her native land, she fell into indigence and misery. Her husband soon after deserted her; and here she had lived thirteen years with her children, unable from want of means, to return to England, or, indeed, to quit her place of exile. It was a woeful spot, she said, and so in truth it seemed; nor did its aspect improve on the following morning, when we left it under a lowering sky.

In a few leagues, however, the Simmenthal grew more fertile and smiling; and the village of Chateau d'Oex, and its church and elegant

spire, that stand on a high grassy mound, were passed. The path, as we approached near the end of our journey, offered on each side scenes of a very grand and singular character. The river rushed beneath, in a wide stream, over large masses of rock which had fallen from above, and broke it into a number of wild cascades. The precipices rose closely on each side, and out of their front hung thick woods, that were waved fiercely by the wind, or drooped into the river at their feet.

A few miles farther, the beautiful and Catholic village of Monte Bovon was entered, placed in a delicious situation, and noted for the civility of its people, and its excessive neatness. The auberge was a comfortable one, and furnished a plain and excellent repast. As we wanted some information respecting the route, we paid a visit after supper to the curé of the village. His dwelling was entered through a small and neat garden, which enriched the atmosphere with its perfumes. The owner received us with great kindness—a man about thirty, with no reverend

air or locks of silver, but a round, rosy, good-tempered face. He proffered wine and refreshments, and talked cheerfully and gaily. Much was he satisfied with his situation, to which he had been lately appointed, having left the monastery at Fribourg, if memory is correct, for that purpose. It was the first charge he had enjoyed, the first flock whom it may be said he had governed; and great must have been the contrast between the walls and rules of the monastery and the little vicarage of Monte Bovon. He praised its sweet situation, and its kind, hospitable people, with whom he was on the best possible terms, and whose doors were ever open to him.

It was as much to him as a living of a thousand a-year to a collegian; and life, to the young curé's imagination, seemed to have few thorns,—at least, he perceived few in his own prospects. We could not, in this instance, but reflect on the many struggles and privations attending the path of so many English curates—their charge, perhaps, in a remote situation, the

last that would have been voluntarily fixed on—a scanty and insufficient salary, and a family, while their superiors wallow in superfluities—together with that most chilling of all thoughts to a feeling and aspiring mind, little prospect of a change for the better. All other professions are progressive; but this affords, in general, no need to talent, no stimulus to exertion, save that of a peaceful conscience; for surely its rewards, except in some few instances, come not in this world. The young priest of Monte Bovon might well be envied.

Proceeding to the territory of Gruyère, famous for its excellent cheese, nearly the whole of which is made on the long and rich mountain of that name, covered with pastures,—we admired the bold site of the small town of Gruyère, and its ancient castle, on the brow of a steep rock. The latter is eight hundred years old, and was for centuries the princely seat of the Counts of Gruyère.

It is now the bailli's residence; and the great hall, where the ox used to be slaughtered, roast-

ed, and served up, and the knights of the court of Gruyère, clad in armour, half-sat, half-stood, at the long table parallel to the wall—is now Madame la baillie's dressing-room. A few years ago, the chamber where the torture was at times inflicted was likewise to be seen.

We had again to retrace our steps through the Simmenthal; and its bold and varied features lost not on being viewed a second time. We traversed the small lateral valley of Urseins, which afforded us, in some measure, a change of interest. It is more bare and primeval than its wider neighbour, into which it issues; and the path is extremely bad. The day was very sultry; and, oppressed with heat and fatigue, we came, after a great deal of wild travelling, to a hamlet that afforded an auberge in the wilderness, as it might be truly called. Some coffee and excellent cream were the chief refreshments to be had, and they were most welcome: it was neither the plant of Mocha, nor prepared by an Arab's hand, yet never was the inspiring draught more sweet in the Desert.

One guest only was in solitary possession of the rude salon when we entered, and he proved to be, what is rare indeed to find in this land, a character—an elderly man, with a hard intelligent face and a cold grey eye, his hair whitened with years; he was discussing, with great deliberation, a bottle of Swiss wine, and invading at the same time, without ceasing, a large tin snuff-box. Many years had he lived in an obscure valley, haunted often with an ardent desire “to see the world,” which had been gratified at last by a journey to Paris, and a few campaigns in the French army.

In these wanderings he had picked up a great deal of information, which he well knew how to set off with a rude eloquence; yet he had gone back to his native rocks and wilds, and been content to gain his living by some mechanical employ. Even there he had been at intervals visited with the passion for roaming to more distant and ancient countries; and actually cherished some idea of setting out to the land whence came our faith. His features kindled with

joy and interest as he spoke of it, and he began an animated converse on religion, both the true and false ;—thence digressed to politics ; talked of what he had read, and how time passed in his solitary valley, where the world seemed to him like a dream. At length, his bottle of wine drawing to its close, the philosopher rose, bade us a courteous farewell, and went on his way to his wilderness.

Another excursion from Thun, still more interesting, was to the valley of Kandersteg, and its adjacent parts. Passing to the other shore, and keeping the mountain of the Niesen on the right, we went round it to Frutigen, one of the largest villages in the canton of Berne ; thence up the valley of Kandertal, in which stands the lonely village of Kandersteg, the only one in the valley, which is several leagues in extent. Here it was necessary to pass the night, and the small auberge offered tolerable accommodations.

It was now afternoon, and we resolved to pass a few hours, by making an excursion on foot through the small valley of Oeschenthal, in the

midst of which is a diminutive, but pretty lake. Three or four waterfalls tumble from the mountains above down the face of the surrounding rocks, and pour their streams at a small distance into the lake. A few chalets, inhabited only in the summer, stand in this secluded place, which is shut in by lofty mountains on every side.

Were the Swiss an imaginative people, like the Scotch,—were their feelings and fancies liable to be operated on by the sights and sounds of nature,—what stores of sweet and popular effusions might they not possess! Many a peasant or mountaineer would be found, on whose spirit, amidst the seclusion of this grand and splendid scenery, had rushed the full tide of poetry; who, like Burns, Ramsay, or so many others, would have immortalized every part of his matchless land. But it is not so. Nature has done for their country what she has done for no other; yet, wherever the traveller's foot roves, he finds few spots hallowed or endeared by the charms of sentiment—by the wild or affecting tale—by the simple, yet vivid delineation

tion of feelings and passions—common to the dwellers about mountain or lake, as well as to those of more vitiated scenes.

This does not arise from a want of education : in no country, perhaps, are its advantages more widely diffused ; each town has its places of instruction, where the poor are often educated *gratis*. In the principal towns of Berne are colleges, and public schools are found in most parts of the country, under the direction of the pastors ; in Catholic cantons, under that of some father ; as at Fribourg, the Père Gerard is superintendent. Many of the tradesmen of Thun, for instance, are acquainted with the classics, and if you wish, will talk Latin with you from behind the counter.

Leaving Kandersteg next morning, we began the ascent of the Gemmi, which continued for about four hours, when we arrived at a little lake, which during great part of the year is frozen ; and near it stands a small chalet, for the accommodation of travellers overtaken by storms. Here may be procured ample refresh-

ment of bread and wine, but nothing more. Soon afterwards, coming to the point of the mountain, the descent is beheld down the other side to the baths of Leuk. We had sent our horses back after having advanced some way from Kandersteg, and now commenced the descent of the Gemmi on foot. This road is one of the most extraordinary in the whole country:—wide enough only to admit of two persons passing each other in safety, should they meet; being cut in a serpentine direction on the face of the rock, and protected on the outer edge by a small and low parapet wall. The face of the rock is so perpendicular, that when you are part of the way down, you neither see the path above by which you have descended, nor discern the road beneath, by which the route is to be continued. Many travellers have advanced some distance on the way, and become so nervous at the singular situation in which they found themselves, as to hasten back again. Indeed, you seem to hang between heaven and earth, and cannot see how you are to be extricated. On

part of the descent is a sentry-box, cut out of the rock, where, during the war between the Bernese and the Valaisans, a sentinel was always posted. At one of the most dangerous parts of the descent, where the abyss beneath is frightful, a fir-tree projects over the precipice:—a few years ago, a native of the Valais, out of bravado, or for some trifling wager, got over the parapet, and ascended the fir-tree—having undertaken to gather the leading shoot, or highest branch; this he had accomplished, when the branch on which his foot rested broke, and he saw the grave yawning to receive him. The firm nerve and practised eye of the mountaineer could alone save him: clasping the gathered branch in his hand, and pressing lightly on the shattered one, he regained with a sudden spring the parapet wall. Lower down, you cease to be any longer on the perpendicular face of the rock; the road passes along a rapid slope, that conducts to the celebrated baths of Leuk.

The baths are much frequented, chiefly for their efficacy in cutaneous complaints; but the

accommodations are indifferent. There is a regular *table d'hôte* provided for all visiters in the salon. The custom is to enter the bath before breakfast, and to have that meal brought to you in the bath, where the patients often remain three or four hours. Small floating-tables are produced, upon which the breakfast materials are laid; and, being seated on a low bench under the water, which reaches above the bather's middle, he eats, takes his wine, or reads his book, at the same time that he is soaking through at every pore. The building is divided into four bathing-rooms, and you sometimes see in each of these thirty or forty people, gentlemen and ladies, all in the bath together. What a subject for Cruikshank!—patients of all ages—the pale and attenuated invalid, who comes solely for health; the fat and florid-looking citizen, who comes for a jaunt; even the avoyer and bailli show their persons here; they talk freely, while some play at cards, eat and drink, and are merry. In the evening, these inveterate bathers, not satisfied with the morning's ablution, for the

most part enter the water again, and remain a second time for three or four hours.

There are a few pleasant scrambling walks about the mountains, which require no little exertion in order to be enjoyed; but the people of this domain think slightly of these things. Not far distant are two or three villages, whose only communication with the world beneath is by means of ladders, carried over the face of the precipices. They go down, both men, women, and children, with loads, of their own little produce, which being disposed of, they return—ascending the eight or ten successive ladders that lead to their own homes with as much adroitness as if those homes were in the midst of groves and soft glades. It is curious to see them climbing up and down their homes in the clouds, with cheese, butter, &c.; especially if the wind be strong, or any part of the steps frail with wear.

Leaving the baths for the village of Leuk, that is not far from the high road which runs through the Valais, and taking horses here, we proceeded to Sion, a distance of six leagues;

and thence a tedious mountain road (that passed through Gsteig, and one or two more villages) conducted again into the Simmenthal, whence was a highway to Thun.

During our prolonged stay on the lake of Thun, the weather was very uncertain; at times wet and gloomy for days together, succeeded by cloudless and sultry intervals. A visit to Lauterbrunnen, at this time, was rendered abortive by the heavy state of the atmosphere. There chanced, as a break in the monotony of the lake life, to be a fair held at Thun, the largest in the year, and attended by a vast concourse of the peasantry from the surrounding mountains: we went about midday, in order to gratify our curiosity with a view of the forms, faces, and costumes of the natives. What an assemblage! It has been my fate to see the dwellers in many a land,—some famed for attractions, others for the want of them; but such unrelieved, unsoftened ugliness never before or since met my view! and still worse, it was universal. In vain the eye sought, amidst the crowds of hideous

aspects, for one soft, sweet, mild feature,—leaving beauty itself out of the question. It was vain, utterly vain.

There is a palm in the wildest desert, a sprinkling of verdure on the most naked precipice, even of this land; but nature, that has shed her glories lavishly on mountain and valley, has shorn their female tenants, as if in wantonness, even of the natural comeliness that belongs to the human race. Throughout the whole canton of Berne, it is even thus: great thick figures; features full of kindness, but broad and unmeaning; a pair of legs, exposed as if courting admiration (being never covered below the knee,) and of the shape and thickness of huge wedges of timber, just hewn from the mountain oak. Where then is the dream—the illusion of Swiss beauty? A question we often put to ourselves, whilst traversing many a canton. Who has not gazed on the pictures or prints richly coloured, brought home as specimens of the great loveliness, that grows like a

common plant on every hill?—there are nymphs of Lucerne, of Soleure, of Uri, and Berne;—one with a waterpot in her hand, gracefully bending over her flowers; another with a nose-gay; a third engaged only in slaying with her eyes; but they are fairies, goddesses, and do much credit to the invention of the Swiss artists, who must have laughed in their sleeve at seeing them bought up as specimens of their country. And when the forlorn traveller finds himself among the living beings who sat, or rather did not sit, for these portraits, he looks wistfully around, and feels somewhat as in the harem of the King of Sennaar Bruce did, who, after dreaming perhaps of Oriental beauty, saw large dark forms and sprawling limbs, and eyes that would fain have sent soft glances, but dispensed startling and withering ones instead. Bruce soon escaped from the harem, however:—so could not we from our horrors; for, at the moment we were slowly making our way through dense crowds, furious torrents of rain began to fall.

Unfortunately we were not provided with an umbrella, and had no resource but to take shelter beneath the projecting roof of one of the houses.

Thun consists chiefly of one extensive street, and a terrace is built along the front of the houses, and ascended by flights of steps, the lower part of which terrace is occupied by small shops, which, as well those above, were now much filled. In one part was an unhappy vender of prints, coloured and plain, of Madonnas and miracles; little saints and martyrs to suit the Catholics, of whom many were at the fair; in another, pictures of Jerusalem, and Swiss battles, to catch the Protestants. Ever and anon this man shouted in praise of his wares. But no sight or sound broke the density of the crowd; on rolled the waves of brown, wide, harsh aspects, each succeeded by another; while motionless, encompassed, and annoyed, we were compelled to remain alternately gazing with wistful eye, first on the rain that rolled in water-spouts from the roofs, and then at the

paysannes, who sometimes lingered as they passed, and, fixing their large eyes and prominent features on us, greeted us with a capacious smile either of surprise or curiosity.

The cantons of Glarus and Fribourg had also poured out their beauties here, as well as Berne : it is true, there was a distinction ; the former nymphs being all clad in red stockings, proudly worn, the petticoat, as we before observed, falling scarcely to the knee ; and their hair hanging down behind in long tails, in the semblance of the Grecians ; but oh, how unlike ! These now became draggled, also, with the incessant rain, and the tresses of the gentle mountaineers distilled large heavy drops. It mattered not, however, to them ; used to the changes and wars of the elements, they did not even notice it, but laughed, romped, made their bargains, and talked their soft sweet mountain German with infinite melody of accent. The Bernese dames came not off with the same impunity as those of the other cantons, who wore small straw hats : throughout the whole canton of Berne, the head-

dress of the women, of all ages, is made of black horsehair, that rises over the head, thin and airy, in the form of wings. To a female of light or elegant form and comely features, this is a graceful and becoming appendage; but with the brawny, sinewy fair, on whose round bull-heads it is stuck in defiance of nature, the effect is merely ludicrous. Even decrepid old women wear this ornament to the day of their death. It is a poor defence from the weather; and pitilessly on the spreading wings that had been tastefully arranged, like nets to lime suitors, did the torrents fall that morning. From many a mountain had these natives descended, from many a chalet in the wild valley's gorge, or on the brink of precipices, weary leagues distant; yet, deep as were the solitudes in which most present resided, this fair was like a fête: lovers met, witching glances were shot to and fro, and rapture beamed in many an eye. The rain at last began to abate; we quitted the scene with eagerness, and, forcing our way through the crowds of various mountaineers that covered the

terrace and the street beneath, succeeded in gaining the gate of the town.

The sallowness of complexion so often visible in the natives of this canton must, in part, be caused by the stoves with which their low and small apartments are furnished, and by their habit of never opening the windows, whence the glass is stained with every colour of the rainbow, from the effluvia of the breath constantly acting on it, without any admission of fresh air. The dwellings of the farmers, or better sort of villagers, have a neat and attractive appearance, when newly built, from the bright hue of the wood, the corridors, and the numerous small windows; but the reverse is the case with the habitations of the greater part of the people, which have a dark and poor appearance.

The manner in which the courtships of the Bernese peasantry is conducted is very amusing: every Saturday night the lover, apparelled in his best attire, hies to the abode of his mistress. So far it is in keeping with "The Cotter's Saturday Night" of Burns; but farther the com-

parison holds not with that beautiful pastoral. It is after the whole of the family are retired to rest, and the paysanne has the house all to herself, that she appears at the window to look out for the approaching footsteps of her lover. Perhaps the chalet is beside a glacier or cataract, or looks over the dark face of the rock: soon the swain stands beneath the wooden walls that hold his treasure, and, without any parley or waste of words, he climbs up at once, and enters the apartment of his mistress through the window that has been left expressly open. Here he remains, treated with cakes of different kinds, and the fiery spirit called *eau de cerises*, and passes the witching hours of night, till morning often surprises him still in the chamber of reception. Since the loves of Ajut and Aningait, and those of the boors of Esthonia, who chanted their amorous ditties over the threshold, when the cattle were foddered and the moon was up, was ever anything so únsentimental or selfish? —That parents sanction, and daughters cherish, the custom, the legislators of Berne have cause

to rue, in the numerous and increasing burdens entailed on the finances and benevolence of the canton.

Another excursion from Thun was to the lonely and unfrequented mountain called the Keily, in the district of the Kander valley, at a considerable distance. My companion, having stopped at a wretched auberge by the way for a short time, arrived in the evening at a spot not far below the summit of the mountain, on the surface of which are several large patches of rich pasture. To these the flocks ascend in the spring, and the shepherds inhabit the very few chalets. Entering the cottage that stood highest on the acclivity, and aloof from the rest, he was received by its owner with the warmest welcome. This man was not a common goatherd: the greatest part of the flocks belonged to him, and he rented the pasture from the municipality of Thun. A repast was instantly put in preparation; but, as the sun was going down, and the rugged summit of the mountain not far distant, my friend instantly proceeded thither. A small

amphitheatre of rocks terminates the Keily, of a romantic aspect, and resembling the druidical circles found in the west and north of England. Several chamois were running and leaping on these rocks, where they were but little molested; they resemble the gazelle in size and form, but have not the large and melancholy eye of that animal. It was a fine and solitary scene, where the wanderer's foot seldom came; on the few dwellings, the circle of rocks, and then on the tops of higher mountains on every side, the fading sunbeams were thrown. He returned to the chalet; and, as it grew dark, the fire of logs spread a fierce light as well as heat through the humble apartment: coffee, the richest cream, eggs, and bacon, were set before him, and the warm welcome was renewed. The wife and the children filled up the patriarchal group: they were affluent in their way; and the care of their cattle in the valleys beneath in winter, and here in the summer, occupied all their life. Excessively fatigued, their visiter was glad to throw himself on the very coarse couch laid on the

bare floor ; and, in the morn, at sunrise, he found, soon after awaking, a similar bountiful repast. For all this hospitality the mountaineer, a tall, fine-looking Swiss, absolutely refused the slightest recompense, and bade him a cordial farewell. This is no rare instance of the disinterestedness of these people on the hill-side ;—but seek not such a quality in towns, or vales, or wherever the track of the traveller comes !

We were less fortunate in a long excursion on foot, which we afterwards took in the mountains of Savoy ; and the details, though a little out of place, may be introduced here. Having crossed the Lake of Geneva to St. Gingouph, a romantic village, Italian in its aspect and scenery, we found a good, though rather dirty inn. It was a lovely moonlight night, and the shore for several miles on each side tempted us to wander on the noble road that Napoleon caused to be made. The rocks of Meillerie looked as attractive as their bare and hewn surface would allow, having been pruned down by the architects ; the French, in their improvements, minding

neither romance nor religion, having carried the road directly through the middle of the Catholic church of Evian, a town a few miles off, so that one half of the edifice is now on one side of the way and the remainder on the other. So admirably is this great road constructed, that there is not an elevation of two inches for fifty miles between Geneva and the end of the lake; and, rather than make the slightest curve, they committed the profanation we have mentioned, separating altar and font, so that the coach-wheels rattle hourly over the once sacred floor.

Long before sunrise on the following day we ascended the valley, at the mouth of which the village is situated: it was very steep, and for two leagues full of bold and beautiful scenery, both of wood and mountain; a torrent ran below the path, forming in its passage several small cataracts. We then came to a miserable village, the last tenanted spot in the territory. It was strange to see, in the course of a few miles, so thorough a transition from plenty and comfort to squalid poverty and misery; from the lovely

and abundant shores of the lake to want, dirt, and dejection. But we were now in Savoy: two or three of the dwellings which we entered were half-hidden by the earth, and the people sat listlessly in their rags on the bank without. It was a sultry summer's day; but in winter, they told us, they suffered dreadfully from the cold penetrating their thin chalets.

We were invited to try the hospitality of the Catholic priest, whose cottage, better than the rest, stood apart: he was the very tyrant and misanthrope of the village; held little converse with any one; kept no domestic, but dressed his food with his own hands, and was of the most snarlish and bitter temper. Even his flock shook their heads when they spoke of him. His revenues must have been slight; and his dwelling, near the foot of a high precipice, imprisoned two-thirds of the year by deep snows, and exposed to the fierce winds that sweep continually down this valley, promised little indulgence to the senses. His slovenly dress, matted hair, and evil look, were enough to repel the most un-

daunted heretics; and his cheerless rooms were no better than a hermit's cell. We were fain at last to seek some refreshment in one of the other cottages; huge wooden platters and dishes, purified for some time in the neighbouring stream, served us wherein to drink the tea that we had brought, which was boiled in an immense pot, that might have served the Janisaries in place of the sacred one they had lost in battle. We then set out for the top of the craggy mountains far above, to visit a lonely lake, of which we had accidentally heard from a guide. This man had served during several campaigns in the French armies, and now lived on one of the mountain-heights in front, in the direction of Mont Blanc. After a steep and toilsome ascent of some leagues, we drew near the spot he had described. An isolated rock rose in the form of a high tower; and, there being pastures on its acclivities, several herds of cattle, with their guides, were wandering there. The spot was shrouded in a thick fog, from amidst which we heard the chanting of the

shepherds, kept up without ceasing, in one shrill and prolonged note, which blended with the tinkling of the bells suspended to the necks of cattle. The vicinity of the latter exposed us to some danger, from the large stones that were displaced as they moved about, and which came rolling down from above with great velocity. The "lonely lake," on the side, proved to be a mere green and dirty puddle; on the bank was a single chalet, on entering which we saw three or four individuals busily engaged in making cheese. O shepherd life, how exquisite are thy charms!

Two overgrown and ugly boys, naked to the waist, were seated on the floor, beating the curds in a large tub, and looking much like Caliban in his island domain. Cheeses, butter, and two or three preparations of cream, were ranged in shelves along the walls; the floor was filthy, and the smell most offensive. The master of the hut, a respectable-looking man, sent us some cream,—the only part of the produce we could summon resolution to taste, and which,

with some bread and a bottle of wine that we had brought, furnished a tolerable repast. We then took leave of the chalet and its solitude (where these people remain half the year), and retraced the rugged paths to the valley beneath.

LETTER IV.

Excursion on the Lake from Thun to Neuhaus.—La belle Bateliere.—Valley of Lauterbrunnen.—Fall of the Staubbach.—Village Singers.—Trachsellaunen.—Fall of the Schmadribach.—Magnificent Scenery.—The Wengen Alp.—Grindelwald.—Motley company at the inn.—An English Traveller.—Valley of Grindelwald.—Capture of two young Eagles by a Peasant Boy.—His perilous Situation.—Caverns in the Glaciers.—Facility of obtaining Divorces.—Laxity of Manners.—Disregard of the Sabbath.—Clara Wenzel, the female Bandit Chief.—A Tragical Amour.

ON a fine morning, we quitted Thun in a boat for Neuhaus; the lake, five leagues in length, is in every part splendid. Can any view possibly be finer than that enjoyed at evening from the ancient chateau called Schadau, on a neck of land projecting far into the lake like a rich islet! As we now passed slowly up the lake, each village on the shore, with its grove of cherry-trees, came in succession into view

from behind some point, or in a fertile and sheltered bay.

From among the many vehicles eagerly offered at Neuhaus, we selected one for the excursion, and again came to the village of Unterseen, and its blue and rapid Aar. The inn here is kept by a Swiss, who married not long since the girl that formerly rowed the travellers across the Lake of Brienz, and was always distinguished for her beauty. Her figure, erect in her boat, and in a fine attitude, always found a place in the collection of Swiss pictures : we had been abundantly convinced, however, of the rare existence of any thing like female attraction in the country, and were not surprised when a large, masculine personage came to the door, with a wide mouth and a heavy look, though her complexion was very fair, and her eyes dark blue. "Where is la belle Bateliere," we asked the landlord, unaware of her presence. "That is she," replied he, with a look of exultation—vain, no doubt, of being so often asked the question—as he pointed to his substantial spouse.

She keeps a book, in which travellers write their names, and also vent their admiration in poetical or prose remarks.

A high literary character of our own land has compared *la belle Bateliere* to *Fornarina*. It is well that Raphael sleeps in his grave, or deep would have been his revenge on any who likened his adored Italian's matchless figure, dark complexion, and eyes wherein dwelt the soul of beauty, to the stout, inanimate Elizabeth, who looked more fit to be a waiting-maid to *Glumdalclitch* than the subject of raptures in immortal verse.

The valley of *Lauterbrunnen* was now free of access, as was also its comfortable inn. It was natural for us to visit the *Staubbach*, a few paces only distant, without much delay. This singular fall attracts general and high admiration, though there are some who presume to uplift a dissenting voice, at the risk of being considered destitute of all taste. We could not help being among this number, and regarded with disappointment the thin silky stream, that stole,

like a vapour, down the face of the lofty precipice. Had this fall a proper body of water to carry it fairly off the rock, it would be the finest in the world, being, it is said, nine hundred feet high, and quite unbroken, as far as regards the rock ; but the larger portion of the stream seems to fly off into vapour after descending a certain depth, and the remainder *creeps* down to the bottom. It is nevertheless a lovely sight when the sun shines on it ; but not as a cataract. It is said to be greatly increased after heavy rains : when we visited the Staubbach the last time, it had rained for several days with little intermission ; but the difference then, and now, during dry warm weather, did not strike us as very material. It does not appear a difficult matter, judging from the view enjoyed of the summit of the precipice from the Wengen Alp opposite, to direct one or two small adjoining streams into the very narrow one that forms this fall, and thus, by augmenting the rush of water, to make it in truth a “ matchless cataract.”

On returning to the inn we found several other travellers arrived, — French and Germans. The former, by the by, have within the last few years been not a little infected with the passion of travelling, heretofore so unusual with them. This valley is well inhabited, but has little beauty, save what is given by the fall. The precipices, in general square, perpendicular masses of rock, composed of limestone, are quite unpicturesque, either in form or colour.

While we were walking in the evening, several of the village girls began their wild Swiss airs : their manner of singing is very peculiar, but sweet, and consists of two or three notes only, sharply alternated. It was the *ranz des vaches* that has so often produced a powerful effect on the Swiss soldiers, and on those who have wandered from their native land. The finest part of the valley is its upper extremity, where it is much wider, and exhibits an entirely different character. This being six leagues off, you are obliged to proceed thither on horseback. For some distance on the right are numerous lofty

falls, or rather slides, of water, down heights of the same kind, though inferior in size, to the Staubbach.

About two leagues from Lauterbrunnen we came to Trachsellaunen. Here are the remains of some works erected for smelting the ore of the iron-mines situated under the Jungfrau. Not far from these, there were also lead-mines, which, as well as the former, are at present abandoned. A gallery has been carried straight into the foot of the mountain on a level with the valley. After proceeding some distance hence, we arrived at a spot that seemed to terminate the vale—a small area completely hemmed in with rocks, amidst which was only space allowed for the river Lutschine to rush by in its narrow channel. On exploring part of the rock near the edge of the river, a very steep and rugged path is discovered upon its face, that ascends a kind of cleft, by climbing up which you soon arrive at a considerable elevation. Hence a path runs along the edge of the river, and conducts in a short time to a chalet, near which some huge blocks

of stone lie scattered about. The difficulty of arriving here is richly repaid by the superb and singular spectacle of the cataract of the Schmadribach, about three hundred feet in height. On climbing one of the masses of stone, you see it in all its majesty, for it lies so high amidst the very glaciers of the mountain that some trouble is requisite to get near it, and even then the ice and rocks by which it is encircled forbid a close approach. From the Jungfrau extends a ridge of snowy mountains, the monotony of which is finely broken by various sharp glittering points of glaciers, that reach to the part where the cataract of the Schmadribach is situated. The wild interest of the whole view is great and indelible, so majestic are the height and aspect of the Jungfrau and the other mountains that form the close barriers of this savage and sublime prison of Nature; amidst the perpetual stillness around the rush of the cataract alone was heard. From the glacier above flow three principal streams and several accessory ones, which, uniting in their descent, form this superb

cascade, the most singularly situated of any in Switzerland.

It descends at first in one rushing sheet of water, and then breaks into three distinct falls, which again spring boldly from the rock. During the winter the cold is so intense as entirely to chain this strong body of waters, which then resemble only a beautiful and fantastic mass of ice. There was no habitation within view; no flock on this pastureless ground, which even the shepherd's foot does not tread. The rude chalet that stood near was untenanted; for Nature, all fresh and glorious around as when she first sprang from the hands of her Maker, claims the only empire here. We gazed on the aspect of the Jungfrau, or Virgin Mountain (surpassed only by Mont Blanc,) from whose heights came the fearful rush of the avalanche, echoing through the valley below; and listened to the eagle's cry from the precipices. Poets and enthusiasts, who have dreamed about and held communion with Nature, on the sedgy lakes and low hills of Cumberland, might here revel in waking visions of bliss.

Yet it is possible for Nature to be too magnificent, and on too vast a scale, for both the painter and the poet. Why have the scenes of this country never been rendered on canvass, or been so done with a mockery of skill conveying no idea of the reality? And the Italian painters,—some of whom must have gazed on scenes in the Alps, so near to their own—never chose, or would not venture to copy them; feeling, no doubt, that even the matchless powers of their pencils were baffled, or set at defiance, by objects so fearfully grand and imposing. The poet, too, feels scenery of this kind not within his grasp; his feelings claim no kindred or sympathy with mountains, the snows of which pierce the skies, with valleys of tremendous depth, or with cataracts and streams so resistless as if the fountains of the earth were again broken up.

Leaving this most impressive scene, a few hours' slow progress was sufficient to bring us back to Lauterbrunnen, whose narrow and melancholy domain looked yet more repulsive after

the inspiring excursion we had enjoyed. Having resolved to cross the Wengen Alp, we set out the next forenoon, that happened, fortunately, to be extremely clear and fine; and, attended by a guide, wound slowly up the steep and circuitous ascent. After several hours' progress, the path led suddenly out of a small wood at the very base of the Jungfrau. To arrive close to this mountain, so as to enjoy a nearer view of it, had been the sole cause of our ascending the Wengen Alp, the only avenue of approach. Its snowy sides, chequered by dark rocks, from which the mantle of winter had fallen, were now beheld through the deep and green foliage of the wood. Another half hour brought us to a chalet, in which a young shepherd resided during the summer, occupied in milking the flocks and making cheese. The hut had too strong and offensive an odour to allow of entrance: he brought us some rich milk, but we preferred the clear rivulet that ran beside his cottage.

We sat dawn on the bank, to look in silence on the noble mountain: but, whether it is that,

on a tour, the most vivid sensations are those most unlooked-for, or that the Jungfrau towers more sublimely from the valley of Interlaken beneath (as it certainly does),—we deemed this journey inadequately repaid. My guide now led over the verdant summit of the Wengen, beside the base of the two Eiger mountains, and then, by a tedious and gradual descent, down into the valley of Grindelwald, and we entered with great pleasure the small and excellently situated inn beyond the church. The salon was made expressly for the picturesque, its front and sides being all glazed. Dinner was soon served in this romantic apartment; it was evening, and we were both fatigued and hungry. Several girls came beneath the window, and sang with sweet voices their wild and unchanging native air. Mountain excursions, so lofty and attended with so pure an atmosphere as those of to-day, seldom fail to give a high elation of spirits and a wish to be pleased with every thing around. The landlord's table offered but a small catalogue of luxuries, including soup made with

milk and herbs; veal, that had numbered few suns on the mountains ere it was doomed to perish; and attempts at pastry, enough to make an epicure wish the cook at the bottom of an avalanche.

A motley company was assembled in the salon. At the upper end was a group of Germans: nature and their own taste have gifted this people with greater roughness of manner than most others, as well as with a love of eternal smoking; and this was a party of young men, of good appearance and dress, let loose on their first journey. Great was the clamour they made, and prodigious the quantities of champagne they drank;—the country, it was agreed, was well enough to visit once; but to live in, most *triste* and execrable. Near them, and at a table alone, sat a traveller, who offered a perfect and refreshing contrast to the Germans;—a tranquil, thoughtful Englishman, who took his simple meal (that had little indulgence in its aspect) with perfect contentment, without uttering a word, though his eye was full of intelligence and animation.

Entering into conversation, he told us he was a pedestrian; had travelled through much of Switzerland; and, being pressed for time, was obliged to prosecute his journey with more speed than was sometimes agreeable. He yet kept up the credit of his countrymen for having some original trait to distinguish them from others. He had a particular aversion to ascend any mountain; and had made it a rule, throughout his whole tour, never to digress from the valleys. It is true, he lost some of the finest views in the land:—but of this he was sceptical, esteeming all scenes, when regarded from below, much finer than they could possibly be on a nearer approach. Mountains he would have nothing to do with but to look at from a distance, convinced that in them, as with many a showy belle, specks and deformities would only grow more visible on a closer contact. His passion for *virtù* was great; and his eyes sparkled as he drew forth from his bosom a small Carlo Dolce, which he had bought a few days before of a connoisseur dealer in Lausanne. The picture had cost high;

it had been offered us not long before ; but its originality had appeared doubtful. The pedestrian, however, free from every doubt, gazed on it with indescribable satisfaction, convinced that he had met with a treasure : it was the constant companion of his journey, and no doubt the Carlo Dolce was often drawn forth amidst the glaciers and precipices, to refresh the spirits and banquet the eyes of the wearied traveller.

The valley of Grindelwald is near three thousand two hundred feet above the level of the sea, exceeding, though not much, that of Chamouni, which is three thousand. Its neighbourhood affords some of the best chamois-hunting in the country ; behind the Wetterhorn they are sometimes seen in bands of twenty or thirty. There are no bears here now, though they are to be sometimes found on spots of much inferior height. Eagles are often shot on the mountains that form the barriers of Grindelwald : and this monarch of the air is seen of the largest size in his domain of the Wetterhorn. They have been known sometimes to attack a man, but at ad-

vantage, when he has been passing along a steep declivity: the eagle then does not strike with his beak, but rushes against him with all the force of his wings and body, in order to prostrate him on the ground, and thus gain an easier prey.

A curious instance of the ferocity of the eagle occurred lately at a solitary chalet on a pasture mountain: a peasant boy, eight years of age, was engaged in looking after some cattle, and he was the sole tenant of the cottage, as the Swiss train their children very early to this occupation. He perceived two young eagles at no great distance, on the ledge of a low rock; tempted by the prize, he drew silently close behind the rock, and suddenly grasping them in his arms, took possession of both birds in spite of the most determined resistance. He was yet struggling with his prey, when, hearing a great noise, he saw, to his no little terror, the two old birds flying rapidly toward him. He ran with all his speed to the chalet, and closed the door just in time to shut out his pursuers. The

boy afterward spoke of the terror he suffered during the whole day in his lonely chalet, lest the old eagles should force an entrance; as, being powerful birds, they would soon in their fury have ended his life. They kept up the most frightful cries, and strove with all their might to break down the barriers of the frail chalet, loosely built of single logs, and find some avenue by which to rescue their offspring. But the young peasant kept his prey, well aware of its value—a louis d'or being given by the government of Berne for every eagle killed. As night approached, he saw his pursuers, tired with their useless efforts, leave the chalet, and watched their flight to the lofty, though not distant precipice: and as soon as the darkness had set in, he again grasped the two eaglets in his arms, and ran as fast as his legs could carry him down the mountain to the nearest village, often looking back, lest the parent birds should have descried him, and fancying he heard their cries at every interval. He arrived in safety, however, at the hamlet, not a little proud of his prize.

Verdure, and even wild strawberries, grow at the very edge of the glaciers of Grindelwald, whose waving and fantastic billows of ice, and the caverns beneath them, are beautiful. The finest of the latter, where arch within arch was of an azure hue, over the water that slept calmly beneath, was entirely destroyed by a party of Germans, who amused themselves by demolishing the frail and elegant structure: every remonstrance to induce them to spare the noble cavern was unavailing.

The beauty and solitude of this vale and many similar ones are apt to give the idea of a state of happiness and purity, that does not in reality exist. Switzerland has been lauded as peculiarly moral, religious, and sincere! This is scarcely the truth. It is well known that every subject in the great canton of Berne and in the canton de Vaud is permitted to obtain four divorces on the score of "incompatibilité des mœurs;" and that it is so common for married couples to avail themselves of this law, that the quondam husband and wife of respectable con-

dition not unfrequently meet at parties, united, however, to different mates; and a journey to another canton has been many a time preconcerted, to enable the bride to urge the plea of abandonment, and thus break a yoke that had become tiresome, or gratify a *penchant* for other bonds.

As to the peasantry, a laxity of manners is often found where least expected. Some of the least moral people of the East are the Druses and the Arabs, who live apart, on the rugged heights of Lebanon. And here, it is not surprising if the licence of the capital extends to the secluded valleys and mountain-sides occasionally. Honesty is the cardinal virtue of the people; theft and robbery are hardly known; the traveller, as well as the dweller, may leave untold gold on his table, and his door without a fastening at night. An Englishman cannot fail to be struck with the imperfect observance of the sabbath in the towns by the people, and too frequently by the pastor: we have heard it lamented even by themselves. The mechanic

does not hesitate to follow his work, or the merchant his affairs, on the day set apart as sacred. The surprise of one of our friends was very great, when invited by a Swiss pastor to spend the Sunday evening at his house. Being a clergyman himself, he expected a calm domestic evening, or the society, perhaps, of a few kindred friends. The host introduced him to the company, who filled two large apartments, and were busily engaged at cards. Having a letter to a wealthy tanner, who bore the character of a very religious man, he had gone on the morning on the same day to his dwelling, and was directed to the tanyard, where he found him busily employed with his workmen. Not a Sunday passed, during our residence in the country, that we did not hear from hour to hour the sharp crack of the rifles, followed by the shouts of the peasantry, assembled to fire at a mark; a favourite diversion, as well as trial of skill. Where is the consistency of the sumptuary laws at Geneva, which enforce, though feebly now, plainness and simplicity of dress, and the absence of costly orna-

ments—while at the same time the theatre is open on the Sunday evening, and this portion of time is often passed in the other towns at the card-table. In a Catholic country these things are overlooked and may be palliated from long habit and a belief of their innocence ; but, in a Protestant land of high profession, it is strange and inconsistent. Yet there are many, very many families, who shrink with pain from these things ; whose creed, as well as practice, will not allow of such licence.

With respect to crimes, they are of rarer occurrence than in any other country in Europe ; when they do occur, “ few and far between,” they are distinguished, as is often the case in mountainous districts, by hardihood and atrocity. The career of the female bandit leader, Clara Wenzel, might furnish materials for a romance. During many years her band, twelve in number, had been the terror of the surrounding country ; and every effort to discover or capture them was in vain. Their places of concealment were so well chosen as to set the authorities at defiance ;

at one time among the fastnesses and precipices of the mountains, at another in the recesses of the forest. A few of the band resided in the villages, and visited the fairs and markets, that they might embrace the most favourable occasions for plunder, or communicate them to their associates. Clara Wenzel had obtained a complete ascendancy over these lawless men; her commands were obeyed with alacrity and cheerfulness: it was the empire of one fierce and strong mind over the many, for she had few personal attractions, though still young. The plunder of chance travellers did not satisfy; hamlets were sometimes attacked, and every dwelling ransacked. Blood was rarely shed, if it could be avoided; for Clara had the kindly feelings of her sex; but it is said that the band did not always shrink from murder, though years passed by ere it was brought to light, as in the celebrated case of the Senator Keller of Lucerne.

The measures of the authorities were at last successful, and the robbers were surrounded and captured in their place of retreat. During the

trial, the chieftainess displayed the same courage and coolness that had marked her career, and was condemned to suffer with several of the band. Had this woman lived under a different system of manners and national feelings, she would, probably, have been another Helen Macgregor, adored by her followers, and sacrificing all to the honour and good of her clan.

While residing on the lake of Thun, a handsome woman was more than once pointed out, whose career, more culpable perhaps than that of the young bandit, was strangely marked by tragical events. The daughter of a peasant, she was taken into the service of an affluent family at Berne, where her beauty and address soon caused her to be treated with more kindness than a domestic. They also won the affections of the only son, who, to the sorrow of his parents, at last maintained her separately, in a state of splendour. But he grew jealous, with all the reputed fury of an Italian, and one day came armed, with deadly purpose, to her dwelling. She was sitting alone and tranquil, when

he drew a pistol from his pocket, and fired, inflicting only a wound in the arm; then retreating to the head of the stairs, he heroically blew his brains out with the remaining pistol. The anguish of his parents may be conceived, for he was their only child. This tragical event, that should have driven the survivor to her native poverty, induced her to bring an action against the family for costs, as well as to accept the proposals of a merchant, who, in a couple of years, was brought to ruin by her extravagance. The beautiful paysanne hated poverty, and quitted the dwelling of the bankrupt, who, unable to endure the separation, also put an end to his life.

These events cause great notice, where divorces take place with such cordial good-will, on so many occasions, and are countenanced by the law—where, in the eye of this calm, calculating people, the glittering louis d'or has infinitely more charms than Cupid or his mother, it might well excite surprise and deep comment, that two men of note should be so

desperate in folly as to send themselves into the other world for a light and changeable love. The guilty object of these violent deeds had returned to the village, near her native home, but not to her native poverty. An income was even allowed by the parents of the first victim ; and a dissolute life loved far better than the calm solitude of the hamlet.

LETTER V.

Ascent of the Faulhorn.—View from its Summit.—Descent.—Fate of a Chamois-hunter.—The Swiss Clergy.—Ascent of the Scheideck.—Fall of an Avalanche.—Baths of Rosenlauri.—Falls of the Reichenbach.—Fall of the Aar near Handeck.—Hospice of the Grimsel.—Glacier of the Rhone.

AT four in the morning we left the village to ascend the mountain called the Faulhorn, situated at a short distance to the left. The ascent on horseback was for some distance not difficult, and led through woods of pine and beech, mingled with oak and fir, through which a rich glimpse was enjoyed at intervals of the valley and its glaciers far beneath. By setting out so early, we made considerable progress ere the sun became powerful, and in about two hours

passed the last chalet. There was one feature so common to the Swiss mountains, the excessive beauty and quantity of the flowers, the variety of colours blending with each other; the wild gentian was everywhere, the rhododendron in the greatest luxuriance. A waterfall fell over a dark rock just below the chalet, and by its sound and sight cheered the gloomy solitude. One long ascent succeeded another; they were wild and dreary rather than sublime. Proceeding slowly over the treeless moor that led to more ascents of the same character, we came to a romantic spot in the bosom of the mountain: it was a small and clear lake, surrounded, even at this height, by herds of cattle, and reflecting the snowy summit of the Faulhorn, still far in advance. With all the magnificence of the Swiss mountains, they are in general destitute of the lonely tarns or lakes so common amidst the humbler heights of Westmoreland, and which give an interest to its dreariest scenes.

We left our horses here, having yet one third of the ascent to make on foot. This little lake

and shores looked on the summits of the great mountains of the Wetterhorn and Shreckhorn, directly in front. The progress hence was very tedious, and much snow was to be crossed ere we arrived on the extreme point, which is very narrow. The view enjoyed from the Faulhorn is the most bold and brilliant in Switzerland; that from the Righi is tame in comparison; and every other we afterwards saw lost immeasurably when this matchless scene was recalled to mind. Its peculiar excellence arises from all the great mountains being closely seen in the form of a splendid amphitheatre; they seemed to gather their charmed circle around you, and the summit of the Faulhorn is the point where, as in a panorama, you can dwell distinctly on their minutest beauties. It was a sultry day, and there was nothing in the sky to cast a shadow on the forms of these mountains; one white, fleecy, vapourish cloud only lingered for a few moments along their summits, or sides, like a silvery streak, and then melted away.

The Jungfrau, on the right, was the first in

grandeur : it has a partial resemblance in its form to Mont Blanc, but does not, like that, stand alone, being encompassed on each side by many others, only inferior to itself in beauty. Its height is about thirteen thousand feet, and it was long deemed impracticable of ascent ; till, four years since, two gentlemen of Berne resolved to attempt the heights of the Virgin mountain, and, after incredible hardships and difficulties, at last succeeded. They declared it to be a far more arduous enterprise than the ascent of Mont Blanc : the precipices, which look from a distance like crystal walls that may not be scaled, were often nearly perpendicular. These adventurers were engaged three days in the attempt, being obliged to lodge two nights amid wastes of snow, and retrace their steps many a time to seek a safer path ; yet so delighted were they with the novelty and excitement of their journey, that they hazarded it a second time in the following season, and succeeded with very great, though with somewhat less peril and hardship than on the former occasion ;

painting in vivid and enthusiastic terms the recompense they had reaped. The mountain of Savoy, on the contrary, whether from its extreme height, or the clouds and vapours that are apt so suddenly to gather on its summit, rarely gratifies those who arrive there with the magnificence of view they expected. Three things, it is said, the traveller inevitably encounters there—great expense, great fatigue, and great disappointment.

On the left of the Jungfrau are the two brother mountains, so much alike—the noble Eigers, whose peculiarly sharp edge one should think a chamois could scarcely descend, so fearful is the slope. The Silverhorn, so called from the dazzling whiteness of its snowy breast, filled the interval between the last mountain and the terrific Schreckhorn, a name significant both of its form and of the tempests that howl around its summit. The latter is broken into two points, and the steep ridges from which these rise are formed of jagged rocks: the fearful and fantastic summit of the Shreckhorn is seen from

afar, like a warning beacon ; no one has ever attempted to ascend it, and the chamois that abound in its dangerous wastes are almost undisturbed. The sublime front of the Wetterhorn, twelve thousand feet high, that adjoins the Shreckhorn, scarcely yields to any mountain in grandeur, and is the favourite hunting-ground for the chamois : its face is a broad perpendicular precipice, of four thousand feet, and, above this, but thrown back, appears the remaining and haughtier ascent.

The mountain that most drew our delighted attention, from its very elegant and slender form, is the Finsteraarhorn, which rises like a needle, loftier than all the rest, and shoots its summit into the sky. No ruggedness or dark spot is visible on its smooth sides, so utterly shrouded in snow ; and the effect of such an obelisk, rising, not in a line with the other mountains but behind them, to the vast height of nearly fourteen thousand feet, is the most singular and beautiful which the imagination can conceive. It looks like the ethereal attendant or guard of the more

vast and extensive masses around, so shadowy and startling is its aspect! The sun threw a cloudless glare on the whole of this splendid scene: the glaciers and heights of the Jungfrau and the other mountains, and the needle-point of the Finsteraarhorn, shone with excessive brilliancy. The ascent of the latter, though to the eye utterly inaccessible, was to be attempted by the same persons who mounted the Jungfrau: it will be a rash and perilous enterprise.

We gazed a long time from the narrow peak of the Faulhorn, with intense and unwearied pleasure. And it was not without relief; for, directly beneath, on the other side of the Faulhorn, lay the calm lake of Brienz,—then the valley of Interlaken, and the course of the Aar, closed by the exquisite lake of Thun. There was a wild chaos-like appearance in the low, bare mountains around the shores of Brienz, and the expanse of country beyond: it looked like a land of other elements than the glorious mountains that rose into the sky, with their wastes of spotless snows, where the foot of man never trod, and the eagle's

wing seldom dared to soar. However numerous, they exhibited that perfect variety of form and character, that ever marks the Swiss scenery. —Our guides had brought a cold repast and wine from the inn, and they were not chagrined at our declining to make use of it: the viands soon disappeared beneath their mountain appetite. We much wished to have lingered here till sunset, to which it wanted some hours; and though the return would have been annoying in the fading light, yet it was hard to tear ourselves away.

We now set out on the descent, coming again, after a rapid progress, to the small lake where our horses had remained: and, after a few hours, passing once more by the wild waterfall, we descended into the valley of Grindelwald, and shared the comforts of its inn. Evening had advanced so far that the last sun-beams were lingering on the fierce precipice of the Eiger, directly opposite to the window of the saloon. A live chamois was shown us, that had been caught

in a chalet above the valley: this animal is esteemed delicate eating.

A hunter, who had been out on the region of the Wetterhorn with little success, got within shot of a chamois, at the close of day, on a very rugged part of the mountain; and on its falling could with great difficulty reach the spot. He grasped his prey, however, but the light had faded fast, the precipices beneath were already dim, and the descent must be a fearful one. The wind blew fiercely, threatening a snow-storm, and the cold on the summit was too intense to be braved without shelter during the night. He had not advanced far when darkness overtook him; and slipping his foot on a narrow ledge that led along a deep descent, he fell, with the chamois closely grasped in his hand, and was found dead the following day by his brother hunters, but little injured outwardly, as the snow had broken the fall.

The church, as well as manse, in this village, were very neat, and the minister might be said

to be removed from the snares as well as tumults of the world. The Swiss clergy in general are well off, so far as competence and equality of income go. They are paid by the government of the canton, by whom the sum that each peasant and landed proprietor shall contribute is also fixed. Their incomes allow few superfluous indulgences; being from sixty (the lowest) to a hundred pounds (which is the average) a-year. In the towns it is higher; and in a country so cheap as the interior of most of the cantons, this sum affords ample provision for a minister's family. They are obliged to preach extempore, or by the memory: a rule, the strictness of which cost a young and accomplished minister his life, in the Valais, two years since. He was appointed to the church, and his inaugural sermon was attended by a great many who were drawn by the reputation of his talents: Monsieur — unhappily utterly forgot the matter of his discourse, and instead of the eloquent one he had premeditated, rambled on incoherently. Such was the effect of this failure on a nervous

and sensitive mind, that, brooding over it continually, it threw him into a decline;—he never preached again, and died in a few months.

Very early on the following morning we were on the way to the Scheideck, that closes the opposite extremity of the valley. The path lay at the foot of the mighty Wetterhorn, and grew more gloomy as we approached the end of the valley. The long, gradual acclivity of the Scheideck had nothing interesting, and we reached with pleasure its cold, moorland summit, that looked on the deep and narrow valley on the other side. A winding path led down the declivity; the mountain of the Wellhorn being close on our right, and we heard the distant roar of the avalanches on its heights and those of its loftier neighbour. We had entered a wood, through which ran the rapid torrent that forms the Reichenbach.

The guide had given hopes of seeing avalanches; but they all, from the sound, passed too remotely. Just as we issued from the wood, however, an enormous mass of ice detached itself

from the glacier above, and rolled, carrying with it a quantity of snow, into a deep fissure, and, again issuing forth, fell down the perpendicular face of the Wellhorn into the valley beneath. It was at a short distance from the spot we were passing, and continued to fall for about a quarter of an hour. The rush of the glacier down the slope into the deep fissure, where it was lost to the view, and then broke forth, as if from the tomb, down the precipice, with new fury, was like the breaking up of "the deep;" the roar was incessant: the ice and snow flew off like vapour in the descent, and the sun, shining full on the volume as it fell, gave it the exact appearance of an immense and resistless cataract. It was a noble spectacle, that could not be forgotten.

The domain we were traversing began to look more fertile on the approach, in about an hour, to the baths of Rosenlauri. It is strange to meet with so lovely a spot rising, as if by enchantment, in such a place. One dwelling only is there, but that is neat and well arranged; with the civilest

people, anticipating every want—and baths for the sick : a cascade falls beneath a rustic wooden bridge, just above the house ; and a handsome little saloon, windowed all round, affords a thorough view of the scenery.

The Reichenbach flows beneath the dwelling ; the long glacier of Rosenlauri, of a light blue colour, and in form the most elegant (if a glacier can be so denominated), descends a wild glen on the opposite side of the stream ; the Eiger is seen to lift its head even over the Scheideck, like a vast and lonely tower ; and there is a garden beside the dwelling, and a larder within, and luxuries were fast accumulating to draw the invalids and curious to the spot. Rosenlauri looked like a sweet and blessed retirement,—a spot for the sick and the sorrowing,—whose very air breathes health. Seated in the saloon, we passed some time at this home in the wilderness : not a self-denying one, for champagne was on the table, the rush of the waterfall in our ears, the stream gliding rapidly onward : the beautiful garden and the everlasting glacier side by side ; and,

when we went on our way, we wished fervently that life might never bring us a sterner halting-place.

The path ere long grew extremely narrow, and ran along the top of a precipice, at whose foot the river flowed. The savageness of the pass suddenly ceased, as we came in view of the extensive vale of Hasli, far below, the laughing pastures, the beautiful spire of Meyringen, and its thriving village. Strong was the contrast.

The falls of the Reichenbach, the most celebrated in Switzerland, were in the way to the village. The first fall, that springs from a high rock into a defile, is very fine; but not so much so as one lower down, less high but more violent, that tumbles beneath an arch, and tears its way resistlessly amidst the gloom. The lowest cataracts, nearest to the village, are the most magnificent: their stream is wide and full, and broken by projecting rocks. The women in the valley of Hasli are renowned for their comeliness, and justify the reputation they enjoy as to greater softness of feature and form than those of the

other cantons. The faces in Meyringen looked positively beautiful after so much dearth and ugliness.

Several leagues led to the great fall of the river Aar, in the valley of the Grimsel. Sending the horses on, as it was necessary to proceed on foot for some distance, and advancing to Gut-tannen, we had the good fortune to find there a small auberge, that afforded some refreshment; and the valley began to grow wild and picturesque. Two leagues farther is the small hamlet of Handeck, consisting of two or three chalets only; and at a short distance is the fall of the Aar.

It was a lovely day, of no small consequence in such scenes: the valley was very narrow, enclosed on each side by high mountains, and the path through it was a slow and continual ascent. A good view of the cataract is enjoyed from a platform on one side. It is the very finest in Switzerland, and in point of impetuosity and quantity of water resembles Schaffhausen: its height is about two hundred feet. The body

of water is very great during the summer, when the snow from the mountains and the glaciers has been melted by the heat. At the same time is seen the stream of the Erlenbach running nearly at a right angle with the Aar : it falls as if in humble rivalry with its more noble associate, and throws its sheet of water into that of the Aar, long before the latter reaches the ground—thus producing a beautiful effect. There is some wood around this cataract, but it is chiefly enclosed by large and naked rocks.

The sultriness of the place was extreme, and was augmented by the reflection from the precipices on each side and the closeness of the air in so confined a site. The stream falls in one unbroken sheet, a rare advantage in the Swiss cataracts, which are generally unequal and unsuitable in grandeur to the other features of the scenery.

Returning to the hamlet, and advancing up the valley, that began to grow a little wider, in about a league and a half we arrived at the Grim-

sel: the path was here a little difficult, and we proceeded slowly till we came to the hospice. This house, situated on a small lake, and in a most wild situation, is inhabited about four months in the year by a man who rents it of the canton of Berne; when he quits at the close of the autumn, he leaves a small stock of provisions for the relief of any person, who may risk the passage afterward during the winter season.

There are days during the fine weather, when twenty or thirty passengers seek refuge at once under his roof; and his activity, as well as that of the domestics, is taxed to provide a repast, which is in general good and sufficient. No doubt the returns well repay the trouble; although here, as in the larger hospices of St. Bernard and Gothard, meat and lodging are provided also for those poor travellers who cannot afford to pay for them; and the profits of the host are derived from the recompense the more competent visitors give: he has also the right of pasturage on some land around, and a small toll

upon the merchandize that passes. The dwelling furnished a supper after our fatigue and some tolerably good wine.

This lonely hospice stands on the slope of a mountain; the dreary tarn, or lake, is just beside it; and the hills rise high, though not closely, around: it would be an excellent abode for a hermit; and as the evening light was cast on it, and no other dwelling was within view, or within the space indeed of a long way, it was impossible to envy the individual who dwelt there. For days and weeks, sometimes, he does not meet a fellow-creature, but is engaged in tending his flocks; he manages all the household cares of his hospice, and goes to rest and wakes in the same loneliness: his lake has fish, and there is game on the heights; and the fatted calf or sheep of his herd is often killed for the stranger, whom he was not seldom on the lookout to discern toiling up the tedious ascent. The heartiness of his welcome was in proportion to the appearance of the pilgrim: if humble and destitute, his wants were supplied; but if

wealthy, the look of mine host brightened, and all the resources of his solitude were instantly put in requisition.

Switzerland! thou land of patriotism!—from mountain to valley—from the chalet to the chateau, there is one ruling passion which has a sweetness for thy natives beyond any other. Were the Venus or Apollo to cross the Alps in golden instead of marble array, nothing could save their matchless forms from instant demolition—even the charms of the goddess would be hewn in pieces. Passing the night in the hospice, we took leave next morning of this recluse, after a breakfast of coffee and milk, and proceeded to the passage of the Grimsel.

The path was fatiguing and difficult that conducted by the Meyenwand to the magnificent glacier of the Rhone, whence the river issues. It is extensive, and about eight thousand feet in length, stretching along the whole of the descent of the Furca mountain. The surface of the glacier is finely broken, and the pyramids of ice that rise from it are in many parts of con-

siderable height ; it possesses also that beautiful blue colour that distinguishes the river in its issue from the lake of Geneva. It is very precipitous, from the steep declivities of the mountain along which its course stretches ; and, unlike some of the other glaciers, there is little verdure around it except during a very small part of the summer.

Retracing the path, we again came, after a weary progress of several hours, to the hospice and its lonely inmate, and soon afterward returning down the valley of the Aar, which was now an easy and continued descent, arrived in the evening at Meyringen.

LETTER VI.

Village of Meyringen.—A Sabbath Morning.—The Pastor.—Sultry Atmosphere.—Reflections on the Psalms.—Evening.—Swiss Love of Country, exemplified in a Swiss Officer in Greece.—A Polish Exile.—Falls of the Giessbach.—Female Singers.—Lake of Brienz.—Interlaken.—A Desperate Traveller.—Castle of Unspunnen.—A Romantic Story.

THE following day was the Sabbath. Meyringen is one of the scenes which, in Switzerland, often give a peculiar impressiveness to this day. The valley was so perfectly retired and lovely—the village is a village *par excellence* even here—the very neat and clean dwellings—the well-dressed people—the luxuriant cultivation of every field and meadow—What a welcome beacon from afar, is its thin and lofty spire, to the wearied traveller !

The day was hot, the sky without a cloud, and the air began already to be very oppressive. It was a relief to lift the eye to the mountain sides, where the breeze was fresh and cool; they were now covered with groups of people, descending to the service beneath. You could see the dwellers of the hamlet far up the ascent leaving their home amidst its group of trees, and winding down "over rock, bank, and brae." Higher still was many a scattered cottage, even where there were no trees, only "the shadow of the rock;" the little family party coming forth, the parents, the children, and perhaps the old man, were as yet but faintly visible. Even from the chalet, beside the region of snows, the lonely shepherd left his flock, to descend many leagues to the church in the valley: the lonely men, from their deep solitudes, coming on with more rapid step and busy mien—for time was precious to them—contrasted with the peaceful air and measured tread of the villagers. The scene was an exquisitely peaceful as well as animated one; the mountain paths were steep and rugged,

and some of the groups were often broken, or lost to the view for a while behind a projecting rock, or in the shadow of a wood : others passed with sure foot along the verge of the precipice. As they drew nearer, and mingled with each other, we could better observe their demeanour : very old men were among them, with silver locks and clear eye, and still robust figure, looking like the patriarchs of the scene. It is wonderful what a healthful old age these men often attain ; and, many of them, have never gone perhaps, beyond the precincts of their own mountains and vale.

Most of the young men were of athletic frame, and, as well as the women, of ruddy complexion : the latter, however, could not vie in comeliness either of figure or face with their sisters of the valley : they were all unbonneted, and in their best attire. The hard, rough, outline of feature, and the strong, massive frame, seem to be the inevitable results of exposure to the mountain blasts and rigours of winter. They were a fine and hardy peasantry, of which a land

might be justly proud; there was subdued deportment and stillness of manner, that proved they were aware of the claims of that religion in whose duties they were about to engage.

Like the peasant, the pastor also is often known to pass his whole life in the retirement of his cure; his income of sixty, eighty, or even a hundred a-year, is ample; the river and the lake supply fish in abundance, and the produce of the farm and the flock is cheaply obtained. The charge of the pastor of Meyringen was an enviable one; over the wide valley of Hasli, its rich pastures, its mountain hamlets, and lone cottages, his flock were scattered; he could scarcely pay a visit, whether of condolence or welcome, without passing along the banks of the Aar, or the Reichenbach; their cataracts were familiar things to him, and the cordial welcome and the warm hearth of the mountaineers were always at his command. Then, to see all these people gathered earnestly around him, once in the week, as their sole instructor! Even if he were careless of nature,

there was yet enough to attach a man to such a scene. There is one drawback, however : he is forbidden ever to read his discourses, and if he does not possess the facility of preaching extempore, is compelled to the slavish alternative of committing them to memory. The service of the Lutheran church is simple and earnest, but some of its ceremonials are too unimpressive.

When the service in Meyringen was concluded, the villagers dispersed to their homes. There was not a breath of air ; it was an exquisite luxury to seek refuge beside the falls of the Reichenbach, and gaze on and listen to them while the sun beat so fiercely on every thing around. These secluded valleys would hardly be habitable in summer but for the waters with which they are so amply provided ; the air has all the sultriness of an Arabian desert, without any of its freshness and elasticity. Every wanderer has felt the companionship of a full and rapid stream and the curse of a scanty and half-perished one. Chateaubriand turned with disgust from the Jordan, when he saw it creeping sadly

and meagerly over its bed of sand, and the withered shrubs and parched trees on the banks, as if in mockery of its desolation. A few months later, he would have bent with joy over the fine rushing tide, when each shrub was in flower and the trees cast a proud shadow.

In a dry and sultry land, this spell of flowing waters comes over the feelings with singular power ; it is a thirst of the fancy, often as strong as the real and devouring thirst.

Is it not strange that, in the poetry of the Old Testament, the beautiful and endless imagery afforded by river, lake, and stream, should be scarcely alluded to by him who sojourned most among them ? The prince of the prophets delights to compare the visitations of Heaven to “ the broad stream,” and the wild river, “ in a weary land,” and speaks of the joy of the desert at the “ rushing of the waters.” But the Psalmist, who in his exile in the wilderness saw nature in every form, neglected the chief beauty of his country. From the solitudes of Ziph and of Maon, the Dead Sea was ever present, the

noblest memorial the world contains of the justice and terror of the divine judgments ; sublime, fearful, and indelible—and the sea of Galilee, exquisite in beauty, that no harp in Israel has yet sung.

Evening at last stole over the valley ; by the stillness it seemed that the day was more strictly observed than in many other scenes ; the shepherd bell, and then the long shrill call, came at intervals from above. The freshness of the twilight was tempting to wander again by the Reichenbach ; and the cataracts were more beautiful than beneath the glare of day ; the dim light on the white foam, and the fierce rushing of the waters, were more shadowy and awful. Sights and sounds such as these, enjoyed from childhood, cannot fail to be fixed in the heart and memory, and to bring his native scenes vividly before the Swiss, wherever he wanders.

An instance of this attachment occurred to us, when in Greece ; it was a melancholy one. Near the sea-shore, where he had lingered for some time in the poor dwelling of a native, we

met a Swiss officer, wounded and friendless. He had come to fight for the liberties of Greece, and had behaved with courage and devotion in several actions, till disabled by his wounds, and then the heartless people took no farther notice of him : he was now useless, and was neglected ; his applications for relief were unavailing.—kindness, he saw it was in vain to expect. Forsaken and almost penniless, he found his way with difficulty to the shore ; his eyes filled with tears when he spoke of his country, his dear native scenes, which he had left for a phantom.

He was a young man, of a tall and fine figure, that was broken, however, by sorrow and suffering. If he could but procure a passage, he said, for Europe, he should be happy ; it was his favourite walk, when he was able, along the shore, where he could see the vessels passing by, and think of his absent country ; but his funds were exhausted, and he was unable to pay for the passage.

It was curious to contrast this love of country with that of a noble Pole, who had settled on

the shore of the Bosphorus. He had embarked with Kosciusko in his desperate struggle for freedom, and then fled, an impoverished and almost heart-broken exile. He wandered to the neighbourhood of Constantinople, and there resolved to pass the remainder of his life: with this view, he chose a lovely spot; it had a small dwelling and a garden, and looked over the enchanting course of the Bosphorus. He kept but one domestic, an old man, who had fought by his side in the Polish struggle: and had accompanied his flight. A small income was sufficient to live in comfort, in this plain and frugal style, and his resources were not exhausted. At home, a man of rank and ancient family, living in his castle in the midst of his own domain; and now, an exile on the Bosphorus, courting solitude rather than society, his only pastime the cultivation of his little garden—the contrast was a strong and bitter one. He bore it, however, with cheerfulness and fortitude; to the strangers who chanced to visit him he behaved with great politeness; his par-

lour contained a small and choice collection of books, in the perusal of which he passed much of his time. The way had long been open for his return; he had been earnestly entreated by some former friends to this step, an amnesty having covered former political offences. But the pride of the Pole was stronger than the love of home; the wounded Swiss would have returned with rapture, though, like the prodigal son, he came poor, wretched, and forsaken.

“But shall I return,” said the exile, “to see most of my estates forfeited, my vassals passed into other hands; my castle desolate, or without a revenue to support it!—No, I love Poland dearer than my life, but I will remain here in peace and obscurity.”

Often did the ambassadors invite him to their palaces in the capital, but he always declined, and clung to his beautiful solitude with as much fondness as if it had contained wife, children, and every dear association of life.

Leaving Meyringen after noon, on the following day, we proceeded through the valley to

the small village of Brienz, on the shore of the lake. It is in a charming situation. Soon afterward we hired a boat to cross the lake, in order to view the falls of the Giessbach. After rowing about a league, we landed, and walked up a winding path to a chalet that stands just below the falls. It is inhabited by a family, consisting of husband, wife, and five or six children ; and each individual is blessed in a certain way with a musical taste and voice to give vent to it. This family circle is represented to the life in a coloured plate, sold amidst a host of other choice Swiss subjects : the old man seated at a piano, and each member, with mouth wide open, joining in the song. The piano is actually in the chalet, and any stranger may command a melodious display just beside the cataract. The waterfalls of the Giessbach have a character as well as beauty altogether peculiar ; six of them are seen at one glance, descending in succession from the wooded heights of the mountain above. They have the appearance at first of artificial cascades in a superb garden ; but the great body

of water quickly convinces that the hand of Nature alone is there. The middle and highest fall is seen from a small gallery carried directly behind it, and the cataract rushes close beside, and almost on, the spectator; but this contrivance diminishes instead of augmenting the effect, since it is perceived thereby that the torrent, which looked so resistless in front, is composed of a slender volume of water, through which the light pierces. The falls above, on the higher declivity, are very fine; and inferior in grandeur as the Giessbach undoubtedly is, altogether, to the more impetuous Reichenbach, imagination can hardly conceive so lovely a situation as it enjoys, shrouded amidst the richest wood; the beautiful lake into which it plunges is directly underneath.

Quitting this attractive spot, we returned to the village of Brienz, and to our tranquil apartment, that looked far over the shores. During supper, a company of female singers, said to be the best in the country, came into the adjoining apartment, and commenced a kind of shrieking

lament,—not in the plaintive voice of sorrow, for it rang shrilly and wildly through the whole house. They were six in number, and each took her part in the air with infinite rapidity and in excellent time. We adjourned to the garden in front of the hotel, and, it being a fine moonlight night, the singing sounded much softer than from within. They gave a variety of songs during more than an hour, and would have continued till midnight, if permitted. The lake had a lovely appearance in the clear light, and the rush of the distant cataract on the other shore was distinctly heard.

Next morning we took a boat in order to cross the lake: la belle Bateliere has given up her trade of rowing since her marriage, and with less captivating rowers we went on our course. The shore opposite to the village is particularly bold and well wooded all the way down toward Interlaken: about half-way, the snowy mountains are seen in the distance; a small isle, too, adds to the scene; yet, however attractive in many parts, this lake must yield in charm and variety

to that of Thun, from which it is separated by so small a territory.

Passing down the river Aar to a small wooden bridge, we landed and went to Interlaken : this village is greatly resorted to by travellers of all nations, as much for a residence of a few months or weeks as for a transient survey. Here are two well-organized boarding-houses for their reception. The situation of the place is central, and excellently adapted for excursions to some of the finest spots. A residence here is also excessively cheap ; indeed, the charge per day at the houses of reception is often so low as three francs, or half a crown, including board and lodging ! The table d'hôte frequently displays a motley assemblage of guests ; and as the neighbourhood is really beautiful — the Aar pouring its blue stream through luxuriant banks, and a high wooded eminence or knoll, with a kind of frail building on its summit that looks out on extensive prospects—the spot is absolutely like a fashionable watering-place ; has tea-parties, fishing excursions, pic-nics ; is perfectly ro-

matic; and cannot fail to fascinate travellers upon their first journey from their own loved isle, by whom the wonders of the land are yet unexplored. Great and rich is the variety of characters assembled; most of them animated with an eager appetite for Nature, a devouring passion for glaciers, avalanches, and inaccessible mountains. What is Clifton, with its poor hot-wells, and its mean, miserable river filthily creeping along? or even Matlock, with its pigmy mountains and shallow glens? Here the mighty Jungfrau is directly opposite to the windows of the dining and bed-rooms: the Staubbach might be heard to roar, if it could possibly be detached from the rock to which it clings so closely; and lakes, gloomy valleys, and horrid precipices, may not be counted, for number! Dazzled by the variety and splendour of these objects, or rather lulled by the good accommodations and comforts of the boarding-house of Interlaken, how many a determined tourist, or family-party, who left "the city," or, maybe, the politer end of the town, with energy and glorious hope,

have lingered here ingloriously on the banks of the Aar, and returned, satisfied that the land had its good things, leaving its perils all untried.

Not thus, however, thought or acted a desperate traveller with whom two friends, that were for a short time our companions, fell in contact on the heights of the Simplon. A Yorkshire gentleman, alone (at least accompanied only by his guide), and on foot, was overtaken by them, who were also pedestrians, about mid-day. He had a pair of top-boots, a great coat with four capes, a staff of tolerable thickness, and a broad-brimmed hat. The day was excessively hot, it being in the month of July; yet so rapid was his pace that they had some difficulty at first to keep up with him. Overjoyed, however, at meeting with two fellow-countrymen, he after a while slackened his progress and entered into a most animated conversation. He had travelled, he said, through the greater part of the country: kept a note of the number of lakes and mountains he had visited; having come on purpose

from Yorkshire to see all that was to be seen. He could not speak one word of French, and his guide only a few words of English,—so that between them, it is no wonder if mistakes were sometimes committed. Wiping his face from the perspiration that almost streamed over it, but still advancing at a round pace, he entreated them earnestly to tell him, if there was anything worth seeing in the road they were travelling. His guide had a hard birth of it, for he complained that the traveller often turned suddenly out of the road to the right or left, if any object at a distance caught his eye, and, in spite of all his remonstrances, would not resume his journey till he had satisfied his curiosity.

Great was the pleasure, the tourist declared, he had felt in a land so different from his own ; yet there were drawbacks ; his disappointment had sometimes been keen : often had he toiled up a high mountain at the persuasion of some other traveller whom he had encountered at the inns,—and when arrived at its summit (which, with his top-boots and four-caped coat, had cost

many an arduous step,) he had seen only dim and distant prospects, nothing clear or satisfying. He had not the least intention of passing the bounds of Switzerland; but he had heard so much by the way of the road over the Simplon that he determined to traverse it; and, being now on the descent of the mountain, he believed he might as well see the whole of the road, and should go on to Milan, where it terminated. He inquired every ten minutes if there was nothing worth seeing in the place they were at, glancing his eyes eagerly on every side; and whether the lake Maggiore was not very fine, as he intended to pause on its banks. They came at last to the little inn on the descent of the Simplon, to the comforts of which we were afterwards so much indebted, during a passage in winter. Here they resolved to rest a few hours, and the impatient Yorkshireman, not brooking the delay, hurried down the mountain, after a hasty refreshment, on his way into Italy.

A few miles distant from Interlaken, are the ruins of the castle of Unspunnen, if a single

tower, standing on a rock, and to which neither door nor window gives entrance, may be called by that name. A few centuries ago, it was a castle of some extent as well as strength. The baronial residences of Switzerland could have possessed little beauty or magnificence; their remains are never impressive; perched also as they sometimes are, at the foot of stupendous mountains, they are rather an injury and a defect, than an improvement to the scene.

The ruin of Unspunnen is in a lone and wild vale, amidst trees and rocks; it has not been without its fame or its tale in days that are passed; the episode of the beautiful Ida would have been good matter for a lay. She was the only daughter of the Lord of Unspunnen: there was a knight called Rodolph, the bravest in the court of the Duke of Zähringen; the latter dwelt in the castle of Thun, and was the mortal enemy of Ida's father. Rodolph had fallen desperately in love with her at a tournament, where she was present; but the baron sternly forbade his suit, because he was in the service of his enemy. De-

spair was of no use ; so Rodolph boldly attacked the castle of Unspunnen, in the absence of its lord, and carried off his bride. A fierce war was the consequence, and a burning hate and fruitless slaughter of many years, between the bereaved father and Berthold, Duke of Zähringen. The latter at last resolved on an interview with his enemy beneath his own roof, on seeking the lion in his den. Alone, and with the child of the beautiful Ida in his arms, he entered the castle ; its lord was now stricken in years, and the fierceness of his spirit was broken ; he was sitting in his hall, in loneliness, when his enemy stood before him, and held forth the burden he bore. The old man gazed first and fondly on the child ; those were the very features of Ida, who had never been absent from his thoughts ; and slowly his hatred gave way, and he forgave her with tears, and then presented his hand to his foe, and from that hour became his friend. The daughter was restored to her inheritance, and Rodolph came a welcome guest to dwell in the castle. “ Let this be a day of rejoicing ! ”

said the old man ; and games, and feasts, and joustings, were held in the wild vale for many a day. Pity that no minstrel was there, whose strains could be remembered in after-days ; one could almost fancy the grey harper, seated on the rock, and giving his wild tones to the wind ; and, as daylight faded on oak, tower, and steep, mourning over the ruin that had fallen heavily.

LETTER VII.

City of Berne.—A Bernese Family.—Ignorance of the Swiss respecting their own country.—Public Institutions at Berne.—Professor Wytttenbach.—Academy of Berne.—Spirit of Aristocracy.—Want of Occupation for Educated Youth.—Monument of Madame Langhans at Hindelbank.—Village of Frutigen—Its destruction by Fire—Appearance of the Ruins.—Destruction of Salines.—Picturesque Scenery near the Lake of Geneva.—Vevay.—Clarens.—Montreux.—The Pastor of Montreux and his Brother.—Chateau of Blonay.—Nyon.—Morges.—Instance of Longevity.

THE level country from the lake-side to Berne resembles a fine park in its richness and high cultivation: the wooden dwellings of the wealthy farmers, ere the whiteness and freshness of the material are worn away, look like fairy models of neatness and comfort. Berne is a dull and gloomy town; the low, heavy corridors in all

the streets have an almost monastic appearance. The place, indeed, is apt to give the idea of a vast and noble monastery, in the bosom of enchanting walks and shades, where the inmates seldom wander beyond the walls, within which reign stillness, stateliness, and reserve.

The loveliest promenades in the world are seldom frequented by the people: the ladies seem to make a principle of not walking; and in shooting with the bow (a favourite amusement in most of the towns), it is considered indecorous to admit their presence. The stranger, after traversing the rich and magnificent canton, is not prepared for so dull and joyless a capital: the stern republic seems to have copied the manners and demeanour of the Roman days; and their simplicity also. The latter quality is admirable.

We passed an evening at the dwelling of a wealthy Bernese, one of the members of the council. The manners of the family were unaffected and kind; they were well informed, save in one point, — the beauties and localities of

their own land:—if surprise is expressed, “We are Swiss; we seldom wander to these places,” is often the reply. The host was a sensible and amiable man: his blue eye and fine healthful features were full of mildness and benignity. Politics were the chief subject of discourse. This man, who was of ancient family, had, beneath his real simplicity, all the pride and feelings of a noble. The whole family were decidedly religious, and what in England would be termed evangelical. The mother and the daughters went to no places of amusement, and even but little into general society, and occupied themselves often in deeds and visits of charity. The tea, with the accompaniments of wine, cakes, cream, &c. was served in the open air, in the garden, for it was a calm and beautiful evening.

Great must be the monotony as well as regularity of a life passed almost wholly within the walls of Berne—the walk on the ramparts is at evening unrivalled—the whole chain of Alps being full in view—but it is little frequented. Perhaps what is so often before the eye loses its charm at last: but the habit of knitting stock-

ings, pursued with such avidity by many well-dressed females, seated beneath the trees, has an odd appearance in such a site.

Not a glance was ever raised, even for a moment, to the mountains, though every hue of heaven was lingering there. A singular feature in the generality of the Swiss, is, their extreme personal ignorance of their own country. There are some exceptions to this, of course, especially among literary men, whose enterprise and research have illustrated the remotest parts of the land. Did such a territory as the Oberland exist in the heart of England, Italy, or even France, great would be the concourse of the natives; but to the greater part of the Bernese, it might as well be placed in New Zealand as within view, and at a few hours' distance. What numbers, who have lived half a century on the lake of Geneva, have never visited Chamouni!

Literature or the fine arts do not seem natives here. There is a public library, and a small museum of natural history, in which is a fine collection of the various birds and animals peculiar to Switzerland; but one of the dogs of St.

Bernard, stuffed, and well preserved, is the most interesting ; with antiquities, minerals and coins, and paintings, not by Raphael or Correggio, but portraits of all the avoyers of Berne.

The real pride of the town is its public institutions : the hospital, a spacious and beautiful building, and well managed ; the two orphan-houses ; the public granaries, in case of scarcity ; the infirmary, &c. prove a spirit in the government alive to the welfare of the community.

The attentions of the Pastor Wyttenbach, professor of natural history, a learned and excellent man, made the residence here more agreeable. He was one, among many, of those instances of old age, which health combine to render delightful. It seems as if the very great simplicity of Swiss habits and tastes aided mainly to insure the healthfulness of the heart and temper, in a green old age.

The professor, while illustrating some article in the museum by a reference to his own wanderings, suddenly paused ; the clock struck twelve : he made a hasty apology, said he was

engaged to a dinner-party, and hurried off to table at the primeval hour. Simple and unpretending as a child, full of various knowledge that has raised him to celebrity, Wytttenbach's life has not flowed, as it should have done, free from darkness and sorrow : his piety bids him bear calmly, where others would despond or murmur.

His country is much indebted to his lonely journeyings to explore and illustrate many of its unfrequented parts. He was the first who, many years ago, traversed the Wengen Alp from Lauterbrunnen to Grindelwald, thereby opening to the stranger's foot one of the finest rambles in Switzerland. Having heard some of the old peasants from the vales say that this route had been tried by mountaineers, he set out alone, passed it successfully, and was the means of its being made a good and convenient route. He spoke with enthusiasm of the pleasure he had felt in these excursions, with his staff for a companion, or with a friend, the learned M. Bonstetten : he had the feeling also, now unhappily

so rare, of novelty in his untrodden scenes. Comfortable inns, caleches, and guides, were not encountered at the close of every day; but the shepherd's hut, the snow-storm, the rock sometimes for a pillow, with weariness and hunger.

The academy of Berne has ten professors, and about a hundred and eighty scholars. Here the sons of the chief families are educated, as well as numbers of poor students from town and country, for the expense is small. Education is sufficiently cheap and abundant in Switzerland, but it is not so easy to make a profitable use of its advantages when completed.

A young man of talent and ambition has few excitements to exertion, few avenues to fame or fortune open to him. The army is a mere post of honour and inaction; the profession of the law is as free from animating struggles as brilliant successes; and the church, for which there are so many students and candidates, is a bare competence.

In the political career, even to be a member

of the council of state, that object of first importance and envy is attended with little emolument. The sons of the wealthy farmers, who now form a third part of the house of parliament of Berne, consisting of nearly three hundred, may look forward with some hope to this dignity, if capable. Many of them have entered the academy, as well as the German universities. In the families of the patrician counsellors this dignity, if not hereditary, is almost equivalent to it, because the council always chooses its own members; thus creating envy and jealousy, not only in the minds of neighbours but even of friends and relatives.

It seems as if a spirit of aristocracy is an inevitable part of our fallen nature; it is in vain to strive to shake off its spell; like the poisoned shirt of Hercules, it cleaves painfully to the last. It eats into the very core of this proud republic, walks abroad in its streets, dwells in its chambers. When men, often of the same talents and pretensions, living on terms of almost equality, are born half of them to be rulers and

the other half to be obedient, the result cannot be favourable to kindness or good feeling. The choice to the honours ought surely to be elective, by the free votes of the citizens, as well as of the senators, who are, as if in mockery, said to receive their power from the former. These liberal words and professions are but mere sounds.

Still, a great part of the educated youth of Switzerland are compelled, for want of occupation at home, to seek other lands, or to enter into foreign service. And when, after many years are passed, they return, with an increase of wealth or of wounds, in fighting for a despot's cause—the result is not always favourable.

A long residence in foreign cities leaves little enthusiasm for the seclusion of their native valleys and towns, where they often aspire to the administration of the laws and of justice, for which their experience abroad has not given the best qualification. Few cherish a taste for letters. The pictures of Zimmerman, of the unrivalled enjoyments of a cultivated mind turning

from the world to the loneliness of nature, are seldom fulfilled in his own land. Switzerland, to be permanently loved, ought rarely or never to be forsaken ; its simple tastes and attachments often wither beyond the Alps, and, if brought home once more, there is alloy and discontent mingled in the cup.

The excursions around Berne, particularly in the direction of Argovia, are full of beauty and variety. About six miles distant, in the church of Hindelbank, is a rare ornament in Switzerland, an exquisite piece of sculpture, executed by Nahl, a celebrated artist. It is to the memory of Maria Langhans, the young and beautiful wife of the pastor of the place, who died in childbirth. She is rising from the tomb at the sound of the last trumpet, that has severed the lid of the tomb ; with one hand she eagerly pushes away the broken fragments, and supports her infant child with the other. The countenance is full of sweetness, mingled with an expression of terror at the sound she hears. But why is the monument, instead of being raised

in a conspicuous spot, inclosed in the pavement, with a covering of wood, which must be removed in order to view it ?

The transition was grateful from the interior of Berne to the wild passage once more of the Simmenthal. A melancholy disaster had befallen since our last visit here. The large village of Frutigen was burned to ashes. Frutigen was in the route to the Kandersteg, two or three leagues to the left of the Simmenthal ; it stood near the stream of the Kander, and was a wealthy and flourishing village, of one hundred and fifty houses, many of them of very large dimensions, and extremely well built, for here dwelt manufacturers in high prosperity and some substantial farmers. The stranger was surprised to find so many resources in so secluded a region. Beneath many of these roofs there was absolute luxury to a Swiss, as far as abundance and comfort went. It was placed out of reach of avalanche or flood, the two most destructive agents in Switzerland ; and its people might with reason dwell in security.

A fire broke out, and raged with such fury that, in the space of two hours, the whole was a heap of ashes; farms, manufactures, barns, the store of the peasant as well as the wealthy man—all perished. The few gardens alone, full of flowers and fruit-trees, were still in bloom beside the mass of ashes. The dwellings were mostly built of wood, that favoured the progress of the flames, whose progress it was not possible to arrest, and seventeen hundred persons were rendered houseless.

It was a dreadful visitation, that to the people seemed like a sudden judgment, so rare is the occurrence of a fire in this country. The appearance of the ruined village was striking: the church was uninjured, but useless now, for the congregation was scattered without a home. A number had taken refuge in the nearest cottages and chalets; and many were wandering about the blackened dwellings, that had been the homes of their fathers for, perhaps, a century. The calamity fell harder probably on the rich man than on the poor, for most of the pro-

perty was uninsured. The labourer could find a welcome home in the poor chalet of the shepherd, and enjoy his rude fare ; but not so the owners of those handsome wooden dwellings, the little aristocracy of Frutigen—the pride of the place. Loneliness of situation does not even here level the little barriers of rank and caste. All were equal now, however ; but the expression of sadness, and even despair, was strongest on the countenance of the ruined manufacturer.

The minister's house, beside the church, was also spared, and he might look forth from his warm threshold on the scene of ruin—but his occupation was gone. A mill and two small houses in the outskirts were all that escaped. The grief of the people was very great ; it was a hopeless thing to expect that their happy village would rise again, as formerly ; years could not repair the loss. It was one of the finest and most flourishing in the whole canton of Berne. The clean and comfortable auberge was also gone.

It was as sudden a distress as befel the town

of Salines, on the French side of the Jura, which we passed through soon afterwards. Never was there any thing more sad and picturesque. Salines filled a very narrow valley, or ravine, at the foot of lofty precipices, and stood on a gentle descent, down which a high wind blew the sparks of a chimney, and, the roofs being all of wood, and the atmosphere hot and dry, they caught like tow. The richer families being at their country-houses, their handsome residences sunk before the flames, without a hand near to help. In one part a massive portico stood entire, conducting only to the dark remains; in another, the fine old trees in the court were untouched, though gates and walls had disappeared around them. The sign of an inn still hung forth, attached to its pillar, while the interior was empty and still. But the forest could not have been consumed more utterly or quickly than Frutigen.

Passing again by Mont Bovon to Bulle, the road led on the second day to the lake of Geneva and the vicinity of Vevay. Splendid is

the scenery from the chateaus and hills around : from day to day it never wearies ; at morn and eve it is still fresh and beautiful as ever to the fancy. From the windows of our own chateau, the *coup d'œil* was inexpressibly beautiful : the dark shadows of the rocks of Meillerie, resting on the lake ; the village of St. Gingouph beside, with the gorge of its rich and bold valley behind ; above, like the watchful genii of the whole, the seven peaks of the Dent du Midi, clothed in perpetual snow ; beneath, the valley of the Rhone and the castle of Chillon. Adjoining Vevay, and also at the water's edge, was the little village and towers of the castle of Latour. The sultriness of the weather was at this time extreme ; not a dry, clear heat, but a relaxing and oppressive one. No excursions were desirable till evening, when a gentle breeze set in along the shore.

Clarens has sweeter villages nearer it than itself, and, but for its fame, its common-looking dwellings by the road-side would be overlooked for the sake of the lovely and peerless Mont-

reux. The situation of the latter, beside high and wooded precipices, is inimitable: its dwellings are models of neatness; the river divides its streets, rushing furiously along at the bottom of a deep ravine, that is crossed by a bridge: its ancient church and elegant spire stand apart, shrouded in wood. The climate of Montreux is the softest in Switzerland; and of all the churchyards we had ever seen in our wanderings, no one overlooks such various and delicious scenery.

It is not more distinguished for the attractions of its site than for the singular excellence of the aged minister, who has so long exercised in it his pastoral care. Monsieur ——, the learned curé of the village, is ninety-six years of age, and still preaches every Sabbath in his secluded church, with an eloquence that the approach to a century of years has not abated. He has resided many years in England as tutor to a lady of high rank; and about fifty years since he returned to take charge of his present flock. Patronage has been heaped on him from England; but, though his income is handsome, he

preserves the utmost simplicity of life, and a charm and amiableness of manners that seem to belong to a purer age and scene than to the valley of tears through which he has nearly passed. His hair is not thin, and as white as the snow of his own mountains; and his large light eye is yet full of fire, nor is its sight dim. The power of his memory is but little impaired, as is evident by the animation that spreads over his impressive features, when engaged in conversation that interests him. To relieve the wants of his people, and to labour for their spiritual good, are the chief pleasures of this curé.

It is a singular circumstance that Monsieur — has a twin-brother, who is also a minister, and preaches, and bears his age of ninety-six with equal vigour, though of a less strong and accomplished mind than the pastor of Montreux. They are so exactly alike in size and feature, that even their friends have sometimes been at a loss to distinguish one from the other. The most ludicrous scenes have sometimes occurred from this strange resemblance. When one bro-

ther has taken a walk along the high road to the neighbouring town or villages, peasants, who were perfect strangers to the two curés, have been struck by meeting so venerable and impressive a personage, and in the course of a few miles after, have beheld, apparently the same being, with the same dress, features, and manner, as the one who had previously passed, advancing full upon them. They have sometimes looked on in mute terror, or else taken to their heels out of the way, while the pastor passed on to join his relative.

There is an Italian blandness in the air of Montreux, being defended by its amphitheatre of mountains from the cold and piercing winds, and open only to the south.

The chateau of Blonay looks enviable on its eminence at the foot of the mountains; ancient, with fossé and massive walls and court, mossy and grass-grown, with spacious and lone apartments, it has tempted more than one traveller to become an inmate. But scenery and old remembrances could not compensate for the

keen winds and extreme cold: eternal fires were necessary: even in June every chamber had its blazing pile of wood. It was found a costly as well as chilling residence, that now tempts in vain, though an English family of some note, with ten children, wintered it there for two years.

One of the most attractive situations on the lake is the village of Nyon, with its rows of noble walnut-trees. It was the native place of the admirable Flechière, vicar of Madeley, whose countenance as well as spirit bore so close a resemblance to those of Fenelon. He might well speak with enthusiasm of the scenes of his earlier life, so utterly unlike the dreary, flat, dismal country around Madeley. The walks in the neighbourhood of Nyon are full of beauty, and its healthiness, as well as that of the other villages along the shore, cannot be questioned.

Walking one day on the shore near Morges, where he resided during the summer, a friend of mine met a lady, one hundred and two years of age; her appearance did not indicate more

than eighty. She was walking, without halting or decrepitude, with a younger companion, who introduced him to her. This ancient had passed her whole life on the banks of the lake, chiefly in Morges and its vicinity, and talked cheerfully of the past scenes of her life—her century, that might well be said to have passed like a dream; for what treasures or resources could memory have gathered in a little country-town, to give much interest or excitement to old age!

The old lady's faculties were in exceedingly good repair; the eyes were not yet dim, the hearing was not yet sealed, neither had the memory departed; but every relative and friend must have long since passed away—parent, brother, husbands. Even her children were stricken in years. It was like St. Leon's seal of immortality, and she seemed to think, by her unconcern and talkativeness, as if she had nothing to do with the king of terrors, but was an exempt being. A very small figure, with no hollowness or ghastliness of feature, thin lips, a quick eye and tone of voice, she paced along

quickly, close to the rippling waves that she had seen break there for more than a hundred years.

A friend of mine at Lausanne went to Edinburgh at the age of twenty, to study medicine, and returned at the end of three years; till which return he declared he had never visited Geneva, and to this day had never gone to Chamouni or Mont Blanc.

At Morges lived a near descendant of Zimmermann's, a gentleman of independent fortune; but, alas! for the love of solitude, and communion with waterfalls, streams, and precipices,—that must have expired with his ancestor. From the dull, monotonous Morges he wandered not, and had small sympathy with such a thing as nature.

LETTER VIII.

Geneva.—Residence in Switzerland.—Sect of the Momiers—Persecuted by the Authorities—Their Tenets—Private Meetings—Increase of the Sect—Activity of the Female Members—Form of Worship.—Visit to the Curé.—Travelling Monk of St. Bernard.—Excursion to the Convent.—Valley of Bagnes.—Hospice of the St. Bernard.—The acting Superior.—The real Superior.—Night on the St. Bernard.—Adventures of Travellers.—Two Italians with two Guides perish by the fall of an Avalanche.—Cemetery of the Monastery.—The Guides and their Dogs.—Effect of Eau de Cerises on a party of English Ladies.—Fate of another Female Traveller.—Severity of Winter on the St. Bernard.

GENEVA, with its vicinity, is the only really habitable place in Switzerland; in every other, the “uses of life grow dull and weary” after a time: the beauties of scenery and many a delightful ride or walk cannot atone for the absence of attractive society, the many little but ineffable excitements of the world. A residence

of two years in many parts of the country may perhaps allow us to judge of its advantages: they are not for a moment to be compared with those of the south of France or of Italy: in both the latter, cheapness of living includes luxury also, as well as various facilities for a family. But a Swiss residence entails in general a cheapness of all the necessaries and a scarcity of the luxuries of life; execrable wine, indifferent cookery; servants' wages high. The people, from keeping so much at home, possess no great variety or resources. In conversation their habits are simple and primeval; dinner always at twelve or half past; the *gouté*, or "hearty tea," as it is called in Devonshire, where the guest is expected to deal freely with the sundry solid cakes, &c. During half the year the scenery, save what is enjoyed from the windows, may be said to be sealed to the eye of the resident.

At this time the tranquillity of the church on the shores of the lake of Geneva was disturbed by a strong religious excitement. Most of the

Lutheran clergy lifted up their voices, and even stimulated the authorities to strong measures, against this novelty and heresy, as it was termed. Even the greater part of the congregations at first regarded the rising sect with suspicion; they were called Momiers in derision, the members being chiefly of the lower classes of society. But opposition, and even persecution, only made them cleave the closer to their loved sentiments.

To the dismay of its powerful adversaries, Momierism, ere long, numbered in its ranks several of the more genteel and affluent inhabitants. Ladies, often the first to espouse a new sect, not only became members, but even ardent and determined advocates; their purse, their eloquence, and their zeal, were all embarked in the cause. The priesthood and the magistracy fell into the usual error on this occasion; they had recourse to harsh and arbitrary measures. Several of the clergy who declared their adherence to the people were called to Geneva to render an account of their sentiments, which they decidedly refused to abandon, or to give a promise that

they would not preach them to the people. In consequence, they were expelled, as summarily as the ministers of our own Charles's day, and banished from the Pays de Vaud. Such a sentence was ruin; the loss of home and stipend left them destitute; they were nearly all young men; age would have been less bold and self-denying. If the youthful pastor we afterwards knew intimately was a sample of these sufferers, they were rather to be envied than pitied; he also was a Momier, but a very amiable and good man: we visited his little village in the interior. The ejected ministers retired to other countries, and waited till the storm should cease. A few remained behind, and continued to preach in private dwellings. For some time there was little prospect of indulgence; even ladies, without benefit of sex, were committed to durance; "gens d'armes" entered their dwellings, and the fair culprits were confined to their apartments, or in the prison, a good part of the day, to terrify them from an attendance at the meetings. At one of the latter, the soldiers, coming by surprise, locked the doors, and placed every one

in jeopardy: the more active escaped through the windows. Had this happened a century ago, the fierce raids of Claverhouse and the stern Cameronians might have been maintained amidst the glens and precipices of the Alps.

The tenets, however, of these people had neither novelty nor heresy: "the religion of the Redeemer," they said, "was to be felt in the heart, not coldly, but with a deep and exquisite enjoyment: the influence of spirit, of mercy, and love, might so fill the mind, as to give security against sin, as well as a sure hope of future felicity." Sentiments, however welcome and consoling, seldom make a lasting impression without other aids and excitements; there was many a secret and loved gathering beneath each other's roof, where they told of their mutual faith and fears, and then went comforted away. These meetings were now forbidden by a decree; but they were not suppressed. How was it possible to suppress an ardent and simple body of people, who deemed it their absolute duty, as well as delight, to meet together, though the dungeon or the stake were the alternative?

Within the space of three or four years, since these sentiments were first started and discussed at Lausanne, they have been diffused far and wide, in village and hamlet, as well as town; even the *juge de pays*, as well as the merchant, have declared their adherence. In more than one situation, the people are able to maintain the minister who visits them; not a week elapses, in the chief towns of the Canton de Vaud, without several assemblies in private.

The minister's arrival at the place from his own residence is carefully kept a secret from all but the members; the large room is well lighted (for it is night), while the assembly of both sexes, the men ranged on one side and the women on the other, sit in silence. He enters at last, to their great joy; an inspiring hymn is sung, and he commences an animating and impassioned discourse, quite extemporaneous, and addressed chiefly to the feelings of his audience.

There was certainly much of the severe and gloomy spirit of Calvin in the measures resorted to in order to suppress the new sect: it is

strange that the Swiss authorities should not have better understood the human mind and character than to think that menaces and imprisonment could stifle religious enthusiasm. They have proved, in this instance, the cradle from which it has sprung forth with new and unconquerable vigour. This cause is not like the transient and vehement system of the celebrated Krudener, who was also expelled the cantons a few years since for promulgating her wild sentiments. She was too lofty and refined a visionary to seize on the feelings of the common people, who could not enter into her mysticism or share in her transports. The effect she produced was short-lived, and her cause faded away for want of zealous supporters. But this system of the Momiers, though perfectly simple, is concentrated and strong, and bears with it the very elements of success and victory. No lofty or peculiar revelations are claimed; no member is exalted high above the rest for surprise or imitation; but the minister and the poorest of the people, the *avocat* and the *paysan*, the lady and

the washerwoman, all meet alike on the same kindred soil, drink of the same fountain of inspiration on a footing of perfect equality, speak of their hopes, fears, and triumphs, with mutual sympathy and mutual kindness. All feel that they are embarked on the same troubled but exciting course, that the same tide wafts them onward for good or for ill; for the system is a purely spiritual one, and also an eminently social one.

The interests of the society are admirably served by the private and earnest visits of the female members to families and individuals; they enter with an air of perfect simplicity, and, being seated, commence a touching and earnest address on the subject of their best and highest interests. Two or three of their books and pamphlets are not forgotten, and are placed in the hand of the hearer. They have already their own hymn-books; many of the pieces are of original composition, and do no discredit to the genius of the composer; and treatises also, explanatory of their sentiments, touching on the

darkness that shrouds too much of the land, the supineness that lulls the spirits of its people, and so on. No Quaker, however, can be more unassuming 'or persevering than these female disciples, whom the rest of the natives call Quixotes, and regard with dislike; but if success is the test of a good cause, they have it, and will reap it in future years still more abundantly. The dry, cold, comfortless system of Calvin falls every day before these humble but untired and determined innovators—the Soci-nianism that has thrown its blasting shadow over the shores of the lake begins to give way before the sure yet noiseless march of the obscure Momi-ers. A few years more, and they will, most probably, be a powerful and flourishing body of people.

One day, we were called on by a respectable female, while residing a short time in one of the towns on the lake: she entered into an exposition of their sentiments; and the conversation ended by a request that we would attend one of their assemblies, to which our curiosity acceded.

This was no easy matter, for the "watch and ward" resembled not a little that of the highland worthies of old, when pursued and hunted to mountain and cave. It was a dark and chill evening, and by the aid of a lantern we threaded our way through some narrow streets, and at last arrived at the dwelling, and then at the door of the apartment, where the service was held; the latter was carefully locked: on being cautiously opened, a devoted but not numerous assembly was within; one of the pastors, a middle-aged man, presided. The classes of society present were rather strangely mingled; but the sense of such a distinction was utterly unfelt. There was a hymn and prayer; a short address by the minister; and often—the part of the service most dear perhaps to the assembly—the detailing, by those so disposed, the religious hope and enjoyment of their own minds. The excitement was not diminished by the apprehension that the police might every moment break in, armed with "the power of this world."

The visit to the village of the "Curé" already spoken of was interesting; it was a solitude, and not a beautiful one: the noble trees and romantic scenery of so many a Swiss hamlet were wanting here. There was an income of about sixty pounds a year, an agreeable wife, and three children. Yet the comfort and the joy must have been chiefly within, in the mind: outwardly, there was no resource to excitement. A young and pale man, with a brilliant dark eye, full of benevolence and peace—for he was a faithful pastor, whose obscure little charge might be called his world—he evidently exulted in the progress of what he described as the "pure and fervent religion of Christ." Nearly all his people might already be termed Momiers; and he did not doubt that persecution must ere long relax and the rejected ministers be restored. In a great measure this has been the case; policy at last induced liberation, and a partial reluctant indulgence.

It was now the season for an excursion to St. Bernard, once somewhat formidable to travellers,

but now affording facilities and comforts even to the fair sex, almost equal to a favourite watering-place. One of the fathers of the convent was on his annual tour to receive subscriptions, had been entertained beneath our roof, and his details were interesting. He was a young man, with a dark complexion, large expressive eyes, and good-natured features, in which there was more of the world than of monasticism. This release from his mountain solitude was evidently most grateful; during five months of almost every year he thus travelled through town, village, and hamlet, and the contributions were every where willingly paid,—so high is the character of the St. Bernard fathers for humanity and usefulness. He fared well, was well lodged, and mingled in a great deal of good society;—sometimes he found a home in a chalet or an auberge, and the succeeding night was made welcome in one of the best dwellings of the land. This vicissitude, and the kindness shewn him, made the young monk strongly attached to his wanderings; few pilgrims ever set

out for a favourite shrine with more eagerness. When the snows began to melt, and the April sun to shine warm and clear, he broke from the weary monotony of the walls where, for seven months, each day brought the same inclement weather and chilling scene.

The passage up the Valais was intensely hot : a pause of a few hours at Martigny was welcome ; the traces of the ravages caused by the inundation of the valley of Bagnes were still visible. Stones and rocks are wildly scattered on every side, and pastures and fields have entirely disappeared ; nearly a hundred dwellings in Martigny were destroyed, and many lives were lost. The appearance of the valley itself is still terrific, particularly between the spot near the glacier, where formerly stood the bridge of Mauvoisin and Le Chable ; the glen is here extremely narrow, from the approximation of the opposite mountains, and was particularly exposed to the violence of the torrent. The distance, seventy thousand feet, was traversed in thirty-five minutes, giving a velocity of thirty-

three feet in a second of time, and the supply of water has been estimated at three hundred thousand cubic feet in a second. An immense mass of ice still remained; a plan had been in operation for its gradual removal, by the action of streams of water conducted to it from the opposite heights, and made to flow over the mass in such a manner, as, in the course of a few summers, it was hoped, to cut it through, when it might fall into a lower part of the valley, and be eventually dissolved.

The only entrance to the valley of Bagnes is from St. Branchier, about two leagues from Martigny, on the route to St. Bernard. Hence to Liddes, and afterwards to Saint Pierre, part of the way through a country of primeval barbarity, ravines, rocks, and the foaming torrent of the Drance. From the latter place to the hospice is about ten miles, and is traversed on mules; the ascent was slow, and the last group of larch trees was soon passed, and then the way was a mere desolation: vegetation was at an end, and a long tract of snow succeeded.

At last, the melancholy hospice was seen—a joyful sight in the wilderness of snow; never was there a khan in the desert, or a well in the burning sand, more inexpressibly welcome; the little lone and still lakes seemed hardly like the waters of this world; frozen during three parts of the year, they were now unchained. The little garden, with its few stunted vegetables, was almost a mockery of vegetation; but within the walls, the welcome was kind and warm. It was now evening. Being conducted to a comfortable apartment, where a fire was quickly kindled, we gave up all thoughts of exploring the neighbourhood for the day. At supper, the table was well and hospitably spread, and the novelty was great, of meeting with good cookery and delicious wine in this wintry and drear seclusion. The Muscat de Chambave, a delicious sweet wine from the valley of Aost, and of which a very small quantity only is made, is not to be found in any other convent in Europe: this had been twelve years in bottle. The superior, who always sits at table with his guests, is

an elderly and agreeable man, and exerts all his powers of pleasing, to make his visitors feel at home : in general, none of the other monks join the company at table. Few entreaties were necessary to induce us to enjoy the whole scene highly, and do justice to the good things set before us : there was no denial in the good father's behaviour ; he ate and drank like the rest, and was very cheerful.

Most visitors remain only a few hours, and find that period quite sufficient in so dreary and unattractive a region ; certainly, after the first impression is over, a sensation of loneliness and almost exile—a consciousness that one is in the least habitable barrier of earth, from whose bourne it is vain to wander on any side—will creep on the feelings. What a situation, in which to linger out life, or even to pass a single year ! The dreariest monastery in Upper Egypt, even that of the chain, on a lofty precipice, where all the communication with the world below is by means of a basket and pulleys, is almost preferable to this waste of eternal snows and piti-

less winds. In the former, in spite of the exile, there are splendid skies, warm and beautiful nights, and a dry and pure atmosphere; but here, the severity of winter will even crush the youngest and hardiest recluse. On one occasion, two young shepherds, in love either with religion or with idleness, earnestly offered themselves as novices; they were accepted, but after the first year gladly hastened back to their flocks again.

The real superior of the convent does not reside in it; being an old man, he has lived for many years at Martigny, attended by a few of the chief brethren of the community. The air of the mountain is more piercing than he can endure; those of the brotherhood whose health is seriously affected also share for a time in the milder climate of the retreat at Martigny. The community does not, like that of La Trappe, live beneath a system of rigorous fasting or maceration. The allowance of a bottle of wine is daily dealt out to each, and this serves during the two meals of dinner and supper; but, if any

of them are unwell, an additional quantity is allowed. No certain recompense is accepted, but there is a poor's box in the church, into which the donations of all strangers are dropped, and this is a handsome mode of remunerating their hospitality.

With what a deep and even solemn stillness the night comes down on St. Bernard; no object but the sky and the wilderness of snows, whose excessive whiteness, even in the faintest starlight, prevents its ever being dark—neither tree, nor rock, nor pasture, nor vestige of green, nor the shepherd's chalet, nor his flock; the whole scene of life, animate and inanimate, was concentrated within the tempest-beaten walls. The fathers at last retired to their cells, and we were conducted, after the superior's departure, to our dormitory.

The next day, and a splendid sun-rise brought cheerful thoughts and a ramble into the vicinity; wood is surely more precious here than gold—of what avail would be even the gift of Midas, that could scatter the glittering piles on the convent floor. Pleasure is a great stranger, as hope was

to the entrance of Dante's hell ; there is no ambition, and scarcely any emulation, in a body of ten or twelve recluses : the love of wealth, of women, of distinction, can hardly be passions, by the side of the mournful lakes, or wilds of everlasting winter ; for the busy and joyous world is afar, and even its faintest voice cannot reach hither. Many are the tales which the fathers tell of mischance and sorrow in the mountain passages during their long abode ; various incidents and adventures of all classes of society have fallen under their notice.

It was during the last winter that two Italians, whose home was in the valley of Aost beneath, were on their passage over the mountain. It was already drawing towards the evening when they arrived, and, after resting and taking some refreshment, they resolved to proceed. It was represented that the appearance of the sky predicted heavy falls of snow during the night ; that the wind had now risen, and had set in violently in the very face of the path they were to take. It was in vain to endeavour to restrain their

departure; they had been absent many years from their families, they said, having travelled as merchants about France and Germany, and were now quite impatient to return to their native valley. The last benefit the kind monks could bestow was, to give them two of the experienced guides of the convent to accompany them through the most perilous part of the way.

Thus assisted, they soon afterwards set out. It became dark not long after they quitted the convent, but as it is a continued and gradual descent of six hours to the valley of Aost, they had hoped to arrive at their own homes in the course of the night; for the distance seemed very small compared with the long journeys they had already travelled. The snow-storm began about an hour after their departure, and the wind blew with fury; it was scarcely possible to make head against it, and the priests felt the worst apprehensions for the safety of the unfortunate Italians, yet they had great confidence in the experience of the two guides.

They had advanced, it afterwards appeared,

some distance on the way to their native valley, being resolved, if possible, to arrive there at the risk of their lives, when their course was arrested in a moment by the fall of an avalanche, which no skill or foresight could guard against, and the whole party was buried many fathoms deep in the snow. The description of the peasant in "the Seasons," perishing at the time the warm thoughts of his home and family, not far distant, came on his mind, might be said to be faithfully paralleled here. A few leagues' farther progress, and the cottages of these hapless adventurers would have received them, and the joyful sounds of welcome be heard, after so long an absence, in a warmer climate too, and under a more genial sky; for there cannot be a more striking change of atmosphere than is found in a few hours from the heights of St. Bernard to the warm valleys of Piedmont below. When the morning came, however, and no tidings were received of the fate of the travellers, and the guides never returned, the fathers gave them up for lost.

The spot where they perished was not known till the last summer, when the melting of the snow, as the season advanced, discovered the bodies at the foot of a small eminence, in the various positions in which they had perished. They were not in a state of decay, having been preserved from corruption by the snows amidst which they had lain; and they were brought to the cemetery, or rather the Morgue, as it is called, of the monastery. This is a very extraordinary place, and presents a rather startling spectacle to a visiter, who is unaware, perhaps, of the objects he is about to see. It is a gloomy and long apartment into which you gaze through a small window, or, if curiosity goes so far, you may enter, and move amidst the dead, who are placed in various positions. A few stand upright against the wall, the greater part are in a reclining position, or recumbent on the floor: some of the bodies are in a good state of preservation, from the dryness of the air and the excessive cold to which they have been exposed. This is the case with those who are

discovered amidst the depths of the snow soon after death, as well as with the remains of others, who have lain frozen and congealed for days, and even for weeks, beneath avalanches, whence it is impossible for some time to extricate them. In this singular receptacle are the bodies of travellers of both sexes, and of various nations, some of a period as remote as a hundred years ago; and even some of the features present the different emotions under which they died, of agony, despair, and heart-rending sorrow. The jaw having fallen, in most instances, and the teeth being frightfully visible, as well as the mouth drawn up by the nature of their death, more than one of the perished have an appalling aspect. The skin becomes perfectly brown and hard, "though, when these victims of winter," observed one of the fathers, "are drawn forth from the snows, the colour is as fresh on the cheek as in life, and continues so for some days."

Here, amidst the other tenants of the tomb, are a few of the brave and skilful guides who have perished in their efforts to extricate the

helpless traveller : there is no daring and self-devotion of which these men are not capable. No tempest or snow-storm deters them from advancing on the track of their faithful and sagacious dogs. Often they are summoned forth amidst the darkness of the night ; and, equipped with long poles and lanterns, they traverse the fearful wilds around the convent, when every beaten path is buried from the view. Often it happens that the guide takes a course which he thinks the most likely for succeeding in his object, when the dogs pursue a directly contrary direction, being led, even at a distance, partly by instinct, and by the exquisite keenness of their smell, with which they trace the spot where a traveller has fallen. The guides instantly abandon their own course, on perceiving this, and follow that of the dog, who soon arrives at the fatal place, and generally succeeds in drawing forth the victim. Two only of these valuable animals now survive, the others having been lost a few years since by the fall of an avalanche.

The guides who are thus employed to rescue

the bewildered traveller, are not attached to the monastery, and only reside there during the winter. They are hardy peasants from the hills and valleys, the nearest on the Italian frontier, who leave their cottages and families during the inclement season, to give their services to the monastery. It might be thought the gratuity for such services could not well be too large, but it does not exceed three louis-d'or for the season to each guide. They are well maintained, of course, in the convent, and hold themselves in readiness to sally out at a moment's call, by night or day.

As a contrast to these gloomy anecdotes, one of a more ludicrous character was related. On a very sharp day, late in the autumn, when the weather had already become decidedly wintry, an English party arrived at the convent, consisting of two ladies, still young, and two servants. Some years since, it might have been thought a little indecorous, and our forefathers, as well as mothers, would have recoiled with horror at the idea of young ladies travelling

about Europe, alone and independent, without a protector, all helpless and companionless; but in these wandering and chivalrous days, it is a thing of frequent occurrence, and indeed attracts little notice or wonder.

On one occasion, there was a group of five ladies, all travelling together in perfect harmony both of temper and taste—a very singular circumstance: their ages, too, were different; two or three were a little stricken in years, the rest were somewhat younger and more attractive; but all enjoyed a perfect freedom from the bonds and caprices of that creature, man. Feeling the full power of their freedom, and resolved to enjoy it to the utmost, they wandered over mountain and valley, snowy height and dreary wild, as their fancy or taste directed them.

At this time, the five were left entirely to their own resources, being imprisoned in a narrow valley, at an auberge, near the one where we had found refuge, by several days' incessant rain. It is a pleasing spectacle, however, to see the weaker sex so enterprising, and able to defy

the elements, without the aid of the stronger ; but it will sometimes bring its inconveniences.

The small party aforesaid that arrived towards evening at the St. Bernard, were chilled and penetrated with the cold ; a large fire was presently kindled in the ladies' apartment, to which they were conducted by the female domestic, who resides at the monastery during the fine season expressly to attend the fairer portion of the travellers. They requested some slight refreshment as an antidote to the cold. One of the good fathers, whose stomach as well as head had been so steeled by many a winter as to render such a beverage harmless as well as cordial, unfortunately brought a bottle of *eau de cerises*, as the best remedy he was acquainted with. The fair travellers, all unsuspecting, drank freely of the ardent and animating spirit, and felt instant relief from the severities of the weather. But the hour for dinner being arrived, and the guests summoned in vain, the repast was deferred awhile in compliment ; when at last the attendant resolved to enter their apartment, and

found each traveller in a happy state of forgetfulness, extended on the floor, insensible to the storm without or the welcome comforts within the dwelling.

Such had been the effect of the perilous draught as to prostrate each fair wanderer beside the fire that threw its unfelt beams on their recumbent figures, each in the attitude in which nature had yielded to the influence of the poor father's draught, who was greatly shocked when he learned the effect of his benevolence, as well as surprised, it being such as he had never felt the slightest tendency to.

The scene that stretches around this abode is very confined, having little of the grandeur of most Alpine views in so elevated a site. The mountains rise near the convent. The monotony of the life of its inmates is certainly broken, during the fine season, by the incessant arrival of visitors of all nations. When there is at times a little relaxation from the strictness of the hospice, music is introduced; and when the monastery has possessed a large party, with several ladies, within

its walls, a kind of ball has actually been got up, and permitted by the superior, much to the amusement and enjoyment of the solitary fathers.

On one occasion, a female traveller found her grave in the neighbourhood, even in the middle of summer. She came to the monastery alone, and without any attendant, respectably dressed, and remained there some days. She had been unfortunate, they thought, and her misfortunes appeared to have made an unhappy inroad on her mind, as she frequently quitted the dwelling to take solitary walks, and was absent some hours. One day, when the weather was remarkably fine and warm, she had wandered forth, and it drew towards evening without her return. One of the fathers, fearing she might have lost her way, set out in pursuit, and, after a long search, found the unfortunate woman reclined at the foot of a precipice, where she had remained probably several hours, frozen to death. She had sat there probably, unconscious of danger, and abandoned to her own thoughts, till the cold had crept gradually over her frame, so as to produce

insensibility. No one ever came to inquire after her destiny, or to claim the remains, which were deposited in the cemetery amidst the number of victims who had long tenanted it.

The winter before last was dreadfully severe on the mountain. For thirty years past the snow had not fallen so deep, neither had the cold been so extreme. Yet no weather deters travellers, chiefly pedestrians, who are in general obliged by their affairs to pass and repass from Italy. A more than usual number of guides were provided, but the loss of so many of their admirable dogs was severely felt. During the many pitiless nights in December and January of that long winter, the guides did not close their eyes, remaining constantly on the watch ; some within the walls, others sallying out as far as it was possible to go, to meet any hapless passengers who might be unable to reach the walls. The snow-storms came on so suddenly, and lasted so long, and at so late a period in the season, when passengers in general believed they might venture with safety, that the fatality was unusually great.

This is not fully known till the showers and sunshine of spring produce a thaw, that discovers the secret ravages of the season.

The fathers are of the order of St. Augustin. The chief amusement, during the intervals of devotion, is reading, the subject being chiefly divinity; the convent-library contains some valuable works.

LETTER IX.

Meeting of the Helvetic Society at the Convent of the St. Bernard.—Journey thither. — Sumptuous Dinner. — Festivity in the Convent. — Excursion in its vicinity. — The Point de Dronaz. — Hospitality of the Brotherhood — Luxurious fare provided by them. — Departure from the Convent. — The Vintage Season in Switzerland. — A Mountain Bathing-place. — Residence of Dr. Levade — His Character and Habits. — English residents near the Lake of Geneva. — An unwilling Exile. — Invalid Traveller. — Ferney.—Gaming.—Departure for Italy.

ON the subject of the monastery, I cannot help introducing here the narrative of my fellow-traveller, a man of science, and a resident of seven years in the country; he was one of the Helvetic Society, whose annual meeting was held on the summit of the mountain, an event that had, perhaps, never before occurred. The various members of the society assembled at Mar-

tigny on the 19th of July, where they were received by M. Lamon, deputed from the order, accompanied by some gentlemen from Sion, who had ordered a splendid supper at the chief hotel, to which the former were all invited in the name of the town. A great number of men, with mules and horses, were also in readiness, offering their services at a price barely sufficient to cover their expenses, to which they were influenced by gratitude for the great exertions of the society in their behalf; on the disastrous inundation of the valley of Bagnes.

For some time the weather had been delightful, but the morning of the 20th was cloudy and menacing; after breakfast, however, the weather brightened, and the whole party was in movement: it was interesting to observe at least a hundred persons, gentlemen and men of science, (winding their way) with a numerous cortège of muleteers, &c. along the course of the river, some mounted, others on foot, some with knapsacks, and mostly in groups, according to their different tastes and pursuits, either examining

the structure of the mountains in mass, or seeking their component materials in detail. Others were occupied in studying the birds, insects, and plants, the slow progress being thus broken by long and frequent pauses. The discovery of each mineral or plant that was new to the finder, and which he knew to be rare, occasioned a shout of pleasure from the immediate group around, which gave a life and zest to the scene, very different from the aspect of the parties often met with on the Alps, who fag away, with thoughtful air and step, wishing from their souls the way was less steep and barbarous. None of us would have regretted the determination of the saint if he had perched his hospice a flight still higher, so full of gaiety as well as information was every step we took.

After a short repose at Liddes, the second portion of the journey was accomplished; and, on advancing towards the convent, some lingering remains, on the sheltered nooks, of the snow which had fallen in the morning, gave us proof of our approach towards the most elevated ha-

bitation in the world. Every thing that could conduce to our comfort was provided : notices had been posted at Martigny and Aoste, informing travellers that, during the meeting of the society, it would be necessary for them to sleep at Liddes on one side and St. Remy on the other, as the hospice would be occupied. The excellent fraternity had all turned out of their sleeping-rooms, and betaken themselves to the inferior lodgings appropriated to muleteers and guides : so that the whole interior, with the entire services of the inmates, was at our disposal, and never could men vie more with each other who should be of the most service, and with the best grace.

The next morning the business of the meeting commenced with the usual statement of the affairs of the society, a review of the progress of the natural sciences during the past year, and the reading of some of the papers communicated by the different members. The sitting having lasted till near the hour of dinner, we adjourned to a most sumptuous repast, that would have

done honour to Verey or the Court of Aldermen. On the substantials making way for the dessert, several addresses were made to the society by some of the members, and some songs, which had been composed for the occasion, were sung with infinite spirit. At this period the scene was such as is seldom witnessed : such an irruption had never occurred at the St. Bernard since the foundation of the convent. Perhaps the strangeness of the position, as well as the contrast of the scene within to the death-like stillness and dreariness without, aided the impression, but on my own mind it was indelible : all were in the height of enjoyment — every face beamed with pleasure. The wine was delicious, for the very oldest and the best in the convent cellar was broached for the occasion. What added to the interest, was the presence of several celebrated men, whose discoveries in science have been applauded in every country. The subdued manner of our hosts was too habitual to be broken through, but the smiling countenance, with the brightness of the eye which glanced from one part of the room to the other, showed the in-

ward satisfaction of their hearts, whilst, on the part of their guests, particularly the younger ones, the enthusiasm seemed not merely to burst from their tongues, but to ooze from their finger-ends; so that when, at the close of each verse of the songs, they broke out into full chorus, they made the old building rattle. As all things must have an end, so had our repast; and as all this energy had been the result of feeling, not of wine, we rose from table with heads sufficiently clear, and nerves sufficiently steady, to enable us to devote the afternoon (at least what remained of it) to scrambling over some of the surrounding eminences, until the close of day warned us to return to our domicile, where every one was free to choose the kind of evening meal best suited to his taste.

Before retiring for the night, our vice-president, who was a member of the monastery, observed, that they had usually during an entire season not more than four or five days so pure and cloudless as this had been; and, as all appearances seemed to indicate a similar one on the morrow, he proposed to meet at six in the

morning instead of nine, so as to enable us to visit some of the highest peaks, &c. It was merely a suggestion, he observed, as the whole of the arrangements were absolutely under our own control — we all adopted it with great pleasure. At six next morning the meeting was resumed, after which, a splendid cold collation was soon put *hors de combat*; dinner was fixed for seven in the evening, so that we had seven hours free, to run wild over the rocks.

In company with three others, and one of the fraternity for our guide, I visited the iron mine, which is pretty well secured by the difficulty of its situation from the attacks of workmen. We visited also the celebrated polished rock, the access to which is unfortunately not difficult enough to place it out of the reach of pocketers of souvenirs, by whom nearly the whole of the surface has been destroyed. We then scaled the summit of the Point de Dronaz, which is more than nine thousand six hundred English feet above the level of the sea; from the summit is a most stupendous panorama of Alpine

scenery, comprising Mont Blanc, with its magnificent aiguilles, and the other chains between Switzerland and Piedmont: descending on the opposite side, we regained the convent.

A repast, equally sumptuous with that of the preceding day, awaited us at night; the conversation was full of interest, for many had to relate the researches and discoveries of the day. A noble fire blazed in the chimney, the air being already chill; the wind was hushed without, and the sky serene; the fatigue and enterprise of many hours also lent a zest to the evening, which was more conversational, and without any of the ebullition of the preceding. I loved it the more for its calm and quiet enjoyment; never will it be my lot to enjoy such another in such a scene. The hours passed rapidly away, while we listened at one time to the narrations and opinions of some celebrated man, then discussed them apart in groups. It was difficult not to reap instruction in such society.

I retired reluctantly to my cell, and let the taper burn long beside my bed; for, in spite of

fatigue, I could not sleep, so vivid was the impression of the past scenes.

On the third day the meeting was held at the same early hour, for some of the members wished to depart, induced either by business or by a wish to proceed on various tours. Those who had more leisure, and I was one of the number, were pressed to pass a few days more at the hospice, which fled most happily away, without a single passing cloud, either in the atmosphere or on the countenance of any one present.

The hospitality of the brotherhood was unbounded, their personal convenience unsparingly sacrificed. With respect to the good things of this world, prepared for the consolation of the Helvetic Society, no one could have imagined the possibility of such a supply finding its way to such an elevation. Every sort of meat, from the fat ox to the kid; and of poultry, from the turkey to the pigeon; game of various kinds; pastry, and delicious fruits from the banks of the lake of Geneva on one side, and the plains of Piedmont on the other—the whole in

such abundance that entire courses were scarcely touched. Indeed, many things considered as rare luxuries at Berne or Geneva were here found for the first time during the season. The desolate hospice presented the appearance of a luxurious and crowded hotel, where the hundred rejoicing guests were gratuitously entertained; but also that of an arena of science and discovery, good part of both day and night having been occupied in instructive discussions and details.

The only body in the lower Morgue that was tolerably perfect, was that of a poor Italian, who had perished the preceding season. He was met by a servant of the convent, who in vain endeavoured to persuade him to return; he resisted on the plea of being perfectly fresh and free from fatigue, or, as he expressed it, "full of force," notwithstanding which he was found dead at not more than ten minutes' walk from the convent.

On leaving this lofty region for the Valais, the scene changed rapidly, and the atmosphere felt close and stifling; the herds of cattle were on the far pasture grounds, that seemed to hang like

nesses on the lofty declivities, and so steep were the latter, as often to render it singular how the animals could preserve their footing. It was now the time of the vintage, and the vineyards in the vicinity of Sion, Vevay, and other towns, were alive with population, but not with gaiety or cheerfulness, such as are visible in the south of France, where the lively air, the dance, and the merry laugh, are heard in every hamlet and village at evening.

This season, in Switzerland, wears a sombre and unjoyous aspect; there is some cause for this, when the execrable nature of most of the vines is considered, which neither cheer the heart nor quicken the fancy. The grapes are in general of a fine flavour, the Neufchatel wine and the Curteillod, which is only the more aged quality of the other, claim an exemption from the bad produce of the land. At this thirsty season, the stranger is often at a loss what to drink when in the interior, but in the chief towns French wines are to be had.

About three leagues walk from Vevay was a

remote bathing-place in the mountains. Many a hamlet and village, now almost emptied of their dwellers, was passed ; in one of them an unhappy Cretin, the favourite son perhaps of the parents, had taken refuge in the gallery of the farm-house, where he continued to make the most hideous noises ; the existence of these beings, and they sometimes live to old age, is a heavy burthen to the household. The ascent was long and gradual, and we at last saw the cluster of houses to which the invalids came from many parts ; it was a dreary site : large blocks of granite were scattered over the moor, the monotony of which was broken by wild and shapeless hills ; at some distance was a gloomy wood of firs : the whole scene was a perfect contrast to the baths of Weissenburg, whose narrow and breathless ravine was like the prison of despair. Here, the sky, the waste and open moor, the horizon bounded by the shapeless hills — allowed the eye to roam far and free, but joylessly. There was a mockery of a garden near the boarding-house, the only home for the

visitors. Here we remained till evening, and dined, and walked about, and strove by every effort and ingenuity to beguile the weary hours, but in vain; the sense of loneliness and ennui was too strong; how these people pass the time is inconceivable. There were young and old women, and fewer men, some of very respectable condition, and others who had little portion save suffering. There was no shade from the heat, no river side, or grove, or precipice, or vale, and within doors no amusement or resources, save knitting stockings or some such useful duty.

In the cool of the evening we again bent our way to the shore. One of the most agreeable resources in the vicinity of Vevay is the home of Dr. Levade, a savant of some celebrity. Still vigorous in health and unbroken in intellect, at the age of ninety, he cultivates his beautiful garden, arranges his cabinet of medals, minerals, and antiques, with some small pictures of great value. His chateau and garden overlook splendid scenery; in the latter there is a rare collection of choice plants. Rising with the

sun, he makes them his first care; then he walks into the town, at some distance, attends to his profession, and hurries home to retirement again: even the rigours of winter do not arrest his daily progress.

It is an impressive thing to see this old man still full of enthusiasm for science, and gaiety of spirits and attention to the comfort of his guests, as if youth were his portion instead of almost a century of life. Like Wyttenbach, he has wandered much over his own country, with most part of which he is intimately acquainted, and has published a useful volume on the natural history, &c. of the canton de Vaud. In his younger days he travelled through Italy, and imbibed a love of painting and statuary, which he still strives to cherish; clinging to his little cabinet, like many a tried virtuoso, with a tenacity and fondness that age only increases. By dint of extreme temperance and cheerfulness, the small frame and ardent spirit still baffle decay, careless of the king of terrors, and smiling at his slow approach.

When the moonlight was on the water and on the woods behind and the beach beneath, it was beautiful to sit in the corridor in his garden, where he had gathered the busts of many celebrated men, while wine, coffee, and other little luxuries, were served in the open air. To so inquiring a mind, the incurious as well as restless taste of some visiters could not but appear strange.

In a small and handsome *maison de campagne*, there lived on the lake, and entirely to themselves, an English couple: two winters and three summers passed over their heads in this calm seclusion, which they scarcely ever quitted. It was enough that they were in a foreign land, and on such celebrated shores: they had no wandering desire beyond this.

Mont Blanc, though nearly opposite, was hidden from view by an intervening mountain; by walking about a mile and half to the right or left, it might be distinctly and gloriously seen; yet very rarely was this attempted, and never, as they assured us, was it achieved. They were conscious it was before them, even in front of

the windows, and this was sufficient; but whether the sun rose and set there in angry lustre or in a flood of golden light, they neither knew at the moment nor cared. These travels, however, are still spoken of with great delight, the grand and snowy mountains, and the whole romance of the situation.

On the summit of a range of hills, and in a solitary scene, lived alone for two years an Englishman of rank. From the dwelling, or the neighbourhood, there was no prospect. A few paces from the door was a little, melancholy, marshy lake; a few barren hills rose opposite and kept off the east wind. What could induce a man of so large revenue to dive in so drear a spot was a matter of wonder to these Swiss: they could not impute it to the love of nature, for he seemed to have no taste for glens, and forests, and mountain wanderings, and seldom quitted the cheerless walls of his home. Few books were within, and when the winter nights, and the winds were up, it might be written on the gate, 'Hither hope comes not.'

Among the more forlorn dwellers in the land are the few who have been induced, at an advanced period of life, to forsake their wonted habits and tastes. In one instance, a merchant from the City, retired on a handsome fortune, had been persuaded to take for some years a chateau, backed by a deep wood, above which rose a lofty mountain. The contrast of scene and sound was startling — the hollow rushing of the wind through the wood was in winter his morning alarum, or of the river in the vale, swollen by the floods. No more came the rolling of carriages along the busy streets, or the ceaseless feet on the pavement — in his ear. No friendly or business face, lighted up with the stirring wants of the day, gathered round his hearth at evening; and if he gave way to reflection, the past was stronger than the present, and the remembrance of past bargains, and stocks, and insurances, mingled with the images of frowning precipices and unfathomable glens, amidst which he was sometimes persuaded to wander. The eagle's cry, and the wild goat's

bounding from rock to rock, were the only living sights and sound, save when he met a group of travellers.

Very soon he desired to depart; what were all these things to the dear excitements he had left,—the war of pursuits and professions, the dirty brick streets, the thick atmosphere, the endless novelty and comforts of London? But the will of others was more powerful than his own; and he was doomed never more to behold the loved roof, where he had toiled for so many years and succeeded. And now he began to feel like a banished man. It was in vain that wife and daughter were wild with joy; his heart never beat in unison. He might sometimes be met with, making one of the family party, in a thick great coat, with several massive capes, buttoned up to the chin, and round his neck a capacious red worsted cravat, and weather-proof leggings beneath, to defy the mountain blast or shower.

There could be little society, for the situation they had chosen was many miles from any town,

and in the interior of the canton. It had been some consolation, could the newspapers have found their way each morn to the breakfast-table ; but in so sequestered a spot this could not be. The wild horn of the spectral hunter could scarcely wake more surprise than that of the daily postman, as he broke through forest, lake, and glen. Resigned to his fate, but sullenly and sadly resigned, the merchant at last saw there was no hope but to linger out his days in a foreign land and lay his bones there at last. And when life draws to a close, the longing after home is often inexpressibly strong : no wonder that, when confined within doors by a lingering illness, he was ready, like the camel-driver in the desert, to curse the luckless hour when he first wandered abroad. No wanted friend, it may be said, either to the body or soul, is nigh : the physician, as well as the minister, if there be one in the land, is, perhaps, fifty or a hundred miles off.

One day, we had arrived at evening at the only inn in a village, and secured the only good

chamber, when a carriage drove up, with a mother and her only son within: the hand of death was already on the latter. They had wandered all through Italy in search of health, and now they drove on towards England as rapidly as his fleeting life could possibly sustain.

Soon after they had entered the inn, the mother came and entreated us to give up to her son the room we had engaged: it was the only good one. Her anguish was great, but the dying man was calm and even cheerful, and spoke of the climates he had left, and the home where he should shortly be—while the parent looked silently on him. What unutterable tenderness is in the look of a mother, who knows that she is soon to be childless! It had been to little purpose, she said, this journey to Italy. Would to God they had never left England! The inn and its chamber were poorly suited to his state.

At Geneva, as in larger capitals, there is at this season a general departure of the more affluent families for the country. It is a grateful

change, the interior of the town being dull and melancholy in general, and built so as to enjoy little of the fine scenery around. The country-houses are all enviably situated; few equally so with Coppet, the dwelling of Madame de Staël. The gardens of the Swiss are often beautiful.

Voltaire could hardly have chosen a less desirable residence than Ferney, with little that is grand or delightful in scenery, either near or distant; not a glimpse of the lake; and sufficiently elevated to be open to the sweep of every high wind. The house is small, the rooms are very small. The whole has more the air of an exile than an affluent and luxurious retirement. The recluse, although he affected to talk of "my lake," which he could not see from door or window, with enthusiasm, had evidently no passion for the "sublime or beautiful" in scenery. It does not appear that, during his long residence of twenty years, he made scarcely a single excursion to explore the glories of the land.

As the last days of autumn were now departing, and the air grew keener, the chateaus were

deserted, and the town filled fast. The close of November brought once more the soirées, the heaps of sweet cakes, the card-parties, &c. *ad infinitum*.

An inveterate gambler, desirous of a cure should by all means settle in Switzerland, unless he preferred the guillotine at once, to avoid the agony of joining wealthy and often clever people in consuming whole evenings for the hazard of a few batzen, three half-pence English. At Geneva the play is higher ; but dissipation of every kind seems out of place here. The real strength and pride of the people is in their literary and scientific men ; in their few women also, not of fascinating beauty or manners, but gentle, mild, often deeply interesting, excellent mothers and wives, and often of excellent minds.

About the middle of February, we resolved to seek a warmer climate and pass the Simplon into Italy.

LETTER X.

St. Maurice.—Fall of the Pissevache.—Sion.—The Valais.—Goitres.—Cretins.—Brieg.—Remarkable Rocks.—Sledge or Traineau.—Coutet, the guide.—Passage of the Simplon.—Severity of the Weather.—Dangerous passage through the Snow.—Destruction of an English family by an Avalanche.—Hospice and Galleries of the Simplon.—Frozen Cataracts.—Domo d'Ossola.—Baveno.—Lake Maggiore.—Sesto.—Novara.—A Religious Festival.—Road to Turin.—Italian Scenery.—Deficiency of Water.—Turin.—Priests.—Ladies of Turin.

It was night when we drew near St. Maurice. The glaring lights in its windows, on the other side of the river, were a welcome sight: the wind was keen, it was the *bise*; and the Rhone greatly swollen by the partial thaw. At the inn two travellers were already arrived; one was a monk. Who would imagine that a theatre existed in such a village, hemmed in by moun-

tains and the Rhone? It was now closed, but in the milder season it is not thinly attended by the genteeler people of the vicinity; the "beauty and fashion" of so wild and stern a scene. As of course no corps of the drama could be supported here, unless they lived on mountain fare, the theatre is supplied by a company of amateurs, who perform German pieces. A Swiss play, whether tragic or comic, must surely be a singular treat.

In the grey of the morning, we quitted St. Maurice; the cold was severe, and the light as yet so faint that few objects could be discerned around. It was a cheerless hour in which to set forth on a picturesque journey. The celebrated fall of the Pissevache, by the road-side, was frozen hard, and hung in congealed masses, here and there coated with snow: the dwellers in the cottages among the precipices were as yet buried in sleep. It was a relief when the red light of morning broke on the dreary scene; and yet more so, after a few hours, was the sight of the archiepiscopal palace, or castle, of Sion, on a

high and pointed rock. The climate of this place is in summer excessively hot, and it produces an excellent Muscat wine, very unlike the sharp and poor vintage of the rest of Switzerland.

The contrast between the wines and cookery of the land and those of France was startling in the extreme: an epicure should never come hither, unless he wished to perform a dreary penance. The progress through the Valais is monotonous, in spite of the boldness of its mountain-barriers. Its people are an especial race, happy in their own ugliness, and proud of their goitres.

Entering one of the cottages in a hamlet, to enjoy the luxury of its fire for a few moments, we found a group of five women gathered closely round it; and the flame glancing over their pale and squalid features, as well as the aforesaid hideous appendage, gave no bad resemblance to Macbeth's witches, and we made a precipitate retreat.

The most pitiable existence is that of the cretins, who are the offspring of goitred parents: they are not numerous, but can never be ap-

proached without disgust. Without a ray of intellect, and with very imperfect animal functions, they are a burden to all around ; yet it is said they are held very dear, and are anxiously watched by their parents. The features are those of an idiot, with sometimes a wildness and even ferocity. We observed one of them stretched at length in a field, uttering hideous cries, for the faculty of speech is also denied, and unable to rise till some of the family came to help him. Others are able to walk about, but are seldom suffered to wander far from their homes.

There was one singular instance of a cretin, who possessed not only strength and activity of limb but some glimmerings of mind. He became attached to the chateau of a wealthy Swiss in the Canton de Vaud, a kind of retainer in the family. His figure was short and broad, and his large features had a savage and determined expression : the sounds he uttered were uncouth and unintelligible. The cause of his being not only tolerated, but favoured in this family, was the service he rendered when the chateau was

attempted by some thieves, and the poor cretin was the foremost in resisting them.

Arrived at Brieg, whose vicinity well repays a few days' residence, perched at the foot of mountains, in the most picturesque part of the Valais. The domes of the churches and college are covered with tin plate. It is a place of some antiquity, and many a dull and spacious mansion, with grated windows, might be had at a very trifling rent, or even let gratuitously, to the traveller who was careless of the prison-like aspect of his home. There is an establishment of Jesuits here, and a theatre, even at the foot of the Simplon. At some distance beyond Brieg, in ascending the Valais, there are two remarkable accumulations of broken rocks, which have all the appearance of being derived from the fall of the neighbouring mountains. The first consists of abundance of immense blocks of granite, which can scarcely have arrived at their present station but through the effects of one of the most violent convulsions. The second mass, about two leagues further, seems comparatively

recent, and is perhaps referable to natural causes, which are still in operation. The masses consist of limestone, and some of the mountains in the vicinity have calcareous summits resting on inclined strata of slate. The slow but almost inevitable mouldering of the latter would ultimately render it unable to support the superincumbent weight, and from this cause the masses forming the second accumulation have no doubt reached the valley. Happy will it be, if many peaks which now rear their heads in undiminished grandeur shall be able to resist the levelling effects of time; but the structure of many of them too plainly indicates that they are doomed at some distant period to bow themselves to dust, carrying destruction in their track.

About an hour after midnight we entered the sledge or traineau. This vehicle, light and low in its structure, was well adapted to these wintry regions, and proceeded slowly over the snow that covered to a great depth every part of the way. The moon was up, and its light was the

best possible one for the passage of the Simplon in such a season. The ascent was winding; in about an hour there was a tremendous descent, and at its edge a large wooden cross, where some hapless traveller had fallen over. A little way further, a small erection like a sentry-box showed a figure of the Virgin Mary, smiling sweetly amidst the horrors around her; this marked the spot where several passengers had perished one night in the snow. Our guide, who for thirteen years had daily traversed the mountain from Domo d'Ossola to Brieg, and returned over the same path the following day, by name Coutet, was a cousin of the celebrated guide of the same name at Chamouni. He was an excellent fellow, of mild and courteous demeanour, and incessant care and attention in this passage. The depth of the yawning precipices could be but dimly perceived; but the numerous white summits around, coated here and there by dark forests of pine and fir, looked fearfully beautiful. Not a breath of wind was passing, nor a footstep, save our own, broke on

the silence of the wilderness;—rock and fallen avalanche, the glacier of ages and the frozen cataracts, slept in the silver light, like a glorious and shrouded world that was no more to be disturbed. The cold struck on the very soul, and it was with very great joy, that, after many hours, we at last halted at a small auberge on one of the heights, and rushed eagerly to the fire-side. O the luxury of that fire! The good Swiss anticipated our arrival, and on the hearth blazed a mighty pile of wood, over which we hung for some time without uttering a word. Surely the Laplander and Kamtschadale have joys that we can rarely know. They brought a breakfast of coffee and bread; though a frugal one it was delicious. After a stay of above an hour we left the chalet. What a situation in which to pass the long winter, where the tempest and the loosened avalanche are almost the only sounds heard, and the sun gives but little warmth. The people appeared to be quite contented with their lot.

Now we advanced more rapidly, the path was

at times difficult and a little perilous. The superb road constructed by Napoleon is from twenty-five to thirty feet wide, and fenced in a partial way from the precipices by small stone and wooden posts and parapets, placed at intervals. But these were now buried beneath the quantity of snow that had fallen, which also covered two thirds of the road, so that in many parts there was scarcely sufficient breadth left for the carriage to pass, with its wheels on the very brink of the descents. The snow was thirty feet deep, and, there being no track, some care and caution were necessary in the route. In several spots, a number of people were engaged in cutting through the immense masses of snow, and they piled it in high ridges by the way-side, in order to make a practicable passage for a carriage. It was no wonder if, in some parts, the grandeur of the surrounding scenes was totally forgotten in attending to one's own safety; and the eye looked nervously on the scanty causeway, narrowed even to excess by the snow that stood in a frozen wall on the left hand, while on the right

yawned the terrific and fathomless precipice, over which a false step, or a sudden turn of the horse, might have plunged the traineau. Many months afterwards, we recrossed this mountain in the summer season, when a four-in-hand might have been driven safely over most of its celebrated road.

Eight years ago, in the beginning of the winter, an English family, five in number including the servants, were travelling over the Simplon into Italy; ere the summit was gained, a body of snow that had fallen on the mountain a few days before, rolled down suddenly on the very spot they were crossing, and swept them instantly into the hollow beneath. They all perished, and it was some time before their bodies could be found, for the search did not succeed till the fallen avalanche had partly melted: what rendered this unfortunate event the more singular was its occurrence in the beginning of the month of October, and the snow seldom begins to fall at so early a period. But this mountain is subject to sudden hurricanes,

and during eight months in the year the weather is uncertain and adverse.

The sun had now risen from a cloudless sky ; so brilliant a day for the passage was a happy circumstance ; there was not yet a breath of wind : the universal whiteness of the scene, with the sole relief of the scattered woods of the pine and beech, was dazzling. Not long after commencing the descent, we passed the hospice, erected by the order of Napoleon for the relief of passengers and travellers, left destitute by want or sickness in so wild a scene. It is a long building of stone, but in an unfinished state, and is only tenanted at present by a few workmen, who attend to the repair of the road. The superb galleries hewn out of the rock were now quietly passed, and a small hamlet with a comfortable auberge soon after invited us to an hour's delay. The landlady was well dressed and very civil, and her parlour neat and clean, with its floor of wood scoured like a mirror, and its walls adorned with scenes in Rome and Turkey. A bottle of mulled wine, and fish from the mountain stream, were soon set before us.

The simple luxuries of that auberge amidst the snows were exquisitely grateful.

We at last quitted the sledge that brought us from Brieg, and entered the small diligence. The weather had changed; the sun was quite hid by dark clouds, and the wind blew cold and shrill. It was an unfortunate change, and made the remainder of the passage very gloomy, the more so, as the path was now shut in closely on each side by overhanging cliffs and barren and dreary mountains. There was, however, the strange spectacle of many a stream arrested in its course down the steeps, and frozen like glass, and many a cascade and catâract, that once foamed along, now hung glittering and motionless, yet still menacing, like a coiled serpent struck with a mortal blow at the very moment of the fatal spring. The defiles of the mountain were at last ended, and the cottages and fields of Italy, and all the softness of its landscape, broke upon the view. In the evening we entered Domo d'Ossola, and took leave of our excellent guide Coutet.

Travellers not being expected so early in the season, the apartments were cold and cheerless ; some coffee however was quickly prepared, and in half an hour we took a voiture for Baveno ; it was dark ere it reached the only auberge in the village. The waters of the lake Maggiore could be but dimly seen, but there were lights in the dwellings on the isle of the fishermen. The excellent wine D'Asti, the growth of the principality of that name, was the best part of the frugal meal. The following morning on the shores of the lake was indelibly beautiful. It is surely true, that our most vivid enjoyments are the fruits of contrast ; the bitter cold of the mountain passage was succeeded by a delicious and balmy air ; the stern and terrific scenery of the Simplon, by the calm and exquisite lake ; from the wooded declivities rose the elegant spires of the Italian churches, the sound of whose bells came clearly in the morning air. Great care appears to be taken in the cultivation of the numerous vineyards, but they produce no wine of superior quality. We left for

Sesto, by a superb road that ran by the water side, and resembled a carefully preserved path through a nobleman's park rather than a high road, and is always kept in admirable repair. No other country has such tasteful and elegant structures for rural worship, particularly the spires and turrets, as Italy.

At Sesto, an unexpected misfortune befel us. The signature of the Austrian ambassador at Paris to the passport had been forgotten; our course was arrested, and we were obliged to pursue cross paths, and night was drawing on fast. The Austrians are the vampyres of Italy, and many an ill-fated traveller has rued the hour he ever entered their territory. At the police office, after some preamble, the officer civilly assured us it was impossible he could allow us to pursue the present route to Milan. It was in vain to offer a bribe, or use entreaty or persuasions: he was inflexible.

This city, the object of our destination, was only forty miles distant, and Turin was quite out of the way. But there was no alternative,

save to quit Sesto in a fresh voiture for Novara, a town many leagues distant. The road, for a short distance was good, but soon turned off into a cross and bad path; a very slow progress, and an old and evil-tempered conductor, did not mend the business; he did every thing in his power to make this night's journey an unhappy one, wrangling and swearing bitterly his Italian oaths, because we refused to pay him beforehand the *douceur* he demanded. After travelling five hours, the lights of Novara appeared at a distance; the gate, that had been closed for the night, was opened, and in the silent and solitary streets not a human being was stirring. The conductor knocked loud and long at the door of an hotel where the people had all retired to rest.

The next day was a festival, the shops were closed, and the greater part of the inhabitants proceeded to the great church, to which a procession of the military had previously passed; their music played beautifully during the service. The ladies of Novara are decidedly hand-

some, and were dressed with much taste, chiefly in black, with no covering to the head save a long, rich, black veil, that hung down gracefully on the side of the face; a look of devotion was in every countenance. High mass was performed in the great church, many priests in their absurd and gaudy dresses went through their usual manœuvres, to which the people paid little attention. The appearance of the military, and the exquisite airs of their bands, made the spectacle rather imposing; the ancient church was crowded, and well-dressed women knelt beside the poor and humble people, without any distinction of rank or pride: such is ever the case in the Italian churches.

Having engaged a voiture for Turin, we quitted Novara at mid-day. The weather was already sultry; in a few hours came to a small town, with a wall, ramparts, and a sort of boulevard, by the side of a large ditch, or Italian river, which in warm weather is much the same thing. It being Lent time, and moreover, a holiday of the Jews, many women of that nation were seen in the

streets, gaudily and in some instances richly dressed. Several were beautiful, with large oriental eyes, the universal mark of their descent, and a profusion of raven hair, partially covered by a smart cap.

The country was destitute of interest; its rich and various cultivation failing to atone for an unceasing monotony; nearly as far as the eye could reach, all was interminably flat. For a while, however, this had been relieved by a distant view of the vast Mount Rosa. It was nearly dark when the voiture entered an Italian village, and put up at a large and straggling inn, of two stories, circled with a gallery above, that led to the sleeping-room. The saloon was below, and a little old man, who was the landlord, came to know what we wished to have for supper, with the assurance that he had a variety of good things. The whole aspect of the place was so sadly the reverse of cleanly—furniture, linen, the walls, as well as the person and garb of the landlord—that we resolved to confine ourselves to coffee, which proved excel-

lent, while a cheerful fire diffused warmth throughout the spacious apartment.

This was the holy year, and was strictly kept everywhere. On entering the village, we had observed a priest seated at a table : a small candle threw an uncertain light on a numerous group that stood around him, chanting with might and main. Next morning, long before sun-rise, we were on the road to Turin ; the people were crowding to the churches even at this early hour with great eagerness ; occupations seemed almost at a stand, and religion the sole order of the day.

The road led by small bridges over the dry beds of two rivers : this is the great and incurable defect of Italian scenery, one cannot praise the aspect of a country as splendid and beautiful *par excellence*, where so little water, and that of the most unpicturesque hue, is seen. The dirty Po, the muddy and shallow Arno, and all the other streams, have a mean appearance, after the full, clear, and rushing rivers of Switzerland. A walk beside the Wye, the Loire, or the Tweed,

will afford tenfold more beauty than the famed rivers of this land.

The fine situation, the frequent presence of the court, as well as other advantages of this city, are sufficient, it might be imagined, to render Turin a favourite sojourn with travellers, but this is not the case. Pure or splendid architecture, in palace or church, has little existence here; but fine buildings surely give but a fleeting pleasure, compared with the rich scenery of hill, stream, and plain, the many exquisite excursions in the vicinity, the stern barrier of Alps afar off. The extreme regularity of the streets, wearisome in many cities, seems here to be a beauty, and cleanliness is not quite estranged from them. The endless street of the Po, and its lofty corridor, were crowded with well dressed people, it being the hour of the promenade.

At the end were the boulevards and the stream, the near and opposite hills covered with villas, and trees, and monasteries: the Po, the "king of floods," as a late traveller calls it, was the only failure in the landscape, being so

shallow that numerous unsightly beds in the channel met the eye. The boulevards, even to the water's edge, seemed to be abandoned to the enjoyment of the lower ranks : in one part a mountebank had erected his stage, and was amusing the crowd with his eloquence and a variety of tricks ; further on, was a quack doctor displaying his medicines, and descanting on their excellent qualities ; dancing bears and monkeys, and some men fencing, filled up the sports. A military band, at the end of the street, played some fine airs. It was a relief to turn from these scenes up a solitary walk on the other side of the river, that led to a convent on the hill.

Few residences in Italy can be more agreeable than Turin or its vicinity ; cheap, as healthful as Milan and Florence ; a lively, agreeable people, where good society is very accessible to strangers ; more liberal also, and hospitable, in their style of living than most Italians, they may be called a luxurious people. But neither cafés nor restaurateurs give this idea ; these are but humble and sorry imitations of the French. If priests

are to be considered an ornament, Turin is highly favoured : their number is almost incredible, being nine thousand in a population of eighty thousand. They swarm in the streets, from the youth on whom his vows begin to sit painfully, to the very aged, whose freshness of look and firm step tell of a long temperance of life. The world, and not the cell, was written on the features of the greater part, yet those features were very often fine, dignified, and highly intellectual : how different from the vulgar and peasant expression of most of the French priesthood ! It was evident they were resolved to enjoy the licence of the holy year as well as the rest of the community.

The men are eminently handsome at Turin, more so, perhaps, than the other sex ; Italian fascination is more often that of manners and the tongue than of loveliness. In a family of our acquaintance were two very attractive young women ; the mother was a Swiss, and married to a gentleman of Turin. They were the only children, of the ages of seventeen and eighteen, the

idols of the parents, and with good reason, for they united no small share of Swiss simplicity and frankness with the large and splendid dark eyes, as well as many of the accomplishments of Italy. They sang with taste and sweetness to the guitar, drew well, and were well informed; the complexion was dark, but the features of both were very handsome, and had an expression of gladness that was always pleasant to look at.

The two girls once wandered to Switzerland, and had thus imbibed an ardent love of nature; it was amusing to hear them dwell, in the heart of Turin, on the glaciers and cataracts of wilder scenes: they had the gift also of a sweet and agreeable voice, not always conferred on Italian women. It sometimes annoys a stranger, who fancies he is in the land of sweet sounds, to hear the loud and unlovely voices of the ladies; even their melody can hardly atone for the high pitch to which they are often raised; the charm of the low, soft, soul-felt tone is not sufficiently valued here.

LETTER XI.

Churches of Turin—Paintings in the Churches.—Alessandria.—Field of the Battle of Marengo.—Environs of Genoa.—Arrival at Genoa.—Heavy Rain.—Pilgrims.—The Strada Balbi.—Church of the Annunciata—Confession.—The Durazzo Palace.—Sera.—Church of Carignano—Statues of Saints.—Filthy State of the Churches.—Altars in the Streets.—The Brignolé Palace.—Narrow Streets—Their Inhabitants.—Deserted Palaces.—Hospitals.—Hospital of the Sœurs de la Charité at Dijon.—Villas and Gardens around Genoa.

THE palaces, as well as the churches, are too well known to allow any description. In one of the latter was an odd and ludicrous exhibition : in one of the aisles, and near the confessional boxes, a great number of small pictures was hung on the wall ; some were freshly arrived, and additions were continually received. They were, in general, indifferently executed, being the fruits of the devout and fervent gratitude of

good Catholics, for the peculiar interposition of Heaven in their favour in circumstances of peril and temptation. In one, a traveller is pursuing his way through a dark and gloomy wood, that is faintly lighted by the flash of a pistol from behind a tree, where the robber's head peeps out: the ball misses the intended victim. Another true son of the church is seated on a load of hay, but, losing his balance, is in the act of falling on the ground, where his brains would have been infallibly dashed out, but the Virgin Mary puts forth her hand from behind a mist in time to save. In a third picture, a handsome woman, pale and wan, is in her last sufferings; her eye fixed with intense hope on a priest praying by her bedside; while opposite, with strong disappointment in his looks, is the Evil one, horns, tail, and other appurtenances complete; but all to no purpose, for the father, on whom he fixes a furious look, is triumphant.

A short time was passed agreeably in this city; on account of its being Lent time, the theatres were shut, and all public amusements

forbidden. We met a funeral procession, six or seven priests holding tapers ; the chief and most venerable of them followed alone, with clasped hands ; then came the corpse, with many sisters in black, and a number of young females in white ; they chanted mournfully as they passed slowly on.

Early on a fine morning we left Turin for Genoa, through a flat and monotonous country. Arriving late at the halting-place for the night, an excellent supper was speedily served, the more relished from its being unexpected, as the aspect of the inn gave small ground for hope ; a noble wood fire blazed in the chimney. The day following we proceeded to Alessandria, and were forced to remain three or four hours in this stupid place ; its vicinity to the field of Marengo alone gives it any interest. The river Tanaro, flowing near, is crossed at the entrance of the town by a long covered bridge. On the strong fortifications of Alessandria immense sums were expended, chiefly by Napoleon ; nature has done nothing for it, being in the midst of a vast and melancholy plain. There is a sort of boulevards,

as far as meagre and scattered clumps of trees go, outside the gate.

An officer of rank, in the service of the King of Sardinia, accompanied us to the field of Marengo, and explained the various movements of the battle, in which he had been. There are no striking natural features, such as the traveller sees in some of the fields of Greece, or at Waterloo, to mark the spot—a flat and extensive plain, interspersed with a few groups of trees and two or three cottages.

The third day was the most interesting one of this journey; the country became more bold and varied; and, on entering a mountain pass, the imagination and spirits were no longer wearied by the level tracts. The weather was cloudy and lowering, and the voiture stopped in the midst of a deep and savage valley at a sorry inn, where a wretched breakfast was served in a wretched apartment. The road soon after wound up the Apennines by a steep ascent. Italy owes its natural charms to other features than its mountains, which are seldom magnificent, save

those of Calabria. In a long valley, we passed beneath the ruined walls of the castle of Gavi, strongly fixed on a rock ; and even the loveliness of this valley was half destroyed by the wide, dry, and stony bed of a river, that ran through its whole extent. On each side, and on the slopes of the gentle hills, were innumerable villas of the merchants and wealthy people of Genoa, built in every possible style of architecture, and of every hue, in the midst of gardens and groups of trees. Some of these edifices were of great beauty. Had the unsightly river-bed held a full and a noble stream, the scene would have resembled fairy-land. Some miles farther the road turns ; but from every window and terrace the arid waterless bed met the eye, and cast back (towards the sea) the burning rays of the sun : on passing the light-house, a sudden and splendid view of Genoa presented itself.

No signs of spring were yet visible at Turin, or on any part of the road, until within a league of this city, when it broke on the eye like enchantment. The almond and myrtle were in

full bloom, the orange-trees loaded with fruit, and the earth covered with beautiful flowers. The climate is more mild and soft than Turin or Milan, and the Apennines break some of the fiercer winds. At the hotel green peas made their appearance at table in the evening; so near the sea, it might be expected that fish would be easily procured, but such is the indolence of the Italians that the supply is uncertain, as is the case also at Leghorn and Naples; and the coasts do not afford the variety of those in England.

Already some of the impositions of the land began. The moment the luggage was at the door of the hotel, as the voiturier is always too proud to touch it, five or six porters laid violent hands on it: each of them placed a trunk or parcel on his shoulders, marched straight up the stairs, and demanded nearly as much as if he had conveyed the whole. The next morning, reckoning on an Italian climate, we had expected to be bright and cloudless, but it brought on an incessant deluge of rain that

lasted without intermission till towards evening. When it does rain in Italy, it is with a violence and constancy enough to astonish a native even of the west of England, accustomed only to the gentle yet frequent showers of his own clime. It was in vain to gaze out on the streets, whose narrow space ran wildly with water: on the opposite side was a high and stately row of houses and palaces, but scarcely a carriage rattled on the pavement.

Pity on the pilgrims who were now on their way to celebrate the holy year at Rome, surprised perhaps by the deluge in the bleak passes of the Apennines, or on the wide plains of the Milanese; many of them we had passed were but ill provided against the inclemency of the weather with the staff, the scallop, the scanty cloak, the little images of tin or lead, appealed to in vain to arrest the tempest or the flood. The old, and feeble, and delicate were among them; to Rome every hope and desire was turned; heat and toil, hunger and pain, were gladly borne; and often the favourite saint, that hung at

the bosom, was kissed, and often the psalm was lifted. The singing of these men, in groups, amidst the lonely places, was striking and often melodious.

A day of ceaseless rain in Italy is more dreary than in most other countries; if it surprises the wanderer at a remote auberge, or a poor town or village, whither can he turn for refuge? Within, where might be written, "Here comfort never comes," cold walls and floors, empty chimneys, down which, and along the passages, the blast finds mournful entrance. The only resource is to walk to and fro in the corridor, and gaze on the court-yard, where no living thing can dare the big and heavy drops; yet they come in mercy, or the abominations of a country-kitchen, &c. in this land, would be more than the senses could bear. The rain ceased towards evening, and the narrow promenade in the Strada Balbi was thronged with pedestrians, among whom were a number of well-dressed women. A foot-pavement is hardly heeded here, the streets being composed of large

flat blocks of lava, laid smooth, and very pleasant to the step. The ladies were dressed in the French style, with lace scarfs on their heads worn gracefully, the universal costume during Lent; and the middle class are fond of vying with each other in the smartness of this head-dress, or hood, in the Madonna style; scarlet, amber, and green shawls were sported in profusion.

The Strada Balbi, narrow though it be, is yet a superb street, its numerous palaces, from the variety of colours of their marble walls, look beautiful; two or three are of a light rose-colour, a few of yellow, and the greater part of white marble. These edifices, with their galleries of paintings, their furniture, and gardens, are almost gratuitously open to the inquisitive stranger at all hours of the day. Entering at night the splendid church of the Annunciata, a great multitude was there; the stream of its many lights cast on the long flights of marble pillars, the ceiling fretted with gold, and the ornaments, rich even to wantonness, were in strange contrast to the little confessional-boxes

by the side of every altar, within which the bald, round head and face of the monk was just visible. A penitent was kneeling beside each box, and pouring in soft whispers her sins and temptations into the father's ear. Splendid music, and the hushed murmurs of the lady's voice in his ear ; gold and gems, and precious paintings on every side ; with soft and sorrowing features bowed before him—was this the scene or hour for religion ; or the abandonment of the senses ? To both priest and penitent, the confession was more an excitement than a sacrifice. It was high mass, and the music added greatly to the effect of the moment. One of the priests, observing us to be strangers, very civilly became cicerone of the place, and made the round of all the paintings and rarities. The finest of the former, over the altars, were carefully shrouded with black cloth in observance of Lent, and the priest removed every one of these coverings. He was eloquent in the description of the saints and martyrs who were the subjects. This veil during Lent, to prevent the attention of good

Catholics wandering from their devotions, might as well be extended all the year round to some of the other subjects, which were more likely to inflame the desires of this world than to exalt them to a heavenly one.

Among the palaces, that of Durazzo is remarkable for its richness and beauty, and the width and height of the grand staircase, of every step which is formed of one block of marble. Paintings being a regular article of Italian chateaus, every apartment was filled with them. Some of the saloons were furnished with crimson velvet and gold, or white satin, embroidered with various colours, exquisite marbles, jaspers, lapis-lazuli, &c.; other pleasant things were in abundance. Yet the terraces of many of the palaces, covered with orange-trees and rich exotics, were more attractive than the interior; they look down on the glorious spectacle of the bay, the shores, and city. An edifice of a different kind of beauty is that of Sera in the Strada Nuova; its small and luxurious saloon looks more like a gorgeous cabinet kept

for show than the principal apartment in a noble's palace. At sunset, on its lofty terrace, the owner need envy none of his fellow-men. Yet this abode, like most the other palaces, appears to be maintained for little purpose of use or enjoyment, being rarely inhabited by the owners, who have not the means to dwell there in suitable style, or have chosen other places of residence. The next day being fine we wandered to the church of Carignano, in the most elevated part of the town. The bridge conducting to it passes over a deep glen in the middle of the town; far beneath are seen the roofs of numerous dwellings and the noisy population; beyond, the bare Apennines, and the dark ridge of groves at their feet. The priests should have built a convent here instead of a church, consistently with that taste in the choice of good positions for which they are justly distinguished.

This church, however, in spite of the grove of trees around it, is a poor and unattractive edifice, large and heavy, without either colonnade

or portico, with two ugly and awkward towers. The interior is more striking, being of white marble, but not a single painting is introduced to relieve the nakedness of the vast walls, although, to atone for this deficiency, there are endless statues of saints, large as life, most of whom were martyrs. The favourite of the Genoese is St. Bartholomew, after he had been flayed alive, holding his skin in his hand; it is rather a frightful performance. Was cleanliness never a favourite attribute with the anchorites of old, that the modern hierarchy seem to blend religion and dirt most faithfully together? At this busy time, if you bowed before a noble madonna—it might be one of Raphael's own—or the snow-white statue of some sainted hero, odours, not of Arabia, floated round, and the garment that pressed the floor was soiled for ever. The filthiness of some of the floors is beyond belief.

Happening to enter, during divine service, one of the finest churches, well lighted and glittering with gold, and many-coloured marbles, and

gorgeous altars, the state of the pavement, and the unhappy airs that prevailed, drove us speedily out with a sensation of loathing. There was a large number of people assembled, as was the case every day at this season, and the slightest care and attention might have remedied the evil. Among the multitudes who filled the churches, there was every appearance of the sincerest devotion; the fervour of many of all ages was indeed remarkable, but it was always in silence they prayed or gazed on their favourite saints; the officiating priest had never much of their attention. It was curious to see the latter change his habiliments, repeat his prayers, partake of the sacrament, in short go through all his evolutions, and excite scarcely the smallest interest in his congregation, who, kneeling with their eyes fixed on their books, rarely withdrew them.

A scene in an old church was not without interest; in the side of one of the walls was a small cavern cut out of the rock, in which was a figure of the Redeemer lying dead, the three

Maries weeping over him, all of the size of life, and of marble. The scene was intended to represent the sepulchre, and was sufficiently well executed. A number of women were kneeling before the cavern, deeply affected, and gazing on the figures with intense earnestness and pity. Who shall say that this was a vain and improper pageantry? to them at least it was not so.

In various parts of the streets were small altars, embosomed in large bouquets of the richest and most beautiful flowers, a perfect atmosphere of sweets; on most of the altars was an image of the Virgin. These bouquets are composed of the numerous contributions of the poorer and middling classes, who take infinite delight in decorating these altars, which were often tasteful and elegant, and replenished with fresh flowers every day. At almost every turn, and in almost every corner, these picturesque exhibitions caught the eye; and though the Virgin monopolized the greater part, St. Francis also had his share, and sometimes other subordinate saints, who happened to be favourites with the votaries.

The Brignolé palace is very beautiful ; in the first spacious apartment was a singular scene : the walls were covered with noble paintings, and this saloon had evidently been a favourite one of its aristocratic tenants. In one part sat a dress-maker, busily employed, and in another two men and a woman making mattresses ; around the walls, and on the floor on which they sat, were dispersed in exquisite confusion the various materials of their occupations. They said that this splendid palace was let out in lodgings. A passing inclination came, to take a suite of these magnificent apartments, so full of paintings, some of great excellence, and rich furniture, having a terrace without, looking far over some of the loveliest scenery in the world ; while, for such a princely tenement, no princely price would be demanded.

The triumph of David, with the head of Goliah in his hand, as he stood in the valley of Elah—his youthful features full of a calm heroism—was one of the most striking pictures. So also was that of the beautiful Judith, after

the deliverance of Bethulia ; save that she looked as composed and smiling as in her own boudoir, while the gory sabre was in one hand and her foot on the tyrant's corpse. Is it the love of money, or the want of it, that can induce the lord of such a dwelling to let it out for hire ? but Italian jealousy, as well as pride of birth and station, will melt like snow at the touch of gold, and the wife as well as the palace will yield to its spell.

Grandeur and meanness dwell side by side at Genoa. The streets are often so narrow, as to be no better than alleys, winding amidst rows of lofty and stately stone houses, whose higher stories, like those of Cairo, admit of intrigues and conversaziones being carried on from the opposite windows. You are astonished how people can exist with any comfort where there is so little circulation of air : the heat, as we walked through these alleys, was stifling ; though they were excellently paved, they were as dirty and unwholesome as possible. Pity but Mahomet had made a short inroad into Italy,

and left behind his eternal love of water and purifying,—the only observance utterly disregarded here.

The streets, which, from the situation of the city, are of alternate ascent and descent, were swarming with a numerous population. Women were seated in chairs at the doors, gaudily dressed; their animated faces, of which the large black eye was the finest feature, wrapped up in richly embroidered handkerchiefs, and bouquets of flowers at their bosoms. It was a holiday, and every body looked gay; but the most striking things in Genoa are the neglected and decaying palaces, that arrest the attention in almost every street. It is not that the noble and massive architecture moulders fast; on the contrary, the marble columns of the corridors, with rich capitals, surround each court and fountain on the lower story, and the colonnades on the second and third stories may yet bid defiance to ages. But these beautiful courts were overgrown with grass and coarse shrubs, and the marble staircases covered with the accumulated dirt of

years. The fountains likewise, even of the richest marble and granite, still continued in some instances to pour forth their streams, and in others were quite dry.

The walls and ceilings of these deserted corridors were often adorned with old paintings, injured and partially defaced by long neglect and exposure to the weather. If you chanced to look into the lofty and spacious apartments opening on these colonnades, you found them inhabited by mechanics, ragged and squalid children running about the variegated floors. Sometimes scarcely a tenant was to be seen, and the stranger might move through the long halls, or the flights of porphyry pillars, and feel as solitary as amidst the ruins of an eastern temple.

The slightest attention paid to the ornamental parts of these edifices would go far to preserve them ; but they are utterly abandoned. Many a descendant of an illustrious family has the frequent luxury of passing by the mansion of his forefathers, now put to the vilest uses.

This city has been justly praised for its hospitals — fine and extensive structures; but the interior of the great hospital inspires disgust rather than admiration. Handsome flights of steps, and then a handsome portico, lead to a long and lofty gallery, on each side of which extend rows of beds, two or three deep, all filled with patients; but a scene more repugnant to every feeling of delicacy and humanity could not exist. None of these abodes of the wretched and suffering were provided with curtains; there they lie under the power of all kinds of disease, deformities, and tortures, exposed to the gaze of each other: the sexes were intermingled without the slightest distinction. Worn and sorrow-stricken countenances seemed on every hand to claim from the stranger that pity and kindness which appeared to be dealt out to them with sparing hand. The absence of care respecting the comfort of these unfortunates was visible enough, but the utter want of cleanliness appealed to the senses so strongly in every possible way, that a hasty retreat soon became desirable.

Several priests were in the apartments, to minister to the spiritual necessities of the patients. The equanimity of these ghostly persons was conspicuous ; not a muscle of their faces, as they lounged about, being in the slightest degree disturbed. This tasteful people build a noble hospital, and then cram all the subjects into one spot more fit to be called a charnel-house ; instead of placing the different sexes and ranks in some of the other spacious and unemployed apartments.

How different from this scene was the hospital of the Sœurs de Charité at Dijon, than which no saloon could be more carefully kept, nor could the sick be attended in the bosom of their families with more devotion. The altar stood in the middle of the long, light, and airy apartment, decorated with flowers. Each neat white bed was shrouded by its snowy curtains from every eye ; the few faces of those whom we saw visited by their friends were full of content and satisfaction. There was no priest, but around many a bed, relatives of the sufferers

were kneeling, with books of devotion in their hands, and praying with great fervour; and where these were wanting, the sisters de la charité, in their white dresses, the pictures of neatness and simplicity, prayed with and consoled the patients.

The numerous dwellings of the wealthy on the sides of the hills, look temptingly. All bare and wild the Appenines rise above: the gardens of orange, aloe, rose, and pomegranate trees beneath make a charmed circle, out of which many a convent lifted its head. The close of winter was here like the full summer season.

LETTER XII.

Protestant Service at Genoa; in Turkey and Egypt; in Rome.—Coral of Genoa.—Fondness of the Italian Females for personal ornaments.—Departure from Genoa.—Road along the Coast.—A Picturesque Town.—Italian Inns.—Comfortable Cottages.—Carrara.—Massa.—Lucca.—Pisa.—The Cathedral.—Celebration of Good-Friday Eve.—The Burial-ground.—Leghorn.—Processions of Monks.—English Burial-ground.—Sienna.—Hospital for Pilgrims.—Festival of St. Catharine.—Unwholesome air of the Maremma.—Cathedral of Sienna.—Radicofani.—Crowded Bed-chambers.—San Lorenzo.—Lake of Bolseno.—Orvieto—Style of Living there.—Montefiascone.—Castle of Ronciglione—Inhabitants of its Tower.—Baccano.

IN the chapel of the English consul there is a service every Sunday, by the chaplain, but the audience is in general a small and fleeting one. Sometimes a sudden arrival of wanderers swells the number, that once more dwindles, in the fasting week, to a scanty, and one would ima-

gine, to the minister, a disheartening group. But the Protestant service, on the shores of the Mediterranean, seems to be shorn of its impressiveness: in the capitals of Turkey and Egypt the scene was somewhat strange—a few merchants, a few adventurers, who had come to seek their fortune, or to spend the little they had—a knot of travellers, each looking shy and suspicious on each other, completed the congregation, in which there were no ladies. Perhaps some twenty or thirty persons were thus mustered, while on the other side of the street was gathered the Armenian or the Greek assembly, and the loud cry from the mosque was distinctly heard. Spiritless and ineloquent—the discourses do not seem in character with that foreign strand, being transplanted, perhaps, from the crowded city-audience, or the more peaceful chapel of the distant parish.

At Rome, the little English chapel is without the walls, and is served gratuitously, and of course irregularly; the wealthy aristocracy, who spend so much time in this capital, decline to

contribute even the scantiest income to encourage a minister to remain there. The pontiff would not allow the sacred city to be polluted with heretical service, and it is one of the most characteristic scenes, even here, to see the splendid equipages of the English nobility rolling in slow and solemn grandeur on the sabbath to the little chapel without the walls, to avail themselves of the services, and partake of the sacred ordinances, at the hands of a man, who looks on his haughty and luxurious audience with the conviction "that the labourer is worthy of his hire." Were he to be so unreasonable as to demand a subscription or a stipend, he might lock the door on the empty interior, and, putting the key in his pocket, wander sadly over the lone campagna, and meditate on the excess of religious zeal in a foreign land.

The coral of Genoa is of a superior kind, and forms a prominent article in the display in the street of the goldsmiths, where all imaginable kinds of rich and tasteful ornaments are laid out, more for the use of the lower and rural classes than the affluent and proud. The Ita-

lian girls are passionately fond of costly earrings, bracelets, &c. often quite unsuited to the quality of their attire; where gold is beyond their means, silver is worn, even when labouring in the fields, beneath the rays of a burning sun, that prematurely takes away their freshness and attraction. The festival days are those of their pride; coral, which is cheap, and of excellent quality at Genoa, and pearl, are profusely worn. In many of the cantons of Switzerland the peasant-bride glories in her vast stock of linen, to the gradual hoarding of which previous years have perhaps been given; the piles of snowy whiteness are often sufficient to serve a family of Brobdignag for a whole year without washing. From the floor, almost to the roof, rises the goodly array, gazed at from day to day with exquisite complacency; and it is a frequent boast, that for two years the household has no need to have recourse to the waters of the lake or stream.

The Tuscan or Genoese beauty does not, like her countrywomen of the south, forget the external purity of linen and vesture on her own fine

form, or on the walls of her home ; but she will expend all her little portion, even thirty or fifty pounds in a splendid necklace or chain, that is worn to the dying hour.

It was now time to think of leaving Genoa, having first procured a passport, properly signed, a thing of primary importance in this country. It was one of the finest mornings possible ; the rain of the preceding days had cooled the air, and there was not a cloud in the sky. The other side of Genoa is far more delightful than that approached from Turin.

The road was the celebrated one made with so much labour by Napoleon, along the cliffs, and equally admirable with the noble one over the Simplon. It must yield to the latter in the terrible and wild ; but, for beauty and magnificence of prospect, it probably exceeds any in the world. After a few hours' travelling, we came to a small village, rising immediately over the sea, at the acclivity of a lofty hill, and here we rested to breakfast. The auberge was a good one, its windows commanding a view of the vast extent of shore in front, which stretched away

in a long and almost endless line of beauty. The spires and palaces of Genoa in the distance still fixed the eye, between which and our lofty resting-place were mountains covered with woods and villages down even to the water's edge.

On many a point, and in many a lovely and secluded bay, (seen only from the windings along precipices above,) were numerous neat villages, each with its church and tall spire. One small town, known for an excellent manufacture of lace, stood far beneath the cliff on a cluster of rocks, and almost hidden even there, by orange and lemon trees, now covered with fruit. Aloes were in abundance, even close to the edge of the water, and the Indian fig as plentiful as we had beheld it in Syria.

It was Sunday; the bells of the numerous churches sounded from the shore below and the heights above, and the tones seemed to pass clear and solemn over the deep. This road must have been constructed at a prodigious expense, being carried on the very edge of rocks, and made to climb the steepest elevations of the mountains. Toward evening, the path descend-

ed into a plain, and in a short time led to a small and very neat town. Its streets were clean and well paved, the houses very good, and the people had a gay and contented air; there was more of the air of home and comfort here altogether, than we had yet seen in Italy—it was an attractive place; one English family alone dwelt in the neighbourhood. Very cheap, a fine climate, a friendly people, delicious walks on every side—what more could be desired? A more enviable spot for a foreign residence can rarely be found.

We walked some time beneath the rows of trees at the water's edge, from which the breeze came freshly, and the evening gathered with a glory and a freshness on mountain, forest, and sea. Having a visit to pay to a family in the town, we were received with a kindness that banished all ceremony; wine and fruits were placed on the table, the youthful mother introduced her children, all marked, like herself, by the delicate, colourless complexion, and large dark eyes. It was not easy to leave so delight-

ful a scene without regret; we resumed our journey, and came at night to a village, part of which stood on a bold promontory. The inn, the best in the place, was a very sorry one, and a wretched supper was served up. Unfortunately for us, an English family had arrived a few hours before, and had monopolized every thing that was good:—the landlord had neither eye nor ear for any thing save my Lord *Anglais*, at one moment rushing through the apartment with salt, vinegar, or some trifle he had forgotten, —and the next his voice was heard loudly from the top of the stairs, summoning the domestics to his aid.

Although the interior, as well as the management of the inns on the road, both in town and village, is in general detestable, this is by no means the case with the villages themselves, at least in the territories of Genoa and Tuscany. In very many of the abodes much comfort as well as order is visible; the domestic life and enjoyment of the cottage, it is evident, is not inferior to that of England; with less poverty, and none

of that fearful looking for the future, which of late has been so fierce an inmate in many a once happy home. There is often a native courtesy about the people, that is grateful to the wanderer's feelings; beneath more than one humble roof, where we rested some hours, the linen chanced to be clean, and the utensils also, and the frugal viands and wine were good. But this can seldom be said south of Tuscany. After an uncomfortable night's lodging, we quitted this place at an early hour.

This day's ride over part of the Appenines was a rugged one, and at night, in order to cross a river, we were obliged to leave the voiture, and enter a boat, that soon landed us on the opposite shore. The moonlight was brilliant on the wild and rocky hills, and the walk to rejoin our vehicle was romantic enough, and conducted us to a poor and solitary inn.

The following morning we entered the town of Carrara, celebrated for its quarries of the purest white marble. It stands in a small valley. The white buildings, like those of Massa,

offer an agreeable contrast to the rich verdure on every side. The quarries being at some distance from the town, we had not time to visit them, but proceeded to Massa, which lies at no great distance. This town stands on a bold and lofty site, and overhangs the road; the castle is the finest object in it, and frowns nobly from its high eminence. The priests are very numerous in this part of the country: often a solitary monk passed on foot in his sombre garb; and on one occasion we encountered two portly fathers mounted in good fellowship on the same horse, and trotting gently on.

About an hour after sunset we arrived at Lucca, in the plain, partly surrounded by low hills,—a very quiet and rather unattractive place; its favourite promenade being the boulevard that extends round the whole of the town, and upon which strangers appear satisfied to be driven along at a slow and regular pace in the cool of the evening. A number of carriages, several evidently English, were driving about.

It was necessary to have an alteration made in

our passport here, and the next morning we were on the way to Pisa. After hearing so much in praise of this city, it is not pleasant to be as we were, sadly disappointed. Its climate in winter is extremely mild and soft, and excellently suited to delicate and consumptive visitors; but the dullness and gloom of the place are enough, as we said before, to quicken their passage to the grave. A friend who was advised to try the mildness of its air, and went from Florence for that purpose, very soon returned, observing that the sad and depressing aspect of the place would augment his malady in a greater degree than the salubrious air could possibly benefit him.

In summer, Pisa is almost suffocating; the nights are damp as well as breathless; even the flat, sandy tract, at an hour's distance, and partly shaded with an oak-wood, is then a welcome resource: it has all the wildness of a desert, though but a sorry resemblance. A herd of camels, near two hundred in number, wander at large here; they are useful animals, often bring-

ing heavy loads to Pisa, in whose dull streets, by the side of the dull and yellow river, at the burning hour of noon, it requires no great stretch of the fancy to imagine we are in the midst of a silent, oriental city.

In the duomo, or cathedral, the festival of Good Friday eve was now held. The galleries over the grand altar were full of choristers, to whose singing was added a full band of military music, and the chanting was very fine.

An altar, dedicated to the passions of our Lord, and composed entirely of lapis-lazuli and gold, supported a small temple, several feet high, of solid silver, around which were placed a number of lights, which, flashing on the precious metals, produced a splendid effect. On this altar was likewise placed a crucifix, nearly two feet high, of solid gold.

Several dignified ecclesiastics stood around, in their rich robes, and a few elegantly dressed and beautiful women knelt, with every appearance of devotion, amidst the mass of the populace; for even beauty and power might well yield their

feelings to the combined influence of sight and sound, in such a scene as this. The fifteen hundred lights which, as our cicerone told us, were burning at this moment, made the interior of the building bright as the day. The person who attends strangers in their visits to the cathedral and baptistery was a genteel-looking man, who had seen much better days, but whose present occupation and livelihood were derived from this office.

It would be useless to speak of the columns of oriental granite and marble, the many altars and pictures, or the leaning tower,—the great lions of the place, amidst whose dirt, poverty, and desolation, they are really valuable, if only as a relief to the wearied feelings. The burial-ground is the most interesting of these; it is of great size, and its numerous light arcades, and pavement of white marble, have a striking effect.

Whether the earth from Mount Calvary was or was not brought hither at the time of the crusades can be important only to a zealous Catho-

lic, but the cemetery is the Père la Chaise of Italy, full of monuments, sarcophagi, and vases of the finest marble. Many illustrious characters repose here.

We quitted Pisa without regret, soon after sunrise, for Leghorn—a ride of a few hours. It was delightful to behold the sea again; and the only luxury of Leghorn is the excellent bathing it affords. But the most curious sights at this time were the endless and many-coloured processions of the monks of the different orders through the streets of the city.

First advanced all the chief people of the town in procession, and clothed in habits of different hues, whereby they were covered from head to foot, holes for their eyes alone being left to enable these sinners to find their way through the streets. Their cap was shaped like a child's fool's-cap at school, namely, pyramidal, and pointed at the top. One body of these penitent laymen had habits of a blood-red colour, another of dark brown, and a third of black. An immense quantity of priests followed, of the

different orders, and divided into large companies, of which not fewer than sixteen paraded through the town,—the whole population being drawn out of their houses to behold the solemn farce.

The monks kept up a grave and heavy chant, which was to be heard throughout the town (except at those intervals when they stopped to take breath) the whole of the day, and wearied the ear with its dull, unimpressive sound. A muffled drum and triangles were distinguished above the slow tread of the procession, and each monk and layman carried an immense wax-candle, longer than himself,—a number of old women, who pressed close on the sides and rear of the procession, coming in for the honour of bearing a sacred candle also.

An image of Christ, wrapped in black cloth, was borne on a bier, behind which came an aged priest, bearing a thick and heavy cross, intended to represent the cross once borne for the sins of mankind. Beneath its weight, however, it was not necessary for him to *feign* weariness, for the

day being extremely sultry, and the way long, the old father staggered and groaned in good earnest beneath his burden.

All the churches were filled, and splendidly lighted up; and in the evening the feet of the poor of the town were publicly washed on the steps of the churches by the chief and richest inhabitants, in token of their humility. But, after all this parade of piety and self-denial, the licentiousness that reigned throughout the place, as night closed, could not be exceeded. The passions that had been reined in during the processions and services were now let loose without restraint, and both streets and houses presented scenes of wild and reckless dissipation.

The English burying-ground, in the neighbourhood, is a retired and charming spot, surrounded with lofty iron railing. The tombs are all of white marble, half-shrouded by a number of cypress, acacia, and rose-trees, together with the weeping willow. In this place are interred all the English residents and visitors who have died here for the last twenty years. The victims

to consumption are numerous ;—military officers who sought in the soft air of Leghorn to repair the ravages of an Indian climate ; invalids who came hither to die. The tomb of Shelley, who was to be interred here, was not observable among the number ; and here is that of an excellent clergyman, who for nearly half a century fulfilled his duties with admirable zeal and fidelity. He was an American royalist, who, having lost the greater part of his property during the war, fled to this town, and was received as pastor by the English, who always regarded him with esteem and veneration.

At the time the French occupied the place, during the revolution, their general declared he should destroy the English burying-ground, and take away the railing, which he told the minister was useless there, while he was in great want of iron for his troops. The latter firmly declared that they should take his life sooner than violate the cemetery, which had been of his own creating ; menaces of being shot for his obstinacy had no effect, and in the end he was triumphant, and saved his favourite burying-ground.

Afer a few days' stay in Leghorn, we departed for Rome, by the route of Sienna. The first night we stopped at Poggibonzi, and on the following evening arrived at Sienna, on the summit of a hill, with extensive prospects and a pure and healthful air. Sienna has always a number of English families; it has another quality, somewhat rare in Italian cities, great cleanliness, the streets being wide and well paved with large tiles. The streets are perilously steep, and many of the old gloomy dwellings, though spacious and good within, are a little like massive prisons, or seclusions. The grass grows in some of the streets; there is a decaying and successless air about the place, in character, in some measure, with the Maremma, of which it is the capital. Provisions are remarkably cheap, as well as house-rent; a palace even may be had at a small rent; but the glorious scenery, the terraced roofs and orangeries of the palaces of Genoa have no place here.

The society is agreeable and very accessible; a few introductions open the door of every

conversazione. The Siennese women are well informed, and speak their language with great purity; they sing and play very generally, and never forget the power of their dark eyes; and as to coldness or reserve of manner, words, or looks—what have they to do in this or any other Italian city, where beauty is seldom retiring, and the thoughts are thrown freely and eagerly into every rich feature.

Among the public institutions of Sienna, is an hospital for the reception of pilgrims; at this time the inmates were numerous, and the many groups passing along the steep streets, or lingering by the way, were picturesque. This hospital was a grateful resting-place to the weary men; they were hospitably received and entertained, but not long did they tarry here; onwards every look and step was directed: a single night, and often only a few hours, were the term of their stay—so impatient were many of them to see, even afar off, the eternal city. The hall of this building commands a noble prospect; but more attractive metal than any of the as-

pects of nature were some of the excellent and invaluable saints, hoarded in some of the churches, to whose presence the zealous men quickly repaired. Saint Catharine, however, bears away the palm here, as she does in the deserts of Sinai; besides her various honours as well as influences, to which popes have even bowed themselves, one of the most useful is an annual procession of the daughters of the poor artisans, who have portions given them by the fraternity. With the girls of Sienna this was once a favourite festival, for they not only had the dowry, but also the liberty to choose their husbands. The lover hovered about the procession, and presented a handkerchief to the object of his passion; if his suit was unwelcome, the handkerchief was kissed by the girl and then returned; but if the latter consented, she tied a knot and presented it as a pledge of her favour.

In the hospital the pilgrims were entertained freely for several days and nights, if they chose to stay. They had need of repose, ere they

entered on the dreary territory of the Maremma, part of which they had to cross; and the passage was of more efficacy than a hundred scourgings and fastings in trying the patience and nerve of the pedestrian. It was not the nakedness and sadness of the earth, whose scanty and stunted clumps of trees were a mere mockery of shade or verdure—the fainting pilgrim found little relief beneath their withered foliage from the burning rays—still less relief could he find from the sulphureous and brackish springs; but on every side there were foul exhalations rising from the volcanic soil. It was hurtful to close the eyes in sleep, for there was sure disease in the damp and noxious vapours, particularly after sunset and early in the morn. During the extreme heats of noon, these fetid mists are seen to rise from the desolate and forsaken vales, carrying death in their track. They are caused partly by the sulphureous nature of the land, and partly, as in the Campagna, from a long neglected and putrid soil, and decayed vegetation. Many of the weaker and more aged pilgrims

finish their course in this region from the unwholesome air, and the many injurious influences, to which their fatigue and poor diet expose them. It is a mournful thing to these unfortunate men to be stricken in this miserable land, even within a few days of the holy city. In the more level parts the grass is rank and rich, and tempts the shepherd to bring his flock, and remain during the winter months ; and the peasants wander here, and sow corn, for the produce is great, as if the very corruption, like that of a field of battle, gave luxuriant crops. From their pale looks and wasted frames it is evident that they dearly abide these advantages.

The wealthy Italians are in general averse to living in the country ; and many a noble and ancient palace and chateau are deserted during the greater part of the year. Utterly neglected, some of these dwellings, even within a few miles of Sienna, seem almost desolate. Most enviably situated, with a wide and feudal domain around, one would imagine it would be delicious to eat of the fruit of the vine, and sit under the shadow

of the oaks and myrtles that our fathers had planted, and wander through the long and lofty halls and galleries;—a Siennese noble loves far more a paltry *conversazione*, an ice, a glass of lemonade, and a little idle badinage.

At last we resolved to leave Sienna, and bend our way to the capital. The cathedral is a noble old building of black and white marble; the floor highly curious, very ancient, and containing, in numerous divisions, portions of the history of the Old and New Testament, curiously done in a kind of mosaic. Two rows of columns that form the two aisles are of black and white marble alternately, which has a splendid effect; and on the pulpit, of white marble, is carved one of the interesting pieces of Old Testament history. It was necessary to depart early.

A few leagues on, begins a waste and dreary tract; rocky hills and tenantless wilds fill up the view. You no longer think you are traveling in Italy,—treeless, waterless—all sights or sounds of life are fled. The hills are composed

of marl, without even a vestige of verdure; the sternest anchorite might revel here to Radicofani, built on the declivity of the mountain of that name. The latter is volcanic, it stands alone, and forms a conspicuous point in the dreary landscape. In the inn, the accommodations were not of the best kind, and the supper, as usual on the Italian roads, was very bad. But the most striking circumstance at these places is the total want of delicacy, not only exercised toward visitors, but in general freely submitted to by them. As each of the apartments is provided with several beds, the host makes no scruple of accommodating those who arrive, of both sexes, with the same resting-place; and his astonishment is sometimes great, on being told that it is impossible to allow other Messieurs and Madames to share your chamber, although the inn is "quite full," and accommodations are not otherwise to be obtained. Mine host implores, remonstrates, shrugs his shoulders at the singular and unnecessary delicacy that prompts the refusal, and on two or

three occasions, he ended by demanding as much for one apartment, as if half a dozen people had really slept in it, because he should have been *able*, he said, to have lodged them all there.

We were still lingering over our unsavoury supper, when the rattling of a voiture without announced a fresh arrival. We had already absolutely protested against any intrusion on our chamber, and felt secure, when the door opened, and six passengers, (four women and two men,) of very respectable appearance entered, and made their way into the adjoining room, the only one in the inn left untenanted, accepting of it as their resting-place in common for the night without a single objection; as if perfectly resigned to the necessity of the case, which indeed occurs so frequently on the Italian roads as to excite no surprise.

Soon after leaving Radicofani, we came to the custom-house at Ponte Centino, the first in the Roman territories, at which we had to undergo a most unpleasant scrutiny. Nothing was overlooked, and a very voracious desire was shown

to seize everything that struck the fancy, but it was successful only with respect to two or three articles. At San Lorenzo the inn was pretty good, and, it being the fourth night of our journey, and the worst part of the road being already passed, even worse accommodations would not have discomposed us. The pleasures of travelling must depend a good deal on the taste; the tedious, and unpicturesque roads of France, though complained of perhaps from the rising to the setting sun, are soon forgotten on arriving at a clean auberge, with good beds and cookery, excellent wine, and extreme civility. The attractions of Italian scenery will hardly atone for the filth of the inns, their abominable meals, and the occasional insolence of the people.

We set out at day-break, and soon came in view of the lake of Bolseno. The grey mists gradually rose from the water. From the volcanic isles, and the ruins on the shore, the whole scene had an air of deep retirement and beauty. It is only a day's journey from Rome, whose gloom and

scorching atmosphere might be well exchanged for the lake; yet there was scarcely a chateau in the environs! Over the cliffs and sad remains of Bolseno hangs a pestilential air.

Orvieto, not far from Bolseno, stands on a rocky and almost perpendicular hill: its situation is striking, and the approaches steep and rugged. It is the isolated retreat of a decaying and ignorant aristocracy, whose palaces, with their splendid and often half-faded furniture, terraces, and rich gardens, cover the brow and sides of the bold eminence. In these ancient edifices, on some of which time has laid his hand heavily, and poverty dwells, but neither fiercely nor painfully, the descendants of many illustrious families maintain a dull and gloomy state, visiting only with each other; yet courteous to the stranger, if he comes among them well introduced. Hospitable they cannot be called, for the means are wanting; *conversazioni* are given, cheap and wholesome, for they break up early; and countesses and baronesses wind their way on foot to those silent halls, threading the

narrow and precipitous streets, with a light borne before them.

On the morrow, if a visit is made by chance, these ladies of high degree look woefully ill-attired, and out of costume and beauty; the sumptuous dresses of the preceding evening being reserved only for society—faces unwashed, hair dishevelled, linen not of the hue of snow: the bright glance, and the voluble tongue, though not in softest accent, speak however a free welcome. A very few of these nobles still retain considerable wealth, and support a handsome style of living, being possessed of a palace at Rome, to which they retire in the winter, or a noble chateau in the plain below, in the midst of a thick grove or forest, where they give at times a *fête champêtre*, where no luxury is absent. At present, when aristocracy is growing out of fashion at home, a more grateful and characteristic retreat for a discontented noble cannot be imagined; he would be received with open arms, and devoured with embraces. Beautiful!—to stand on one of the

terraces of the princely palaces, on the brow of this perpendicular rock of tufo (volcanic and perilous foundation); and look down and moralise on the fortunes of the fallen land, stretched far beneath — rich food for the sullen exile. And at night no plebeian dares enter the Orvietan circle; its nobles would be less startled by the ghost of their ancestors, than by the entrance of some intrusive and nameless commoner. Then their conversation glows with the tales of former grandeur and glory: blood—pure, stainless, revered blood—glides in every vein, though the face be wan with scantiness at home, and the frame halting to its final rest.

The day was hot, when we passed the gate of the town of Montefiascone, that wore, in spite of the reputation of its excellent wine, a gloomy and forbidding appearance; the single, long, and gloomy street being more like a descent to the abodes of the dead than the joyous resort of the living. It stands high and gloomily over the treacherous and lovely shore of Bolseno, like a beacon to warn the wanderer away.

It was a long stage to Viterbo, to breakfast; a pleasant town, with streets wholly of lava. The road was now excellent, the weather delightful; and in few leagues farther, on the left, far beneath, gleamed out the small lake of Vico; wood-covered groves of oak and chestnut, with a variety of rich heather were around it. In the evening we rested at Ronciglione, and the aspect of the country around had become materially altered. The antique and lofty castle has a strange, dark appearance, suited better to the wild regions of romance than the fair fields of Italy. It is built of tufo, and is said to be a thousand years old. We ascended to the summit of the tower by a winding staircase, and found a small family dwelling in two or three of the strong massive and apartments near the top. Yet the light that entered dimly through the little windows showed no ruinous or repulsive sight within; for the chambers that formed this poor family's abode were exquisitely neat and clean. They were two very old people, a husband and wife; the latter was dressed in the

Roman costume ; the boddice of coloured stuffs, edged with gold lace ; the head-dress a kind of towel wrapped tastefully round the head, and hanging in a respectable length behind. They both evidently took pride in their singular abode, and in the cleanliness for which it was remarkable ; for they had resided here half a century, and though several hundred feet in the air, in the top of a tower fit only to be a dungeon for despairing criminals, they loved their nest as dearly as if it had been a neat cottage in some rich valley, with wood and water around. Nothing could be more hideous and melancholy than the wide prospect from the top of the tower ; hills of tufo, destitute of all verdure ; a black and useless soil ; mournful valleys, and a fierce and volcanic bed every where. The inn was execrably bad and crowded with passengers, so that it was difficult to secure a decent lodging ; and the manners of the inhabitants seemed as uncouth and rude as their country.

We quitted this place with great satisfaction, as this was the last day's journey, and at night

we were to be in Rome. In the course of a few hours we came to Baccano, a lonely inn, in the middle of a small and unwholesome plain. No other habitation is within view. The day was miserably hot : we wandered up the low hills to try to pass a few hours ; the solitary inn looked like an exile ; it is a fated place in summer. We were the only travellers who had yet arrived ; but the meal served up was wretched, and the wine still worse. Nothing marks more strongly the want of all agrémens in Italian travelling than this, that though within a few hours' distance of Rome, whence every luxury might be procured, and at the only resting-place on the road, yet not a single comfort is to be found here ; and the melancholy Baccano, both as to internal and external resources, can leave none but dreary recollections on the traveller's mind.

LETTER XIII.

First View of St. Peter's.—Entrance of Rome.—Pilgrims.—The Tiber.—Death of Miss Bathurst.—Views on the Tiber.—Church of St. Paul, destroyed by Fire—State of the Ruins.—Pyramid of Caius Cestius.—Baths of Caracalla.—Tomb of Cecilia Metella.—Easter Ceremonies.—Procession of the Pope and Cardinals.—Meeting with two Fellow Travellers.—Their Mission to Palestine.—A young Italian Lady sent from a Convent to Syria.

AFTER quitting Baccano, the road soon began to ascend the hills, from the highest point of which is the first view of the cross of St. Peter's. The air in the small plain we had just quitted is said to be very unhealthy, and in the winter the cold is so severe that the cheerless inn is scarcely habitable. The view of the vast plain that stretches towards Rome was now gradually disclosing, and as yet offered few interesting objects. Little cultivation was visible; the

small and ruinous tomb, said to be that of Nero, is in character with the scene.

The approach to Rome has little beauty; neither groves, streams, nor pastures, meet the eye; but the wide and frightful waste said to surround it is sought for in vain. The plain is broken and varied by numerous hills, on whose verdant sides a number of flocks were feeding; the habitations were few and far between. Crossing the Tiber, the Porto del Popolo is quickly passed. This entrance is remarkably fine, and gives a magnificent notion of the city; but this is soon enough banished by an immediate visit to the office of police, where effects are examined. This preliminary being accomplished in about an hour, we drove to the Hotel de France, in the Rue Condotti.

Hosts of our fellow-travellers, the pilgrims, had got to the city before us. They had come from all parts of Europe, for this was the holy year—the year of jubilee, that threw such an amazing sanctity round the home and personage of the Pope. Men of all ages, and of all aspects,

with long staves in their hands, sandals on their feet; those who were bare-footed, by way of penance, had a dreadful journey, amidst excessive heat and the ruggedness of the way. Some of the very old men now seemed ready to give up the ghost, no longer able to drag their weary steps along; from Switzerland, Germany, France, and Spain they came, and now the blessed goal was gained. Some had journeyed from the more northern parts of Europe, and appeared sinking under the effect of the unusual heat to which they were exposed. They generally marched in small bands, at a slow pace, supported by their long staves, each of which bore an image on the top, according to the fancy of the bearer; some had the Virgin, but in general each had his favourite saint, and they frequently sang hymns to beguile the way. Around their necks they also wore crosses and images; the impression wrought upon their minds by this crusade was visible upon their countenances, which all wore a solemn and subdued air. Those most to be pitied were the solitary stragglers, who often

looked the very picture of misery, and solicited charity of passengers, for the love of the Virgin and the saints ! While they were not allowed to travel in any other manner than on foot : to mount a horse or a voiture would have been esteemed sacrilegious. The expenses of the journey could not be slight to these poor devotees ; the distance they had to traverse was, in a majority of instances, immense ; and from thirty to fifty thousand, at least, were computed to be at this time in the city, or on the way. One of them attracted our curiosity to ask him some questions ; his person was dwarfish and remarkably deformed, and how he could have supported the fatigues of the journey is inconceivable. He came, he said, from the neighbourhood of Mount Rosa ; his only ambition, to see St. Peter's and the Pope ; and the eyes of the poor creature beamed with delight while he spoke of them.

One of the first excursions is generally to the castle of St. Angelo ; the enormous angel in bronze, on its summit, with expanded wings, and

a sword in his hand, is suited to the gloomy pile on which it stands, and that chiefly merits to be visited for its fine view of the city. The bridge built by Adrian in front of this castle offers a good view of the Tiber, as it winds below. It may be doubted how far this river ever differed from its present appearance; somewhat wider it might have been, but the dirty, yellow hue, and the mud, must always have belonged to it. Its attractions are solely derived from the associations of memory, not at all from any beauty of its own. It appears to flow more tranquilly than it really does; and its current is full of swift and dangerous eddies, on which account few boats are ever seen on it; and those which do pass the stream, at times, are obliged to be towed by a rope, to avoid being borne away.

The death of the beautiful and ill-fated Miss Bathurst was probably occasioned by one of these eddies. In trying to pass a very narrow part of the path on the edge of the Tiber, the earth gave way beneath the feet of her horse, which fell backward into the stream; one gen-

tleman only had previously passed the spot, who, seeing Miss Bathurst hesitate upon observing the critical appearance of the path, animated her to follow him and not to be outdone, as she was an excellent horsewoman. Her uncle beheld the catastrophe, which was said to be hastened by a vain attempt of one of the party to seize the horse's bridle, whereat the animal became yet more startled. The horse rose to the surface, with his helpless burden still clinging to his back, and uttering cries for assistance; the only way, if indeed any thing could have availed to save her, was to have plunged into the stream; but the party seemed horror-stricken, and, in truth, the rapid eddies of the river would have probably caused such an attempt to end in destruction. The horse floated down a short way, then sank, and Miss Bathurst was seen no more. It was strange, the loss of so valued a life, in such a manner; perhaps a panic seized the beholders, or the suddenness of the accident paralysed every attempt.

One lovely morning we rode along the river

to visit the ruins of the famous church of St. Paul, so unaccountably destroyed by fire. The view here is very pleasing, and the most picturesque part of the river is between the city and the ruined church. It continues to widen for some distance beyond, till it issues into the sea at Ostia.

A cottage stood on the bank opposite to the church, and we were obliged to engage the peasant's boat, in order to cross. The spot being so agreeable, we sat down on the wild verdure of the bank, and he brought a bottle of his best wine and some eggs, boiled hard, which are met with in every Italian cottage. Our host conversed with much fluency and assurance, which latter quality, indeed, few of his countrymen want.

There was a fine and fresh breeze, and, though the scene around was treeless and almost desolate of life and sound, it suited the scorched aspect of the ruin opposite. The passage to the other side was effected by going far above the place we intended to land at, the rapidity of

the river rendering it impossible to go straight across.

This celebrated church was erected by Constantine over the tomb, it is said, of St. Paul himself. Its length was between two and three hundred feet, its breadth about half as much. Except on account of its great antiquity, it was remarkable chiefly for the numerous and superb pillars that decorated its aisles, of the rarest white marble, and shafts exquisitely fluted. Their capitals were Corinthian, and, what is rare in Italian churches or ruins, each lofty column is composed of a single piece of marble; but a few only were now left standing amidst the colossal ruins of the fabric, while the rest lie broken in a thousand fragments. The power and fierceness of the flame was singularly displayed upon these noble pillars, which it broke asunder, as by an earthquake, either reducing them to ashes, or scattering them in innumerable pieces of all sizes on the vast pavement.

Of the portraits of the two or three hundred popes that stood over the pillars, the greater

part are destroyed ; a few still remain on high and aloof, looking down with their quiet and saintly countenances on the devastation beneath ; and, being a little scorched by the flames, the effect they produce is not very impressive. The precious mosaics also, and the valuable antique inscriptions wherewith the floor was in many places adorned, are almost entirely demolished. The cause of the fire is unknown ; the monks, on being awakened in the night by the alarm, found the building in flames. Of the ancient roof, composed of the cedars of Lebanon, some of the rafters yet remain.

A friar accompanied us through the ruined building, and took pains to search out some pieces of the broken marbles of the colonnades. He was young and effeminate in appearance, and had lately entered the monastery, he said, to devote himself to a religious life. But the world looked too powerfully through his black and ardent eyes to impress the conviction that religion only occupied his heart. He soon began to complain of the restrictions whereto he was sub-

ject, and it was evident that he longed to retract his vows, and taste of the things he had forsworn.

The way back led to the pyramid of Caius Cestius, that has so well withstood the ravages of time; little injured or defaced; like the pyramid of Egizeh (comparing little things with great), it bids fair to endure for a thousand centuries to come: this form of monument is, in fact, the only imperishable one. But objects of this nature are only commanding when beheld far from the haunts of men, and were the pyramid of Cestius of the most colossal proportions, its effect would be lost so near to the highway and to a numerous population.

Except the Coliseum, no ruin is so deeply interesting as the baths of Caracalla. In their secluded site, apart from the many piles of ruins around which the steps of strangers are constantly passing, as on a thoroughfare; a luxuriant foliage hanging on the walls; they carry the imagination of the visiter to far distant and different scenes, when voluptuousness and

splendour reigned in every part. Some edifices are more impressive in their ruin than others in their entireness. When the sunset is thrown on the waving foliage, and falls through many a vast arch and gateway, one is tempted to believe that such is the case here. A great number of workmen were employed in making excavations; a bath had lately been discovered, with a descent of marble steps, and a pavement of fine mosaic.

A pleasant ride conducts to the tomb of Cecilia Metella, which is uncommonly well preserved, for which it is partly indebted to its round and massive form, being built like a tower, with walls of prodigious thickness. It does not a little surprise a stranger, who might have imagined that marble, or the finest stone and granite, compose the Roman ruins, to find that the chief, both in beauty and size, consist of brick; this detracts no doubt from their elegance. The tomb of Metella is built entirely of brick.

But ruins, as well as all the reflections they inspire, were to be forgotten during the sacred processions at the festival of Easter. A new

Pope, too, was to make his appearance in them, and great was the *éclat*. Rome was full of foreigners, many of whom had come solely to be present at these saintly shows; some had actually travelled post from Germany, and arrived just in time.

On the Thursday the ceremony took place of carrying the host to the chapel Paulina, which was illuminated in the evening, when there was a kind of representation of the Holy Sepulchre, as it is exhibited at this day in the church at Jerusalem. The imitation was rather a sorry one, but served greatly to delight the faithful, who were never troubled with the shadows of doubt about anything they saw.

The imposing ceremony of the Pope blessing the people, who were assembled in an immense multitude, and the illumination of the inside of St. Peter's by a cross, took place, with many other minor ceremonies, all which rather disappoint than exceed the expectation. The Sunday that succeeded Easter Sunday, there was a splendid procession; the Pope, we were inform

ed, was to set out on foot, at an early hour, to visit the principal churches. On driving to that of St. John Lateran, we found the area in front filled with carriages and a great multitude. His Holiness, who had already visited two or three churches, and finished the service in that of the Lateran, was then engaged in taking some refreshment to recruit his exhausted powers.

It was in vain to endeavour to obtain a view of the person of the Pontiff in such a situation; and as he was soon to pass beneath the walls of the Coliseum, we went thither, and took a station in one of the elevated galleries of the ruin. In about an hour the whole affair was seen advancing down the road; first walked the nobles of Rome, to the number of several hundred. Neither their costume nor aspect denoted their high descent; the former was black. Each of them held a lighted wax candle, and they chanted as they went along. Next followed the priests, all in black likewise, and bearing a number of saints and images. The cardinals were habited in their scarlet robes, and in the midst of them walked the Pope, his

head uncovered. He was dressed in a robe of white brocade embroidered with gold, the train of which was supported by two priests. The chaunting, which was universal in the motley assemblage, was not in the least impressive, and a dense mass of the populace and servants of the nobles brought up the rear. The day was sultry; the promenade of the Pontiff was not yet half finished; his countenance was pallid with heat and fatigue, and the features it belonged to were fixed as rigidly as marble, the hands were clasped immoveably, and his looks bent on the earth, from which they were never raised, even for an instant.

The view of the procession was imposing from the ruined windows of the Coliseum, whence every part of it was distinctly seen. The galleries around us were greatly crowded, the thick foliage of the walls waving about the heads of numbers of the Roman ladies, who had sought this lofty position to enjoy the spectacle. But there was little devotion visible among the spectators; a few of the populace knelt on the

ground as the Holy Father passed, in order to obtain his blessing; but they were very few. Among the cardinals were several whose corpulency would have done credit to an assembly of aldermen, and they seemed to get through the hot and weary march but indifferently. A number of banners, of different colours, were carried by the priests; and one part of the procession, not the most magnificent, but presenting a grotesque appearance, consisted of the liveried servants of the Roman nobles, who closed the rear in a mass. They were dressed in all the colours of the rainbow, and a more shabby-looking set of serving-men it was impossible to gaze on. A cloud of dust attended this assembly in their painful pilgrimage, as it certainly appeared to us, while looking down on it from the cool and airy galleries of the ruined amphitheatre.

As the cathedral of St. Peter's was to be the termination of the procession, after it had visited and worshipped in three or four more churches, we hastened thither before its arrival. This offered the only truly grand scene of the whole, as

the nobles, priests, and cardinals, with their dignified vicegerent, swept slowly, followed by the vast multitude, up the vast isle of St. Peter's.

The dull and heavy chaunt ceased on their entrance, and the Pope proceeded to a beautiful chapel on the right, in order to take the sacrament. While he knelt on the pavement before the altar, universal silence prevailed. The most interesting object in the group was a venerable-looking cardinal, with a noble face, and hair as white as snow. He was quite blind, and was led into the church, in order to join in the devotion of the Pontiff. His countenance, as he knelt with clasped hands, his sightless eyes turned to the earth, was almost the only one amongst the reverend cardinals wherein true devotion was pictured. As soon as the ceremony of taking the sacrament was finished, the procession left the church, and the Pope must have been not a little delighted at its conclusion, for he appeared worn out with fatigue. Indeed, the length of the way, and the recurrence of so many services, with the dusty walk beneath a

mid-day Roman sun, were sufficient to affect a more youthful and robust frame.

Judging from his look and demeanour, there are few men whose circumstances are less to be envied, filling, as he does, a situation, the restrictions whereof do not certainly sit quite easy. By far the greater part of the simple and devoted beings who came their weary journey to receive his blessing were no doubt much happier than the successor of St. Peter.

In one of the convents were two fathers, who had unwillingly been our companions in a distant scene, for they had execrated every step of the way, and invoked every favourite saint to bring them in safety to their beloved home. They had been sent to the capital of Palestine, with money for the necessities of the convent of St. Salvador ; and afterwards found their way to Cyprus, and sailed thence in a Greek vessel. A friendly and glad reception was not wanting ; and, after many an exclamation of surprise, wine, and other refreshments were brought. The former did not discredit the good taste that had

distinguished them on the pilgrimage; their pale looks and wasted frames were succeeded by all the signs of good living and idleness. The many privations we had shared together, and that weary and baffling voyage, were rich themes to enlarge upon, in the comfortable cell, amidst the many little luxuries gathered there.

Giuseppe and his friend had gained much fame by their enterprise; the fathers loved to listen to their details, that were hardly yet exhausted; and as to the pilgrims who now came to Rome, some of whom were lodged in the convent, their interest was extreme, and the two wanderers might safely invent as many tales and miracles as they pleased, and their invention did not fail with such an audience.

Their monastery was small, as was also the number of fathers; but much comfort was manifest within. Rome in general is the adored place of these men: with what eagerness and intense desire did the two travellers often invoke its name, in suffering and weariness! and, when in danger of shipwreck, the burden of their sorrow

was, that they should never see Rome again. They protested they would never more leave its walls, and probably kept their vow.

The convent garden, which was shaded by fine old trees, was mostly the extent of their walks. The religious duties were not severe; and the two friars might well look towards the future without an anxious thought; they had no cares of the world. The charge of the money which they brought to the East was the heaviest burden ever laid upon their souls, and caused many a sleepless night and miserable day, lest they should be robbed. Argus himself was not more watchful than the two pilgrims of their treasure; and when it was delivered, all curiosity as to the saintly scenes and objects around was extinct; the desire to return absorbed every other.

On one occasion, we were landed in a barren isle of the Archipelago; and they wandered wistfully along the shore, looking over the sea towards the point where they believed Italy stood. Giuseppe was a tall and bony figure,

with a shrewd yet smooth countenance. He had all the temporal cares of the journey, while his cleverer and more grave companion had the chief authority, and was also the chief speaker in the various interviews on the way. On these occasions, Giuseppe would stand silently beside, with an expressive look and folded arms. Both, indeed, exhibited a picture of sustained and patient sufferance, a proof that imaginary evils are often greater than real ones. What would have been to most a delightful and romantic enterprise was to them full of anguish and dark anticipations.

Long residence in these calm and comfortable monasteries, where each day and hour roll on alike, utterly unfits most men for enterprise or daring. Prayer was their solace and shield, and when the storm rose, and the sun beat fiercely, and thirst and weariness were their portion, their voices grew louder, kneeling side by side, with their hands clasped on their breast; yet their worship, as in the case of so many Italians, was more like that of helpless children,

calling on the loved saint and the Virgin, than the free and confiding offering of the heart to God.

Peace to their memories! After a few more monotonous years their little cemetery will quietly receive them, and their companions will, perhaps, inscribe a few strange preservations and miracles on their tomb, till the rank grass covers all, as it ere long will cover each papal nest of sloth and luxury.

This was the reverse of a circumstance that chanced a short time before. We had one evening established our quarters in the naked apartment of a khan, and had scarcely shared a coarse meal, when we were surprised by the entrance of another small party, preceded by a guide. The most interesting personage in this group was a young Italian lady, who had been lately taken from a convent near Florence, to spend her life in Syria. She was descended from an ancient family, and, having lost her parents at an early age, had been placed by some friend in the convent, from whose walls, being portionless

and an orphan, she had scarcely ever emerged. And now, when drawn for the first time from her solitude, she was transported at once to a distant land, where the whole face of things was to her like a new and dreary world.

She was very pretty and accomplished, sang sweetly, and was well read in the literature of her country. She gazed sadly on the wild scenery and wilder people among whom she was thrown. The feeling of liberty was the only one that made the change welcome; and what to most others would have been a far and grievous exile, was not so to her, for no convents were near. The fine dark eyes of Mademoiselle V—— expressed all the warmth of feeling of her country; and, in a situation where an Englishwoman would have broken her heart, or pined away with sorrow, she resolved to bear her lot with fortitude, and, if possible, with gaiety.

Some months afterwards we again met with her in a cheerless residence, at the foot of Mount Lebanon, and, parched with heat and thirst, had the pleasure of receiving a glass of the exquisite

vin d'oro from her hands ; but at this time she looked pale and thin, for the romance of the scene had in part disappeared, and the society of Turks and Syrians, almost the only beings she saw, could not be very agreeable to a young, handsome, and sensible Italian woman. Yet she spoke of the delight she anticipated from a journey to Balbec in a few weeks ; and then she would visit Damascus and its lovely plain. But these, however they might charm for a moment, were no food for a southern heart.

LETTER XIV.

Procession of noble Roman Ladies to St. Peter's and other Churches.—Fountain of Egeria.—The Forum.—The Temple of Peace.—Gardens of the Palatine Hill.—Church of St. Maria Maggiore.—Chapel of Sextus V.—Chapel of the Virgin.—Church of St. Pietro in Vinculis.—Michael Angelo's Moses and Christ bearing his cross.—Bernini's dead Christ.—Incongruities.—Bust of Julius Cæsar.—English Travellers at Rome.—Illumination of St. Peter's.—Fire-works at the Castle of St. Angelo.—State of the People in the Papal States.—Punishment of Carbonari by Austria.—Imprisonment of Count Confalonieri, Maroncelli, and Pellico.—Austrian Dominion in Italy.—Baron Valerio.

ONE morning at an early hour, there was a procession of two hundred noble Roman ladies to the church of St. Peter. They entered on foot, preceded by several priests bearing crucifixes; a few of the fair penitents carried wax candles; they were all habited in close black

bonnets, and common black shawls, in token of mortification and putting aside the vanities of adornment. There was little need, however, for the beholder to guard against overpowering attraction, for a plainer set of women of so elevated a rank of life hardly ever met the human eye; even the antique dignity of countenance, the Roman nose, so fine in a statue, and so little loveable in life, in fine, the whole order of commanding beauty—were absent here.

The ladies did not waste much time in the church, although they knelt before every altar and repeated many a prayer; their servants in livery brought up the rear. The ceremony being entirely finished, they quitted the cathedral in procession, two and two, as they had entered, and hastened away to visit fourteen other churches, and to repeat the same form of prayers and genuflexions ere they returned to their homes; it was altogether a very unimpressive scene. The lonely devotion of one pilgrim, who had left her parents and lover, perhaps far distant, to come and kneel at the sacred places of Judea, was worth the whole

Roman ladies, footmen, wax candles and all. Several of these were young women of pale complexion, and the monks gazed on the scene apparently quite unmoved.

About a mile and a half from the city, and in the seclusion of a small vale, is the fountain of Egeria. In its grotto of white marble are the mutilated remains of a statue of the nymph, and in the walls around several empty niches; a rivulet flows beside, and the sweet and calm character of the spot harmonises with its recollections. There was a loneliness and retirement about it, which, so near the walls of the city, was very grateful, and has the air of perfect solitude. The cicerone at this place was an old priest, who dwelt in a small ancient building, said to be the temple of Bacchus, situated not far from the fountain. There is a small altar, very antique, in this miniature temple, which is now transformed into a church: some valuable marble vases of great antiquity, dispersed round the walls, once belonged to the illustrious Roman family on whose territory the building stood. In the front, outside,

were four fluted pillars, but the interior had a most motley appearance, part church, part temple, part dwelling. Ascending a flight of stairs, the father showed the little refectory, his sole apartment, where he slept, took his meals, read, and meditated. A few bottles of wine were visible in the cupboard; however, the old monk was sole inquisitor here; neither guests nor auditors ever intruded on his church or his hospitality, save when the step of a chance traveller passed the threshold, when his eyes twinkled with joy, and he descended the flight of stairs with rapid step, for his cicerone talents were never exercised in vain.

The partial verdure in the Forum is just sufficient to give relief to the ruins, the memory eagerly supplies the want of present grandeur, even in the ruins, which are at first sight unsatisfactory, and almost insignificant, save the glorious Coliseum, the Palatine Hill, the scattered and lone columns, and the desolate and impressive groups on every side, so shattered and mutilated. Three pillars of Giove Tonante, and those of the portico of Antoninus

and Faustina, with a very few scattered in the middle of the vast area of the forum; compose nearly the whole of the colonnades, if they may be so called: the capitals of these pillars are more or less defaced, and the shafts likewise injured.

The Temple of Peace, on the left, is a large mass, with very little beauty at present, though anciently celebrated for its grandeur, and built wholly of brick, a material fatal to magnificence or elegance of architecture. Mouldering walls, broken pillars, and fragments of porticoes, amidst heaps of rubbish, are visible at every step, all dignified with the name of temples. It demands the perseverance and zeal of a pilgrim in pursuit of holy places to visit and dwell upon the countless number of antiquities, known and unknown. Some travellers accomplish the task by ordering their carriage, and driving to a certain number every day, as the ciceroni keep a regular list, and seldom allow any one under their guidance to miss a single article.

From the tomb of Nero, on the spot where he slew himself, to that of the Horatii and Curiatii,

who slew each other (on opposite sides of the city), it is necessary to traverse this space of many miles with a large portion of faith; and meagre are the realities that are left of the yet existing memorials of such greatness. But to the Coliseum the foot hastens eagerly again and again, and never turns wearied away.

The gardens of the Palatine Hill, almost entirely covered with ruins of the palaces of the Cæsars, overgrown with a mass of foliage, are a lovely walk. The ancient oaks spread their branches over the entrance to endless subterranean apartments, baths, and halls; and the laurel twines round the fragments of arches without number. From this promenade there is a prospect which can never be effaced from the memory.

Next to St. Peter's in magnificence is the church of St. Maria Maggiore, on the summit of the Esquiline Hills. In general, the exterior of the Roman churches is undistinguished either by elegance or grandeur, and inferior in effect to many in our own metropolis; but this offers a splendid exception, although the taste of the

architecture is too florid, and from its want of purity and simplicity has, like many of the principal churches, more the air of a palace than a religious edifice. The ailes are formed by eighteen pillars of marble on each side, of exquisite beauty and whiteness, taken from the ancient temple of Juno:—their relief is singularly fine, amidst the mass of gilding on the ceiling and on every side. The altar is more elegant and beautiful than any within the walls of St. Peter's, not excepting even the large one, and far excels every shrine in the endless churches of Rome, of themselves sufficient in number to form an interminable street. This altar, placed alone in the middle of the upper part of the edifice, is supported by an immense urn of the finest porphyry, whereon is a marble table, sustained by an angel with outspread wings at each corner, composed of bronze, entirely gilt. The canopy over the altar has a splendid appearance, being supported by four lofty columns of porphyry, around whose shafts are twisted palm branches and leaves covered with gold. This taste of gorgeous ornament, of excessive gilding, &c.

so lavished on the interior of many churches, has antiquity, remote and celebrated, for its authority, in the first great religious edifice erected. In the detail of the grandeurs of the temple of Solomon, more mention is made of rare woods, &c. and rich and profuse gilding, than any thing else.

On the right of the altar is the chapel built by Sextus the fifth, which contains in a small compass a mass of precious materials and some valuable works of art. The tomb of this pope strikes the eye, and is sustained by four columns of verd antique, and adorned with statues of white marble. On the other side is a tomb where repose the remains of another pope, in an exquisite urn of verd antique. The ambition of the pontiffs to have their ashes deposited in costly and glorious sepulchres is worthy of observation. Never was there such a waste of expense as well as of the finest efforts of art, as has been made in embellishing the last resting-places of these men.

On the opposite side is the small and still:

more superb chapel of the Virgin, built by Paul the Fifth. Here, amidst paintings, beautiful bas-reliefs, and the rarest marbles, are two tombs of admirable execution, one of the pope Paul, who built the chapel. The statues of St. Basil and David are placed side by side — a singular association as is likewise that of Aaron and St. Bernard. But the altar of the Virgin draws away the attention from popes and saints: it is a matchless shrine, in which columns of oriental jasper, with capitals of gilt bronze and pedestals of agate, support an entablature, partly of agate also. The image of the Virgin (said to be made by St. Luke!) rests on a base of lapis-lazuli, and is covered with precious stones.

In the church of St. Pietro in Vinculis are the fine ancient columns of the Doric order, taken from Diocletian's baths. But the chief ornament of this edifice is the statue of Moses, by Michael Angelo. The lawgiver is represented in a sitting posture; in his hands are the tables of stone. A monstrous similitude, if intended for Moses! the head, with the divine rays streaming from it,

in the shape of twisted cords, is a fitter resemblance for the head of Medusa, and the features for those of Pluto, or of almighty Jove in his boundless rage, than the "meekest of men," whose external appearance is described as having been mild and tranquil. Even when roused to anger by the idolatry of his people, love for them still strove with his indignation, which was followed by the most earnest intreaties for their pardon. But in the countenance of the statue there is unmitigated rage, and the fury of a demon.

How delightful is it to turn from this statue to that of the Redeemer bearing his cross, by the same master, in the church of St. Maria de les Angeles!—the only representation in marble of his sacred form and aspect, which the mind can contemplate with satisfaction, or which realizes the pictures of imagination. The proportions of the figure are the reverse of large; it is very slightly bent forward, and dignity, meekness, and triumph amidst suffering, are vividly pourtrayed. Yet it is the mortal nature

only; the celestial does not break on the view as from the aspect of Raphael's Redeemer: the marble has not allowed such a feature. It is nevertheless a glorious statue, that the eye is never wearied in gazing on. There is another of the same Divine Being, by Angelo, in St. Peter's, representing Christ lying dead in the arms of the Virgin,—but far superior in effect.

In the small chapel of Corsini, in the church of Maria Maggiore, is the very fine statue, by Bernini, of Christ after death. It is in the small vault beneath, and the effect of the torch-light adds to the beauties of the statue. The countenance of the mother expresses extreme and almost heart-broken suffering; the look with which she gazes on him is hopeless of ever beholding his resurrection and life. The limbs of the corpse fall from the embrace in which they are folded—and on the mild and endearing aspect death is irrevocably graven, but without any of its terrors.

In wandering through Rome, a melancholy feeling comes over the mind, which it is unable to

banish, at the blending of modern magnificence and gaiety with the gloom of the sublime remains of antiquity. Amidst the ruins of Athens, and still more those of Egypt, you pass, as it were, into a separate and solitary world, where all around is in unison with the recollections of the scene. But here there is a startling and painful contrast : columns that were erected by imperial hands joined to tasteless churches ; crosses and saintly images amidst broken arches and porticoes ; dull processions of priests and pilgrims, whose weary chanting and vile ceremonies make one almost wish that the ruins through which they pass would avenge, with their crumbling walls, the violation of their solitude ; then the rolling of carriages, and the array of luxury, are in ungrateful unison with the broken colonnades and dim aisles of the times of old.

The situation of ancient Rome was certainly one of the finest in the world, and images of desolation do not apply to its present appearance. Among the numerous busts of the em-

perors, the features of Julius Cæsar have the highest interest; talent the most commanding and penetrating is visible in every lineament; whether the bust is of his youth or of the more matured life, the same pervading spirit shines forth: in the former, the aspect is handsome and engaging; but in the latter, much altered and attenuated, as if by long fatigue and weariness both of body and mind.

Numerous were the English travellers now in the capital. Citizens who, retired from business, had left their homes "to see the world," and were now met with in the galleries, passing their criticisms, and admiring or censuring all they saw; agriculturists, who had come from the rich pastures and glades of Norfolk or Somerset to revel in the ruins and luxuries of Rome.

On one occasion a group consisting of two gentlemen and several ladies had collected round the Antinous; one of the former was a short thick man, with a rosy face, and appeared to be the spokesman of the party, who were devouring his words. "Do but observe," said he, extend-

ing his arm gracefully, the *harmony* of the *attitude*," and every eye was fixed intently on the limbs of the statue. Two travellers, of low stature, and by their strong likeness evidently brother and sister, were daily encountered where there was any thing curious or beautiful; their speed of foot must have been magical, judging from the quantity of ground they daily traversed, and nothing within or without the walls escaped notice. One day they were silently adoring the Apollo Belvidere, and the next morning, being in the Capitol, the ladies approached us in haste, and eagerly enquired for the said statue. On being informed there was no similar one here, "I thought," she said, in a disappointed tone, "there were two Apollos."

Many have sailed up the whole of the beautiful lake of Thun by night, in order to "save time," and be at Interlaken the following morning. Two gentlemen of the Temple, however, outdid every other feat of this kind, for they actually saw the principal lions of Naples and its vicinity in thirty hours. They hastened to

the summit of Vesuvius by night, accompanied by a resident of Naples, to whom they were recommended. From Vesuvius, they descended to Pompeii, at the time day was breaking, and visited also the Studio in Naples, with its paintings and statuary, and one or two palaces; ascended St. Elmo; walked in the Chiaja; admired the bay excessively, and the following morning, at an early hour, were posting back to Rome.

The illumination of St. Peter's was quite an event to the populace. The evening was a calm and cloudless one, and it was with some difficulty places could be obtained to view the spectacle. The numerous windows and roofs of houses overlooking the cathedral were let at a certain price. The concourse of people was immense: the bridge of St. Angelo and the streets immediately connected therewith, were almost impassable; and the vast area in front of the cathedral was filled.

At eight o'clock the illumination of the front of the cathedral took place, and consisted of

numerous rows of a kind of paper lanthorns, lighted by spirits of wine. They were also placed in numbers on the pillars and windows. The effect was as poor and tawdry as can well be imagined, and the majestic building looked quite degraded by such a lighting up. The said lanthorns continued to send forth a blaze for above an hour, when, as the clock struck nine, the dome was suddenly illumined as if by magic, and continued so for about ten minutes; the effect of this was very fine, but at the end of that short period the flood of light passed away, and gave St. Peter's once more to its own unaided grandeur.

The populace had enjoyed the scene immensely; it was a very favourite one with them, and they instantly hurried off to the neighbourhood of the castle of St. Angelo, to gaze on the fire-works which were shortly to be exhibited from its summit. The fire-works were admirable, and a great deal of skill was shown in the direction of them. Many were excessively brilliant; but the effect they produced was perhaps

finer than the works themselves; for the light, of various colours, falling on the bridge with its many statues, and the numerous groups of people, and over the Tiber that rolled silently and sluggishly in the midst, reflecting every hue upon its bosom, combined to afford a striking scene. All Rome appeared to be out to witness the spectacle; and when over, it was extremely difficult to extricate oneself from the prodigious throng of men, women, and children, mingled with carriages and horsemen; for in this city, where there were no gay and attractive spectacles during the current year, nothing but monotonous religious processions, where even the fantoccini were forbidden to amuse the populace—such an evening as this was a treasure.

The people in the Papal states, south of the Apennines, appear to be contented with their condition; indolent, not anxious for change, with little enterprise or spirit; the fields and villages exhibit few signs of active industry or plenty, compared to the Roman states north of the Apennine. Happy Tuscany! in its mild

government, its beautiful territory, which a fine cultivation has made figuratively to “flow with milk and honey.” Lombardy and Naples have known a bitter change in the military government of Austria; the Neapolitans have crouched in fear and silence; the bolder spirits of the latter state have risen against their own yoke, only to fall a miserable and useless sacrifice.

How many mourners, how many bleeding hearts, are to be found in that land of loveliness? where political offences, or, in other words, the ill-conceived and worse executed efforts for independence, are judged as deserving worse than death.

Count Confalonieri, of Milan, is one of the greatest sufferers. For the crime of conspiring against the Austrian government, he has been confined for ten years in the prison of Spielberg, in Moravia, where he is doomed to pass the rest of his days. Maroncelli, a native of Forli, not far from Bologna, of good family, incurred the suspicion of being one of the Carbonari; but this could not be clearly proved. He was,

however, condemned to be hung, but this doom was changed to that of the fortress of Spielberg, situated on the top of a mountain.

Pellico, an eminent poet of Turin, the author of several tragedies, was imprisoned in the same dungeon. The cord had been to his companion a milder fate : by the pressure of the iron fetters, the legs became swollen and festered ; yet no entreaties could move the authorities to allow their removal, even for an interval. At last, after prolonged suffering, a gangrene commenced, and the governor wrote to the emperor for permission to have the leg amputated. Twenty-two days elapsed ere this mercy was granted, and then it was found necessary to amputate the thigh !

On his bed of straw, without any fire during the severe winters, Maroncelli bore his lot with fortitude ; that of Trenck, in the fortress of Magdeburg, was light and gentle in comparison. Bread and water, with some vegetables, constitute the daily allowance. Pellico, the tragedian, the occupier of another bed of straw in the same

apartment, had only to mourn the loss of liberty, the hard fare and lodging, and the exile from his native Turin. Ten years' captivity is a fearful blank in the life of a poet : no books, no communication with friends, or the world of literature ; a prayer-book only was permitted. No letters could be written or received from those they loved ; no faces, save those of each other and the gaoler, ever met their view.

The amputation, performed by the barber of the fortress, who was also the surgeon, occupied nearly an hour. He lost an eye also from his sufferings. Yet the mind of Maroncelli never lost its elasticity, nor his fancy its play. In the decline of life, or even in middle age, these bereavements would have fallen less bitterly, but when liberated at last with his companion, he was still young, and had to carve his way through the world.

The two companions had been compelled in prison to knit two pair of worsted stockings a week ; yet, by a refinement of cruelty, they were not allowed to wear them : one season,

when the cold was extreme, the luxury of gloves was vouchsafed by the governor, for the air was piercing; thick forests surround the fortress, even on its airy summit, where the rigours of winter are dreadfully felt.

Count Vogel, a minister of state, being sent by the emperor to inspect the prison, observed the shivering prisoners with gloves on their hands, and sternly forbade the indulgence, which even the galley-slaves enjoy, who are in the same fortress, and are much better fed and lodged. Could it be supposed that the muses flourished in the fearful cell of Spielberg? Maroncelli, who was denied pen and ink, composed and committed to memory fourteen thousand verses. This poetical employ was the sole and loved solace of his dungeon hours, in which he far exceeded, in quantity at least, the famous instance of Christabel, begotten in a vision, and afterwards written down from memory; for when Maroncelli was liberated, he remembered faithfully the whole of the fourteen thousand verses, save one poem to the Virgin—which, like

the last five hundred lines of *Christabel*, never rose to memory again; each line, each word, was lost for ever.

Pellico is also said to have attempted the drama on his straw pallet, while his companion, with his thigh amputated and one eye extinct, was enthusiastically bodying forth ideas, and clothing them in verse, and gravings them on his soul. Let it not be said again that the face of the sun, the blessed scenes of nature, the sea, the mountain, the forest—are necessary to inspire the fancy, and give wings of light and glory to its career; the poor maimed captive struggled on without them, and succeeded. He has since proposed, in Paris, where his fate excited general sympathy, to publish these prison poems, as well as the narrative of his dreadful sufferings. When he descended from the fortress of Spielberg, the world was to him a changed thing; he went to his native Forli, and found that his father was dead; his mother, and brothers and sisters were banished to Rome, on his account alone. He would eagerly have

gone thither, but this was forbidden, as well as a longer stay in Italy. He went to Paris, where he now resides, and, to support himself, gives lessons in music and his native language. Soon after the late revolution he was presented to Louis Philip, who professed an interest in his fate. Alas! the monarch's interest has since been sadly on the wane for patriots and revolutionists; and poor Maroncelli would now meet with no smiles at the Tuileries.

The dominion of Austria in Italy is a strange mixture of good and evil; the latter is felt chiefly by the higher classes. Idolized by his Austrian subjects as their father, Francis is to the nobles of the Milanese a stern inquisitor, who watches all their movements, and pursues every thought or effort for freedom with a relentless cruelty. The popular system of education in his states of Lombardy is fraught with present and future benefits. "When the people are able to read, they will no longer stab," observes Francis, who tolerates all religions, and anxiously promotes industry, sciences and the

arts—while his subjects are taxed more heavily than any other Italian state, and must support the army of a hundred thousand men, that keeps them faithful.

Of what consequence are the miseries of the twenty distinguished Italians who now groan in the dungeons of Spielberg, or the distrust, the terror, that fill so many palaces in Lombardy? “Am I at liberty,” asked Maroncelli of the Director-General of Police, when leaving Vienna, “to disclose freely what I have endured?” “Perfectly so,” was the reply, “it is the Emperor’s wish that all of like mind with yourself should be told of your sufferings.” Neither Metternich nor any other functionary has any knowledge or influence in the details of Spielberg; they are under the immediate care of Francis, and are reserved for his private ear.

The system of espionage in the Milanese is complete: when the young Baron Valerio wished to leave the capital, and pursue his studies at Göttingen, permission was refused. He escaped, however, from it in company with the Prince

B——, passed two years at the university, and thence came to England. The prince returned, and was imprisoned for six months; and it was intimated to Valerio, that two years durance would be his lot, in case of return. He lingered yet longer in England, preferring exile to captivity, and at last he was informed that his native Milan was finally closed against his return. Should he have the hardihood to disregard the warning, the fortress in Moravia will perhaps receive another victim.

LETTER XV.

The Campagna.—Sulphureous Lake.—Villa of Hadrian.—Tivoli.—Temple of Neptune.—Pool in which a young English Traveller was drowned.—The Villa d'Este.—A Roman Traveller in Syria.—Pilgrims at Rome.—Hospital of Pilgrims—Their Treatment—Their feet washed by Nobles and Ladies.—Conduct of the Devotees.—The Stairs of Pilate.—Anecdote of two Irish Ladies.—Galleries of the Vatican.—Canova's Perseus.—The Laocoon.—Raphael's Fornarina.—Guido's Bianca Cenci.—Albano.—Domitian's Villa.—Aricia.—Nemi.—Velletri.—Pontine Marshes.—Terracina.—Fondi.—Mola. Minturnum.—Capua.

THE next morning was favourable for Tivoli ; so entering on the Campagna, ere the sun rose, the climate seemed to be entirely changed. The sultry heats within and around the walls extend not hither, but, on the contrary, the air, both early in the morn and at night, is in general very cold. The fog was on the present occa-

sion dense and penetrating, covering the barren and uninhabited plain ; and when the rising sun overcame this fog, the air long continued keen and sharp. The whole land looked as if a curse was on it ; not a dwelling, a tree, or sign of vegetation : the soil itself seemed to be pervaded by a principle of universal decay, and to send forth nothing but corruption and unwholesome vapours. It has all the aspect of a desert, the solitude whereof is deepened by one's having left so immediately a populous and splendid city.

One of the most remarkable objects in the route is a small sulphureous lake, with the odour of which the air is filled long before it is reached. Its depth is excessive, and it boils violently if any thing is thrown in it. A small stream issues from it, for which a channel has been cut, in order to convey the pestilential water to a considerable distance, where it discharges itself. In the midst of this wild waste is the Plautian tomb, the river Anio, and its small and ancient bridge.

Then come the wide ruins of the villa of Hadrian. Having passed some hours here, and

breakfasted in the shade of one of the large trees, we came to Tivoli, the *beau ideal* of lovely and magic scenery ; to the ancient Romans an inestimable luxury. The inn was in a fine situation, close to the small temple of the Sibyl. The shattered temple, of very small proportions, of yellow stone, and circular form, was perched, fairy-like, on the precipice's brow.

On the right, the river Anio, at present called the Teverone, falls in a wide, unbroken cascade ; the body of water is not great. The finest scene is far below, to which a winding path leads, where the cataract rushes into the temple of Neptune. In the bottom of the grotto, and within a few feet only of the fierce cataract, is a small, still pool of water, of great depth, and a surface unruffled by the slightest agitation.

It was in this place that an unfortunate young Englishman lost his life in a singular manner. Two brothers, of the name of B——, on a tour through Italy, visited the grotto of Neptune ; the elder felt curious to examine the depth of this tranquil pool, by the side of which they

stood. The rocks that surround it are sharp as well as slippery, from the constant moisture from the fall. Having attained the point he wished (just above the edge of the pool), he was leaning forward to view the water more clearly, when his foot slipped, and he fell into it. His brother saw him fall and rise again to the surface, and strive to cling to some part of the rocks, but was unable to assist him. The latter was either overpowered by the sudden surprise of the fall, or had received a contusion, for he quickly sank to rise no more. It seemed as if there was a fatality in the event. He had recently returned from a hazardous and distant journey in the East, and thus perished in a still piece of water, which it is difficult to conceive, on viewing it, could have proved fatal to a human being.

The villa d'Este, erected four hundred years ago by a cardinal, is a very attractive spot, although suffered to fall into decay; some poor people, however, reside in charge of it. The better apartments have long been uninhabited, and have a very desolate air. Pity that so de-

licious a scene should be thus neglected! Successive flights of steps conduct to each story and terrace of the building: the painted ceilings are sadly defaced, and of the former splendour scarcely a trace remains.

The gardens beneath preserve a kind of beauty, with numerous waterfalls and jets d'eau, one of which is made to play in a circular sweep, round an enormous rock, in the midst of a piece of water; the cypress-trees are of great size and height; many statues are in the groves of oranges; but the hand of ruin is on the whole. Few scenes on earth can afford a more lovely or hushed retirement than this small and desolate villa, which, at a moderate expense, might be rendered habitable and tasteful.

As we lingered on one of the loftiest terraces, the sun was slowly going down on the wide plain towards Rome, on the wild hills around Tivoli, on grove, stream, and river, and the deep silence was unbroken, save by the faint falls of the mimic cataracts beneath. We could not help envying the owner, and yet more the inhabitant, of such a spot, who could look forth every morn

and eve from his chambers on such a scene, and could walk at noon-day in his sunless groves, while beneath and on every side there was a burning heat. Even the present possessor, though a Roman noble, would be glad to let the villa of his fathers for a moderate rent; and an income, amounting to no more than a competency, would be sufficient in this cheap region.

What a disparity between the beautiful d'Este, in a land of enchantment, almost within sight of Rome, a few miles from Albano, Frascati, &c. and a residence at one of our own watering-places, or country towns! Surely one of the saddest feelings of a traveller is to part speedily and for ever from scenes where he longs to linger yet awhile. Yet our regrets were feeble compared to those of an old Roman nobleman, whom we met in Syria, on his way to the ruins of Balbec, at the age of seventy.

It was his first journey, and a fever seized him on his way to the temple of the sun, the object of his passionate desire. If he could but behold it, he said, he should die content. Lingered for six weeks in a Syrian dwelling, with few com-

forts and not a friend near, his enthusiasm never abated, and as soon as sufficient strength returned, he set out again over rugged mountains. It was the middle of summer; the heat, even on the chain of Lebanon, was very great; and his frame was debilitated by recent sickness. Time, it might be said, had taken him by the hand, and death was not far behind; he felt this, and knew the only golden opportunity was before him.

Of Balbec he spoke without ceasing, and his wasted features were lighted up with joy: his wish was accomplished, and, when he stood amidst the splendid ruin, the aged man seemed to think no more of his beloved Rome and all its associations. Yet, on parting, after a stay of some days, his feeling was that of sadness, and he looked back again and again on the glorious temple, as a man looks on some loved one whom he leaves for ever.

Long before we arrived near the city, in the night, the air had become piercingly cold, but, on entering the gates, the temperature was quite warm.

I have already adverted, in one or two places, to the host of pilgrims whom this particular year brought to Rome. It was very amusing to remain as a spectator in St. Peter's, and observe their demeanour on entering. They were at first bewildered by the magnificence around them; but as soon as astonishment had in some measure passed away, there was one great, immediate, and universal object of attraction. This was the statue of St. Peter, transformed *by faith* from that of Jupiter into the representation of the apostle. It is of bronze, and very ancient; the attitude is fierce and commanding, and totally destitute of any expression either of piety or meekness. But it is implicitly received as a faithful likeness of the great founder of the Romish church, and on beholding it the ardour of these pilgrims knew no bounds. Prostrating themselves on the pavement, they scarcely dared raise their eyes to an object so overpowering, and every one knelt and kissed most devoutly, and repeatedly, the great toe of the statue. Part of this toe, a very considerable part, is actually

worn away by the incessant kissings of the devout, although the material is of excessive hardness. But every other relic in Rome yields in sacredness and importance to this small portion of the statue, and no religious wanderer who came to the city would depart without an accusing conscience, if his lips had not been fervently pressed to the sacred bronze.

But the last great and solemn ceremony was now at hand, and we repaired one night to the large edifice, called the Hospital of the Pilgrims. In this hospital they are all lodged and fed during three days and nights, which are considered quite sufficient to traverse all the memorable scenes and sacred places. The apartments are very numerous. Immense tables extended their huge lengths on every side, at which were seated, at supper, multitudes of pilgrims: worn and harassed as they all were with incessant hurrying to and fro, they appeared disposed to do justice to the substantial meal set before them, consisting of barley-soup, and other viands, more savoury; but no wine made its appearance on the

board. Their complexion and aspect were as different as their land and climate. Sicilians and Maltese were mixed with Germans, Swiss, and Irish; and the clamour of tongues resembled the confusion of the Tower of Babel, with this difference, that in the latter instance the engrossing subject was probably the edifice they were constructing, whilst here the universal theme was the sanctity and virtues of the different churches and relics. Where each nation had its favourite shrine and martyrs, it may be supposed the converse was not always harmonious — but a higher elation of spirit seemed to pervade all ranks.

On descending by several steps into two very large and long halls, a scene was presented of another and still more curious character. No earthquake or conflagration could have more utterly confounded the ranks of society, or thrown high and low into more desirable or hopeless confusion. Cardinals and dukes, archbishops and nobles, were humbled at the feet of peasants and menials, of the lowest and obscurest grades. The smell was offensive enough,

but the sight still more so. In three or four long rows, in a gradual ascent from the floor, sat the pilgrims, their eyes beaming with delight and satisfaction at the ceremony. With those who were placed on the second and third seats, the rite was finished ; they were absorbed in contemplation, in sweet and lofty musings, or else muttered in low sounds to themselves their heart-felt joy. But their brethren beneath were now served by illustrious hands, for this is an office rather *desired* by some of the first people of Rome, who consider it as a most excellent and self-denying performance, and a decisive proof of their extreme humility.

Two or three dukes, with as many cardinals, were to be seen most busily and intently engaged in washing, in large tubs, the feet of the numerous pilgrims, which had gathered masses of dust and filth from the peregrination of more than one kingdom, besides the uncleanly ways and by-ways of the city. Yet, the features of the *illustrissimi* were moulded into a very fervent and pleasurable expression ; and,

while engaged in their delightful task, they continued to repeat without ceasing, in a loud tone, blessings and benedictions on the heads of the poor creatures, who had afforded them so high a privilege. The whole body of pilgrims chanted back prayers and thanks to their saints, and to the Virgin; and the servants of the hospital, who were continually moving to and fro,—joined most audibly in the blessings—as their fancy led them. Strange and confused was the combination of sight and sound.

In another apartment might be seen the female pilgrims, attended in a similar manner by ladies of rank and even princesses. Among them were a few of the finest women in Rome, dressed humbly and modestly, as became their office, and kneeling on the floor and muttering benedictions; thus purchasing a greater peace of conscience for past errors, as well as a wider indulgence for the future.

Amidst all these ceremonies and religious fêtes, the interior of Rome was something like that of a vast cathedral—no theatre, opera, or even

public concerts: even in the evening parties and conversations there seemed at times a want of the spirit of enjoyment. It was the year of jubilee to the priesthood, the devout, and the poor—but not to the dissipated, the wealthy, or the gay. The reign of delusion was abroad, and of idolatry Rome was at this moment one vast scene of miserable delusion; alas! even through the bosom of the Coliseum priestly processions passed, and tears and laments fell from the votaries, not for the passing away of such glory, but for the woes of some wretched saint.

Some of these numerous pilgrims we had met in more distant scenes—in the beautiful wilderness of St. John, or in the more dreary one of the Temptation, where they had gazed on valley, stream, and plain, with curious but unimpassioned looks, but with little interest or enthusiasm. No sooner did they behold the bronze figure of Peter, or the stone stairs of Pilate, or the hundred relics of bones, and hair, and vestments, than they rushed forward with rapture and all the unction of faith. But credulity is not con-

fined in Rome to the lower classes; many opulent as well as dignified families were this year infected with the mania; among them was an Irish family, rich and well connected; with the eldest son we had travelled part of the way from Florence. They had all come to reside in Rome for the sole purpose of being near the pontiff and all the excellent places. One day, the mother and daughter, a fine young woman, were actually seen crawling up the long, weary stairs of Pilate, on their hands and knees, dropping a sin, or a sorrow at every step they mounted: the mother went first, and, being rather corpulent, her progress was slow; the young and active Irishwoman followed more briskly, though with evident soreness to the knees of both; plenty of good as well as dirty company were on the same errand, and covered the incomparable stairs as thick as bees.

In the numerous galleries of the Vatican palace, the lover of statuary will find food for the study of months, and perhaps years. The Perseus of Canova is a noble production, though too effeminate, perhaps, in its proportions and

aspect for a hero. In the countenance of the Antinous, esteemed so perfect in beauty, the expression is surely too tranquil and inanimate, destitute of soul or fire. How rarely can the expression of strong passion of any kind be given to marble features!

But in the Laocoon it is perfect and appalling; in looking there, time passes unheededly away. Mark the agony on every lineament of that face, the torment of seeing his two little sons perishing in his arms, and the despairing appeal, as it were to the gods, to save them from a death so horrid. There is no thought or effort for himself; each struggle is to remove the folds of the serpent from the forms of his children; and the love, stronger than death, is in every convulsed feature, far stronger than the anguish of such a death, or the throes of failing nature. In whatever point you view that sublime aspect and writhing form, in front or on either side, the expression is still full of the same deathless energy. Even the Apollo is less glorious after this mournful group. The strong sufferings and

affections to which mortality is prone, surely affect us far more than any ethereal or half human emotions. As in some of the paintings from "Paradise Lost," we turn from the angel figures and looks of Raphael and Uriel, to gaze on the despairing countenances of our first parents, or on the ruined aspect of the fallen angel, where every fierce and fearful passion is depicted.

In the palace Barberini, is the Fornarina of Raphael, with its infinite softness and luxury of expression, but with little beauty of feature; the very large black eye, full of tenderness and power, would make the plainest countenance engaging. The exquisite figure of this female was perhaps more admirable in the painter's eye than her countenance, as he has seized every occasion to display its faultless proportions, even in the picture of the transfiguration.

In the same apartment is a painting by Guido, of Bianca, the daughter of Count Cenci, the murderess of her father. The gentleness, nay even languor, of the countenance has no kindred with the fierce feeling of the parricide. The

full, bright, and hazel eyes speak only of kindness and mercy; and the little, lovely mouth—could it ever have uttered sentence of death against a parent, however guilty? The light and graceful turban gives an oriental expression to the aspect.

The road to Naples being now made tolerably secure by the Austrians, we quitted Rome, and in a few hours arrived at Albano. Having time to spare, we rode by a shady and circuitous path to the lake of Albano, or rather to the top of the eminence that looks down on it. It is situated in a deep and circular hollow, and is more remarkable for its singularity than its beauty; it is said to be the crater of an extinct volcano. A walk leads down the declivity to the edge of the water, in which some remains, said to be those of the ancient Albalonga, are yet to be seen. Returning by another path, we passed the ruins of Domitian's Villa.

The situation of Aricia, passed soon afterward, is fine, and a few miles distant is the little lake of Nemi, of a more picturesque aspect than its larger neighbour. A few hours more brought

us to Velletri, where the night was to be passed. The situation is charming; in the vicinity was a decayed palace, with marble staircase, and numerous mutilated statues, which yet stand in their places in the spacious corridors. Some of the apartments were inhabited by poor people.

The country hence to Terracina soon begins to present an immense uninteresting flat, and the dreaded Pontine marshes are to be passed. The road for eight leagues is, in fact, a weary, wretched length of way, and, the hour being rather early, it was covered with an intensely thick fog, caused by the vapours from the marshes. A miserable auberge is met with here, in which it is scarcely possible to find anything eatable. Some eels and bad wine were at length produced, which the cold ride rendered extremely palatable. Two English families arrived during our short stay, but the larder had little to furnish, save hot water and eggs, and complaints and murmurs arose fast on every side. The dirt of the place was excessive, and equalled only by the squalid looks of the people.

Dismal scenes of residence are these of the Maremma and the Pontine marshes. A curse is in the air and on the earth; the pestilential damps come on at day-break, and hang like a heavy shroud over the stagnant pools and corrupt earth. The frame, as well as the spirit, loses its energy—life languishes on: the sultriest wastes of sand are delightful in comparison, for there the air is pure, and the heavens always clear; in such a scene we once met with a very aged man, who dwelt in a cave in the wilderness, from motives of piety. The mouth of his abode looked on little else than sand, rocks, and a frightful barrenness; not a tree, a flower, or a shrub was there. But he said that he enjoyed continual good health, happy animal spirits, and a perfect submission to the will of God. It was easy to believe this, for his countenance was calm, and his words full of firmness and peace, even at the age of ninety. The very air around his wild home bore health on its wings; no rain, or fogs, or fatal exhalations. To this fine old man, death when he comes, will be as a friend and not an enemy: no relative near to comfort

him, no tie to be broken asunder, no one to mourn over his desert grave.

A few hours hence brought us to Terracina, a wild and exposed site. High and bare rocks, like towers, a tame and sandy beach, and above all, the miserable accommodations of the inn, present few charms. Next is Fondi, a noted place for the brigands, but bandits often figure more on paper than in their own vicinity. An excellent guard is kept up by the Austrians, whose posts are placed all along the way nearly to Naples, at a mile distant from each other, in small houses built for the purpose.

At Mola, in the garden of the inn, are shewn the ruins of the Formian Villa of Cicero; few hours can be passed more interestingly than in this garden, whose foot is bathed by the sea, close to the edge of which, and almost entered by the waves, are the remains of arches and of caves. The orange trees, with which the enclosure is filled, were in full bearing. A few miles from Mola are the ruins of Minturnum, being the rather extensive remains of an aqueduct and a theatre; and to the left of the road was formerly the

marsh into which Marius wandered for refuge. The situation of St. Agatha, where the night was passed, is beautiful ; so also is the scenery on every side.

The town of Capua answers in nothing to its ancient fame, being dirty and mean ; and its luxuries would not tempt the most wretched wanderer to tarry by the way. The road hence to Naples is excellent, through a most luxuriant country ; it was late in the evening ere we entered the capital, after incessant stoppages at the different police-houses, at every one of which payment, although trifling, was demanded. On reaching the shore, a wild scene was presented by the bay, and the thousand lights that sparkled from the endless dwellings on its shores, and which appeared, in the darkness, to rise out of the water, or to float on its surface. After traversing several streets in order to gain our hotel, we had at last the pleasure to enter its gates, after a fatiguing day's journey, and found what was even better than rest—excellent accommodation and attentions, after several days' miserable lodgings and worse manners.

LETTER XVI.

Naples.—Statues in the Church of St. Severo.—The Studii.—Bay of Naples.—Lake Fusaro.—The Stygian Lake.—Lake Avernus.—Pozzuoli.—Ischia.—Pompeii.—Amalfi.—Eboli.—Pæstum.—The Campo Santo at Naples.—Church of St. Martino; its fine Paintings.—Subjects of Italian Pictures.—Catholic Superstition.—English Converts to Popery.—Scenery of the Bay of Naples.—Situation of the City.—Return to Rome.—Feelings on quitting it.—Pilgrimage of a German Student.—Terni.—Fall of the Velino.—Perugia.—Torricella.

THE following morn brought not the serene sky or soft breezes of the south; our slumbers were broken by the furious howlings of the wind, and the rush of torrents of rain; the air was miserably cold. We remained long enough at Naples to discover that its clime was one of the most uncertain upon earth, and that the beauty of its position had much that was apocryphal in it.

Having ordered a cabriolet, we sallied out, nevertheless, to visit some of the churches, in

particular that of St. Severo, where are the three statues more deserving of admiration, perhaps, than any others in the city. One of them was Modesty, standing, and covered with a veil from head to foot. This is an exquisite statue; the veil is transparent, and of marble, each fold and link being as finely executed as if the material had been lace, and its clearness is such that both the countenance and shape are as distinct as if unveiled.

But the dead Christ recumbent is the most wonderful performance of the three. The death-like expression of the features, their deep and last repose, are brought more vividly before the eye by the thin, airy veil of marble that, like a shroud, wraps the whole form, and is twined round the stretched and lifeless limbs like their winding-sheet: over the feet and hands, pierced and stiffening with wounds, a net of stone mingles its tracery-work likewise with the falling and dishevelled locks of hair. It is altogether a representation faithful beyond conception.

The rain still fell in torrents when we repaired

to the Studii. The hall, containing the statues found at Pompeii and Herculaneum, is full of interest, as is likewise the apartment full of the various articles taken from the buried city, such as clusters of grapes, bread, raisins, figs, and many kinds of ornaments, besides corn, eggs, prunes, &c. blackened, it is true, with the ashes that covered them, but otherwise well preserved.

The queen of the statues is the Venus Callipiga, or Victrice, placed in the middle of one of the halls, and around her are numerous other statues, but they look like attendants on this princess of loveliness. This statue, like the Medicean, is below the middle height of woman, and stands as if either shunning or soliciting admiration. One hand bent over the left shoulder, has hold of her light and elegant drape, and the head is half turned back to observe if it is adjusted on the other shoulder. The countenance has a playful yet defying expression, and the figure gains by being partly shrouded by a robe.

Among the greatest curiosities in the Studii,

are the cork models of the ruins ; they are inimitably done, particularly those of Pæstum and of the Coliseum, of various sizes ; the foliage and trees which shroud these relics being imitated most naturally. These are for exhibition and for sale also, for every thing in this country has its price. They give a faithful idea of the originals, especially that of Pæstum, and several of the forum in Rome, which are more easy to represent than the widely-scattered ruins of Pompeii. Part of the baths of Caracalla are also well imitated.

The imperfect clothing of the trees is a cardinal defect in the bay of Naples ; the dry and dusty range of Pausilippo is very thinly shaded, for the soil is rocky, and the sultry sides present neither groves nor streams. We traversed great part of this hill afterwards on a burning hot day ; the prospect beneath and in the distance was enchanting, and compensated for paths unsheltered save by the scattered and comfortless olive-tree, or the numerous vines, and the ugly stone cliffs, amidst which steps were cut to de-

scend into the high road that led from Naples to Pozzuoli.

The lake Fusaro is a wide pool, celebrated only for its fine oysters, to taste which in their freshness, as well as to enjoy the luxury of fishing, the King of Naples has built a small cottage on the banks. Hence is a pleasant ride to the harbour of Baiæ, loved with good reason by the ancient Romans. The remains of the villas of Cæsar, Marius, and Lucullus, are now partly covered by the waves. You are incessantly implored to enter baths, grottoes, and caves, by a crowd of dirty women and children, all armed with torches, the smoke of which, if you trust to their guidance, nearly poisons you.

Nothing satiates the curiosity sooner than ruins, especially if presented in wearying succession; here, they are of too dubious a character. But nature is all lovely in this little bay; the temples are half seen amidst the trees; the air is delicious; and, happily, this part of the shore is but thinly inhabited by the vile and wretched people.

Riding along the beach, we ascended the eminence that leads to the summit of the promontory of Misenum. The cottage of a peasant of the better order stood here: the portico offered a rude seat, and the wife of the owner placed before us a bottle of excellent white wine.

Around the Stygian lake there is little deathly or fearful, it being now connected with the sea. The shores have a sort of gloominess about them, but the banks are both tame and low. The sun was setting on their dull sheet of water: Upon the Elysian Fields there was a partial verdure, with a few trees: a soft and tranquil scene, with little of Elysium about it. Returning hence to the shore, and taking a boat to the Lucrine Lake, we thence walked to that of Avernus, the only spot that retains any of the ancient enchantment. But the hour—the remains of the sun-set fading into twilight—was well suited to a scene like this.

The ruins of the temple of Apollo, on the opposite shore, were reflected in the clear water, as well as the group of trees bending over it.

Fancy can no longer conjure up a remnant of the horrors and darkness that of old rested on the shores, yet there was on them a solemn and shadowy aspect, augmented by the utter seclusion and stillness of the place. It is said to be two miles in circumference, and the depth of its waters is excessive: there are many trees on the banks, and the path often winds beneath the branches. In the clear starlight that soon succeeded, the grey walls of the temple grew yet more dim, and not a ripple on the shore was heard — the waters slept heavily.

Walking back to the harbour, we proceeded in our boat to the town of Pozzuoli; seated in the corridor, the air of the night felt like balm.

Early next morning we took a boat for the islands of Procida and Ischia; the appearance of the latter is quite volcanic. Hiring mules, we rode over a considerable part of the isle to the Sentinella, a house finely situated on the summit of a hill, and well fitted up for the reception of travellers; it has every comfort and excellent attendance, with rather high charges.

Families often come and reside here during the hot season.

An English lady, with a servant and two children, had passed some months in the house, which looks over a wide and beautiful scene, on land and water, and the air is inexpressibly pure and bracing. You feel new life and cheerfulness both in soul and body; even the fancy borrows fresh wings. It is a waste of time, however, to remain here, as the interior possesses few attractions; but the air is the richest blessing that the delicate or the invalid can enjoy.

After spending some days at the Sentinella, took boat for Pozzuoli, and entering a cabriolet, rode to Naples amidst a deluge of rain. The well-known scene of Pompeii has, perhaps, no resemblance in the world; an uncovered city rescued from the shroud of so many centuries. The dwellings of the ancient people were very small. What dining and drawing-rooms, and chambers they must have had!—so close, cabined, and confined—in which any splendour of furniture or ornament could have appeared to little

advantage. To the eye of a citizen of Athens or Rome, the airiness, size, and beauty, of our modern apartments, would appear suitable only to a luxurious patrician, or a temple of the gods. A bath-room of one of the affluent Pompeians, lately discovered, shows a taste for indulgence, even in a scanty space ; it consisted of a large basin of marble, sunk in the earth, with steps to descend, of the same material, and adjoining was a small apartment with a fine mosaic pavement, and marble seats in the recesses. Some rude paintings still exist on the walls, their colours greatly decayed. Abundance of stone wine-vessels, with various other utensils, continue to be found ; the former are of the long and slender shape, and narrow neck, still in use in the East. We had seen the young women of Canaan coming from the fountain, and bearing on their heads these pitchers, of the same kind and form, doubtless, as those vessels whose contents the Redeemer turned from water into wine.

The most singular part of this revived city is the street of tombs, if it may be so called ; it is

entirely paved, and issues forth on the country. These tombs are of large size, and various forms, according to the taste and fancy of the designer. The greater part are of marble, with inscriptions on the exterior ; some are of a square form, one resembled greatly that of the Paraclete in Père la Chaise. But the gaiety and beauty of that cemetery — the groves, the little gardens, the exquisite neatness, are utterly wanting here. Rarely do the sepulchres of fifteen hundred years possess such freshness and immortality as these of the rich Pompeians : the thick covering of ashes has averted all decay ; a peculiarly desolate and mournful air is around them. The silent and narrow street returns the sound of the step of the curious passenger : the sight of the trees, flowers, and glades beyond, is strange to the eye — it is as if earth had been compelled to give up her dead, but the gloom of the “ dark valley” still sits heavily on them, and these short and simple inscriptions, that tell the names and ages of the peaceful people of two thousand years past—what a mockery of the power of the grave!

From Pompeii, a drive of six hours was sufficient to arrive at Salerno ; the way was full of interest, particularly after passing Vietri, in a lofty and commanding position : the country is then well wooded and peopled. The beautiful site of Amalfi is a resistless temptation to leave the direct route, and have recourse to the mules' path that conducts to it. The whole coast is magnificent, but has few parts equal to the romantic, antique, and bold Amalfi, in an amphitheatre of mountains, the cliffs in front, enchanting rides on every side, although achieved on donkeys, for carriages exist not here. The antiquary also may riot over the sea-gate, it is so old, and the vase of porphyry, and the red oriental columns, and the crypt, and the excellent and aged paintings in the cathedral. But the lover of nature will mount his sage courser, who will forthwith scramble up the wild and rocky ways, and the higher he gets still more exquisite is the prospect. Then he must take his dinner with him, for there are no houses of refreshment ; Amalfi does not even boast an inn,

but he can choose a lofty plateau, or a cave in the rock, and feel the inexpressible luxury of solitude; while beneath is the wild little town, the shore, and its wilder people, whose boats lie tossing in the wave, while their voices come faintly from afar.

The inhabitants are very civil and courteous to strangers; there are many genteel and ancient families among them, with small fortunes, which are quite sufficient for every enjoyment in this cheap region. Parties are often formed by those gay and kind people, which strangers are welcome to join; a good and ample repast, with excellent wine, is sent on to some lovely and favourite spot, and the ladies and gentlemen set out on donkeys and mules, up the hills and verdant slopes, and over the edge of precipices; the ride and the scenes are enjoyed by all, as also is the repast that awaits them, spread out on the grass, and they return home in the cool of the evening.

Apartments may be had here at a very moderate rate, it is a wild and lovely sojourn, but books, and society, at least of kindred minds,

are utterly wanting here ; the mountain region, and the difficulty of access, make it seem like a little world of its own, and which, after a time, if the spirits are not good, and the strength equal to the bold rides and walks — may feel lonely, void, and wearisome.

Leaving this place, we proceeded to Eboli, where there is a tolerable inn, with good and clean beds, which are “ few and far between,” in the land. A few hours from Eboli begins the waste and extensive plain, at the extremity of which, and near the sea, are the ruins of Pæstum. This is sometimes dangerous ground, from being the occasional resort of banditti. There is a farm-house near the temple, but so dirty, and the tenants so miserable, that it is better to sit on the earth without, or beneath the canopy of the ruin, than enter its walls. A more savage solitude cannot be conceived, in the midst of a vast and dreary plain, in which are two or three mean huts, an abject little edifice intended for a church, a single patch of cultivation, where some wild vineyards grow. Some herds of wild buffa-

loes are seen, and the solitary cry of the eagle alone breaks on the desert silence. Even the sea-shore is low and sandy, and the air so unwholesome, that it is not safe to wander here in the evening, or till the morning sun has dissipated the pernicious dews. Yet this waste was once, like that of Damascus, a celebrated plain of roses, and luxurious Sybarites dwelt here, and gathered round them every indulgence of earth. Pity that priestcraft never found its way hither, that no little colony of monks took a fancy to the scene, and gathered relics, and put crosses and images around the massive remains, whose territory would then have had life and comfort, instead of being almost a forbidden haunt!

Richly is the journey repaid by the sight of the aged and stupendous temples, which seem almost to be the work of a rude and colossal people; like the huge and strong skeleton of the megatherium, lately found in the other hemisphere, they are more surprising than graceful. The situation adds wonderfully to their effect; the wilderness, the ocean on each

side; even nature itself decaying around them, and breathing only fatal odours, the haunt only of the bird of prey, or the ruthless bandit. None of the ruins of Rome so impress the imagination. The height of the columns is disproportioned to their enormous thickness, without any base, and simple and even rude capitals. The enormous steps, which are not very easy of ascent, are, like the pillars, more suitable to the dimensions of some vast Egyptian temple. These edifices are of coarse stone, hollowed in many parts like a honeycomb; their severe and majestic simplicity has been greatly admired. The enthusiasm of the wanderer, who is devoted to everything ancient and venerable, will here, no doubt, kindle into rapture; but he will not see beauty dwelling amidst decay; there is a total want of relief—of lightness and elegance. Even the rich clusters of foliage that so often cheer the grey dwelling-places of time, would be grateful amidst these iron remains, the most ancient almost on the earth, which may proudly take up the words of old, and say, “No feller

has yet come up against us." The bustle and gaiety of the streets of Naples were almost startling, after so solitary an excursion.

There is a place without the city well worth visiting by a stranger, if his nerves are strong enough to go through the ordeal—the Campo Santo. No one could believe, without being convinced by actual observation, that a refined and polished people, as are the Neapolitans in many respects, can tolerate a usage so revolting to every feeling, so disgraceful to human nature. An immense square area, inclosed by lofty walls; around the interior runs a gallery, supported by pillars. In the pavement are as many holes as there are days in the year; these are closed by square stones, each of which, on being raised by a pulley, discloses a deep cave or tomb beneath. Here the bodies of both sexes, and of all ages, from infancy to decrepitude, are brought, and the stone being lifted, are tumbled to the bottom in a mass, and left to repose on a vast heap of corpses, previously accumulated. As we stood in the midst of this Golgotha, where death sits

in hideous mockery, gorged every rise and set of sun with fresh victims, we observed a man proceeding into the area with a large basket on his head. On being asked what he carried, he produced his burden, consisting of a couple of dead and naked children, which he very coolly, as soon as the stone for the day was lifted, tossed into the gloomy cave beneath. We had the curiosity to request the covering of one of these universal sepulchres to be raised, and gazed down on its dreadful secrets. No field of battle, the carnage being finished, was ever half so shocking. Hosts of infants lay there, mangled—as when Herod ceased his slaughter of the innocents. Strong men were in heaps, bowed and broken by the fall, in whose aspect every ghastly disease had feasted; and women there were many, and in youth too, of whom the worm had not yet become “the mother or the sister.” The relatives and friends seldom even attend the farce of interment, but leave that to the hardened functionaries of the place.

In the small and exquisitely beautiful church

of St. Martino, on the hill of St. Elmo, the riches are incalculable ; the chapel, as well as the various adjoining apartments, are paved with rare marble, and kept perfectly clean ; a circumstance not very common in Naples, where the floors of their churches are often disfigured by filth. As you enter, there is a painting of the Nativity by Guido, a theme to which no other hand could give such softness and beauty. Opening from the sides of the large chapel are several of smaller size ; in one of which is a profuse display of precious stones, with the altar inlaid with lapis-lazuli, agate, amethyst, &c. with various rich marbles. This shrine has a gorgeous appearance, with its gold and jewels, and other costly things ; as the silver in the capital of Judea, "like the stones in the street for plenty." On the opposite side is another small chapel, in which are some fresco paintings ; the appearance of the angel Gabriel to Mary, and the Salutation ; in both of which the figure and features of the latter have the deep and hallowed beauty, the tenderness and enthusiasm of

the mother, which the fancy loves to picture. But in this chapel the noblest paintings are heaped with almost as great profusion as the precious stones; the Magdalene in the Desert, and the Dead Christ, by Spagnoletti; the latter is full of woe and sadness, the gloom of the grave is there, the King of Terrors sitting grimly on his prey; darkness and despair are around; there is no watcher; the cross is near, dimly seen; and friend and disciple are fled, "even the loved one." Is there no charm in representations like these? It is easy to conceive they may be useful, as well as intensely interesting to the mind. The feelings sympathise with the vivid impressions made on the imagination, by sacred descriptions, even of that beautiful majestic countenance, of those deeds of mercy and glory which purchased our salvation. It is impossible to view the Transfiguration of Raphael, the Ascension, and the dread scene of the Sepulchre, without indelible impressions; and often, in after-life, while reading or musing on these themes, the matchless pictorial representations

will come back, like "sweet music on the memory," and place the memorable scenes all freshly and vividly before us.

Perhaps, in the anxiety to avoid the abuses of the Romish church, we may have gone to an extreme in rejecting all ornaments to church and chapel, and have chosen the too naked exterior. At the same time, these things would be useless, unless they came from the hand of the mighty masters, unless that "resistless truth and enchantment" were there, by which the blessed scenes seem to live again before the heart and eye.

There is certainly every thing in this exquisite church and convent to tempt the indolent and enthusiastic Catholic to embrace monasticism — a retired and unruffled life, no severe penances or vigils, a soft and comfortable home, with a good library and good living. The prospect from the interior and from the garden is unrivalled; the city, the bay and shipping, the isles and mountains, all like a glorious panorama beneath.

As to the fine arts, there is a daily and exhaustless banquet within the walls for every kind of taste. Yet it is a cause of regret, that the great painters of Italy have been obliged to confine themselves almost exclusively to the subjects of their faith or rather superstition. It would be as easy to number the sands on the sea-shore as the countless number of virgins, saints, and martyrs. The history of their country was surely rich in memorable scenes : those of republican and imperial Rome, perhaps, often haunted the painter's fancy ; but the convents and prelates had miracles to be illustrated, favourite saints to be glorified, and offered handsome and present pay ; and the loftiest genius, urged by dependence and poverty, truckled to the eternal Madonnas, and the fiery trials of churchmen.

Even the historical scenes of Scripture, so rich in sublime and dramatic situations, were rarely those of the painter's choice ; the wife of Potiphar, Judith and Holofernes, Susanna and the Elders, in many a form and grouping, must have

been the taste of the stupid monks, not of the master.

In spite of the delusions and often laughable mummeries of modern popery, it would be unjust to believe that there are not many intellectual as well as excellent men among its priesthood. Chance threw us, sometimes, into the society of several of them ; lively and agreeable men they were, but, from one in particular, the superior in rank as well as years, we received marked and kind attentions. This father was a perfect gentleman in manners, a man of strong sense and observation ; sincerely, yet blindly, attached to his faith : after a contest about the miracle of St. Genaro, we saw that it was useless to dispute any more.

About six years since, an English traveller, of good fortune, a Mr. S——, who had passed some time at Naples, was so smitten with the attractions of a life of retirement and contemplation, that he formed the strange resolution of entering a convent. He had lived fast, and habits of extreme dissipation had produced a weariness of

the world, rather than any love of religion,—and he imagined it to be a most desirable thing to enjoy the deep calm and passionless days of a monastery, to cultivate a beautiful garden, and have no anxieties, no corroding emotions. But devotion and the picturesque were mixed up together in his fancy : so he chose a monastery in the neighbourhood of Palermo, splendidly situated, forsook the gay haunts of Naples, and entered on the year of his noviciate. His friends said it was a wild freak of a satiated mind, a restless thirst of change ; no one said it was the fever of enthusiasm ; but the Englishman seemed to be resolved to defeat all predictions concerning him. Even the superior and some of the fathers of the convent threw cold water on his design : the former, after awhile, to try his zeal, gave him some of the most servile and dirty tasks to perform, to sweep the court, the chambers, &c. which he obeyed implicitly. His dreams of stillness and peace were realized to the full ; no rolling of carriages, no loud merriment or strife, no flashing looks or burning words and

thoughts, and no passions of the gambler or man of pleasure, came to the convent walls ; prayer, and praise, gardening and meditation, filled up the life. And he said that he loved it, and would cleave to it irrevocably—a singular proof of the delusion or waywardness of the human heart. Seeing his constancy, the fathers desisted from opposition, and began to admire their new candidate. The year expired, and he was stanch to his purpose; he was still in the prime of life, his health and fortune good, but the sickness of the heart had come over him. It is said he has decided to take the vows, and become a monk of his favourite monastery.

But the baronet of ancient family, Sir H. —, what excuse had he to offer for embracing the Romish faith, after he had been many years rector in his own land : a parish priest, with a numerous family, and many looking up to his example ? Will the cardinal's hat which he has lately received, wash out the apostacy, or console his sons for their being disinherited, because they are Protestants ? On his daughter, who is also be-

come a Roman Catholic, and has chosen a husband of the same faith, nearly the whole of his large property is settled.

The scenery of the bay of Naples has perhaps been estimated beyond its deserts; the long line of the hill of St. Pausilippo, so destitute of wood and shade—a panting and weary promenade; from the city to Portici an open and unvaried shore; from Castel-a-mare to beyond Sorentum, the mountainous, bold, and wooded country is seen only far distant and in the mass. The resident in Naples will have also to regret, that the vicinity of the city is too open, if the expression may be allowed, being destitute of retired and secluded walks and scenes, to which it would be so welcome, at times, to withdraw. The possession of a carriage would doubtless remedy this defect, but the pedestrian must walk some miles ere he can find himself “alone with nature in her silent haunts.”

An English lady, who had resided here several years, complained that, having no equipage, she was almost debarred the use of exercise on this

account. The situation of this capital has often been compared in beauty to that of Turkey; but the resident in the latter can in a few moments be transported to many a delicious, cool, and silent valley and grove, where the "busy hum of the world," cannot come. A treeless beach and burning declivities may not compare with these; and often, after a sultry day, the sea-breeze sets in about four o'clock with such chill intenseness, as makes the consumptive patient hurry to his home, and even the strong wrap his cloak closely around him. Long before sun-rise the streets were lively with a number of passengers, for in the south they are very early risers. The sultry way made the cool of the evening grateful at St. Agatha, deliciously situated on a gentle eminence, that overlooks the sea, the plain of Minturnum, Gaeta, &c.

On returning to Rome, the city was no longer crowded with the same eager groups; the interior of the churches was once more comparatively silent and solitary, and relics of all kinds and virtues began to repose in quiet, till the

election of another worn-out pontiff should bring a new holy year.

The feelings of regret with which we left the city, were not dissipated at the melancholy Baccano, the caravanserai in the desert, where we breakfasted, and passed some hours. The heat of the day was great, and without the walls of the gloomy inn not a tree or even a rock in the small and lifeless plain offered any shelter. A few straggling pilgrims waited till noon should be past, to resume their journey; they looked like men whose minds, as well as frames, had been overwrought; after such constant and delicious excitement to their credulity and wonder, there was now a dull and drear recoil. Had Johnson ever proved the solemn listlessness of a lone inn in the midst of a lone and burning plain, where there is no sound, no sight, but of the treeless earth, parching beneath the fierce sun, he would not have said that to be in an Hebridean isle, whence the wild winds and wilder waves precluded all escape, was the saddest waste of life he could conceive.

The scene brought to mind the instance of the German student, who, having pined with desire during many years to see the "eternal city," and hardly saved a slender sum from his poor resources, at last set out with an enraptured heart. He had calculated, that with rigid economy there was enough to bear the expenses of the way, as well as a short residence in Rome. He travelled on foot, and was occasionally indebted by the way to the hospitalities of the pastors of the villages, who gladly gave him welcome for a night beneath their roof. But this resource failed, when the distance between Heidelberg and the north of Italy was passed; and he found himself in a foreign land. Like the shipwrecked man, who guards with a lynx-like suspicion and care the little store he had saved, the enduring student grudged himself almost every meal he ate, and for which he must surely pay. Yet amidst privations and fatigues the energy of the mind lived on; every day, and not one was given to rest, brought him nearer to the goal of all his hopes: Rome filled his thoughts by

day, and his dreams by night; in a thousand splendid and fantastic forms she stood before him in the desert plain, but all were glorious and indelible. In spite of every care, and daily and even hourly self-denial, when he arrived at Baccano his finances were brought low, very low, for the way had been long and weary. The day was breaking, he could not afford to rest at the desolate inn, but he hastened forward to the summit of the hill that bounds the little plain, and sat down, and looked long, and with indescribable emotion.

From this spot the dome of St. Peter's is distinctly seen far in the distance, and the rising sun now fell redly on it. He watched its glory, as if it had been that of another and brighter world, all for which he had yearned for so many years, which his heart had bled to behold, was *there*. And now to turn back again, after all his toils, and never—never enter Rome, was almost more than man could bear. He counted once more the scanty sum that remained, and saw that if he entered Rome he must solicit the

charities of his countrymen either for his support there or his return home, and he scorned to be thus degraded. Even with the most rigid economy there was scarcely a sufficiency for his journey back; he cast a farewell look towards the city, and, rising from the earth with an almost broken heart, he bent his way over the plain.

The charms of the vale of Terni deserve a residence of a few days; the fall of the Velino is certainly the finest in Europe, none in Switzerland may be compared with it; a perpetual iris, of exquisite beauty, resting on it, and on the face of the precipice. There is a kind of shed in front of the fall, but a small rock lower down, washed by the spray, commands a more perfect view. It is necessary to bear the excessive insolence and officiousness of the myriads of guides and ciceroni, who volunteer to show the various places, and detail their claims with a clamour that confounds all enjoyment. Many miles from Perugia is the old town of Assisi, nobly situated on a hill, the birth-place of the founder of the Franciscan order. He had not to regret that he was born

in an obscure place of the earth, for Assisi, on the rocky sides of the mountain, with its remains of columns, aqueducts, and temples, is a memorable scene. The remains of this celebrated man repose in a convent, said to be founded by himself.

The situation of Perugia is exquisite, rising abruptly to view as you approach it, through a vale like the garden of Eden in beauty. The city is built along the brow of a hill, that in one part falls in a steep descent; its interior has an aspect of gaiety and liveliness, the more striking after the gloom and dullness of so many Italian towns. Perugia has a university, with twenty-two professors, and two hundred students, several academies, and twenty convents. The paintings are chiefly by Perugino, the master of Raphael; but pictures and convents had less attraction at this hour than the scene from the city walls. A rich sunset was passing away, the numerous hamlets, pastures, and hills, wooded to the very summit, were vivid with the golden light; the population was numerous, and appeared to have every comfort of this life about them.

How different was the scene from the hill of Torricella, where we stopped to breakfast, after passing along the shore of Thrasymene. The day was overcast and chill, the little inn was dirty and comfortless; they brought a large fish that had been caught in the lake; the very circumstance gave it in fancy an excellent flavour, but it was "tasteless and fissionless." Cornfields and vineyards, not very romantic objects, covered the shores of the indelible waters, which in many parts were rather flat and marshy, but abundantly wooded, and the little hills recede in the distance into mountains. If the lone house that stands on the shore could be fitted up for the resting-place of the traveller, it would be grateful to tarry there, rather than in the squalid village-inns. But the interest of the Italians is now drawn to sanguinary scenes of their own, and there is little to give to the battle-fields of antiquity; and the listless traveller will soon be as rarely seen on the soil as the Greek in the ancient city of Constantine.

LETTER XVII.

Arezzo.—Curious Religious Procession.—Florence.—Paintings in the Pitti Palace.—The Anatomical Gallery.—The English in Florence.—Abbey of Camaldoli.—La Verna.—The Body of St. Francis.—Spirit of Monachism.—Convent of Sinai.—Scenes for Romance.—Neglect of Romance in Italy.—Captivity of Maroncelli.—Neglect of his work.—Refined Cruelty.—Count Confalonieri.

AT Arezzo the weather was still bad, and the rain fell fast; we were condemned to pass the day in the dullest of all situations, an Italian inn on a Sunday. It was impossible to devise how to while away the time; the high houses had a dark and sombre aspect, and the streets were narrow and dirty, and enlivened only by the steps of the more devout part of the population, and the number was small that passed by to church. The naked floor, the empty grate, (for

the air was chill,) the soiled and bare walls, on which a few saints showed their faces, and the incessant pouring of the rain without, made up a whole that was not very soothing to the feelings.

At Levané was a strange and curious religious procession. The saint in honour of whom the festival was held was preceded by a great number of priests, bearing lights and banners, with much appearance of devotion. A bishop also in his robes immediately followed the saint, who figured not as an image, or painting, or graven form, but came in his own sepulchral likeness, a fearful object of adoration. In a very large glass-case, borne with extreme solemnity by many monks, was the entire skeleton of the saint, prostrate; and its grinning and ghastly aspect was gazed on eagerly and devoutly by the populace, who surrounded the procession in great numbers, as it passed slowly through the streets of the town. On the skull was a crown, ornamented with jewels, false ones surely, for the priests would hardly lavish the ruby and amethyst on the death's head.

Came to Florence in a deluge of rain. The shallow Arno added little at this time to the appearance either of city or valley; its bed was half dry, and it crept sluggishly under its many handsome bridges. The streets of the city have rather a gloomy and monotonous air, partly owing to the dull and heavy architecture of the public edifices. The interior of the cathedral is gloomy and sombre; the light through the small windows is too partial for so vast an area, while an almost rude taste seems to prevail in the alternate black and white marble, of which the walls of this immense edifice are built. The interior of the chapel of the Medici is another striking instance of the Florentine taste in architecture. On this chapel vast sums of money have been expended, and numbers of workmen are still employed, and the most costly materials are heaped to satiety. Although there is a gloomy kind of magnificence in the interior, it has very much the air of a vast sepulchre; and the jasper, the rare Egyptian granites, and the costly marbles, that are lavished on the tombs of the princes, seem as if they were out of place in a building

destitute both of grace and beauty. All the churches in Florence partake more or less of this character. One would imagine that the fraternity of St. Dominic had superintended their construction, for many of them would make excellent halls of the inquisition.

The paintings in the Pitti palace would repay a descent into the tomb ; the heavy and gloomy exterior looks like that of a tribunal of life and death, rather than a hall of pleasure. The two sea-pieces of Salvator Rosa, and a St. Sebastian by Caracci, are noble pictures ; but the collection is so vast, and of such surpassing excellence, that few princes can boast of so many masterpieces. Cleopatra, by Guido, is a lovely representation ; the robe has fallen from the shoulders, the neck is bared to the bite of the aspic, and the high resolve that sits on the features, to which a wildness is given, but without sorrow or mourning over the destruction of her matchless beauty. There are many of Carlo Dolce's—the Christ in the garden ; the St. John, a child, sleeping on the cross ; and the crucifixion of St. Andrew.

The Conspiracy of Catiline by Salvator Rosa, is a proof with what mastery the great could forsake the beaten field of madonnas and saints. A few of the conspirators only are assembled, by night, among whom is the chief. The light of the torch falls full on his countenance, torn as it is by every dark passion; he is in the act of causing them to pledge each other with their blood, and the goblet that contains it is in his hand.

A singular spectacle is the anatomical gallery in the Museum of Natural History; it contains several thousand figures of the size of life, and executed with wonderful skill. They represent the effects on the human body of the various diseases to which it is liable; and they are fearfully faithful. The greater part of the spectators who frequent this gallery are drawn merely by curiosity, and amongst them ladies are frequently seen, though in general they are Italians, whose sense of delicacy is far less fine than that of the natives of the north. In a small apartment, are three or four scenes in wax, de-

scriptive of the ravages of the plague; no words, not even those of Defoe, can give so vivid and shuddering a representation of the effects of this disease. The figures which compose the groups are extremely small, one of the scenes represents the interior of a church-yard, where the miserable relatives are assembled by night to mourn over the friends they have lost, whose dead bodies are laid beside the tombs in various positions; some are already in the sepulchre, or thrown carelessly beside it. The passions of grief, despair, and utter abandonment, are finely shown in the countenances of the mourners; the mother gazes on the blackening body of her child with intense affection; the wife weeps over the form of her husband, from which all traces of humanity are driven; and on the delicate wife the survivor's eyes are strained, though all resemblance is past away. It is not beauty, infancy, and manhood, consuming away merely "as a garment by the moth, or as the captives of the worm," but death delighting to clothe itself with the most strange and horrid

aspects on which the living can scarcely resolve to look.

No city in Italy offers in all respects so desirable a residence for strangers as Florence; the society is agreeable and accessible, and another circumstance of the most extraordinary nature is, that the English are disposed to be rather sociable with each other, and to cherish feelings not wholly compounded of suspicion and dislike. In general, they wish occasions for seeing each other's faces to be "few and far between;" and when they do meet, it is somewhat like the meeting of the parties of Shunghie and Shulitea, in New Zealand, who glare at each other for a time in silence, then utter stern and cold monosyllables, evidently feeding at the time upon a secret store of vexation, doubt, and annoyance.

After feasting the eyes for days on the galleries, and feeling, or trying to feel, something like rapture, it is delightful to go forth to the delicious and solemn retreats of nature, where neither the taste nor imagination can play false. Such is the site of the abbey of Camaldoli, a good dis-

tance from the city. The beauty of the Val'ombrosa, through which the route passes, is very great, and the territory beyond is altogether as desolate—a perfect wilderness. The anchoret who founded the conyent was a Calabrian, and chose the site, perhaps, from its resemblance to the savage scenes of his own land, in a dreary dell or glen, the declivities covered with ancient pines, and the torrent roaring below. The interior of the convent is more cheering than the scene without; the monks do not imitate the habits of their founder, but receive their guests kindly. About two miles higher up the mountain is a retreat of hermits, founded by a St. Remualdo; but the Italian climates are less favourable than those of the East to the longevity of ascetics: in the most frightful desert the dry, pure, and elastic air gives old age to the most indolent and soul-less recluses; even men who can number fourscore retain a florid complexion, a clear eye, and excellent appetite. With what avidity did the aged anchorites devour their repasts, and listen eagerly for the bell

that pealed through the drear solitudes the renewal of the refecton ! But on those Apennine heights the followers of Remualdo died piecemeal ; the novices seldom lasted beyond one or two winters ; the rest had dropsy and all manner of diseases.

The bold and capricious taste of St. Francis selected the most strange as well as splendid sites for his monasteries ; fond himself of the terrors and sublimities of nature, he consecrated scenes which his shivering followers would gladly exchange for the soft face of the valley or plain. Such is La Verna, twelve miles from Camaldoli, perched on the very cliffs of the dark Apennine, far from any human habitation ; but so exalted is the vicinity by the visits and prayers of the idolized founder, that every spot is dear and hallowed ground to the zealous visiter more than to the monks. Recluses grow very weary at last of living constantly among sacred or venerated scenes : unsupported by enthusiasm, the feelings and fancy soon sink into indifference. Those of La Verna kept up the

farce well, but felt as little luxury in gazing on the rocks and recesses where he of Assisi prayed and was enraptured, as they did in gazing on the fine and dread aspects of nature on every side; precipices, woods, mountains, and the wild sweep of the tempest that came often round their walls. We were in possession of a relic, that was perhaps equal in value even to their choicest; a bit, the most diminutive, barely visible, of the *real* body of St. Francis, for which we had paid a tolerably high price, at Nazareth, to a clever Spanish monk. It was inclosed in a little glass frame, and was of sufficiently light carriage. Could I have parted with it, board and lodging within the walls, the best wine, the best fare, might perhaps, have gone for nothing; and who would gainsay its identity? the very scene whence it was brought threw a sanctity about it. As to intrinsic value, a cell in La Verna for a week, looking down on the stern and indelible scenery, in "that world of its own," would have been a sufficient price. But such-like rarities, brought

from so far a land, were not to be lightly parted with.

If there is felt no taste for literature—if no ambition, hatred, jealousy, or malice — what sullen apathy must the life of La Verna be! The dreamy yet exalted piety, the fine and engrossing enthusiasm, such as their founder felt, might yet make this airy solitude a beloved resting-place; but the mantle of St. Francis does not rest, “even most faintly,” on his followers, in whose hearts the passions of this world find a ready entrance. Seldom did our wanderings lead us to a monastery, in which men did not even in old age, as well as youth, speak suspiciously and unkindly of some of their fellows, and watch and thirst for a little power over them. “Beware,” said an old man of ninety, on one occasion, looking anxiously round, “lest my brethren see your servant bring the present to my cell.” But where men are to live always, till they rest in the little cemetery in the wild or the garden—let the softness and the mercies of nature be their portion: the rich meadows

and fields, the groves and fruit-trees, the flocks on the green-hill side, the hamlet beside the stream, the song of the happy villager, the blessed voices of the mother and child! Then will the convent-bell, at early morn or midnight, peal cheerily on the heart; for it calls to visit the home of the happy and the troubled; to share in many a kind sympathy; to let the spirit go forth from its lone cell for a while, to mingle in the pleasant sights and sounds of life.

How sad and drear that convent-bell rang forth amidst the solitude of Sinai, and called its people to prayers at break of day, or in the stillness of night, or summoned to their few and coarse meals! They rose from their poor couch with the conviction, that from rise to set of sun no change would come on their imprisoned state; no welcome strangers or friends, would knock loudly at the gate, like Christian at that of the interpreter, praying for entrance: no voice of kindness, of love, would fall on their ear through the long dreary day. Seated listlessly in the corridor, they watched the sun sink

redly on their awful precipices, or the tempest break there in fury, as if the wrath of heaven was once more awake, with the same unexcited mind, holding communion neither with nature nor with the world, that was to them sealed for ever.

Surely such retreats as La Verna and Camaldoli should be strongholds of superstition, the very haunt of them who rest not quiet in their graves. The moaning of the tempest, or the more startling stillness amidst the sepulchral caverns and vaulted passages, and the dreary array of nature without, the black abysses, the solemn woods, "look like a mournful veil, which is never to be raised." What a scene for the sheeted dead to walk in! Can the fancy avoid conjuring up sad sights and sounds, the long shuddering call of some past voice, in the sublime description of the Apocrypha, the rushing of fearful things near them—but "without form, and void?" With such rich aids to invention in the many monastic retreats, some tenanted, others forsaken; in the ruinous castles and pa-

laces, in the wildest sites — it is strange that the Romance should be so little cultivated in Italian literature, and when attempted, rarely with success.

The stores of their history, scenery, and antiquities, would be golden treasures in the hand of genius. The field is so favourite a one, so consecrated also to the fancy, of which the success of the “Castle of Otranto,” is a sufficient proof. By what magical influence could that book ever become popular? Is it for its monstrous inventions, its overstrained passions, or its puerile *dénouement*? Surely a hand, mightier than Horace Walpole’s, will yet be found to give life to the noble tales, the dark deeds, and the redeeming virtues of Italy — of her days that are gone. Even Maroncelli, in his fortress on the Moravian mountain, had surely better have given his talents and invention to one of these fine themes, than employed them in composing interminable verses, and hymns to the Virgin and the saints. But the imagination of the Italian, impetuous and beautiful as a torrent, when the sun

is on its bosom, is deficient in a sustained and persevering course; three volumes of invention would run it dry, or turbid and wild as the Po in winter:—five acts of a tragedy must be a hard ordeal, else why has the attempt been so seldom made successfully?

Ten years' captivity, of days and nights, on whose silence alone came the grating of the prison-doors, the voice of the tempest, of the torrent leaping down the rocks, and the cry of the eagle, would have been a mine of fame as well as gold to some men, of better taste, if not of higher genius, than Maroncelli. How solemnly and vividly would the wild, sublime, and terrible images and scenes rush on the fancy; of the feudal castle, red with many crimes; of the dreary ruin, where the graves of churchmen are trodden by the bandit's foot! Even the lost world, its loves, its hopes, would come back to the prison-walls precious in indelible colours. Of what worth were the fourteen thousand verses to such pictures, freshly, feelingly painted! And Pellico, the author of two or three tragedies,

perhaps aided his companion in this sea of rhimes; and wrote part of a drama: poor memorials of so large a portion of life, where the fetters on the limbs need not have clouded the intellect. But for his imprisonment, the fancy of Bunyan had never produced the "Pilgrim's Progress;" Dodd his fine "Thoughts;" even Trenck, the wild picture of his courage and sorrows; or, perhaps, Tasso, the "Jerusalem."

The sympathy and pity of the world are to the destitute but barren and thankless things; the dearest recompense to the captive would have been the patronage of his work that had been his refuge, when the iron had entered into his soul. Poor Maroncelli! will it be believed, that the Parisians subscribed for only a hundred and fifty copies, thirty of which were for Louis Philippe? with such a prospect, he saw it would be useless to publish. It is a noble thing to see the maimed and desolate man struggling with his fate, and earning an honourable livelihood by his talents and industry. Surely there were passages in that "Narrative of Spielberg," that

would have repaid the publisher : during the few last years of captivity he was allowed, with the rest of the prisoners to walk, for an hour each day, on the top of the tower, that looked over all the surrounding country. From the gloom of the cell, whose little grated window gave the only light, to feast the soul once more on the sight of forest, stream, and plain—what blessedness ! When the evening fell, and the night passed wearily away, he longed for the morrow, that should bring again the loved walk on the battlement. When the next report of the prison was made to the Emperor, he inquired if they could see the country from the tower ? “ Certainly,” was the reply, “ distinctly on every side.”—“ I will not suffer this,” said Francis, “ the prisoners shall not see the country ;” and commanded a wall, ten feet high, to be built on the tower, whereby the woods, the hills, and hamlets, were for ever shut out, and the captives could gaze only on the sky. Exquisite cruelty ! that took away utterly that communion with Nature, that dwelling intensely on her face, as

on one we once loved and lost, but have found again, even in the hour of our anguish !

When each returning Sabbath summoned the prisoners to the massive and gloomy chapel, to hear mass, Maroncelli saw his companion in misfortune, the celebrated Count Confalonieri. This man was of one of the most illustrious families in Milan ; very handsome and accomplished ; of great wealth, young, and married to a lovely woman. What fiend whispered it to his soul, to conspire against the Austrian government, and cast away all these blessings ? He was warned, even to the last day, to fly, for the governor of Milan was his friend : the following day saw him in chains. His wife, (let it not be said there is *no* domestic love or fidelity in Italy,) hurried to Vienna, travelling day and night, to implore pardon of Francis, to whom his father had been chamberlain, but in vain. On her return she saw her husband, who was condemned to Spielberg for life, dragged away to that fortress. One memorial he took with him, on which he laid his head every night, and which he steeped with

his tears; it was the air-pillow on which the Countess had sought a hurried slumber in her night-journeys to Vienna. The broken-hearted and beautiful woman refused to bear her husband's loss; the consolations of friends and family were fruitless, and she soon sank into the grave. After her death, the souvenir, as he called it, became yet more dear to Confalonieri; the pillow was, to his feelings, a relief and a precious relic, even as the endless poems and hymns were to those of Maroncelli. But the inspector, Count Vogel, during one of his visits, perceiving its value to the captive, bade the jailor take it away, in spite of every intreaty. The proud and bereaved man begged submissively, even with tears, that it might be spared to him; that it was all he possessed on earth of his lost wife, and must be useless to any other person. He spoke to men who knew not pity. Not Maroncelli, when the wall, ten feet high, severed the beautiful world from his view, felt anguish comparable to the captive noble, when he would have laid his head at night where *her* head had rested—and it sank on the cold dungeon-floor.

LETTER XVIII.

The Val d'Arno.—Florence.—Bologna.—Gallery of Pictures.—The University.—Female Professors.—Aspect of the Country between Bologna and Milan.—Education in the Papal States.—The Author again prevented from proceeding to Milan.—Passage of the Po.—Wretched Accommodation.—Uncomfortable Night.—Arona.—Baveno.—The Borromæan Isles.—Domo d'Ossola.—The Fête Dieu.—Calvary.—The Simplon.—Martigny.—Fear of a Second Inundation in the valley of Bagne.—Contrast between Switzerland and Italy.

To return to the soft scenes of the Val d'Arno was delightful; everywhere richly cultivated, the miseries of poverty are scarcely felt, the pale face of suffering is rarely seen. Personal deformity, that watches for the traveller by the road side in the south, and ugliness, so common among the peasants of the south, and also among the ladies of Naples, have no place here. The graceful figures, and finely speaking faces of the

young women, daughters of peasants, artisans, or farmers, the elegant taste of their dress, the cleanliness and comfort of their homes, give to rural life in these hamlets a peculiar and golden character.

Florence is a very cheap residence, either for families or individuals: the charges at the hotels are moderate; the fare, lodging, and attendance, all excellent. Compared with the charges usual in the good hotels of our own cities, these of Florence appear almost ludicrously low; yet an epicure would be in no haste to leave the repasts which are daily served. Wandering one day in the country, we came to a little auberge among the trees; the host eagerly set before us a huge bottle of light and pleasant wine, fish from the Arno, eggs, bread, and fruit; for all which the charge was little more than a shilling.

The route to Bologna was in part wild and dreary. The country for a considerable distance around the city is so richly and variously cultivated, that it looks more like a garden than the territory of peasants. The gallery of paintings near the university contains many of the finest

works in Italy, consisting chiefly of those of the Caracci, Guido, and Domenichino. The martyrdom of a christian family by the latter is a noble subject; a young and delicate lady, of great beauty, and richly dressed, is the chief figure, kneeling, her eyes and hands lifted towards Heaven for fortitude to bear her through the trial. The executioner, a cool and hardened villain, has twisted one hand in the long rich tresses of her hair, and is lifting in the other the fatal weapon; his proportions are Herculean, his look pitiless and eager for a fresh deed of blood. Near this picture is another of Domenichino's, the murder of a celebrated father and saint, while travelling through a wild, attended by two priests of his order. One assassin has thrown him on the earth, and the other has lifted the dagger, on which the eyes of the abbot are fixed with such fearful agony, that they seem starting from their sockets. The horror of death, ere the blow is stricken, is wonderfully portrayed in the wild and glazed eyes of the helpless priest.

At the upper part of this small but admirable collection is the Crucifixion by Ludovico Caracci. He has chosen to represent all the figures as large as life, differing therein from the design of Raphael, who has made the sacred group on the mount very small. The features of the Redeemer want the celestial and unapproachable look of Raphael's, lifted to heaven, as if pleading for a ruined world.

The Samson of Guido is a noble picture; the figure is as large as life, and the attitude beautiful and full of majesty. He is resting from the slaughter of the Philistines, and stands victorious amidst the havoc he has wrought; the right hand raised, holds the bone filled with water, which he is about to drink, and on which his look is fixed with intense eagerness. How refreshing to turn from the eternal martyrs and prelates to such a theme; they almost realise the complaint of the traveller who came to a strange isle, where the people were very handsome, but their faces were all alike.

This city, like Florence, offers a most agree-

able place of residence to the stranger, being well built and clean, and having wide arcades in all the streets, as a protection from the sun ; the environs are rich and picturesque. The most remarkable thing here is the uncommon beauty of the women ; scarcely a plain face is to be seen : whether he looks on a company of women washing linen in the stream, or enters any of the shops, the traveller is alike struck with the loveliness of the features, and the symmetry of the forms. The eyes of the daughters of Bologna are large and dark, their complexions good, though with little colour, and their manners amiable and lively.

The University of Bologna holds a high rank among the literary institutions of Italy. Here the first dissection was performed in the fourteenth century, and galvanism was discovered in our own. Some of its present professors are men of considerable reputation ; Orioli, professor of physics, and the celebrated Mezzofanti, of oriental languages. There are five faculties in this university, that of *belles-lettres* being distinct

from that of philosophy. The former has the following chairs — oratory, poetry, ancient history, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, &c. The medical sciences are still the most zealously cultivated.

Bologna can boast at various times of female professors. In the fourteenth century, Novella di Andrea used to supply her father's place in the chair of canon law, and, as she was young and handsome, she is said to have had a curtain before her, that the attention of the students might not be distracted. In the last century, Laura Bassi taught philosophy; and still more lately, the celebrated Clotilde Tambroni, Greek; and at the present moment there are two female professors, one of law and the other of surgery.

The number of students amounts to between five and six hundred. The professors are by no means so well paid as those of Pavia. The library of the University contains, it is said, eighty thousand printed volumes, and four hundred MSS. There is also a botanical garden, and an agrarian garden, where a course of agriculture is given.

In no territory of Italy do the lands appear so highly cultivated as for several days' journey around this city and all the way hence to Milan : the fields and grounds, even to the edge of the high road, have a rich and most productive aspect ; not a foot of soil seems to be lost. The peasantry are in a contented and thriving condition : in the hamlets and cottages there is a cleanliness and even comfort, of which those of the more southern Italy are as destitute as the Hottentot kraals. Even the country inns and auberges lose their repulsive and disgusting character : one, at which we halted on the first day's journey to Milan, was a model of neatness and order, whose very aspect inticed the traveller to stay.

The popular education in the Papal states is in the hands of the clergy. Almost every curate or assistant gives instruction, for a trifling fee, to a certain number of boys of the parish, in reading, writing, and the elements of Latin grammar. Many of the unprovided clergy give instruction either at their own houses, or by repairing to those of their more affluent pupils.

Several monastic orders devote themselves to the instruction of youth, and open classes, *gratis*, to a certain number. In the towns this system is more accessible and useful than in the country, where it is necessarily irregular and uncertain. In the states of Lombardy, the system of education enforced by the Austrians is excellent: every village has its school, whose masters receive a fixed salary from the municipal fund. In the chief towns these seminaries are superior; and history, the science of commerce, mathematics, chemistry, and some of the modern languages, are taught. Female elementary schools are also provided, comprising writing, arithmetic, needle-work, embroidery, sacred history, epistolary composition, &c.

The people of northern Italy, of the territories of Genoa, Bologna, or Tuscany, are more intelligent, spirited, and agreeable in mind and manners, than their southern neighbours. They seem to want but one guiding and master-spirit to teach them how to loosen the yoke, whether of Austria or the Pontiff, for even the

successor of St. Peter is at last grown unpopular; even when he extended his arms in blessing, and waved them to and fro, full of unction, from the balcony of the cathedral, the multitude were no longer filled with ecstasy.

Pursuing the route to Milan, we were within thirty miles of the city, but were stopped at an Austrian post, at the end of a bridge over the Po. To our dismay, the officer of the douane, who seemed bitterly to hate the English, found some informality in the passport, of no possible importance. He said it was sufficient to authorise him to prevent our proceeding to Milan, from which we were distant only thirty miles; thus having arrived a second time within a few hours of the gates in vain. The coarse fool of an Austrian, who evidently exulted in the dilemma in which he had placed us, was deaf alike to protestations and bribes. Day had not long broke, and the morning was gloomy, and the wind blew in raw gusts over the wild and monotonous scene, that was little cheered by the yellow and dirty Po, the barrier which we were

never to pass. The sealed shores of the Styx could be little more disconsolate to the shivering spectres. There was no resource but to return to Parma, and set out on the following day through cross-roads, to avoid the Austrian posts, and reach the Lake Maggiore by a circuitous route.

A cheerless route it proved. Some distance from Parma we had to cross the Po, but it was so swollen by the rains that for a long time this was impracticable. On the shore was a solitary cottage: here we took refuge from the rain, and looked out on the broad and turbid waters, sweeping rapidly by, with feelings similar to those of Earle, when he looked all day from the little isle of Tristan d'Acunha, for a sail, but saw only the white surge beating on the rocks of lava. Hour passed on after hour, and still there was no chance of passing: it was a bleak and sullen scene, on which the evening gathered tempestuously. The cottage was a miserable one: without was a little dishevelled garden; there was no excuse for this; with a little care,

the dirty and indolent people might have made a pretty spot of this cabin in the wild. On the walls were a few wretched prints of saints and martyrs, whose doleful looks and attitudes were in keeping with the desolation around.

At last the passage was effected, with considerable risk: carriage and horses were for some minutes helplessly at the mercy of the deep current, that nearly swept over the back of the animals. Arriving at a hamlet in the evening, it was almost impossible to procure a lodging, the only inn being occupied by part of the suite of the Emperor Austria, which had halted at this place on its way to Genoa.

There was a squalid auberge, in which a chamber was found, repulsive enough in its aspect; but necessity reconciled us to it, as well as to the repast that was served up on the rude table, that had not known water for a long time. These were no ideal grievances; but sorrows, like pleasures, are of short duration, and the morning light was welcome, that ushered us to a rugged way and an unlovely country. Unable

to proceed further at night than a hamlet consisting of a few cottages, we sought refuge in one of them; the people were very poor: in the large empty room the windows were without glass, and through the broken wood-work the wind came wildly. The night was chill, and they kindled some fire on the hearth. The water and bread, the only nourishment they had, with the addition of a little tea of our own, furnished a grateful supper. An elderly couple, with an only daughter, were the tenants of the dwelling, that had, perhaps, never before given shelter to the traveller: they would have smiled, probably, had we told them, that the search after pleasure alone had induced us to forsake our native land, and wander about thus. Our wood-fire, the only light, threw its glare over the miserable flock-beds, and the shattered floor and walls; it was useless to think of retiring to rest.

The rain fell in torrents on the following day, in the afternoon of which we arrived at Arona. Surely the pleasures of contrast are the most vivid of all; the neat and excellent apartments,

whose walls were washed by the lake ; the soft beauty of the scene without ; the luxury of cleanliness within ; the welcome repast that was soon placed on the table, and at night the indulgent beds that invited sleep : the previous night we had sat sadly beside the dying embers on the hearth, and the vile and squalid couches scared rest away.

From Baveno the magic isles looked so beautiful, that it was impossible not to take boat, and visit them once more. But the afternoon brought clouds and mists, which gathered fast and heavily on the hills and forests. A few travellers arrived, predetermined to remain only a certain time, that is, till they had finished their dinner, and then set out in the midst of a violent rain, to visit the Isola Bella, and admire the scenery, over which a dense fog had at this time spread its shroud.

The next day at Domo d'Ossola was the celebration of the Fête Dieu : the weather was brilliant ; tapestry was hung forth from every window, in value and richness according to the

wealth of the dwellers ; branches of laurel and flowers were strewn in the streets ; each face was lighted up with pleasure ; and forth came the procession of the priesthood, bearing the host, and followed by the chief inhabitants of both sexes. The ladies were handsomely dressed, and seemed to wear their richest ornaments.

The next day, being Sunday, the loveliness of the weather tempted to walk to the summit of the hill, called Calvary, on different parts of which are seven chapels, each containing a singular group of figures, large as life, made of plaster, and painted ; a fruitful source of admiration and devotion to the surrounding country. The seven groups represent the whole history of the crucifixion, in grotesque attitudes and looks, intended to be melancholy and affecting ; soldiers, high-priests, the disciples, and even the horses, all play their part. This sacred hill is resorted to by numbers, even from a distance ; partly, because it is said to bear a resemblance to the real hill of Calvary. But the deep retirement and shade of the place are very agreeable ;

glimpses of the country beneath are also caught through the trees ; it is an excellent site for a hermit ; votaries toil up the hill, full of veneration and zeal ; the air is pure, the ancient forest is a fence from the sun and the blast. One cannot help fancying that the life of the recluse, so pitied and praised, was often rather an eligible one than otherwise to a man fond of dreaminess, abstraction, and a beautiful solitude.

The next morning brought the passage of the Simplon, with the same excellent conducteur as formerly. It may be bad taste, but the scenery of this mountain is far more impressive in the winter than in the summer. The terrors of the way were all past, and with them had also departed much of its magnificence. To Brieg in the evening, and then the Valais in the midst of violent and incessant rain.

As we proceeded up the Valais to Martigny, the weather was oppressively hot : the clouds and mists had passed away. From Martigny the mountain-passage to Chamouni, slow and fa-

tiguing as it is, well repays the trouble. Should the valley of Bagne be the scene of a second inundation, the former town will be again ravaged. Such an event is by no means improbable; no remains of the original lake exist, the barrier of ice has been destroyed; but several immense masses have subsequently fallen at different periods, and resisted the feeble influence of the sun. Considerable apprehensions are entertained, in consequence of the recent formation of a smaller lake, higher up the valley, near its termination, and resting on the very bosom of the glacier itself. This lake, from the gradual advance of the ice, must inevitably reach a point at which its waters must be discharged. To avoid the disaster of a second inundation, that swept away hamlets, rocks, and groves, various plans and precautions are conceived. A celebrated engineer has proposed works, comprising canals and embankments, by which the danger may be averted; but such operations are rather costly, and the Valasians are far from rich. To be a spectator of another overflow would

repay a journey from England. There is surely nothing in nature so sublime as “the rushing of many waters, like a moving mountain, three hundred feet high, from which a column of thick vapour arose, like the smoke of a great fire.”

The change is startling, yet welcome; from the splendid and factitious excitements of Italy to the lonely magnificence and stillness of the Swiss vales, where the love of nature is the sole resource, and the fine arts and music and the sight of beauty, and the palaces of luxury, have no place. But man is a purer, though a less gifted being; his loved liberty and religion keep watch beside the hearth even of the poorest shed.

LETTER XIX.

True Devotion.—Pastoral Labours of Felix Neff.—Valley of Chamouni.—Inns at Prieuré.—The Album.—The Col de Balme.—Swiss Solitudes.—Aiguille de Caton.—Fatal Accident to a Saxon Traveller.—The Tête Noire.—The loftiest Village in Switzerland.—The Valorsine.—The Mer de Glace.—Glacier of Bossons.—Mademoiselle Coutet.—Sallenche.—View of Mont Blanc.—Character of the Swiss.

AFTER the childish and sumptuous pageants of superstition, how beautiful to see God worshipped with the strength of the intellect as well as the devotion of the heart; to hear the hymn rising from the little rural church, on the grassy mound at the foot of the precipice, or beside the stream! It will not, perhaps, be an intrusion, to introduce here one of those noble Swiss pastors, who are to be sought, not in the towns,

but in the wilds of their land. Felix Neff was brought up in a village, under the care of his widowed mother ; he has added one more to the number of distinguished men who have owed their first religious impressions to maternal watchfulness and affection. From a child he loved the glorious mountain scenery of his land, and the long rambles by the side of the torrent or the lake. With a book in his hand, he would climb the rock, and spend hours alone. With increasing years there grew within him an ardent spirit, an inquiring genius, to which was afterwards joined the burning desire to be useful to his generation.

At sixteen, he published a " Treatise on the Culture of Trees," and entered, in the year 1815, into the military service of Geneva, in which he distinguished himself, till the religious tendency of his mind became so marked, that he was advised to quit the army and seek holy orders. After pursuing his theological studies at Geneva, he was called to the exercise of the ministry in the wild regions of France which join the valleys

of Piedmont. Queyras, Fressiniere, Dormilleuse, were frightful regions ; but his taste for magnificent scenery found an attraction in even their savageness. " In the whole range of Alpine scenery," he observes, " there is nothing more terribly sublime than the pass of the Guil. For several miles its waters occupy the whole breadth of the defile, which is like a vast rent in the mountain, and the path, which will not admit more than two to walk side by side, is hewn out of the rocks. These rise to such a giddy height, that the soaring pinnacles which crown them look like the fine points of masonry-work on the summit of a cathedral."

Felix Neff forced his way through this pass in the middle of January, when it is notoriously unsafe ; he found a humble white cottage which had been recently prepared for the pastor. Here he had none of the comforts of this life to cheer him. " The snow," says his journal, " was ten inches deep, and the wind, which blew a hurricane, raised and tossed it about in clouds. Not a trace could be seen of the paths, and I was six

hours performing twelve miles. I arrived at San Veran, and the next day preached in the church, catechised in the afternoon, and assembled some willing hearers round me in the evening, so that I did not lose a single hour, during my stay here." This is said to be the most elevated village in Europe. His ministrations were held in barns, stables, &c. till he contrived to raise contributions, and teach the people how to build, himself working at the rafters, walls, &c. fashioning the pulpit and seats.

From break of day to midnight he was toiling in one way or other, from hamlet to hamlet; he sought the people where they watched their flocks, or laboured in the fields or slate-quarries. In the few sunny corners, where a thaw had taken place, his evening expositions began later, and were extended far into the night. The ardour of the teacher and his scholars seemed to be equal; both stole from their hours of rest: the youth of both sexes, the old and the timid were there, and the lonely glare of blazing pine-wood torches, and the mingled

voices often broke the silence of the night in those wild glens.

In the month of January he penetrated to the dismal Dormilleuse ; the rock on which it stands is almost inaccessible, even in the finest months of the year. The rapid ascent is always slippery, from a cascade, which throws itself over it into the abyss below, but now it was a mass of ice. On several occasions the pastor hewed his way with a hatchet. When the sun shines warmest, the sides of the mountains on the same level with the village of Dormilleuse are ever covered with snow ; but this terrific spot was the last asylum of Christians, who fled thither from persecution : for six hundred years its people had resisted the church of Rome. The love of God and his fellow-creatures was like a devouring thirst in the soul of this young and devoted pastor, whose sweetness of temper, and kind and winning manners, aided the success of his admirable plans of teaching. His fine intellect and extensive reading allowed no void or weariness to steal on his desolate hours. Great,

very great, was the good he effected ; but his aim was not alone to instruct the understanding and affect the heart. His lessons on agriculture and the mechanical arts were peculiarly useful. Where the produce was small and the soil poor, he taught the people to make aqueducts, and conduct the mountain-torrent, like a channel of plenty, over the fields.

When it was rumoured in the beautiful Guil-
lestre, or the gloomy Queyras, or San Veran,
that their pastor was on his way, though afar off,
the people climbed the highest rocks to discern
his approach, or descended the precipices to kiss
his hands, or even his garments, and shed tears
of joy. Even when he felt that his career must
soon end, at the age of thirty, he thus paints
the wintry horrors of Dormilleuse. " My little
school is now floored and glazed, the benches
and seats are all finished ; and, while all my
other schools in this country are held in damp
and dark stables, where the scholars are stifled
with smoke, or are obliged to be constantly
quarrelling with the kids and fowls in defence

of their copy-books—we have here a comfortable and well-warmed apartment. I am again conducting a school for the education of those, whose business it will be to educate others,—it now consists of about twenty young men, from different villages. We are buried in snow more than four feet deep. At this moment a terrible hurricane is raging; we can scarcely put our feet out of the house; the avalanches threaten us on all sides; they have been falling thick about Dormilleuse. Communication with the other valleys is difficult and dangerous; there is not a spot in the narrow region which is absolutely safe; even our calm and daring Alpines express anxiety.”

The greater part of this sketch is taken from the life of the pastor, lately compiled by the Rev. W. S. Gilly. It is no solitary instance of fervent zeal and usefulness among the Swiss clergy, few of whom have found so desolate a field—few so admirable a biographer.

Entering the valley of Chamouni, we alighted at the inn in the well-known and frequented

Prieuré. Both the inns here are clean and good; but the harvest of visiters that annually flock to the spot has sadly diminished. The landlords, of late, have shown some taste for the picturesque (less for their own enjoyment, it may be believed, than that of their guests) in the disposition of their dwellings. The saloons front the glorious mountains, and look on and down the valley. The larder is not extensive, but sufficiently good for such a situation: it would not seem so, however, if the album carefully kept at each inn were to be entirely believed;—an interesting register, and an instructive one also, wherein may be read what men of every nation in Europe have written on, and how differently their minds have been affected by the same scene. Querulous complaints of the weather, the clouds, and those most fatal enemies to mountain excursions, the fogs and misty rain, mark the mementoes of the Englishmen; whose complaints proceed from their very soul, though their commendations and praises are given with sufficient enthusiasm.

The Frenchman seems to strive for words sufficiently expressive and gorgeous to indicate his vivid sense of scenery, to any thing resembling which he is quite unused; and the Italian appears unwilling, in spite of his admiration, to allow high praises to any scene out of his own beautiful land. Some of these bequests to posterity are very amusing and characteristic.

A clergyman, for instance, vents in verses, full of zeal, the deep impression that had been made on him: and in these verses, glaciers, rocks, and icy caverns strive in vain to make melody. A citizen, who had been persuaded to go to the top of the lofty Mont Breven (a most Herculean deed) warns those who come after him not to be so led away, as the toil was enormous, and Mont Blanc really looked very little higher when the summit was won, than it did from the valley beneath. Who shall prescribe any limits to the love of immortality, by virtue of which principle so many good fathers of families note here the number of their children? — how they all, with their mother, mounted to the *mer de glace*, were

delighted, were astonished beyond measure ; and how they were all going back to town by the way of the Rhine, or had come from the Grindelwald and so on. Was it not this feeling that made the Viscount Chateaubriand, when compelled to leave Egypt without seeing the pyramids, intreat a fellow-countryman to go and write his name on that of Cephrenes, that posterity might believe his feet had wandered to so memorable a scene ?

We arranged several excursions for the few following days, with the assistance of the guide, an elderly and intelligent man.

The next morning being fine, we set out toward the Col de Balme : for two hours the path wound up the valley, having several fine glaciers on the right ; the last of which, that of Tours, descends like a torrent down its precipitous valley. Its icy billows, less pointed and broken than the others, have a beauty of their own. The ascent was tedious, and perfectly uninteresting up the blank and barren eminence of the Col de Balme, on the summit of which a cross is placed.

The prospect from thence is chiefly to be admired for the fine view it gives of the three summits of Mont Blanc, and of the valley beneath in its extreme length, narrowed to excess, with the Arve, looking like a puny rivulet, winding through it. The day was clear, and the sun shone from a cloudless sky: having brought a cold repast from the inn, we sat down on the coarse verdure, and partook of it beside the cross erected as a land-mark. The guide led the way down the opposite side of the Col de Balme, where the snow still lay in large patches: the descent soon began to grow steep and winding, and led through a wood of pines and firs that but partly veiled the deep precipices, on the edge of which the path lay. The valley beneath was savage beyond all we had yet beheld: a torrent, that looked impassable, rushed through its dreary bosom; and on its bank stood a forlorn village, about midway down the vale.

Those who pine for Swiss solitudes, their peacefulness and sublime associations, might cure their longings by gazing on this hamlet, the miserable chalets of which contained no comfort

whatever: the wooden apartments were pierced by every wind that howled through the glen, and were black with smoke; while squalid poverty was visible in the dress and aspect of the people. This was summer; and when winter came, the warm hut of the Laplander would be a palace to such abodes! On the left were two or three mountains of naked rock, of great height, terminating in points; the path passed almost at their base, and, during the descent, the guide Coutet interested us highly with the detail of an unfortunate event that took place there about five years before. The Aiguille de Caton is the loftiest of these summits, as well as the most terrific; for it forms, from the base to the extreme point, one vast perpendicular precipice of eight thousand feet, that makes the head almost dizzy to gaze up it. To appearance it is inaccessible, yet there are always some travellers mad enough for any exploit; and it had been a favourite one to climb to the top of this mountain, or rather needle. Five or six individuals only, of different nations, were known to have

succeeded, by venturing on a perilous ascent from behind, where the elevation is far inferior and more gradual. A bottle is fastened to the very peak, in which these desperadoes have inclosed their names and the date of their exploits, thus seizing a claim to immortality.

A Saxon gentleman, on his way from Martigny to Chamouni, with one of the guides from the former place, (whose reputation for zeal and sagacity is very inferior to that of the latter,) took it into his head to make this ascent. The guide, a young man, after dissuading him from the attempt, refused to accompany him to the Aiguille. He therefore went alone, attained, with great difficulty, the sharp summit, and placed his name, written on a slip of paper, in the bottle, where it was afterwards found. But at the moment wherein he strove to retrace his steps, the appalling descent burst at once on his view in all its horrors : he was seized, as is conjectured, with sudden giddiness, sank helplessly over the verge of the precipice, and rolled down its terrific depths. The wretched man was hurl-

ed first over the unbroken face of the rock : then the body, from some obstruction, took a more winding course, and bounded from crag to crag, till it was stopped by some low shrubs just above the base. The guide went on to Chamouni, supposing the traveller would arrive there in the evening. When next day came without any tidings of him, the man told the guides of the place, who inquired respecting his safety, that he must be returned to Martigny. On the third morning they, growing apprehensive, set out in search, and after some time found the ill-fated young man in the spot where he had fallen. He was carried to the latter town, and buried by some of his relatives, who came as soon as the news of his fate reached them.

Perhaps it was the aspect of the savage valley, or more probably that of the horrid precipice itself, at the feet of which we were passing, that made this story fasten on the imagination, which the image of so fearful a fate continued for some time to haunt. Turning out of the valley to the left, we entered the celebrated one of the Tête

Noire, so called from an immense round and dark rock, covered with trees from the bottom to the summit, and almost perpendicular : it rises from the deep glen, high over which, on the opposite side, the narrow path lies, and the foaming torrent is seen at intervals forcing its way over the crags that impede its course. The precipices and woods approach closely to each side of this path, and cast a gloom over it, and there is no tenant to disturb its deep silence.

A few miles farther, and the defile opens into a wide valley—of a luxuriant yet strange aspect : —the pathway serves as a ledge, or small rampart, from which you gaze on spots of exquisite beauty, to which you dare not approach nearer, the dark cliffs and the torrent at its feet preventing you. A cascabelle, as elegant as those of Tivoli, and divided into eight or ten sheets of water, falls from the steep face of the opposite rock, on the verge of which hangs a village, (as if placed there to complete the interest of the scene,) surrounded by the richest pasture. The slender spire of its church seems to tremble over the

descent ; the streams fall glistening in the sun, and the sound comes softening through the air from the depth below.

A little farther on, and dimly viewed above the path we were pursuing, was a village, allowed to be the loftiest in Switzerland ; the eye could just discern the houses, crowded on the bleak and black summit of the precipice, as if the ambition of the people of Babel had seized them to get nearer to heaven. When the storms of winter beat, and the snows descend, what can earth do for these forlorn people ?—for they seem to have taken leave of her. They can gaze indeed on her fairness and luxuriance far beneath ; but the warm cave of a Kamtschadale, with its dense smoke and blazing fire, encircled by a crowd of torpid beings, is preferable to so shelterless a site.

It was evening when we entered the Valorsine, that exhibits, in great part of its extent, a ruinous and desolate appearance, occasioned by the rived and broken sides and summits of its bare mountains, at the bases of which heaps of fallen

fragments are strewn. Very few habitations are here. Its first section, however, is the reverse of this; full of interest and variety, with some noble waterfalls and two or three neat villages; beyond these the fertility ceases, and all is wild and solitary.

We came in a few hours to a small hamlet, one of the wooden chalets of which afforded a resting-place for a short time. It was an auberge, if such an establishment could be supposed necessary in such a scene; yet the landlord, who saw the mists and shivered rocks much oftener than he saw guests, was a shrewd, civil, and bustling fellow, and had well arranged his long labyrinth of wooden rooms, that emitted the odour of smoke at every pore, like most of the Swiss cottages, in a very offensive manner, owing to the rooms being so very low, and to the excessive closeness which it is necessary to preserve in them during the winter, for the sake of warmth. Barren was the cheer of the auberge of the Valorsine: could the prophet of Mecca have sent his followers to this country for a few

months, his prohibition against wine would have been needless : no believer would ever have forgotten the beverage cultivated and drunk under that name, but would have handed down to his posterity, in song and tale, his detestation of it and its effects.

The wild ended at last, and the valley of Chamouni was seen at a short distance, its glorious glaciers red with the setting sun ; and we re-entered the excellent inn at the Prieuré. From the window looking down the valley, other travellers were seen arriving. How strangely did the appearance of some harmonize with the scene around, greeted with looks of perfect nonchalance, while enthusiasm sat enthroned in the eyes of others ! Happy is the man who is on his first journey : to whose eye and heart every object is deliciously strange and attractive, ere the feelings are in the least degree sated, and the fancy worn, by continual wanderings.

The night was perfectly calm, and the vivid moonlight on the valley showed its numerous aiguilles and glaciers to great advantage. The

former constitute the great beauty of this prospect; for in no other part are they to be seen so varied, lofty, and elegant, in their forms, rising in a long range from that of Midi, which is nearest to Mont Blanc, to that of Tours.

Next morning we visited the *Mer de Glace*. Whatever previous ideas one may have formed of this icy sea, they are generally very unlike the reality; a strange and sublime spectacle, on whose shore the visiter lingers long without wishing to depart. There is the cottage of a shepherd on the height close by, the window of which looks down on the menacing, yet moveless waves beneath: he is a young man, and lives here during the summer months; having a huge album in his custody—a very treasure-house of wit, poetry, and raptures on the sublime and beautiful!—accumulating for about a dozen years.

Descending, as every body does, on the waste of ice, and admiring the fearful crevices, and the brilliant blue colours that mark them, we retraced our steps, which had extended but a few

hundred yards. It is curious that this solid ocean of ice, and its lofty waves, move, though invisibly, every year. Large masses of rock, that have fallen from the mountains by which it is inclosed, have been observed in the course of a few years considerably advanced beyond the spot where they fell, carried on by the slow but sure motion of the sea. Seven or eight years since, the glaciers descended lower than usual, by a few hundred feet, and did great damage to the valley by the torrents of water that flowed from them on all sides, disdainng the bed of the Arve. The inhabitants were alarmed for their small domain ; but subsequent seasons reduced the glaciers within their former limits. Within the last three years, however, they have encroached fifty yards farther into the valley than customary.

When the English travellers who first discovered Chamouni came to this spot, not being quite certain of the safe or peaceful temper of the natives, they pitched their tent in the middle of the valley, thinking so wild a region must necessarily be tenanted by as wild a race, till the

curé waited on them, with assurances of the quiet and honest temper of the people, and invited them to his house.

A few miles from the village, towards the entrance from Servoz, is the fine glacier of Bossons, the loftiest of all, the billows being one hundred feet high.

This evening was also a cloudless one; a circumstance of no small importance, as the enjoyment of this peculiar scenery depends entirely on the clearness of the atmosphere. The summit of Mont Blanc is very imperfectly seen from the valley beneath: the Col de Balme affords a distinct view of this mountain, yet far inferior to that enjoyed from the valley of Sallenche. Its aspect, from that point, seems to belong not to earth—so calm, yet mighty in its loftiness—so beautiful and imperial in its form.

About two miles from the village, in her native home, lives the daughter of the celebrated guide, David Coutet. Her father is dead, and she is the beauty of the valley, and the mistress of the chalet, two rare possessions in the eye of a Swiss, especially the latter worldly substance.

Were Nebuchadnezzar's golden image set up in this country, the sounds of sackbut and dulcimer were altogether needless to summon worshippers: the glittering of the metal would captivate every eye, and win every heart. To the fair Coutet, homage, however, is paid by strangers as well as natives, partly on her father's account; and the walls of the small apartment of the chalet are covered with presents made to her by those who have visited the dwelling. After passing many days here, we quitted Chamouni one fine afternoon for Sallenche.

The view of Mont Blanc from this place justifies all the rapture of travellers; the green eminence behind the village offers perhaps the most splendid scene in the land, to whose effect the noble cascade of Arpenas adds greatly; breaking in one bold sheet from a lofty precipice, the rays of the setting sun fell on its single and beautiful arch. The mountains on the opposite side of the valley rose in pointed and fantastic spires, that looked, as the flood of yellow light rolled on them, like the minarets and cupolas of a

gigantic eastern temple, whose domes beneath are a mass of shade. On the spotless sides and summits of Mont Blanc the light grew more deep and fiery towards its close, and several times, when its breast had become a vast and white wilderness, the purple hues returned with a still fiercer glow, as if revelling in their beautiful resting-places. But the melting of the snows, or the previous rains, had swollen the river Arve to a rapid overflow, and on the following day good part of the pastures and fields of the valley were covered with the inundation that rolled even to the road side.

The manner of visiting, in most of the towns and cantons, is ludicrously alike; seldom a dinner party; soirées alone; and whoever has attended one of these will find little variation in the interest, should he frequent them every night in the year. The Swiss generally dine so early, that when the *gouté*, or tea, arrives, the appetite is become keen, and the stranger is amused to see the rapid consumption of the many kinds of substantial cakes with which the plates are

loaded. The meal, as it may be called, over, a large portion of the assembly is broken up into a number of small parties, who continue at cards unweariedly till the hour of parting, generally a very early one. Let it not be thought that this passion for cards includes a love of deep play; the spirit of Tell himself, stalking into the room, would not startle a Swiss more than the sight of gold on the table. A batz, a safe coin, of the value of three halfpence, a game, is commonly the stake at these parties.

Commonwealths are delightful things to admire, but not to live in. A stranger is soon aware that he cannot feel a lively interest in the welfare or policy of the aristocratic Berne, Fribourg and Basle,—or the mere petty, proud, and republican states. The vanity of many of the people is a sad satire upon human nature, from the Syndic who declared of his native city, in the meeting of the deputies, “that Geneva had abandoned all ideas of further conquest”—to the Bernese, who allowed Britain to be the first country in the world, but claimed the second rank for his own canton.

There is in the land but little refinement of manners and tastes ; those of painting, sculpture, architecture, are as alien there, with very rare exceptions, as on the ancient soil of the Hebrews ; but there is a fine simplicity and frankness of feeling and demeanour, and an independence of mind, that would resist oppression to the last. The union and the patriotism of the days of Morat and Granson will never be again ; but if the hour should come, of Austria pouring her legions on the cantons, the Swiss will still battle nobly for their hearths and homes. In a country of old heroic deeds and present freedom, one is apt to dream of Spartan times, perhaps of the iron money of Lycurgus, who would have lifted up his voice and wept, stoic as he was, if he had witnessed the paramount thirst of gain in Helvetia. It enters not only into the hotel, the chateau, the pension—but lurks about the lonely lake and valley ; wherever there is money to be dispensed, there is the grasping hand, the eager heart. Let the shepherd's home and the mountain hamlet be excluded from this censure. But

if a gold mine should chance to be discovered, even on the summit of the virgin Jungfrau, till lately deemed inaccessible—towns, cities, would pour forth much of their population; artisan, avoyer, bailli, and proprietaire, would be seen struggling up the white and glassy slopes, to have “a grip ’o the gowd.”

LETTER XX.

Return to Thun.—Reflections on the sudden death of a beloved object.—Fatal effects of a Snow-Storm.—Remarkable Preservation.—Brienz.—The Brunig Mountain.—Lake and Village of Lungern.—Alpnach.—Lucerne.—Diet of the Swiss Cantons.—National vanity of the Swiss.—Schwytz.—Abbey of Einsiedeln.—Zuinglius.—Basle.—Voyage down the Rhine to Strasburg.—Scenery of the Rhine from Mayence to Cologne.

THE fineness of the autumn, the season so prolonged and beautiful in this country, induced us to seek once more the valleys of the Oberland. Johnson said that, “in life’s dull round, the warmest and the surest welcome was, perhaps, to be found at an inn:” had he known no other roof during twelve months, he would have sighed for a “home,” as keenly as ever did Swiss for his mountains. The sight of our loved winter retreat on the lake of Thun, its little garden,

its verandah, the forest on the hill, that rose like a wall above, was inexpressively welcome. But sorrow is within, the sorrow that "refused to be comforted." The one buoyant and beautiful being, that was the pride and joy of this solitude, who used to meet us with a smile, and look more eloquent than words, we were to meet no more for ever! At rest in the lone burial-ground, in a foreign land, where a simple grave alone marks the spot—no vault, no monumental stone, no memorial of the heart, of the intellect, of the splendid promise of the future, or of the sudden doom that made them all as vanity! The survivor sat beside the hearth, where the fire blazed cheerily, and the glorious valley and mountains were distinct on every side from the windows. What were these things to a broken heart? It is in such an hour as this that a foreign home is peculiarly desolate. When those we love are with us, the Alps, Italy, or the Rhine, all are exciting, even enchanting; but when death enters into the little palace in the solitude, even into the chamber, the loneliness of the heart is miser-

ably aggravated by the absence of all those minute associations and attentions which would have been gathered earnestly around in our own land. No relative or friend comes to weep over the lost, or to pour the balm of praise, of sympathy, on the survivor's agony; he must remember the past, and brood over the future *alone*: yet all these are perhaps less chilling and dismal to the feelings than when the bier is borne almost unhonoured, unattended, to the little burial-ground in the valley, or beneath the precipice; a few peasants are there, perhaps, from the neighbouring village, or even the avoyer, or bailli, may follow, in cold civility or kindness. Is it thus the companion of years, the source of every tenderness, and hope, and joy, is to be laid in the last home? Some may say that this is an imaginary misery; be it so—yet it pierces to the very soul.

After a few weeks, we again crossed the lake to that of Brienz; the weather presaged a more fleeting autumn than that of the preceding year. Even in the middle of August the new snow

had fallen on the higher platforms of the mountains, and in the neighbourhood of the St. Gothard three persons perished by being frozen to death. One man had dined in the village of Hospital, in the valley of Urseren; he started with the intention of sleeping in the small inn on the St. Gothard, near where the hospice formerly stood; the distance is about three leagues, but he never reached the resting-place on which his hope was fixed; night came down, and he was found the next morning frozen and stiff.

A more affecting instance was that of the father and son, who left Wasen to pass into the canton of Berne by the Susten, which leads into the valley of Gadmen, and thence to Meyringen. They had scarcely proceeded half-way up the ascent, when they were assailed by a furious storm, and struggled long against it; the thick drift-snow beat full in their faces, the wind was a perfect hurricane, and as evening fell, the frost set in pitilessly.

How dreadful a scene to their eyes was the mountain wilderness, covered with a white man-

tle several feet deep ; no chalet was within hail, no taper gleamed from precipice or slope, yet a pale and ghastly light was on every object, from the extreme brightness of the new-fallen snow. The father perished first, in whose mind the very feelings of the wanderer in Thomson, sinking in the winter's storm, were no doubt felt, even to agony, with this aggravation—that his son died with him. The distant cottage in the vale, the wife and children looking forth into the night, and calling loudly on his name—then turning to the blazing hearth, to shed tears of despair. When found the next morning, the latter was quite dead ; the son, who was about a gun-shot in advance, showed signs of life, but, being conveyed to the chalet, he died about four hours afterwards. With the last effort of failing strength, he had forsaken his parent's side to struggle on alone.

During the same tempest, the son of a Swiss clergyman had a hairbreadth escape ; he had taken his degrees in medicine, and was enjoying an excursion before settling himself in prac-

tice. The morning of this day, before starting to cross the mountains which separate the Grisons from the canton of Glarus, he purchased of the innkeeper a young dog, and then proceeded on his journey in company with two other persons, who were going in the same direction. By accidentally treading on a stone concealed in the snow, he sprained his foot so as to be prevented from keeping up with his companions, who accordingly left him. The pain increased, and he went on still more slowly, until, being overtaken by the storm, he strove feebly to proceed; but when the dusk came on, he sunk down in utter weariness and helplessness, and soon became insensible. Here he remained all night, and was covered by the snow to a considerable depth, which probably saved him from perishing by the frost; he heard nothing of the tempest passing over him, or the thunder's peals that broke amidst the surrounding summits.

The dog remained by his side, faithful to his new trust, which he never for a moment quitted; and, in the morning, seeing some peasants cross

at some distance, he howled, barked, ran towards them, and returned, until he attracted their attention, so that they followed to the spot, and, removing the snow, found his master, unconscious of all that was passing; they bore him to the nearest asylum, and succeeded in restoring him to life. No situation, more mournful and despairing can be conceived, than the slow coming on of death on these mountain wastes, swept by the most piercing blast and sleet, with no sound more cheerful than the eagle's or chamois' cry, as they seek their homes; the long, shrill call of the shepherd, from height to height, is heard no longer, or drowned by the loud wind. The fall of an avalanche were a mercy to the sadness, the horror of the mind, and the feebleness, and then faintness, of body that slowly creeps on; the distortion of the features of many of those lost in the snow, their fearful and dark expression, tell that death came not on them "like a gentle sleep."

Returning once more to the village of Brienz, the following morning was fair to pass the Bru-

nig mountain. It was the Sabbath morning, and numerous groups of well-dressed peasantry passed on from their villages to the church, the bells of which sent their tones far and wide among the hills. Aged peasants, with their silver locks, and still muscular frames,—family groups, and many a paysanne in her gayest looks and choicest attire, all unbonneted, their head-dress such as Nature gives, were seen descending from their hamlets on the mountain slopes, and from the solitary chalets scattered at long intervals.

The path up the Brunig was winding and full of interest, affording, every now and then, a rich view of the valley of Hasli, its river and village. The path on the other side descended slowly into the canton of Unterwalden, which, placed in the heart of the other cantons, seems as if some of the choicest beauties of each had been given to it. Without a single town of any note, but numerous villages and hamlets; its climate is peculiarly mild, and fruit-trees of most kinds flourish well. Its heights are covered neither

with rocks nor snow, but with rich woods, even to the summit ; or, in default of these, with pasturage for the flocks. Mountains, lakes, and valleys, are on that diminutive yet rich scale, large enough for beauty, and singularly pleasing to the eye that has gazed so long upon objects whose vastness and grandeur have dazzled and confused. Surely no earthly land possesses the astonishing variety of scenery that Switzerland exhibits ; its forms are ever changing, and never exhausted.

As we descended slowly the side of the Brunig, the small and lovely lake of Lungern appeared just beneath, with its wooded banks, its village, and church. On entering the inn, we were surprised at its extreme neatness and good accommodations, and were attended by a waiter, a handsome young fellow, with a Parisian air, and the address of one of its best cafés. A red waistcoat, a green velvet coat, blue stockings striped with white, and a gilt chain round his neck, formed part only of the singular costume of this waiter, who seemed, amidst all his civility

to stand on a perfectly good footing with himself. We understood, however, that this was the frequent dress of the young men of the canton, and peculiar to Unterwalden; though they did not all, like the gay waiter, wear their gala dress every day. At dinner we were joined by a Frenchman and a Pole.

The rain now fell in torrents, and the waves of the little lake, that were blue as the ocean, rushed on the shore, on the verge of which the inn stood. On the opposite bank, at the foot of the mountain, was another village, with its tall spire. The Frenchman was a light-hearted being, travelling in company with his friend the Pole; though in good humour with every thing, he seemed to have little relish for the picturesque, or for Alpine solitudes.

The rain at last ceased, and, bidding adieu to the village of Lungern, we wound along the shores of the lake, and in about an hour came to the valley of Sarnen, one of the most uninteresting we had yet seen, and which has been selected, perhaps for its dreariness and tameness,

to give a panoramic idea of the land! After a progress of several leagues, amidst gloomy weather and a wild country, we came in the evening to the village of Alpnach, and the auberge situated at the edge of the lake of Lucerne. The house was a homely one, but extreme attention and civility made amends. Fish from the lake, and tea, were the best fare they could set before us, and it was as grateful here as the wines or delicacies of France.

The evening came down beautiful in this sequestered spot; the setting sun was on the forests far above, where no foot, even of the mountaineer, had passed; and the ancient trees were unstirred even by a breath of wind: the crest of Mount Pilate was free from its angry clouds. The only passers-by were a few peasants, going to the little Catholic church just above, gaudily adorned with little gilded saints and a tawdry image of the Virgin. At last a few candles were lighted on the altar, and the people knelt around.

It was a silent, soulless worship: enthusiasm

is seldom excited by material objects of devotion, which allow no play to the imagination, no wings to the prayer: even among the pilgrims in Rome there was little of that glad going forth of the feelings or the fancy after things invisible and glorious. They were "cribbed and cabined down" to forms of marble, and brass, and stone, which had communion with the senses rather than the spirit.

The next morning we were rowed, in a few hours, to Lucerne, a stupid town, to whose situation little praise can be given; the portion of the lake on which it stands resembling a basin, with flat and fertile shores. The Diet was now sitting, and the representatives of all the Cantons were at Lucerne, where it was this year held; the inns were consequently all full, and the *table-d'hôte*, where we dined the first day, was chiefly filled by these worthies. The mountains and valleys had poured forth their deputies, proud to excess of their liberty, and glorying in their institutions. Many of them were men of strong sense and noble spirit; others were as fiery and pig-headed

as any abbot of old, thrust out from his goodly home ; the exterior of a few would have gladdened the heart of Cruikshank.

Of the grandeur and power of Switzerland as a whole, of her influence in Europe, several were ready to converse ; but soon the theme changed to the own loved canton ; its antiquity, its military force, finances, and dominion. Let the equally haughty citizen of another canton, perhaps a neighbouring one, dispute this, then comes the tug of war ; the fire of jealous indignation flashes from the eye, the big words roll like one of their own cataracts from the lips ; and France, with her lilies again looking bright, imperious England, nay, the warring interests of the whole world, melt into thin air before those of Uri, Schwytz, or Unterwalden.

By taking a boat for Fluellyn, at the other extremity of the lake, the sublimity of its scenery is fully enjoyed. On landing at Brunen, the excursion to Schwytz was pleasant, and the aspect of a stern and mountainous region welcome, after the pastoral scenes of Unterwalden.

The extensive valley where the puny capital of the canton lies, is a bright and fruitful scene ; the temperature in winter cannot be very severe, as it is skreened on the north and east by noble mountains. That of the Mythen, not far from the town, has a peculiar character ; its sides covered with rich pastures and chalets, and its summit crowned with two vast rocks, each above a thousand feet high. The situation of many of the cottages is peculiarly fine ; if shepherds had any taste for the picturesque, those of Switzerland would be some of the happiest people on earth. The sound of the Ranz de Vaches, sung by some of the peasant girls, to attract a fee from the passing stranger, was very wild and mournful : sung in the plain below, half its effect is lost ; but in the far mountain solitudes it is grateful to the feelings, like the melancholy chant of the Arab in the desert.

A few hours hence is the celebrated abbey of Einsiedeln, a singular scene in the heart of this country, which carries the fancy back to the splendid edifices and gloomy cloisters of Italy,

to the dim and solemn procession stealing by, the straggling prayer and the midnight hymn. Painting, statuary, and marbles, are in profusion in the interior of the edifice, and pilgrims come hither in devotion to the Madonna. Good Catholics all, and as much in earnest as, when kissing the brazen toe of St. Peter, they weep and mourn, and lie prostrate on the earth, either in repentance or speechless admiration. But a land of snows, and fogs, and sudden rains, is not an impressive one for a pilgrim; the brilliant sky, the pure atmosphere, the silent and burning plain, and the blessed fountain, are the clime and the scenes where it is impressive as well as sacred to wander. A few such edifices as that of Einsiedeln would be a noble relief to the lone and majestic scenery of the land: the time-worn towers and walls, the deep tones of the bell among the mountain echoes, the wild cemetery, the procession of fathers and votaries winding among the precipices, or by the torrent's side! How impressive looks the grey monastery, amidst the wastes of sand, or in the rank and forsaken

vale of the East ! When, faint and weary, the tent of the Bedouin would be as a palace to the wanderer, his heart leaps within him as the heavy gate is unbarred, and he steps into a court where orange and palm trees grow, and the fathers treat him kindly ; and, as the night comes down, he hears the deep chant from the chapel, hewn out of the rock, where many torches burn.

Such was not the reception at the little inn, where a poor repast and miserable wine gave little zest to the flights of fancy ; and the return to the good hostel of Schwytz was the more welcome. At Einsiedeln dwelt Zuinglius, its curate, the most disinterested and simple-minded, perhaps, of all the Reformers : how bright does his mild and moderate spirit appear, when contrasted with that of the gloomy and bigoted Calvin ! So forcible is said to have been his preaching, that the monks of the abbey took a disgust to their life, quitted their recluse's habit, and forsook both cells and monastery. All deserted, there stood for awhile the celebrated shrine, but the

fathers soon found, that, like every other priesthood, they were unsuited to the busy avocations and changes of the world, and they gladly sought their retreat again. Zuinglius began, even earlier than Luther, to preach against indulgences, and that the Scriptures were the only rule of Christian faith. In several battles he had marched with the troops in his character of a clergyman, and in that of Cappel fought between the Catholics and Reformers, he was mortally wounded, and, lying on the field, was approached by some of the enemy, and on his refusal to confess or pray to the Virgin, was slain by a soldier. His remains were denied the privilege of a quiet grave, either in the burial-ground of his own cure, or of the neighbouring abbey; they were burned, and the ashes scattered to the winds.

From Lucerne, two days' travel through a highly-cultivated country brought us to Basle and the shores of the Rhine. Wishing to see as much of the river as possible, we engaged a little flat boat, of four planks only, to go

down to Strasburg. It was a frail conveyance, directed by one boatman, with a paddle; for, such is the extreme rapidity of the current, that oars or sails would be perfectly needless. Fast, prodigiously fast, the little bark sped its way, at the rate of fifteen miles an hour, and flew like lightning past the banks. Nothing was lost by the velocity of its course, for the scenery on each side was the most tame and monotonous possible. Sandy banks, strewed with stunted brushwood—extensive and useless flats!—not a hamlet or a cottage to be seen—no cheerful volume of smoke rising into the air, to mark the haunt of a living being:—and we perceived that we had been too impatient to seize on the charms of this celebrated river, which, after all, are found but on a very scanty portion of its long and tedious course.

In the evening our weariness was relieved by arriving at the only romantic spot in the passage—a large village, that had formerly been much more handsome and extensive, but was burned by the French in the war of the

Revolution. A steep hill rose over it, on the top of which were the shattered walls and ruins of many a goodly dwelling. The auberge in this distant spot was a good one, and the landlord assured us we were fortunate in arriving just then : they were not in general, he said, provided for travellers, who seldom came this way, but there had been a pic-nic dinner, at which all the gentlemen and ladies, for a great distance round, were present—quite a banquet—and out of which he promised that an excellent repast should soon be set before us.

The result justified his praises ; the company had departed to their distant homes or country seats, and early next day we re-entered our light bark, and, in spite of rapid currents and puny whirlpools by the way, which the skill of the boatman rendered quite harmless, arrived in safety at Strasburg.

From this city to Mayence by land ; and hence in a few days took boat to Cologne, and passed through the most striking scenery the Rhine is considered to exhibit. In a short time the vil-

lage of Bingen, and ruin after ruin, the noble remains of Rheinfels, were seen, and St. Goar on the opposite side. The whole of this voyage is too well known, and has been too much lauded, to admit of any attempt at description. Were it not for the bold and graceful ruins, that stand on precipices and projecting points, the finest sites possible for effect, the tour of the Rhine, would scarcely be worth performing for any intrinsic beauty. The villages are often pretty and in picturesque situations; but in general nothing can be more tame and unlovely than the immediate shores. They are mostly vine-hills, with little wood; and their summits present the form of a bald, uniform ridge.

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