

WHARTON ANNE
HOLLINGSWORTH

IN CHÂTEAU LAND

Anne Wharton
In Château Land

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Anne Hollingsworth Wharton In Château Land



Neurdein Freres, Photo.
Loches with Gate of Cordeliers

I AN EMBARRASSMENT OF CHÂTEAUX

Hotel Florence, Bellagio, August 10th.

You will be surprised, dear Margaret, to have a letter from me here instead of from Touraine. We fully intended to go directly from the Dolomites and Venice to Milan and on to Tours, stopping a day or two in Paris en route, but Miss Cassandra begged for a few days on Lake Como, as in all her travels by sea and shore she has never seen the Italian lakes. We changed our itinerary simply to be obliging, but Walter and I have had no reason to regret the change for one minute.

Beautiful as you and I found this region in June, I must admit that its August charms are more entrancing and pervasive. Instead of the clear blues, greens and purples of June, the light haze that veils the mountain tops brings out the same indescribable opalescent shades of heliotrope, azure and rose that we thought belonged exclusively to the Dolomites. However, these mountains are first cousins, once or twice removed, to the Eastern Italian and Austrian Alps and have a good right to a family likeness. There is something almost intoxicating in the ethereal beauty of this lake, something that goes to one's head

like wine. I don't wonder that poets and artists rave about its charms, of which not the least is its infinite variety. The scene changes so quickly. The glow of color fades, a cloud obscures the sun, the blue and purple turn to gray in an instant, and we descend from a hillside garden, where gay flowers gain added brilliancy from the sun, to a cypress-bordered path where the grateful shade is so dense that we walk in twilight and listen to the liquid note of the nightingale, or the blackcap, whose song is sometimes mistaken for that of his more distinguished neighbor.

This morning when we were resting in a hillside pavilion, near the Villa Giulia, gazing upon the sapphire lake and the line of purple Alps beyond, we concluded that nothing was needed to complete the beauty of the scene but a snow mountain in the distance, when lo! as if in obedience to our call, a cloud that shrouded some far-off peaks slowly lifted, revealing to us the shining crest of Monte Rosa. It really seemed as if Monte Rosa had amiably thrown up that dazzling white shoulder for our especial delectation. This evening at sunset it will be touched with delicate pink.

I am writing this afternoon on one of the long tables so conveniently placed on the upper deck of the little steamers upon which we made so many excursions when you and I were here in June. The colors of sky, mountain and lake are particularly lovely at this time of the day. Miss Cassandra and Lydia have taken out their water colors, and are trying to put upon paper the exquisite translucent shades of the mountains that surround the

lake. Lydia says that the wash of water colors reproduces these atmospheric effects much more faithfully than the solid oils, and she and our Quaker lady are washing away at their improvised easels, having sent the children off for fresh glasses of water. While I write to you, Walter lights his cigar and gives himself up to day dreams, and I shall soon say *au revoir* and devote myself to the same delightful, if unprofitable, occupation, as this fairy lake is the place of all others in which to dream and lead the *dolce far niente* life of Italy. And so we float about in boats, as at Venice, and think not of the morrow. By we, I mean Walter, Lydia and myself, as the children and Miss Cassandra are fatiguingly energetic. She has just reminded me that there is something to do here beside gazing at these picturesque shores from a boat, as there are numerous villas to be visited, to most of which are attached gardens of marvellous beauty. We are passing one just now which has a water gate, over which climbing geraniums have thrown a veil of bloom. The villa itself is of a delicate salmon color, and the garden close to the lake is gay with many flowers, petunias and pink and white oleanders being most in evidence. The roses are nearly over, but other flowers have taken their places, and the gardens all along the shore make brilliant patches of color.

It is not strange that Bulwer chose this lake as the site of Melnotte's *château en Espagne*, for surely there could not be found a more fitting spot for a romance than this deep vale,

"Shut out by Alpine hills from the rude world,
Near a clear lake, margined by fruits of gold,
And whispering myrtles, glassing softest skies."

We were wondering what "golden fruits" were to be found on these shores at this time, oranges and nespoli being out of season, when some boatmen in a small fishing smack began to sing the "Santa Lucia" beloved by the Neapolitans. A handsome, middle-aged woman seated near us, touched to tears by the penetrating sweetness of the song, as it reached us across the waters, and with the *camaraderie* induced by the common hap of travel, has just whispered in my ear that her husband proposed to her at Bellagio. I fancied the happy pair floating about in a boat with a beautiful brown and yellow sail, but the lady has destroyed my picture by telling me that she was over in New York at the time. It appears that a timid and somewhat uncertain admirer, the kind that we read about in old-fashioned novels, as he strolled by the shores of the lake at twilight, heard a boatman singing her favorite song and the melody of "Santa Lucia" floating forth upon the still air, coupled with the beauty of the scene, so wrought upon his feelings that he forthwith wrote her a love letter by the flickering light of a *bougie*. This little incident dates back to the more romantic if less comfortable days before electricity came to light our way, even in remote places.

August 11th.

There are so many châteaux to be visited, and so many

excursions on the lake to be made that we could stay here a month and have a charming plan for each day. This morning, we climbed a winding mountain path to the Villa Serbelloni and wandered through the hillside garden, with its grottoes and tunnels, to a natural balcony overhanging a precipice of sheer rock that rises above the lake. From this height there is a view of the whole northern part of Lake Como, with the Alps beyond, and here one realizes the beauty of Bellagio which along the water front is but a long line of shops. Situated on the extreme end of the point of land that separates Lake Como from its southern arm, the Lago di Lecco, the little town rises upon its terraces, and with its steep, narrow streets and winding paths, is as picturesque as only an Italian hillside *villagio* can be.

On this Punta di Bellagio is situated one of the numerous villas of the younger Pliny; another villa we saw, near the curious intermittent spring, which he described in his letters. This Larian Lake, as the ancients called it, is full of classic associations, and of those of a later time connected with Italy's heroic struggle for independence, for the Villa Pliniana was once the home of the heroic and beautiful Princess Christina Belgiojoso, the friend of Cavour and Garibaldi, who equipped a troop of Lombardy volunteers which she herself commanded, until she was banished from Italy by order of the Austrian general.

Gazing upon the blue lake, on whose shining bosom the rocky shores were so charmingly mirrored, to-day, it was difficult to believe that great storms ever sweep over its still waters, yet

habitues of this region tell us that this Punta di Bellagio is the centre of furious storms, the most violent coming from behind Monte Crocione, back of Cadenabbia, and sweeping with great fury across the lake. Such a storm as this was the memorable one of 1493, upon whose violence chroniclers of the time delighted to descant. This particular tempest, which was probably no more severe than many others, found a place in history and romance because its unmannerly waters tossed about the richly decorated barge of Bianca Sforza, whose marriage to Maximilian, King of the Romans, had been solemnized with great magnificence, at the cathedral in Milan, three days before. The bridal party set forth from Como in brilliant sunshine, the shores crowded with men and women in holiday attire, and the air filled with joyous music. Bianca's barge was rowed by forty sailors, says Nicolo da Correggio, while her suite followed in thirty boats, painted and decked out with laurel boughs and tapestries. This gay *cortège* reached Bellagio in safety, and after a night spent at a castle on the promontory the bride and her attendants set sail toward the upper end of the lake. Hardly had they left the shore when the weather changed, and a violent storm scattered the fleet in all directions. Bianca's richly decorated barge, with her fine hundred-thousand-ducat trousseau aboard, was tossed about as mercilessly as if it had been a fisherman's smack. The poor young Queen and her ladies wept and cried aloud to God for mercy. Giasone del Maino, says the chronicler, alone preserved his composure, and calmly smiled at the terror of the courtiers,

while he besought the frightened boatmen to keep their heads. Happily, the tempest subsided toward nightfall, and the Queen's barge, with part of her fleet, succeeded in putting back into the harbor of Bellagio. The following day a more prosperous start was made, and poor Bianca was saved from the terrors of the deep to make another perilous journey, this time across the Alps on muleback, by that fearful and cruel mountain of Nombray, as a Venetian chronicler described the Stelvio Pass. She finally reached Innsbruck, where she was joined, some months later, by her tardy and cold-hearted bridegroom.

We had seen Bianca's handsome bronze effigy in the Franciscan church at Innsbruck, and so felt a personal interest in the fair young bride who had been launched forth upon this matrimonial venture with so much pomp and ceremony, her head crowned with diamonds and pearls, and her long train and huge sleeves supported by great nobles of Milan. Foolish and light-headed the young Queen doubtless was, and with some childish habits which must have been annoying to her grave consort, many years her senior,—Erasmus Brasca, the Milanese envoy, says that he was obliged to remonstrate with her for the silly trick of eating her meals on the floor instead of at table,—and yet she was a warm-hearted, affectionate girl, and like many another princess of that time, she deserved a happier fate than the loveless marriage that had been arranged for her. Our memories are quite fresh about Bianca and her sorrows, because an accommodating tourist, who had Mrs. Ady's "Beatrice d'Este" with her, has

loaned it to us for reading in the evenings—at least for as much time as we can afford to spend in-doors when the out-door world is so beguiling.

August 12th.

The man of the party and the children set forth early this morning for a day's fishing on the lake, Walter having learned from a loquacious boatman that trout of large size, frequently weighing fifteen pounds, are to be caught here. We women, lacking the credulity of the true brother of the angle, declined Walter's invitation, preferring a morning at the Villa Carlotta to "the calm, quiet, innocent recreation of angling," although we did encourage the fisher-folk by telling them that we should return from sightseeing with keen appetites for their trout.

The villa, or château, which we visited to-day, situated on a hillside directly opposite Bellagio, is not that in which Maximilian and Carlotta passed some happy years before the misfortunes of their life overtook them. That villa, as you may remember, is on the southern shore of Lake Como, at Cernobbio. The fact of there being two Villas Carlotta on the same lake is somewhat confusing, as will appear later. This one, whose beautiful hillside gardens reach from Cadenabbia to Tremezzo, our informing little local guidebook tells us, was long known as the Villa Clerici, later as the Villa Sommariva, and finally, failing of heirs in the Sommariva line, it was bought by the Princess Albert of Prussia, who named the villa after her own daughter Charlotte.

We crossed from Bellagio to Cadenabbia in one of the little boats with brown awnings and gay cushions, that add so much to the picturesqueness of this fairy lake, and made our way to the Villa Carlotta, passing through the richly wrought iron gates and up many steps to the terraced garden where a fountain throws its feathery spray into the air. We were all three in such high spirits as befit a party of pleasure seekers, journeying through a land of enchantment on a brilliantly beautiful day, for it must be admitted that in a downpour of rain Lake Como and its shores are like any other places in the rain. Miss Cassandra, who is gay even under dull skies and overhanging clouds, is gayer than usual to-day, having donned a hat in which she takes great pride, a hat of her own confection, which she is pleased to call a "Merry Widow," and an indecorously merry widow it is, so riotous is it in its garnishings of chiffon, tulle and feathers! Thus far Lydia has prevented her aunt from appearing, in public, in her cherished hat; but here, in the lake region, where the sun is scorching at midday, she rebels against Lydia's authority, says she has no idea of having her brains broiled out for the sake of keeping up a dignified and conventional appearance, and that this hat is just the thing for water-parties, and is not at all extreme compared with the peach-basket, the immense picture hat with its gigantic willow plumes, the grenadier, and other fashionable monstrosities in the way of headgear. Our jaunt to Cadenabbia appeared to be the psychological moment for the inauguration of the merry widow, and so I may say, truly and literally, that

our Quaker lady is in fine feather to-day, her head crowned with nodding plumes, and not a qualm of conscience anent the far-away meeting and its overseers to cloud her pleasure.

Whether in consequence of the charms of the merry widow, or because of a certain distinctive individuality that belongs to her, Miss Cassandra attracted even more attention than usual this morning. While we were admiring the noble Thorwaldsen reliefs, that form the frieze of the entrance hall, and the exquisite marble of Cupid and Psyche by Canova, that is one of the glories of the Villa Carlotta, she, as is her sociable wont, fell into conversation with two English-speaking women of distinguished appearance. Before we left the château Miss Cassandra and one of her new friends, a stately, beautiful woman, were exchanging confidences and experiences with the freedom and intimacy of two schoolgirls. These ladies, whom Miss Cassandra is pleased to call the American countesses,—it having transpired in the course of conversation that they were of American birth, Pennsylvanians in fact, who had married titled Italians,—were courteous to us all, but they simply fell in love with our Quaker lady, whose "thee's" and "thou's" seemed to possess a magic charm for them.

Later on we were in some way separated from our new acquaintances amid the intricacies of these winding hillside paths, where one may walk miles, especially if the guide is clever and entertaining, and has an eye to future *lira* bestowed in some proportion to the time spent in exploring the beauties of the garden, and to the fatigue attending the tour. Italian

dames of high degree, even if so fortunate as to have been born in America, are not usually as good walkers as our untitled countrywomen. These ladies, being no exception to the rule, had probably yielded to the seductions of one of the rustic seats, placed so alluringly under the shade of fine trees, while we wandered on from path to path, stopping to admire an avenue of palms, a bamboo plantation, a blue Norway spruce, a huge India-rubber tree, a bed of homelike American ferns, or a clump of gorgeous rhododendrons, for the trees and flowers of all climes thrive in this favored spot. A party of four or five men and women had joined us, who talked to each other in German, occasionally bowing to us and smiling, after the polite fashion of foreigners, when the guide drew our attention to some rare flower or plant, or to a charming vista of lake and mountain, seen through a frame of interlacing branches and vines. An immense bed of cactus, on a sunny slope, attracted the regard and admiration of our companions. Miss Cassandra, who had seen the cactus in its glory on its native heath, recognized the strangers' admiration even in an unknown language, and by way of protest expatiated in her enthusiastic fashion upon the splendor of the cactus of Mexico, the plumes of her hat waving in unison with her eloquent words and gestures, while Lydia and I exchanged amused glances; but our merriment was destined to be but short lived. The strangers, who were standing near us, could not, of course, get the drift of what Miss Cassandra was saying, but one of the party, a man of strongly marked personality, evidently caught the word

"Mexico," and pricked up his ears when she repeated it. In an instant, a heavy hand was laid upon her shoulder, while an angry voice hissed close to her ear:

"Mexican, Mexican! Pourquoi avez-vous tué l'Empereur Maximilian?"

Not comprehending this sudden arraignment, although she felt the heavy hand upon her shoulder, heard the angry voice at her side, and saw the unfriendly faces that surrounded her, our dear Miss Cassandra, by way of making matters worse, repeated the only word that she had caught:

"Mexican! Yes, the Mexican cactus is much finer than this!"

This innocent remark seemed to irritate the Austrian beyond all bounds. He repeated his question in French, still keeping his hand on the poor lady's shoulder and gazing into her frightened face.

"Why did you kill the Emperor Maximilian?" gesticulating with his free hand and drawing it across his throat. "Pourquoi lui avez-vous coupé la gorge?"

Lydia and I were too shocked and dismayed to speak, and in that instant of terror every sad and gruesome disaster, that had befallen unprotected travellers in a strange land, passed in rapid review before our minds. We turned to the guide for help, but he who had been so voluble and instructive in botanical lore, in several languages, now held his tongue in them all, appearing quite dull and uninterested, as if having no understanding or part in the affair! Suddenly my voice came to me, and I cried out in the

best French that I could command: "The Emperor Maximilian did not have his throat cut! He died like a soldier! He was shot!"

"Well, then," exclaimed the Austrian, still gesticulating violently with one hand and shaking Miss Cassandra's shoulder with the other, "Why did you shoot him!"

Not having improved the situation by my remark, I turned again to the guide, when, to our immense relief, the American countesses, most opportunely, emerged from a shaded path. Miss Cassandra's pale, frightened face, the despair written upon Lydia's and mine, the stranger's excited tone and gestures, told half the story, while I eagerly explained:

"These people are Austrians. They think that Miss Cassandra is a Mexican, and they hate her on account of the assassination of the Emperor Maximilian. She is frightened to death, but she does not understand a word of what it is all about. Do explain!"

The stately lady, Countess Z— by name, drew near, threw her arm protectingly around Miss Cassandra, and turning to the Austrian, with an air of command, ordered him to take his hand off her shoulder, explaining in German (German had never sounded so sweet to my ears) that this lady was an American citizen who had simply travelled in Mexico. The man listened and withdrew his hand, looking decidedly crestfallen when she added: "The American nation had nothing to do with the most unfortunate sacrifice of your young prince; in fact, the government at Washington made an effort to avert the disaster. His death was deplored in America, and you must

remember that the whole affair was in a large measure instigated by the ambitious designs of Napoleon III, who broke faith with Maximilian, failed to send him the troops he had promised him, and cruelly abandoned him to his fate."

The Austrian bowed low and humbly apologized, adding something in an undertone about "Here in the grounds of the château where Maximilian and Carlotta had once lived, seemed no place to talk about Mexico."

"You are quite mistaken!" exclaimed the Countess. "This is not the Villa Carlotta that once belonged to Maximilian. That is quite at the other end of the lake. This château, long the property of the Sommariva family, passed in 1843 into the hands of the Princess Charlotte of Prussia, who named it after her daughter, another Carlotta, and I hope a happier one than the poor Empress Carlotta."

Again the Austrian bowed and apologized, this time to Miss Cassandra, who, from his softened voice and deferential manner, realized that whatever deadly peril had menaced her was happily averted, and throwing her arms around the Countess Z-'s neck, she exclaimed, "My dear countrywoman! Thee has the face of an angel and, like an angel, thee has brought peace to our troubled minds. But for the life of me I cannot tell what I have done to make that German so angry!"

When Miss Cassandra had learned what was the head and front of her offending, she begged the Countess to explain that she was a woman of peace, that war was abhorrent to

her and all of her persuasion, and finally she quite won the Austrian's heart by telling him that she had no admiration for that upstart Bonaparte family (Miss Cassandra is nothing if not aristocratic); that for her part she liked old-established dynasties, like the Hapsburgs, and had always considered the marriage of the daughter of a long line of kings with the self-made Emperor a great come down for Maria Louisa. Please remember that these are Miss Cassandra's sentiments, not mine, and how the dear Italian-American lady managed to translate them into good German and keep her face straight at the same time, I know not; but the Austrian evidently understood, as he became more profusely apologetic every moment, and well he might be for, as Miss Cassandra says, "No amount of bowing and scraping and apologizing could make up for the fright he had given us." But she is the most forgiving of mortals, as you know, and an *entente cordiale* having been established, through the mediation of our two American-Italian *diplomatistes*, the two recent foes were soon exchanging courtesies and scaling mountain paths together, hand in hand, smiling, gesticulating, quite *en rapport*, without a syllable of language between them, Miss Cassandra's nodding plumes seeming to accentuate her expressions of peace and good will. While our Quaker lady was stepping off gaily, her late tormentor now her willing captive, Lydia, usually so quiet and self-contained, suddenly collapsed upon the nearest seat and went off in a violent attack of hysterics. One of the Austrian women rushed off for a glass of water, while the countesses

ministered to her, in true story-book fashion, having with them a bottle of sal volatile which seems to be an important part of the equipment of every well-appointed foreign lady. And what do you think that heartless Lydia said between her laughter and her sobs? "If only one of us had had a kodak with us, to take a snapshot of Aunt Cassie with the angry Austrian berating her! Nobody will ever believe the story when we get back to America, and then it would lose half its point without the merry widow!"

Of course we had tales of adventure to relate when reunited with our family this evening. Walter warmly, and I believe with sincerity, expressed his regret that he had not been with us, which regret was probably all the more heartfelt because he had failed to catch the fifteen pound trout or, indeed, I may add in all truthfulness, trout of any size and weight.

II

AN ISLAND CHÂTEAU

Pension Beau-Séjour, Stresa, Wednesday, August 17th.

We reached this enchanting spot by a most circuitous and varied route, which I outline for you, as you may be coming this way some time. From Bellagio we crossed over to Menaggio, on Monday after *déjeuner*, where we took an electric tram which brought us to Porlezza in less than an hour. Here we found a boat awaiting us in which we enjoyed a two hours' sail on beautiful Lake Lugano. At Lugano, which we reached before six o'clock, we were in Switzerland, as we learned when the customs officers visited our luggage, with no benefit to themselves and little disturbance to us, and again when we found our beds at the hotel supplied with feather counterpanes—and I may venture to say it with all my love for Italy—by a scrupulous and shining cleanliness that belongs more to the thrifty Swiss than to the amiable and less energetic Italians. Lugano is full of quaint corners, interesting narrow streets, market wagons, drawn by oxen, and stalls and carts on all sides, filled with curios and native wares that would tempt the most blasé shopper. Yesterday, being a market day when the peasants come in from the surrounding country in their ox carts, and with their great panniers, or *hottes*, on their backs, we found many delightful bits for our kodaks.

The children were especially interested in a woman who carried a pretty, little young kid in her pannier, instead of the fruits and vegetables that are usually to be seen in these great baskets, and a heavy load it must have been! But these Swiss and Italian women are burden-bearers from early childhood.

We needed a week instead of a day and night at Lugano, and let me advise you and Allan not to travel on schedule time when you make your tour through these lakes, as there are so many delightful side trips to be made. Some pleasant Americans, whom we met at the hotel in Lugano, told us that a day or two spent on the summit of Monte Generoso is well worth while, as the view is one of the finest in Europe, embracing as it does the chain of the Alps, the Italian lakes and the vast plains of Lombardy as far as the Apennines. In addition to all this there are fine woods and pasture lands upon this mountain top, and a hotel in which one may sojourn in comfort, if comfort is to be considered when such heavenly views are to be feasted upon.

We quitted Lugano after luncheon yesterday, having had time for only a hurried visit to the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli and the famous Luini frescoes. Another charming trip on the lovely Lago di Lugano brought us to Ponte Tresa, from whence we journeyed by a steam tram through an enchanting wild wood country, full of little hills and rushing streamlets, to Luino. Do you wonder that Lisa calls this a fairy journey? The change from car to boat and boat to car takes away all the weariness of travel, and the varied beauties of lake and shore make this an ideal trip,

especially as we found ourselves transferred to another boat at Luino which brought us straight to fairyland, here at Stresa. The lights upon the many boats on the lake and in the hotels and villas along the shore gave the little town a gala appearance, as if it were celebrating our arrival, as Miss Cassandra suggested. Later on it became humiliatingly evident that we had not been expected, our boat was late, the cabs had all gone away, and it was with difficulty that we secured enough conveyances for our party.

We drove many miles, so it seemed to us, by winding roads up a steep hillside to this pension, where we finally found light, warmth, welcome and good beds, of which last we were sorely in need. By morning light the pension proves itself to be well named Beau-Séjour, as it is delightfully situated on a hill above the lake, with a garden, which slopes down to the town, full of oleanders and orange and lemon trees. When I opened the *jalousies* at my window, what should I see but dear, snow-crested Monte Rosa and the rest of the Alpine chain, seeming quite near in this crystal atmosphere, a perfect background for the picturesque Borromean Islands, fairy islets in a silver lake!

"I really think that Maggiore is more beautiful than Como," I said, reluctantly, for I have heretofore contended that Lake Como at Bellagio is the most beautiful place on the face of the earth.

"Take what goods the gods provide you, Zelfine, and don't use up the gray matter of your brain trying to find out which of these lakes you like best," said Walter in his most judicial tone.

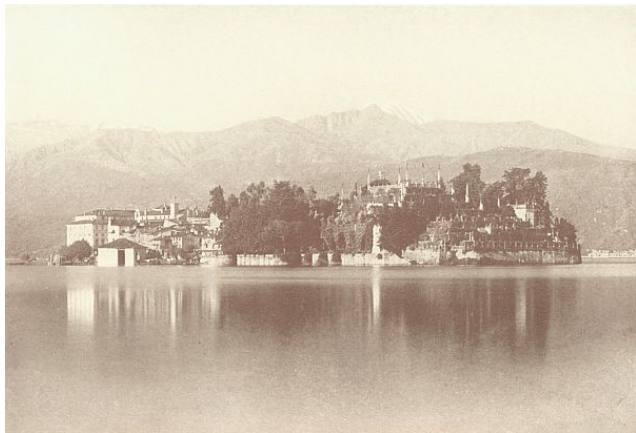
"Yes, but one really cannot help comparing these two lakes,

and if we give the preference to Maggiore we have Mr. Ruskin on our side, who considers the scenery of Lake Maggiore to be the most beautiful and enchanting of all lake scenery, so we read in a pleasant little book of Richard Bagot's which we found on the drawing-room table, yet the author says that for himself he has no hesitation in giving his vote in favor of the Larian Lake for beauty of scenery and richness of historic interest."

Despite his philosophy I truly think that the man of the party has left his heart at Bellagio, as I heard him telling a brother angler, whom he met at the boat landing, how fine he found the fishing there and that he doubted the sport being as good at Stresa—at least for amateur fishermen. The associations here are less inspiring than those of Como, the presiding genius of Stresa being San Carlo Borromeo, whose thirst for the blood of heretics gained for him the title of Saint. A great bronze statue at Arona now proclaims his zeal for the Church. Miss Cassandra, who has an optimistic faith in a spark of the divine in the most world-hardened saint or sinner, reminds me of Carlo Borromeo's heroic devotion to the sufferers from famine and the plague at Milan in 1570 and 1576. So, with a somewhat gentler feeling in our hearts toward "the Saint," we turned our faces toward Isola Bella and its great château, built by a later and more worldly-minded member of the Borromeo family, Count Vitaliano Borromeo. This château, which from the lake side appears like a stronghold of ancient times, is fitly named the Castello, and after admiring its substantial stone terrace and

great iron gates we were prepared for something more imposing than what we found within. The large rooms, with their modern furniture and paintings, some of them poor copies from the old masters, were strangely out of harmony with the ancient exterior of the Castello; but they were shown to us with great pride by the custodian, who must have found us singularly unappreciative and lacking in enthusiasm, even when he displayed a room in which the great Napoleon had once slept. When Napoleon was here, and why, and whether he was here at all, does not concern any of us especially, except Lydia, who having a turn for history is always determined to find out how, why, when, and where. I am glad that she does care, as her example is edifying to us all, especially so to Christine and Lisa, who follow her about and ask questions to their hearts' content, which she is never tired of answering. The garden, we revelled in, and found it hard to believe that the terrace, which rises to a height of one hundred feet, was once a barren rock until Count Borromeo covered it with a luxuriant growth of orange, olive, and lemon trees, cedars, oleanders, roses, camellias, and every tree and plant that you can think of. It is really a bewilderingly lovely garden, and we wandered through its paths joyously until we came suddenly upon some artificial grottos at one end overlooking the lake. These remarkable creations are so utterly tasteless, with masses of bristling shellwork and crude, ungainly statues, that we wondered how anything so inartistic could find a home upon Italian soil. The children, however, found delight in the hideous grottos, were

sure that they had been robbers' dens, and fancied they heard the groans of prisoners issuing from their cavernous openings. They were so fascinated, as children always are by the mysterious and unknown, that nothing but the pangs of hunger and promises of luncheon on a terrace garden overlooking the lake reconciled them to leaving the garden and the grottos.



A. Gebr. Wehrli, Photo.
Isola Bella, Lake Maggiore

We tried to forget the monstrosities of the château garden and to remember only the beauty and the rich luxuriance of its trees and the many flowering vines that clambered all over the shellwork terraces, as if striving to conceal their rococo ugliness. Nor is it difficult to forget unsightly objects here, when

we have only to raise our eyes to behold a scene of surpassing beauty,—Isola Madre and Isola dei Pescatori look but a stone's throw from us across the shining water, and beyond a girdle of snow mountains seems to encircle the lake, our beloved Monte Rosa, white as a swan's breast, dominating them all. Despite the distracting beauty of the outlook from our café, on the terrace of a very indifferent looking hostel, we enjoyed our luncheon of Italian dishes, crowned by an *omelette aux confitures* of such superlative excellence that even my inveterate American was ready to acknowledge that it was the best omelet he had ever eaten anywhere.

We shall need a whole morning for Isola Madre, whose gardens are said to be even more beautiful than those of Isola Bella. The sporting tastes of the man of the party naturally draw him toward the allurements of Isola dei Pescatori, but thither we shall decline to accompany him, for picturesque as it appears from the shore, it is, on a more intimate acquaintance, said to rival in unsavoriness the far-famed odors of the city of Cologne.

Orta, August 19th.

From Stresa we made a short *détour*, in order to have a day and night here on the Lago d'Orta, which although comparatively near Lake Maggiore is not often included in the itinerary of the fast traveling tourist, who usually hurries to Arona, Stresa, and Pallanza, which, beautiful as they are, lack something of the restful charm of this miniature lake set in the midst of a circle of well-wooded hills. After Como and Maggiore, which are like

inland seas, the Lago d'Orta with its pretty island of San Giulio, all so small that one may see the whole picture at a glance, is indescribably lovely. The waters here are said to be of a deeper blue than anywhere else in Italy, probably because the lake is fed from springs which issue from its rocky bed. The whole town of Orta, as well as the lake, is a blaze of color with the gay awnings of its many loggie, its masses of scarlet and pink geraniums, cactus and oleanders, its fruit stalls laden with melons, peaches and tomatoes, or poma d'oro, and its blue sky over all. We cannot imagine Orta under any but a clear sky, as our day here has been one of dazzling brilliancy. But it was not solely for its beauty that the man of the party brought us to Orta, as I discovered when I looked over a little local guidebook last night, and learned that the Lago d'Orta is famous for its fish, and abounds in trout of large size, pike, perch, and the agoni, a delicate little fish for which Lake Como is also noted. After glancing over this illuminating guidebook, and recalling the fact that the catch at Stresa had been poor the day before, we were not surprised to hear arrangements being made for an early start this morning. After reading aloud some extracts from the guidebook, Miss Cassandra said, quite seriously:

"For ways that are dark and tricks that are vain commend me to a fisherman or hunter. With all that Izaak Walton was pleased to say about fishing being 'a calm, quiet, innocent recreation,' I have known the best of men, even as good men as Walter, descend to duplicity and even to prevarication when it came to a

question of fish or game. Not that I regret for a moment Walter's bringing us here. Orta is so beautiful that the end justifies the means; but he might have told us why we were coming."

Despite the innate and total depravity of fisher folk, I yielded to Walter's and the children's persuasions and joined the fishing party this morning, and a delightful day I had, seated in the stern of the boat under one of the little canopies that you see in all the pictures of this region. Here, well screened from the sun, with books and work, and the lovely lake and shore to gaze upon, the hours passed so quickly that I was surprised when we were told that it was time to land on the Island of San Giulio for our noon *déjeuner*. I was in the midst of relating the interesting experiences of the missionary priest Julius, who is said to have founded a church here as early as 390, when we were nearing the lovely little island named for him. The children were naturally delighted with the priest's fertility of resource, which, like that of the mother in their favorite "Swiss Family Robinson," was equal to every occasion.

Having resolved to found a sanctuary upon the island whose solitary beauty, as it rested upon the shining bosom of the lake, appealed to him as it does to us to-day, and finding no boatmen upon the shore willing to convey him thither, on account of the hideous monsters, dragons, and serpents of huge size then inhabiting the place, good Julius, nothing daunted by so trifling an inconvenience as the lack of a boat, used his long cloak as a sail, and his staff as a rudder, and thus equipped allowed himself

to be blown across to the island.

"Of course, we know that there is nothing new under the sun, but who would have thought of finding traces of the first aeroplane here, in this quiet spot, far from the haunts of men?"

This from the man of the party, while Lisa exclaimed impatiently: "Now, don't stop the story! What did the good priest do when he landed on the island? Did he kill the beasts with his big stick?"

"We never heard of the 'big stick' flourishing among these lakes," said Walter, as he wound up his line, and I explained to the children that the hideous monsters fled before the beautiful face of the messenger of peace and swam across the water to the mainland. A delightful confirmation of the story, the children found in the church, where they were shown a huge bone that belonged to one of these self-same monsters.

"Very like a whale," said Walter, while we were further edified by a sight of the silver and crystal shrine under which repose the bones of St. Julius removed from the little old church to this one of the seventh century, which is a perfect miniature basilica. This was explained to us by a priest, in Italianized French of the most mongrel description, translated by me and listened to by Christine and Lisa with eager faces and wide-open eyes.

When we related our experiences to Miss Cassandra, who had in our absence visited the twenty chapels on the mainland erected in honor of St. Francis of Assisi, she shook her head, knowingly, and said, "Lydia and I have heard a great many wonderful tales,

too, but it is worth everything to be a child and ready to swallow anything from a gumdrop to a whale."

The little girls take so much more interest in churches and shrines than we had expected that we are half regretting our plan to leave them in a French school in Lausanne while we make our tour among the Châteaux of the Loire. I can hear you say, "Why not take them to Tours, for the French there?" We know that the French of Tours is exquisite, but they have had quite as much travel as is good for them, and then they have little friends at the school in Lausanne whom they wish to join. "And after all," as Miss Cassandra says, "American French can always be spotted, no matter how good it may be." We were very much amused over the criticism of a little American boy who had been educated in Italy. He said of an English lady's correct and even idiomatic Italian, "Yes, it's all right; but she doesn't speak in the right tune." We have so many tunes in our own language that we are less particular than the French and Italians, who treat theirs with the greatest respect.

To-morrow we leave this charming spot with great reluctance. We shall doubtless find architectural beauty in Touraine, but we shall miss the glorious mountain and lake views and these indescribable atmospheric effects that we delight in. But, as the man of the party says, with masculine directness, "Having started out to see the Châteaux of the Loire, had we not better push on to Touraine?"

You cannot appreciate the full magnanimity of this advice

without realizing that Orta is a place above all others to please a man's fancy, and that the fishing is exceptionally good. Miss Cassandra has taken back her caustic expressions with regard to the devious ways of fisher folk, or at least of this especial fisherman, and so, in good humor with one another and with the world in general, we set forth for Lausanne, by Domodossola and the Simplon. We shall have a Sunday in Lausanne to drink in Calvinism near its source; Monday we arrange about the children's school, and set forth for Touraine on Tuesday, stopping in Geneva for a day and night.

III

AN AFTERNOON AT COPPET

Geneva, August 24th.

Like Hawthorne, our first feeling upon returning to Switzerland, after our sojourn in Italy, was of a certain chill and austerity in the atmosphere, a lack of heartiness, in sharp contrast to the rich feast of beauty, the warm color and compelling charm of Italian towns. This impression was accentuated by the fact that it rained yesterday at Lausanne and that we reached Geneva in the rain. We had one clear day, however, at Lausanne, upon which we made a pilgrimage to Chillon, to the great delight of the *Kinder*. Miss Cassandra insisted that we should take the children to see this most romantic and beautiful spot, because, she says, it is out of fashion nowadays, like Niagara Falls at home, and that it is a part of a liberal education to see the Castle of Chillon and read Byron's poem on the spot, all of which we did. It is needless to tell you that Christine and Lisa considered this day on the lake and in and about Chillon the most interesting educational experience of their lives. We were glad to leave them at the pension in Lausanne with a memory so pleasant as this, and for ourselves we carry away with us a picture of the grim castle reaching out into the blue lake and beyond that almost unrivalled line of Alpine peaks, white and shining in the sun. After this there came a day of rain,

in which we set forth for Geneva.

"We have not seen him for three days until to-day," said the *garçon* who waited on us at the terrace café of the hotel this morning, with a fond glance toward the snowy crest of Mont Blanc rising above enveloping clouds. It would not have occurred to us to call this exquisite pearl and rose peak *him*, as did the *garçon*, who was proud of his English, and much surer of his genders than we ever hope to be in his language, or any other save our own; but we were ready to echo his lament after a day of clouds and rain. To be in these picturesque old towns upon the shores of the Lake of Geneva, and not to see Mont Blanc by sunlight, moonlight, and starlight is a grievance not lightly to be borne; but when a glory of sunshine dispelled the clouds and Mont Blanc threw its misty veil to the winds and stood forth beautiful as a bride, in shining white touched with palest pink, we could only, like the woman of the Scriptures, forget our sorrows for joy that such a day was born to the world.

Days like this are rare in the Swiss autumn, and with jealous care we planned its hours, carefully balancing the claims of Vevey, Yvoire, picturesque as an Italian hillside town, Ferney, and Coppet. This last drew us irresistibly by its associations with Madame de Staël and her brilliant entourage, and we decided that this day of days should be dedicated to a tour along the Côte Suisse of the lake, stopping at Nyon for a glance at its sixteenth century château and returning in time to spend a long afternoon at Coppet. The only drawback to this delightful plan was that

this is Wednesday, and according to the friendly little guidebook that informs sojourners in Geneva how to make the best of their days, Thursday is the day that the Château de Staël is open to visitors. Learning, however, that the d'Haussonvilles were not at present in residence, we concluded to take our courage, and some silver, in our hands, trusting to its seductive influence upon the caretaker. After a short stroll through the quaint old town of Coppet we ascended the steep hill that leads to the Château de Staël. As we drew near the entrance gate, Walter, manlike, retired to the rear of the procession, saying that he would leave all preliminaries to the womenfolk, as they always knew what to say and generally managed to get what they wanted.

Fortune favored us. We noticed several persons were grouped together in the courtyard, and pushing open the gate, which was not locked, Lydia, who if gentle of mien is bold of heart, inquired in her most charmingly hesitating manner and in her Sunday best French whether we should be permitted to enter. Upon this a man separated himself from the group and approaching us asked if we very much wished to see the château, for if we did he was about to conduct some friends through the premises and would be pleased to include us in the party.

"When the French wish to be polite how gracefully they accord a favor!" exclaimed Lydia, turning to Walter, the joy of conquest shining in her blue eyes.

"Yes, and I kept out of it for fear of spoiling sport. Any caretaker who could withstand the combined charms of you

three must be valiant indeed! I noticed that Zephine put Miss Cassandra in the forefront of the battle; she is always a winner even if she isn't up to the language, and you did the talking. Zephine certainly knows how to marshal her forces!"

We all laughed heartily over Walter's effort to make a virtue of his own masterly inactivity, and Miss Cassandra asked him if he had ever applied for a diplomatic mission, as we gaily entered the spacious courtyard.

We noticed, as we passed on toward the château, the old tower of the archives, which doubtless contains human documents as interesting as those published by Count Othenin d'Haussonville about his pretty great-grandmother when she was *jeune fille très coquette*, with numerous lovers at her feet. Behind the close-barred door of the tower the love letters of Edward Gibbon to the village belle were preserved, among them that cold and cruel epistle in which for prudential reasons he renounced the love of Mademoiselle Curchod, whom he would "always remember as the most worthy, the most charming of her sex."

Count d'Haussonville, who now owns Coppet, our guide informed us, is not the grandson of Madame de Staël, as Lydia and I had thought, but her great-grandson. Albertine de Staël married Victor, Duc de Broglie, and their daughter became the wife of Count Othenin d'Haussonville, to whom we are indebted for the story of the early love affair of his ancestress with the historian of the Roman Empire. The sympathies of the reader of this touching pastoral are naturally with the pretty Swiss

girl, who seems to have been sincerely attached to her recreant lover, although she had sufficient pride to conceal her emotions. If Edward Gibbon found excuse for himself in the reported tranquillity and gayety of Mademoiselle Curchod, we, for our part, are glad that she did not wear her heart upon her sleeve, there being other worlds to conquer. Indeed, even then, several suitors were at Mademoiselle Curchod's feet, among them a young parson,—her father being a pastor, young parsons were her legitimate prey,—and still greater triumphs were reserved for her in the gay world of Paris which she was soon to enter. As *dame de compagnie*, Mademoiselle Curchod journeyed with Madame Vermenoux to the French capital, and carried off one of her lovers, M. Necker, under her very eyes. The popular tradition is that Madame Vermenoux was well tired of M. Necker and of Mademoiselle Curchod also, and so cheerfully gave them both her blessing, remarking with malice as well as wit: "They will bore each other so much that they will be provided with an occupation."

It soon transpired that M. and Mme. Necker, far from boring each other, were quite unfashionably happy in their married life, some part of which was passed at Coppet, which M. Necker bought at the time of his dismissal from office.

An hour of triumph came to Madame Necker later when Edward Gibbon visited her in her husband's home in Paris. After being hospitably invited to supper by M. Necker, the historian related that the husband composedly went off to bed, leaving him

tête-à-tête with his wife, adding, "That is to treat an old lover as a person of little consequence."

The love affairs of the Swiss pastor's daughter, her disappointments, her triumphs, and her facility for turning from lost Edens to pastures new, would be of little interest to-day did they not reveal certain common characteristics possessed by the lively blue-stocking, Susanne Curchod, and her passionate, intense daughter, Anne Germaine de Staël. The well-conducted Madame Necker, whose fair name was touched by no breath of scandal, possessed all her life a craving for love, devotion, and admiration, which were accorded to her in full measure. With the mother, passion was restrained by fine delicacy and reserve, and her heart was satisfied by a congenial marriage, while the impetuous and ill-regulated nature of Germaine was thrown back upon itself by an early and singularly ill-assorted union.

With many thoughts of the two interesting women who once lived in the château we passed through the doorway into the hall, on whose right-hand side is a colossal statue of Louis Seize, while on the left are portraits of several generations of d'Haussonvilles. On the stairway are numerous genealogical charts and family trees of the Neckers, doubtless reaching back to Attila, if not to Adam, for strange as it may seem the great Swiss financier was as much addicted to vain genealogies and heraldic quarterings as a twentieth century American.

It was in the long library, with its many windows opening out upon a sunny terrace, that we came upon traces of the presiding

genius of the château. Here are Madame de Staël's own books, the cases unchanged, we were assured, except by the addition of new publications from time to time. On a table, among the most treasured possessions of the devoted daughter, is the strong box of M. Necker in which he kept his accounts with the French Government when he sought to stem the tide of financial disaster that was bearing the monarchy to its doom.

From this room instinct with the atmosphere of culture, a fit setting for the profoundly intellectual woman who inhabited it, we stepped through one of the long windows to the terrace which commands a glorious view. In the distance, yet not seeming very far away in this clear air, is that well-known group of which Mont Blanc is the central peak, with the Dent du Géant and the Aiguilles du Glacier and D'Argentièrè standing guard over its crystalline purity. We had seen Mont Blanc and its attendant mountains from the heights of Mont Revard, and knew its majestic beauty as seen from Chamounix; but we all agreed that nothing could be lovelier than these white peaks rising above the sapphire lake, with the blue cloud-flecked sky over all. Yet, with this perfect picture spread before her, Madame de Staël longed for the very gutters of Paris, its sights and sounds, which were inseparably associated in her mind with the joyous chatter of the salon to which she had been introduced at an age when most children are in the nursery. Seated upon a high chair in her mother's salon, little Anne Germaine Necker listened eagerly to the discourses of the great men of her day. Listening was not

destined to be her *rôle* in later years; but to pace up and down the long drawing room at Coppet, with the invariable green branch in her beautiful hands, uttering words that charmed such guests as Schlegel, Sismondi, Bonstetten of Geneva and Chateaubriand. It was Chateaubriand who said that the two magical charms of Coppet were the conversation of Madame de Staël and the beauty of Madame Récamier.

Madame de Staël's library opens into her bedroom, and beyond this is the charming little apartment dedicated to Madame Récamier. This small, dainty room, with hand-made paper upon its walls of delicate green decorated with flowers and birds, seemed a fit setting for the flower-like beauty who occupied it, a lily that preserved its purity amid the almost incredible corruption of the social life of the period.

Madame de Staël's own bedroom is filled with pictures, and souvenirs of the *vie intime* of one who with all her faults was dowered with a limitless affection for her family and friends. Here is a marble bust of the beautiful daughter Albertine in her girlhood, and on the right of Madame de Staël's bed is a portrait of her mother, in water color painted during her last illness, the fine, delicate old face framed in by a lace cap. On the margin of this picture is written, "Elle m'aimera toujours." Under this lovely water color is the same picture reproduced in black and white, beneath which some crude hand has written in English the trite phrase, "Not lost, but gone before."

In a glass case are Madame de Staël's India shawls, which,

like Josephine de Beauharnais and other women of the period, she seems to have possessed the art of wearing with grace and distinction. One of these shawls appears in the familiar portrait by David, which is in a small library or living room *au premier*; this we reached by climbing many stairs. It is quite evident that David was not in sympathy with his sitter, as in this painting he has softened no line of the heavy featured face, and illumined with no light of intellect a countenance that in conversation was so transformed that Madame de Staël's listeners forgot for the moment that she was not beautiful.

Quite near the portrait of the exile of Coppet, as she was pleased to call herself, is one of Baron de Staël Holstein, in court costume, finished, elegant, handsome perhaps, but quite insignificant. It is surely one of the ironies of fate that the Baron de Staël is only remembered to-day as the husband of a woman whom he seems to have looked upon as his social inferior. In this living room is a large portrait of M. Necker, indeed, no room is without a portrait or bust of the idolized father, and here, looking strangely modern among faces of the First Empire, is a charming group of the four daughters of the Count d'Haussonville, the present owner of Coppet. Several portraits and busts there are, in the drawing room, of beautiful Albertine de Staël, wife of Victor, Duc de Broglie, whom Madame de Staël says that she loved for his tenderness and sympathy.

In this spacious, homelike drawing room, furnished in the style of the First Empire, and yet not too fine for daily use,

we could imagine Madame de Staël surrounded by her brilliant circle of friends, many of whom had been, like herself, banished from the Paris that they loved. She is described by Madame Vigée Lebrun, and other guests, as walking up and down the long salon, conversing incessantly, or sitting at one of the tables writing notes and interjecting profound or brilliant thoughts into the conversation. "Her words," added Madame Lebrun, "have an ardor quite peculiar to her. It is impossible to interrupt her. At these times she produces on one the effect of an improvisatrice."

Ohlenschlager described the *châtelaine* of Coppet as "living in an enchanted castle, a queen or a fairy," albeit of rather substantial proportions, it must be admitted, "her wand being the little green branch that her servant placed each day by her plate at table." The time of the Danish poet's visit was that golden period in the life of the château when it was the *rendezvous* of many of the savants of Germany and Geneva. Into the charmed circle, at this time, entered Madame Krüdener, that strangely puzzling combination of priestess and coquette, whose Greuze face and mystic revelations touched the heart of an Emperor. Standing in the long salon, which contains many portraits and souvenirs of the habitués of Coppet, we realized something of the life of those brilliant days, when the walls echoed to what Bonstettin called "prodigious outbursts of wit and learning," and upon whose boards classic dramas and original plays were acted, often very badly, by the learned guests. Rosalie de Constant wrote that she trembled for her cousin Benjamin's success in *Mahomet*, which

rôle he accepted with confidence, while beneath the play at life and love the great tragedy of a passionate human soul is played on to the end, for this is the period of storm and stress, of alternate reproaches and caresses, from which Benjamin Constant escaped finally to the side of his less exacting Charlotte.

After spending some weeks in the company of a hostess who could converse half the day and most of the night with no sign of fatigue, it is not strange that Benjamin Constant sometimes found himself wearied by the mental activity of Coppet, where "more intellect was dispensed in one day than in one year in many lands," or that Bonstettin said that after a visit to the château, "One appreciated the conversation of insipid people who made no demand upon one's intellect." And brilliant as was that of the hostess, her guests doubtless hailed as a relief from mental strain occasional days when she became so much absorbed in her writing that she ceased for a while to converse, and they were free to wander at will through the beautiful park, or to gather around the Récamier sofa, still to be seen in one corner of the salon, where the lovely Juliette held her court.

Madame Récamier, like Benjamin Constant, Sismondi, and many other distinguished persons who had incurred the displeasure of Napoleon, found what seems to us a gilded exile at Coppet in the home of the Emperor's arch-enemy. The close friendship of Germaine de Staël and Juliette Récamier, even cemented as it was by the common bond of misfortune, is difficult to understand. That Madame de Staël kept by her side

for years a woman whose remarkable beauty and sympathetic charm brought out in strong contrast her own personal defects, presupposes a generosity of spirit for which few persons give this supremely egotistical woman credit. She always spoke of Madame Récamier in rapturous terms, and her "belle Juliette" and her "dear angel" seems to have been free under the eyes of her hostess to capture such noble and learned lovers as Mathieu de Montmorency, Prince Augustus of Prussia, Ampère, and Chateaubriand. It was only when that ill-named Benjamin Constant allowed his unstable affections to wander from the dahlia to the lily that Germaine de Staël's anger was aroused against her friend. For a short period Madame Récamier ceased to be the "belle Juliette" and the "dear angel" of the mistress of Coppet until, with a truly angelic sweetness of temper and infinite tact, she made Germaine understand that she had no desire to carry off her recreant lover and so the friendship continued to the end.

If it is difficult to understand the long friendship of Madame de Staël and Juliette Récamier, it is quite impossible to follow with any comprehension or sympathy the various loves of Germaine. One can perhaps understand that after Benjamin Constant had escaped from her stormy endearments she could turn for solace to young Albert Rocca, and yet why did she still cling to Benjamin's outworn affection, and then, with naïve inconsistency, declare that he had not been the supreme object of her devotion, but that Narbonne, Talleyrand and Mathieu de

Montmorency were the three men whom she had most deeply loved?

Lydia said something of this, as we passed through the gate of the château, upon which an elderly woman, who had been one of the guide's party, turned to us and said abruptly, "Artistic temperament! Men have been allowed a monopoly of all the advantages belonging to the artistic temperament for so many years that it seems only fair to cover over the delinquencies of women of such unquestioned genius as Germaine de Staël and George Sand with the same mantle of charity."

These words of truth and soberness were spoken in a tone of authority, almost of finality, and yet in the stranger's eyes there shone so kindly and genial a light that far from being repelled by them, we found ourselves discussing with her the loves of poets and philosophers as we descended the steep hill that leads from the château to the garden café at its foot. Here, led on by the pleasant comradeship induced by travel, we continued our discussion over cups of tea and buns, while Mont Blanc glowed to rose in the sunset light, and we wondered again how Madame de Staël could ever have looked upon the shores of this beautiful lake as a "terrible country," even if it was for her a "land of exile."

You will think that we have had enough pleasure and interest for one afternoon, but you must remember that this is our one day in Geneva, and although we have all been here before, we have never seen Ferney. Walter discovered, in looking over the local guidebook, that this is the day for Ferney, and that it is open

until six o'clock. He found that we had an hour after reaching the boat landing. Walter secured an automobile and we set forth for the home of Voltaire, which is really very near Geneva.

It was interesting to see the old philosopher's rooms and the gardens, from which there is an extended view of the lake and mountains; but most impressive after all is the little church which he built in his old age, with the inscription on one end:

DEO EREXIT VOLTAIRE MDCCLXI

Walter has suddenly conceived the idea that there are some valuable coins well worth a visit in the Ariana Museum which we passed on the way to Ferney, so we have decided to gain a half day here by taking an afternoon train to Dijon and stopping there over night. When you next hear from me it will be from Mary Stuart's pleasant land of France and probably from the Paris beloved of Germaine de Staël. Until then, *au revoir, ma belle.*

IV

EN ROUTE FOR TOURAINE

Hôtel de la Clôche, Dijon, August 26th.

We stopped at this interesting old town last night in order to break the long journey from Geneva to Paris. Dijon, which has only been to us a station to stop in long enough to change trains and to look upon longingly from the car windows, proves upon closer acquaintance to be a town of great interest. After a morning spent among its churches and ancient houses and in its museum, we were quite ready to echo the sentiments of an English lady whom we met at the *table d'hôte*, who spends weeks here instead of days, and wonders why travellers pass Dijon by when it is so much more worth while than many of the places they are going to. So much is left of the ancient churches and buildings to remind one of the romantic and heroic history of Dijon, that it seems eminently fitting that we should make this stop-over, a visit to the capital city of Burgundy being a suitable prelude to a sojourn among the châteaux of the French kings, who had their own troubles with these powerful lords of the soil. The present Hôtel de Ville was once the palace of the Dukes of Burgundy. Little is now left of the original building with the exception of the ancient kitchens, and these, with their half-dozen great ventilating shafts, give one the impression that those

doughty old warriors had sensitive olfactories.

In the Cathedral of Saint Bénigne, who seems to be the patron saint of Dijon, are the remains of the great Dukes of Burgundy, although their magnificent tombs are in the museum. The Cathedral of Saint Bénigne has a lovely apse and other architectural charms; but Notre Dame captivated us utterly, so wonderful are its gargoyles representing man and beast with equal impartiality, their heads and shoulders emerging from a rich luxuriance of sculptured foliage, the whole indescribably beautiful and grotesque at the same time. It is not strange that the carved figure of a plump and well-fed Holy Father, with his book in one hand and food in the other, sitting beside an empty-handed and mild-faced sheep, should have called forth such lines as the following from some local poet, evidently intended for the remarks of the sheep:

"Les Esprits-Forts. Volontiers les humains s'apellent fortes-têtes
Qui la plupart du temps ne sont que bonnes bêtes
Et qui juste en raison de leurs étroits esprits
De leurs maigres pensers sont beaucoup trop épris."

"Les Esprits-Forts.

Volontiers les humains s'apellent fortes-têtes
Qui la plupart du temps ne sont que bonnes bêtes
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Other decorators and sculptors of these ancient buildings

have, like Fra Lippo Lippi, worked their own quaint conceits and humorous fancies into their canvases and marbles, and we to-day are filled with wonder at their cleverness, as well as over the excellence of their art, so exquisite is the carving of leaf and branch and vine. One would need to come often to the Galerie des Tours of Notre Dame to fully enjoy it, and other beauties of this church, whose tower is crowned by a curious clock with moving figures, called Jacquemart, after the Flemish mechanician Jacques Marc who designed it. The Jacquemart, with his pipe in his mouth, stolidly strikes the hours, undisturbed by the cold of winter or the heat of summer, as some Burgundian poet of the sixteenth century has set forth in a quaint rhyme.

Near the cathedral is a charmingly picturesque building called La Tour de Bar, where René d'Anjou, Duke of Bar and Lorraine, was imprisoned with his children. In the museum, which possesses many treasures in painting and sculpture, we saw the magnificently carved tombs of Philippe le Hardi and Jean Sans-Peur. Here, with angels at their heads and lions couchant at their feet, the effigies of these Dukes of Valois rest, surrounded by a wealth of sculpture and decoration almost unequalled. It would be well worth stopping over night at Dijon if only to see the magnificent tombs of these bold and unscrupulous old warriors and politicians. Jean Sans-Peur planned and accomplished the assassination of Louis d'Orléans and was himself overtaken by the assassin a few years later. The tomb of the boldest and bravest of them all, Charles le Téméraire, you may remember, we saw

at Bruges. The lion at the feet of the last Duke of Burgundy, with head upraised, seems to be guarding the repose of his royal master, who in his life found that neither statecraft nor armies could avail against the machinations of his arch-enemy, Louis XI.

Beautiful and impressive as are these tombs, the true glory of Dijon is that the great Bossuet was born here and St. Bernard so near, at Fontaine, that Dijon may claim him for her own; and Rameau, the celebrated composer; Rude, whose sculptures adorn the Arc de l'Etoile in Paris; Jouffroy, and a host of other celebrities, as we read in the names of the streets, parks, and boulevards, for Dijon, like so many French cities and towns, writes her history, art, literature, and science on her street corners and public squares, thus keeping the names of her great people before her children.

When we were studying routes in Geneva yesterday it seemed quite possible to go to Tours by Bourges and Saincaize, and thus secure a day in Bourges for the cathedral of Saint Etienne, which is said to be one of the most glorious in France, and not less interesting to see the house of the famous merchant-prince who supplied the depleted coffers of Charles VII, Jacques Cœur, the valiant heart to whom nothing was impossible, as his motto sets forth. At the tourist office we were told that such a crosscut to Tours was quite out of the question, impossible, and that the only route to the château country was via Paris. It seemed to us a quite useless waste of time and strength to go northward to Paris and then down again to Tours, which is south

and a little west, but having no knowledge on the subject and no Bradshaw with us to prove our point, we accepted the ultimatum, although Miss Cassandra relieved her feelings by saying that she did not believe a word of it, and that tourist's agents were a stiff-necked and untoward generation, and that she for her part felt sure that we could cut across the country to Saincaize and Bourges. However, when we hear the questions that are asked these long-suffering agents at the tourist offices by people who do not seem to understand explanations in any language, even their own, we wonder that they have any good nature left, whatever their birthright of amiability may have been. Here, in Dijon, we find that we could have carried out our charming little plan, and Walter, realizing my disappointment, suggests that we take an automobile from here to Saincaize and then go by a train to Bourges and Tours. This sounds quite delightful, but our Quaker lady, having turned her face toward the gay capital, demurs, saying that "We have started to Paris, and to Paris we had better go, especially as our trunks have been sent on in advance, and it really is not safe to have one's luggage long out of one's sight in a strange country." This last argument proved conclusive, and we yielded, as we usually do, to Miss Cassandra's arguments, although we generally make a pretence of discussing the pros and cons.

Paris, August 29th.

When we reached Paris on Saturday we soon found out why we had come here, to use the rather obscure phrasing of the man

of the party, for it speedily transpired that Miss Cassandra had brought us here with deliberate intent to lead us from the straight and narrow path of sightseeing into the devious and beguiling ways of the *modiste*. She has for some reason set her heart upon having two Paris gowns, one for the house and one for the street, and Lydia and I, being too humane to leave her unprotected in the hands of a dressmaker who speaks no English, spent one whole afternoon amid the intricacies of broadcloth, messaline, and chiffon. Of course we ordered some gowns for ourselves as a time-saving measure, although I really do not think it is usually worth while to waste one's precious hours over clothes when there is so much to be done that is better worth while. However, the shades of mauve, and all the variants of purple, which are set forth so alluringly in the windows are enough to tempt an anchorite, and no more decided color attracts us, as blues and greens seem crude and startling beside these soft shades, which came in with the half-mourning for King Edward and are still affected by Parisians of good taste.

Our Quaker lady has become so gay and worldly-minded, since her signal triumph with the American countesses in her merry widow, that we are continually reminded of the "Rejuvenation of Aunt Mary," and Lydia and I have to be on the alert to draw her away from the attractions of windows where millinery is displayed, lest she insist on investing in a grenadier, or in that later and even more grotesque device of the *modiste*, the "Chantecler."

To compensate for the time lost at the dressmakers, we had two long beautiful mornings at the Louvre and a Sunday afternoon at the Luxembourg, followed by a cup of tea and a pleasant, sociable half-hour at the Students' Hostel, on the Boulevard Saint-Michel, a delightful, homelike inn where many young women who are studying in Paris find a home amid congenial surroundings. A little oasis in the desert of a lonesome student life, this friendly hostel seemed to us. Several women whom we knew at home were pouring tea, and we met some nice English and American girls who are studying art and music, and the tea and buns brought to us by friendly hands made the simple afternoon tea take upon it something of the nature of a lovefeast, so warm and kindly was the welcome accorded us.

Pension B—, Tours, August 30th.

We left Paris yesterday from the Station Quai d'Orsay for our journey of three and a half hours to Tours. So near to Paris is this château land of Touraine that we wonder why we have not all been journeying this way full many a year, instead of waiting to be caught up and borne hither by the tide of fashion, especially as our route lay through a land filled with historic and romantic associations. It is impossible to pass through this flat but picturesque country, with its winding rivers and white roads shaded by tall poplars, and by such old gray towns as Étampes, Orléans, Blois, and Amboise, without recalling the delight with which we have wandered here in such goodly company as that of Brantôme, Balzac, Dumas, and Madame de Sévigné.

It was upon this same Loire, which winds around many a château before it throws itself into the sea, that Madame de Sévigné described herself as setting forth from Tours at 5 o'clock on a May morning, in a boat, and in the most beautiful weather in the world.

These boats on the Loire, as described by Madame de Sévigné, were evidently somewhat like gondolas. "I have the body of my *grande carosse* so arranged," she wrote, "that the sun could not trouble us; we lowered the glasses; the opening in front made a marvellous picture, all the points of view that you can imagine. Only the Abbé and I were in this little compartment on good cushions and in fine air, much at our ease, altogether like *cochons sur la paille*. We had *potage et du boulli*, quite warm, as there is a little furnace here; one eats on a ship's plank like the king and queen; from which you see how everything is *raffiné* upon our Loire!"

Down this same river M. Fouquet, the great financier, fled from the wrath of his royal master and the bitter hatred of his rival Colbert. On the swift current the lighter sped, carried along by it and the eight rowers toward Nantes and Fouquet's own fortress of Belle Isle, only to be overtaken by Colbert's boat with its twelve sturdy oarsmen. Whatever may have been the sins of Fouquet, he had so many charming traits and was so beloved by the great writers of France—Molière, La Fontaine, Madame de Sévigné, Pelisson, and all the rest whom he gathered around him at his château—that our sympathies are with him rather than

with the cold and calculating Colbert. Putting their hands into the public coffers was so much the habit of the financiers and royal almoners of that period that we quite resent Fouquet's being singled out for the horrible punishment inflicted upon him, and after all he may not have been guilty, as justice often went far astray in those days, as in later times.

Whether or not M. Fouquet was the "Man with the Iron Mask," as some authorities relate, we shall probably never know. Walter, who is not a fanciful person, as you are aware, is inclined to believe that he was, although his beloved Dumas has invented a highly dramatic tale which makes a twin brother of Louis XIV, the mysterious "Man with the Iron Mask."

In the goodly company of Madame de Sévigné, her *fablier*, as she dubbed La Fontaine, M. Fouquet, and our old friends the three Guardsmen, you may believe that the journey from Paris to Tours did not seem long to us. I must tell you of one contretemps, however, in case you, like us, take the express train from the Quai d'Orsay. Instead of being carried to our destination, which is a railroad courtesy that one naturally expects, we were dumped out at a place about twenty miles from Tours. We had our books and papers all around us, and were enjoying sole possession of the compartment, when we were suddenly told to put away our playthings and change cars. We asked "Why?" as we had understood that this was a through train, but the only response that we could get from the guard was, "St. Pierre le Corps, change cars for Tours!" So bag and baggage, with not a porter in sight

to help us, and Walter loaded like a dromedary with dress-suit cases and parcels, we were hurried across a dozen railroad tracks to a train which was apparently waiting for us.

"What does it all mean?" exclaimed Miss Cassandra. "What have we to do with St. Peter and his body? St. Martin and his cloak are what we naturally expect here."

"To be sure," we all exclaimed in a breath, but we had actually forgotten that St. Martin was the patron saint of Tours.

Miss Cassandra is worth a dozen guidebooks, as she always gives us her information when we want it, and we want it at every step in this old Touraine, which is filled with history and romance. She also reminds us that between Tours and Poitiers was fought the great battle between the Saracen invaders and the French, under Charles Martel, which turned back the tide of Mohammedism and secured for France and Europe the blessings of Christianity, and that in the Château of Plessis-les-Tours the famous treaty was made between Henry III and his kinsman, Henry of Navarre, which brought together under one flag the League, the Reformers, and the Royalists of France.

As we drove from the station to the hotel, the coachman pointed out to us the new church of St. Martin, which occupies a portion of the site of the vast basilica of which two picturesque towers alone remain. We hope for a nearer view of it to-morrow, and of St. Gatien, whose double towers we can see from our windows at the Pension B—.

We had expected to stop at the Hôtel de l'Univers, which Mr.

Henry James and all the other great folk honor with their regard; but finding no accommodations there we are temporarily lodged at this excellent pension. Although called a hotel by courtesy, this house possesses all the characteristics of a pension in good standing. There is no office, nothing to suggest the passing of the coin of the realm between ourselves and the proprietors. We are treated like honored guests by the ancient porter and the other domestics; but of Madame, our hostess, we have only fleeting visions in the hall and on the stairway, usually in a pink *matinée*. Monsieur materializes on occasions when we need postage stamps and change, and is most accommodating in looking up train times for us. Above all, and most characteristic of all, there is in the *salle à manger* a long table surrounded by a dozen or more of our countrywomen, *en voyage* like ourselves.

Walter was at first somewhat disconcerted by this formidable array of womankind without a man in sight, and at the dinner table confided to me his sentiments regarding pensions in rather strong language, insisting that it was like being in a convent, or a young ladies' seminary, except that he had noticed that most of the ladies were not painfully young, all this in an undertone, of course, when lo! as if in answer to his lament, a man appeared and seated himself modestly, as befitted his minority sex, at a side table by his wife. Walter now having some one to keep him in countenance, we shall probably remain where we are and indeed a harder heart than his, even a heart of stone, could not fail to be touched by Miss Cassandra's delight at being surrounded by

her compatriots, and able to speak her own language once more with freedom. The joyous manner in which she expands socially, and scintillates conversationally, proves how keen her sufferings must have been in the uncomprehending and unrequiting circles in which we have been living. It goes without saying that she soon became the centre of attraction at table, and so thrilled her audience by a spirited recital of her adventures at the Villa Carlotta that the other man cried, "Bravo!" from his side table, without waiting for the formality of an introduction.

"Quite different," as Walter says, "from the punctilious gentlemen in the 'Bab Ballads' who couldn't eat the oysters on the desert island without being duly presented."

Our new acquaintances are already planning tours for us to the different châteaux of the Loire, while Walter and his companion, who proves to be a United States Army man and quite a delightful person, are smoking in the garden. This garden upon which our long windows open, with its many flowers and shrubs and the largest ginkgo tree I have ever seen, would hold us fast by its charms were the Pension B— less comfortable than it is.

V

IN AND AROUND TOURS

Pension B—, Tours, August 31st.

We set forth this morning on a voyage of discovery, and on foot, which is the only satisfactory way to explore this old town, with its winding streets and quaint byways and corners.

Our first visit was to the church of St. Martin of Tours, in the Rue des Halles, which brought with it some disappointment, as instead of a building so old that no one can give its date, we found a fine new church, in whose crypt are the remains of St. Martin. The most ancient basilica of St. Martin was erected soon after the death of the benevolent saint, whose remains were carried by faithful members of his diocese from Candes, where he died in the beginning of the fifth century. This basilica was burned down in the tenth century, and another erected on its site some years later. This last basilica, built in the twelfth or thirteenth century, of vast size and beauty, was certainly old enough to have been treated with respect, and its destruction a few years ago to make way for a new street was, as Walter says, an act of vandalism worthy of the councilmen of an American city. Of the old church only two towers remain, the Tour de Charlemagne and the Tour de l'Horloge, and the gallery of one of the cloisters. Over this imperfect arcade, with its exquisite

carvings of arabesques, flowers, fruits, cherubs, and griffins, Mr. Henry James waxed eloquent, and Mrs. Mark Pattison said of it: "Of these beautiful galleries the eastern side alone has survived, and being little known it has fortunately not been restored, and left to go quietly to ruin. Yet even in its present condition the sculptures with which it is enriched, the bas reliefs, arabesques, and medallions which fill the delicate lines of the pilasters and arcades testify to the brilliant and decided character which the Renaissance early assumed in Touraine."

If the present church of St. Martin was disappointingly new, we found the Cathedral of St. Gatien sufficiently ancient, with its choir dating back to the thirteenth century and its transept to the fourteenth, while the newels of the two towers belong to a very much earlier church dedicated to the first Bishop of Tours, and partly destroyed by fire in 1166.



Neurdein Freres, Photo.

Staircase and Cloître de la Psallette, St. Gatien

Who St. Gatien was, and why he had a cathedral built in his honor, even Miss Cassandra and Lydia do not know, and we have no good histories or Lives of the Saints to refer to; verily one would need a traveller's library of many volumes in order to answer the many questions that occur to us in this city, which is so full of old French history, and English history, too. Indeed it is quite impossible to separate them at this period, when England owned so much of France and, as Miss Cassandra says, her kings were always looking out of the windows of their French castles upon some Naboth's vineyard that they were planning to seize

from their neighbors.

"Jolly old robbers they were," says Walter, "and always on top when there was any fighting to be done. I must say, quite aside from the question of right or wrong, that I have much more sympathy with them than with the Johnny Crapauds. Here, in this foreign land of France, the Plantagenet kings seem quite our own, and only a few removes in consanguinity from our early Presidents."

We were glad to lay claim to the Cathedral of St. Gatien, which in a way belongs to us, as the choir was begun by Henry II of England, although it is to be regretted that a quarrel between this Plantagenet king and Louis VII resulted in a fire which destroyed much of the good work. We lingered long in the cloisters, and climbed up the royal staircase, with its beautiful openwork vaulting to the north tower, from whose top we may see as far as Azay-le-Rideau on a clear day.

This was, of course, not a clear day, as we are having hazy August weather, so we did not see Azay, but from the tower we gained quite a good idea of the general plan of Tours, and stopped long enough in the cloisters to learn that the picturesque little gallery, called the Cloître de la Psallette, was the place where the choir boys were once trained. The façade of this cathedral seemed to us a beautiful example of Renaissance style, although said to offend many of the canons of architecture. We are thankful that we do not know enough about the principles of architecture to be offended by so beautiful a creation, and

inside the church we were so charmed by the exquisite old glass, staining the marble pillars with red, blue and violet, that we failed to notice that the aisles are too narrow for perfect harmony. The jewel-like glass of the Lady Chapel was brought here from the old church of St. Julian in the Rue Nationale, once the Rue Royale, and is especially lovely.

In a chapel in the right-hand transept we saw the tomb of the little children of Charles VIII and Anne of Brittany, by whose early death the throne of France passed to the Valois branch of the Orleans family. Looking at the faces of these two children sleeping here side by side, the little one with his hands under the ermine marble, the elder with his small hands folded piously together, a wave of sympathy passed over us for the unhappy mother who was in a few months deprived of both her precious babies. As we stood by the tomb with its two quaint little figures, guarded by kneeling angels at their heads and feet, beautiful, appropriate, reverent, we wondered why modern sculptors fall so far behind the ancient in work of this sort. The moderns may know their anatomy better, but in sweetness and tender poetic expression the work of the old artists is infinitely superior. This charming little group was probably made by Michael Colombe, although it has been attributed to several other sculptors of the time.

After a visit to the archbishop's palace, and a short stop at the museum, which attracted us less than the outdoor world on this pleasant day, we stopped at the Quai du Pont Neuf to look at

the statues of Descartes and Rabelais, so picturesquely placed on each side of the Pont de Pierre. Retracing our steps by the Rue Nationale we strolled into the interesting old church of St. Julian, where we admired the vast nave of noble proportions and the beautiful stained glass. After wandering at will through several streets with no especial object in view, we found ourselves in a charming little park where we were interested in a monument to three good physicians of Tours, a recognition of valiant service to humanity that might well be followed by our American cities. Just here my inveterate American reminded me of the monument in Boston to the discoverer of ether, and that to Dr. Hahnemann in Washington.

"Both of them monstrosities of bad taste!" exclaimed Miss Cassandra, as we turned into the Rue Emile Zola, and along the Rue Nationale to the Palais de Justice, in one of whose gardens is a fine statue of the great novelist who was born in the Maison de Balzac, near by on the Rue Nationale. Through the streets George Sand and Victor Hugo, we found our way to the theatre and then back to the Boulevard Béranger, upon which our pension is situated.

"It is," as Miss Cassandra says, "a liberal education to walk through the streets of these old French towns, and whatever may be the shortcomings of the French, as a nation, they cannot be accused of forgetting their great people."

As we stroll through these thoroughfares and parks we are constantly reminded by a name on a street corner or a statue

that this Touraine is the land of Balzac, Rabelais, Descartes, and in a way of Ronsard and George Sand, as the châteaux of La Poissonnière and Nohant are not far away. Here they, and many another French writer, walked and dreamed, creating characters so lifelike that they also walk with us through these quaint streets and byways or look out from picturesque doorways. We can fancy the Curé de Tours emerging from the lovely Cloître de la Psallette of St. Gatien or the still lovelier cloister of old St. Martin's; or we can see poor Félex de Vandenesse making his way across the park, Emile Zola, with his meagre lunch basket on his arm. We have not yet tasted the *rillons* and *rillettes* so prized by the school children of Tours, and so longed for by Félex when he beheld them in the baskets of his more fortunate companions. Lydia reminds us that Balzac was at some pains to explain that this savory preparation of pork is seldom seen upon the aristocratic tables of Tours, and as our pension is strictly aristocratic and exclusive, it is doubtful if we ever see *rillons* and *rillettes* upon Madame B-'s table.

September 1st.

We crossed over the bridge this afternoon in a tram to Saint Symphorien, on whose hillside the original city of Tours was built. Here we saw an interesting Renaissance church, and passing through the streets of Vieux Calvaire l'Ermitage, Jeanne d'Arc and St. Gatien, gained the entrance to the Abbey of Marmoutier, where Saint Gatien dug out his cave in the rocky hillside. We also saw the ruins of a fine thirteenth century basilica

once the glory of Touraine, and by a spiral staircase ascended to the *Chapelle des Sept Dormants*, really a cavern cut in the side of the hill in the shape of a cross, where rest the seven disciples of St. Martin, who all died on the same day as he had predicted. Their bodies remained intact for days and many miracles were worked, which you may believe, or not, just as you choose. When the name of the chapel was revealed to Miss Cassandra she exclaimed: "I have heard of the Seven Sleepers all my life and have been likened unto them in my youth; but never did I expect to lay eyes upon their resting place, and very uncomfortable beds they must have been!"

"So it was St. Gatien who first brought Christianity to France. Some one of us should surely have known that," said Lydia, looking up from the pages of a small local guidebook, with a face so dejected over her own ignorance, and that of her companions, that Miss Cassandra said in her most soothing tones:

"Never mind, dear, you will probably find when we reach the next cathedral town that some other worthy and adored saint did this good work for France."

And sure enough, this very night we have been learning, from a short history that we picked up on a book stall, that, although St. Gatien came here on a mission from Rome in the third century, to St. Martin is due the spread of Christianity not only through Touraine but all over France.

Having done our duty in the line of sightseeing and historic associations, we rested from our labors for a brief season and

stopped to call on the Grants from New York, who are staying in a pleasant pension at St. Symphorien. Here we had an hour with them in the garden where many flowers are abloom, and exchanged travel experiences and home gossip over *brioche*s, the famous white wine of Vouvray and glasses of orange-flower water. Orange-flower water is the proper thing to drink here as it is made in large quantities in the neighborhood of Tours. As a refreshing and unintoxicating beverage it was highly recommended to our Quaker lady, who does not take kindly to the wine of the country, which is really guiltless of alcohol to any extent; but over this rather insipid drink she was not particularly enthusiastic. Like the English woman when she made her first acquaintance with terrapin, the most that Miss Cassandra could be induced to say was that the *eau des fleurs d'oranges sucrée* was not so very bad. The English dame, of course, said "it is not so very nasty"; but we have not become sufficiently Anglicized to say "nasty" in company. There is no knowing what we may come to when Angela joins us, as she has been visiting and motoring with Dr. McIvor's English and Scotch relations for the last six weeks and will have become quite a Britisher by the time we see her again. She is to meet us in Paris later in September, when her M.D. will join us for his vacation.

We returned home by the suspension bridge, built upon the site of an early bridge of boats. A later stone bridge was erected by Odo, Count of Blois and Touraine, "in order," as he recorded, "to make himself agreeable to God, useful to posterity and upon

the solicitations of his wife." These were very good reasons, it must be admitted, for building a bridge. The substructure of this old stone bridge, the first of its kind in France, may be seen below the surface of the water a little farther up the stream.

Royalty seems to have had the good taste to spend much time in Touraine during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, and small wonder we thought, for this fertile well-watered plain combines the advantages of north and south, and is hospitable to the fruits and flowers of many climates. Louis XI, in his declining years, sought refuge here from the chill winds of Paris, which are tempered in Touraine by the softer breezes of the Midi, and this ancient city of the Turones he wished to make the capital of the France that he had strengthened and unified. However we may abhor the despicable characteristics of this wily old politician and despot, we cannot afford to underestimate his constructive ability and his zeal for the glory of France.

September 2nd.

We drove out this morning through the little village of St. Anne to the old château of Plessis-les-Tours, which Louis built and fortified to suit his fancy and his fears, for great and powerful as he was he seems to have been a most timid mortal. Of the "hidden pitfalls, snares and gins" with which the old King surrounded his castle we could not expect to find a trace, but we were disappointed to see nothing left of the three external battlemented walls or the three gates and dungeon-keep, which Sir Walter Scott described, the latter rising "like a black

Ethiopian giant high into the air."

With our Quentin Durward in our hands, we read of Plessis-les-Tours as the novelist pictured it for us in the light of romance. Of course Sir Walter never saw this château, but like many other places that he was not able to visit, it was described to him by his friend and neighbor, Mr. James Skene, Laird of Rubislaw, who while travelling in France kept an accurate diary, enlivened by a number of clever drawings, all of which he placed at the novelist's disposal. From this journal, says Lockhart, Sir Walter took the substance of the original introduction to Quentin Durward. As Mr. James Skene is said to have given his friend most accurate descriptions of the buildings and grounds, it is safe to conclude that the château has been entirely remodelled since the days when the young Scottish archer listened to the voice of the Countess Isabelle, as she sang to the accompaniment of her lute while he acted as sentinel in the "spacious latticed gallery" of the château. It is needless to say that we failed to discover the spacious gallery or the maze of stairs, vaults, and galleries above and under ground which are described as leading to it. Nor did we see any traces of the fleur-de-lis, ermines, and porcupines which are said to have adorned the walls at a later date. Indeed the empty, unfurnished rooms and halls, guiltless of paintings or tapestries, were so dismal that we hurried through them. As if to add an additional note of discord to the inharmonious interior, a "vaccination museum" has been established in one of the ancient rooms. We stopped a moment to look at the numerous caricatures of the

new method of preventing the ravages of smallpox; one, that especially entertained Walter, represented the medical faculty as a donkey in glasses charged upon by vaccine in the form of a furious cow.

We hoped to find in the grounds some compensation for the cheerlessness of the interior of the castle; but here again we were doomed to disappointment. The vast lawn and extensive parterres, which caused the park of Plessis-les-Tours to be spoken of as the Garden of France, have long since disappeared, and all that we could find was a grass-grown yard with some neglected flower beds, surrounded by a hedge of fusane, a kind of laurel with a small white flower that grows here in great profusion. We made an effort to see, or to fancy that we saw, an underground passage that was pointed out to us as that which once led to the dungeon upon whose stone foundation was placed the iron cage in which Cardinal la Balue was confined. Of the series of fosses which once enclosed the château we found some remains, but of the solid ramparts flanked by towers, where a band of archers were once posted by night and day, and of the bristling *chevaux-de-frise* nothing was to be seen. Walter wishes you to tell Allen that the greatest disappointment of all is that there is no oak forest anywhere near Plessis from whose boughs the victims of Louis were wont to hang "like so many acorns," one of Scott's bits of realism that appealed to his boyish imagination.

We were glad to turn our backs upon the modern brick

building which occupies the site of the ancient stronghold of Plessis and to drive home by a farm called La Rabatière, whose fifteenth century building is said to have been the manor house of Olivier le Daim, familiarly called Olivier le Diable, the barber-minister of Louis. Our driver, who is somewhat of an historian, and like a loyal Tournageau is proud of the associations of his town, good and bad alike, was delighted to show us this old home of Olivier who was, he informed us, the executioner of his master's enemies of high degree, while Tristan l'Hermite attended to those of less distinction, having, as Louis warned Quentin, "For him whose tongue wagged too freely an amulet for the throat which never failed to work a certain cure." The house of Tristan, our *cocher* told us, we should find in one of the narrow streets of the old part of Tours, which we have not yet explored.

VI

LANGEAIS AND AZAY-LE-RIDEAU

Pension B—, Tours, September 3rd.

When we started toward Langeais this afternoon we were pleased to think that our way was much the same as that which Félix took in search of his "Lily of the Valley." The Loire lay before us just as he described it,— "a long watery ribbon which glistens in the sun between two green banks, the rows of poplars which deck this vale of love with moving tracery, the oak woods reaching forward between the vineyards on the hillsides which are rounded by the river into constant variety, the soft outlines crossing each other and fading to the horizon."



Mediaeval Stairway, Château of Luynes

We passed by Luynes, whose steep hillside steps we shall mount some day to see the fine view of the river and valley from the outer walls and terrace of the château, as its doors are said to be inhospitable to those who wish to inspect the interior. This afternoon Langeais and Azay-le-Rideau are beckoning us, although we were tempted to stop for a nearer view of the strange Pile de Cinq Mars, which is, we are told, an unsolved architectural puzzle. The most probable explanation is that this lofty tower was once part of a signalling system, by beacon fires, which flamed messages along the valley, past Luynes to the Lantern of Rochecorbon and as far eastward as Amboise.

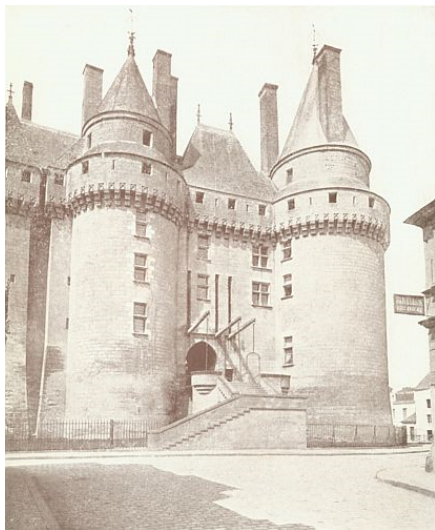
Although there are the ruins of a castle of the same name quite near the Pile de Cinq Mars, the home of Henry d'Effiat, Marquis de Cinq Mars, seems to have been at Chaumont, where Alfred de Vigny placed the opening scenes of his novel.

To compensate for our disappointing morning at Plessis-les-Tours, we had an entirely satisfactory afternoon at Langeais, where we beheld a veritable fortress of ancient times. At a first glance we were as much interested in the little gray town of Langeais, which is charmingly situated on the right bank of the Loire, as in the château itself, whose façade is gloomy and austere, a true mediæval fortress, "with moat, drawbridge, and portcullis still in working order," as Walter expresses it. As we stood on the stone steps at the entrance between the great frowning towers waiting for the portcullis to be raised, we felt as if we might be in a Scott or Dumas novel, especially as our Quaker lady repeated in her own dramatic fashion:

". . . . And darest thou then
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall?
And hopest thou hence unscathed to go?
No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no!
Up drawbridge, grooms—what, warder, ho!
Let the portcullis fall."

Lord Marmion turn'd,—well was his need,—
And dashed the rowels in his steed,

Like arrow through the archway sprung,
The ponderous gate behind him rung;
To pass there was such scanty room,
The bars, descending, razed his plume.



Entrance to Langeais, with Drawbridge

Fortunately for us the portcullis rose instead of falling, and so, with plumes unscathed, we passed through the doorway, and as if to add to the *vraisemblance* of the situation and make us feel quite mediæval, soldiers stood on each side of the entrance, apparently on guard, and it was not until after we had entered the château that we discovered them to be visitors like ourselves.

If the façade of Langeais, with its severe simplicity and solidity, its great stone towers, massive walls, *chemin de ronde* and machiolated cornices, gave us an impression of power and majesty, we found that it also had a smiling face turned toward the hill and the lovely gardens. Here the windows open upon a lawn with turf as green and velvety as that of England, and parterres of flowers laid out in all manner of geometrical figures. From a court basking in sunshine, two beautiful Renaissance doors lead into the castle. Through one of them we passed into a small room in which the inevitable postcards and souvenirs were sold by a pretty little dark-eyed French woman, who acted as our guide through the castle. We begged her to stand near the vine-decked doorway to have her photograph taken, which she did with cheerful alacrity. Some soldiers, who were buying souvenirs, stepped through the doorway just in time to come into the picture, their red uniforms adding a delightful touch of color as they stood out against the gray walls of the château. It was a charming scene which we hoped to be able to send you, but alas! a cloud passed over the sun, and this, with the dark stone background, made too dull a setting, and by the time the sun was out again our guide was in request to take a party of tourists through the château, ourselves among them. Langeais is so popular during this busy touring season that hours and turns are strictly observed.

One of the soldiers is evidently the *cher ami* of our pretty Eloisa, who waved her little hand to him as she sent a coquettish

glance from her fine eyes in his direction, and threw him a kiss, after which she applied herself to her task as cicerone, conducting us from room to room, enlarging upon the history and associations of the château, and explaining to us that of the original castle, built by Foulques Nerra, or "Fulk the Black," in 990, only the ruinous donjon keep is to be seen beyond the gardens. The present château is of much later date, and was built by Jean Bourré, comptroller of the finances for Normandy under Louis XI, who was granted letters patent of nobility and the captaincy of Langeais about 1465. After listening to thrilling tales of the barbarous cruelty of Fulk the Black, Count of Anjou, who had his first wife burned at the stake and made himself very disagreeable in other ways, as our guide naïvely remarked in French of the purest Touraine brand, Lydia exclaimed, "The more perfect the French, the easier it is to understand!"

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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