

FAIRBANKS CHARLES BULLARD

MY UNKNOWN CHUM:
"AGUECHEEK"

Charles Fairbanks

My Unknown Chum: "Aguecheek"

«Public Domain»

Fairbanks C.

My Unknown Chum: "Aguecheek" / C. Fairbanks — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

FOREWORD	5
SKETCHES OF FOREIGN TRAVEL	7
A PASSAGE ACROSS THE ATLANTIC	7
LONDON	13
ANTWERP AND BRUSSELS	18
GENOA AND FLORENCE	22
ANCIENT ROME	27
MODERN ROME	31
ROME TO MARSEILLES	36
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	40

Charles Bullard Fairbanks

My Unknown Chum: «Aguecheek»

FOREWORD

Life is too short for reading inferior books.

Bryce.

In 1878 a letter of introduction to Mr. S – of Detroit was instrumental in securing for me the close friendship of a man some twenty years my senior – a man of unusual poise of mind and of such superb character that I have ever looked upon him as a perfect type of Newman's ideal gentleman.

My new friend was fond of all that is best in art and literature. His pet possession, however, was an old book long out of print – "Aguecheek." He spoke to me of its classic charm and of the recurring pleasure he found in reading and rereading the delightful pages of its unknown author, who saw in travel, in art, in literature, in life and humanity, much that other travellers and other writers and scholars had failed to observe – seeing all with a purity of vision, a clearness of intellect, and recording it with a grace and ease of phrase that suggest that he himself had perhaps been taught by the Angelic Doctor referred to in the closing lines of his last essay.

A proffered loan of the book was eagerly accepted. Though still in my teens, I soon became a convert to all that my cultured friend had said in its praise.

With the aid of a Murray Street dealer in old books, I was fortunate enough to get a copy for myself. I read it again and again. Obligated to travel much, I was rarely without its companionship; for I knew that if other reading-matter proved uninteresting, I could always find some new conversational charm in the views and words of the World-Conversant Author.

Fearing that I weighed the merits of the work with a mental scale wanting in balance, I asked others what they thought of it. Much to my surprise, they had never even heard of it. In fact, in these thirty-four years I have found but three persons who knew the book at all. Recently at The Players I asked Mr. Evert Jansen Wendell if he knew "Aguecheek." "Why," said he, "it was in my hands only yesterday. It is in my library – my dramatic library." The late John E. Grote Higgins, President of the St. George Society, knew its interesting pages well; and it is, I am assured, a "prized unit" in the library of His Eminence Cardinal Farley.

I lent my copy to young and old, to men and women of various professions and to friends in the world of commerce. The opinion of all might be summed up in the appreciation of a well-known Monsignor – himself an observant traveller and an ardent lover of "real" literature. Returning the book, he said, "I have read it with the greatest of pleasure, and have turned to it often. I could read it a hundred times. It is a great book. Its fine humor, its depth, its simplicity and high ideals, commend it to all, especially the highly educated – the scholar."

Charles B. Fairbanks is the reputed author, but the records show that he died in 1859, when but thirty-two years old – an age that the text repeatedly discredits. Whether written by Mr. Fairbanks or not, the modest author hid his identity in an obscure pen-name that he might thus be free to make his book "his heart in other men's hands."

Some necessary changes have been made in the text. In offering the book to the public and in reluctantly changing the title, I am but following the insistent advice of friends – critics and scholars – whose judgment is superior to my own. No one seemed to know the meaning of "Aguecheek" (taken, no doubt, from a character in "Twelfth Night"), and few could even spell or pronounce the word; moreover, there is not the remotest connection between title and text. The old book has been the best

of comrades, "the joy of my youth, the consolation of my riper years." If the new name lacks dignity as well as euphony, the reader will, I am sure, understand and appreciate the spirit of affection that inspired "My Unknown Chum."

Henry Garrity.

SKETCHES OF FOREIGN TRAVEL

A PASSAGE ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

"To an American visiting Europe for the first time," saith Geoffrey Crayon, "the long voyage which he has to make is an excellent preparative." To the greater proportion of those who revisit the old world, the voyage is only an interval of ennui and impatience. Not such is it to the writer of this sentence. For him the sea has charms which age cannot wither, nor head winds abate. For him the voyage is a retreat from the cares of business, a rest from the pursuit of wealth, and a prolonged reminiscence of his youthful days, when he first trod the same restless pathway, and the glories of England and the Continent rose up resplendent before him, very much as the gorgeous city in the clouds looms up before the young gentleman in one of the late lamented Mr. Cole's pictures. For it is a satisfaction to him to remember that such things were, – even though the performances of life have not by any means equalled the promises of the programme of youth, – though age and the cares of an increasing family have stifled poetry, and the genius of Romance has long since taken his hat.

The recollections of youthful Mediterranean voyages are a mine of wealth to an old man. They have transformed ancient history into a majestic reality for him, and the pages of his dog's-eared Lemprière become instinct with life as he recalls those halcyon days when he reclined on deck beneath an awning, and gazed on Crete and Lesbos, and the mountains that look on Marathon. Neither age nor misfortune can ever rob him of the joy he feels when he looks back to the cloudless afternoon when he passed from the stormy Atlantic to that blue inland sea, – when he saw where Africa has so long striven to shake hands with Europe, – and thrilled at the thought that the sea then glowing with the hues of sunset was once ploughed by the invincible galleys of the Cæsars, and dashed its angry surges over the shipwrecked Apostle of the Gentiles.

It is rather a pleasant thing to report one's self on board a fine packet ship on a bright morning in May – the old portmanteau packed again, and thoughts turned seaward. There is a kind of inspiration in the song of the sailors at the windlass, (that is, as many of them as are able to maintain a perpendicular position at that early period of the voyage;) the very clanking of the anchor chains seems to speak of speedy liberation, and the ship sways about as if yearning for the freedom of the open sea. At last the anchor is up, and the ship swings around, and soon is gliding down the channel; and slowly the new gasometer, and Bunker Hill Monument, and the old gasometer (with the dome) on Beacon Hill, begin to diminish in size. (I might introduce a fine misquotation here about growing "small by degrees, and beautifully less," but that I don't like novelties in a correspondence like this.) The embankments of Fort Warren seem brighter and more verdurous than ever, and the dew-drops glitter in the sunbeams, as dear Nellie's tears did, when she said good-by, that very morning. Then, as we get into the bay, the tocsin calls to lunch – and the appetite for lobsters, sardines, ale, and olives makes us all forget how much we fear lest business of immediate importance may prevent an early return to the festive mahogany. And shortly after, the pilot takes his leave, and with him the small knot of friends, who have gone as far as friendship, circumstances, and the tide will allow. And so the voyage commences – the captain takes command – and all feel that the jib-boom points towards Motherland, and begin to calculate the distance, and anticipate the time when the ship shall be boarded by a blue-coated beef-eater, who will take her safely "round 'Oly'ead, and dock 'er." The day wears away, and the sunset finds the passengers well acquainted, and a healthy family feeling growing up among them. The next morning we greet the sea and skies, but not our mother earth. The breeze is light – the weather is fine – so that the breakfast is discussed before a full bench. Every body feels well, but sleepy, and the day is spent in conversation and enjoyment of the novelty of life at sea. The gentle heaving of the ocean is rather agreeable than otherwise, and the young ladies promenade

the deck, and flatter themselves that they have (if I might use such an expression) their sea legs on. But the next day the gentle heaving has become a heavy swell, – locomotion is attended with great difficulties, – the process of dressing is a severe practical joke, – and the timorous approach to the breakfast table and precipitous retreat from it, are very interesting studies to a disinterested spectator. The dining-saloon is thinly populated when the bell rings – the gentlemen preferring to lounge about on deck – they have slight headaches – not seasick – of course not – the gentleman who had taken eight sherry cobblers was not intoxicated at all – it was a glass of lemonade, that he took afterwards, that disagreed with him and made his footing rather unsteady. But Neptune is inexorable, and exacts his tribute, and the payers show their receipts in pale faces and dull eyes, whether they acknowledge it or no; and many a poor victim curses the pernicious hour that ever saw him shipped, and comes to the Irishman's conclusion that the pleasantest part of going away from home is the getting back again.

But a few days suffice to set all minds and stomachs at rest, and we settle down into the ordinary routine of life at sea. The days glide by rapidly, as Shakspeare says, "with books, and work, and healthful play," and as we take a retrospective view of the passage, it seems to be a maze of books, backgammon, bad jokes, cigars, *crochet*, cribbage, and conversation. Contentment obtains absolute sway, which even ten days of head winds and calms cannot shake off. Perhaps this is owing in a great measure to the good temper and gentlemanly bearing of the captain, who never yielded to the temptation, before which so many intrepid mariners have fallen, to speak in disrespectful and condemnatory terms of the weather. How varied must be the qualities which make a good commander of a packet ship; what a model of patience he must be – patience not only with the winds, but also with variable elements of humanity which surround him. He must have a good word for every body and a smiling face, although he knows that the ship will not head her course by four points of the compass on either tack; and must put aside with a jest the unconscious professional gentleman whose hat intervenes between his sextant and the horizon. In short, he must possess in an eminent degree what Virgil calls the *suaviter in what's-his-name* with the *fortiter in what-d'ye-call-it*. I am much disposed to think that had Job been a sea captain with a protracted head wind, the land of Uz would not have attained celebrity as the abode of the most patient of men.

An eminent Boston divine, not long since deceased, who was noted alike for his Johnsonian style and his very un-Johnsonian meekness of manner, once said to a sea captain, "I have, sir, in the course of my professional career, encountered many gentlemen of your calling; but I really must say that I have never been powerfully impressed in a moral way by them, for their conversation abounded in expressions savouring more of strength than of righteousness; indeed, but few of them seemed capable of enunciating the simplest sentence without prefacing it with a profane allusion to the possible ultimate fate of their visual organs, which I will not shock your fastidiousness by repeating." The profanity of seafaring men has always been remarked; it has been a staple article for the lamentations of the moralist and the jests of the immoralist; but I must say that I am not greatly surprised at its prevalence, for when I have seen a thunder squall strike a ship at sea, and every effort was making to save the rent canvas, it has seemed to me as if those whose dealings were with the elements actually needed a stronger vocabulary than is required for less sublime transactions. To speak in ordinary terms on such occasions would be as absurd as the Cockney's application of the epithets "clever" and "neat" to Niagara. I am not attempting to palliate every-day profanity, for I was brought up in the abhorrence of it, having been taken at an early age from the care of the lady "who ran to catch me when I fell, and kissed the place to make it well," and placed in the country under the superintendence of a maiden aunt, who was very moral indeed, and who instilled her principles into my young heart with wonderful eloquence and power. "Andrew," she used to say to me, "you mustn't laugh in meetin'; I've no doubt that the man who was hung last week (for this was in those unenlightened days when the punishment of crime was deemed a duty, and not a sin) began his wicked course by laughing in meetin'; and just think, if you were to commit a murder – for those who murder will steal – and those who steal will swear and lie – and those who swear and lie will drink rum – and

then if they don't stop in their sinful ways, they get so bad that they will smoke cigars and break the Sabbath; and you know what becomes of 'em then."

The ordinary routine of life at sea, which is so irksome to most people, has a wonderful charm for me. There is something about a well-manned ship that commands my deepest enthusiasm. Each day is filled with a quiet and satisfactory kind of enjoyment. From that early hour of the morning when the captain turns out to see what is the prospect of the day, and to drink a mug of boiling coffee as strong as aquafortis, and as black as the newly-opened fluid Day & Martin, from No. 97, High Holborn, to that quiet time in the evening when that responsible functionary goes below and turns in, with a sententious instruction to the officer of the watch to "wake him at twelve, if there's any change in the weather," there is no moment that hangs heavy on my hands. I love the regular striking of the bells, reminding me every half hour how rapidly time and I are getting on. The regularity with which every thing goes on, from the early washing of the decks to the sweeping of the same at four bells in the evening, makes me think of those ancient monasteries in the south of Europe, where the unvarying round of duties creates a paradise which those who are subject to the unexpected fluctuations of common life might be pardoned for coveting. If the rude voices that swell the boisterous chorus which hoists the tugging studding-sail up by three-feet pulls, only imperfectly remind one of the sounds he hears when the full choir of the monastery makes the grim arches of the chapel vibrate with the solemn tones of the Gregorian chant, certainly the unbroken calmness of the morning watch may well be allowed to symbolize the rapt meditation and unspoken devotion which finds its home within the "studious cloister's pale"; and I may be pardoned for comparing the close attention of the captain and his mates in getting the sun's altitude and working out the ship's position to the "examination of conscience" among the devout dwellers in the convent, and the working out of the spiritual reckoning which shows them how much they have varied from the course laid down on the divine chart, and how far they are from the wished-for port of perfection.

I have a profound respect for the sea as a moral teacher. No man can be tossed about upon it without feeling his impotence and insignificance, and having his heart opened to the companions of his danger as it has never been opened before. The sea brings out the real character of every man; and those who journey over its "deep invisible paths" find themselves intrusting their most sacred confidences to the keeping of comparative strangers. The conventionalities of society cannot thrive in a salt atmosphere; and you shall be delighted to see how frank and agreeable the "world's people" can be when they are caught where the laws of fashion are silent, and what a wholesome neglect of personal appearances prevails among them when that sternest of democrats, Neptune, has placed them where they feel that it would be folly to try to produce an impression. The gentleman of the prize ring, whom Dickens introduces looking with admiration at the stately Mr. Dombey, gave it as his opinion that there was a way within the resources of science of "doubling-up" that incarnation of dignity; but, for the accomplishment of such an end, one good, pitching, head-sea would be far more effectual than all the resources of the "manly art." The most unbending assumption could not survive that dreadful sinking of the stomach, that convulsive clutch at the nearest object for support, and the faint, gurgling cry of "*stew'rd*" which announces that the victim has found his natural level.

A thorough novitiate of seasickness is as indispensable, in my opinion, to the formation of true manly character, as the measles to a well-regulated childhood. Mentally as well as corporeally, seasickness is a wonderful renovator. We are such victims of habit, so prone to run in a groove, (most of us in a groove that may well be called a "vicious circle,") that we need to be thoroughly shaken up, and made to take a new view of the *rationale* of our way of life. I do not believe that any man ever celebrated his recovery from that marine malady by eating the pickles and biscuit which always taste so good on such an occasion, without having acquired a new set of ideas, and being made generally wiser and better by his severe experience. I meet many unamiable persons "whene'er I take my walks abroad," who only need two days of seasickness to convert them into positive ornaments to society.

But, pardon me; all this has little to do with the voyage to Liverpool. The days follow each other rapidly, and it begins to seem as if the voyage would stretch out to the crack of doom, for the head wind stands by us with the constancy of a sheriff, and when that lacks power to retard us we have a calm. But the weather is beautiful, and all the time is spent in the open air. Nut brown maids work worsted and crochet on the cooler side of the deck, and gentlemen in rusty suits, with untrimmed beards, wearing the "shadowy livery of the burning sun," talk of the prospects of a fair wind or read innumerable novels. The evenings are spent in gazing at a cloudless sky, and promenading in the moonshine. Music lends its aid and banishes impatience; my young co-voyagers seem not to have forgotten "Sweet Home," and the "Old Folks at Home" would be very much gratified to know how green their memory is kept.

At length we all begin to grow tired of fair weather. The cloudless sky, the gorgeous sunrises and sunsets, and the bright blue sea, with its lazily spouting whales and its lively porpoises playing around our bows, – grow positively distasteful to us; and we begin to think that any change would be an agreeable one. We do not have to wait many days before we are awaked very early in the morning, by the throwing down of heavy cordage on deck, and the shouts of the sailors, and are soon aware that we are subject to an unusual motion – as if the ship were being propelled by a strong force over a corduroy road constructed on an enormous scale. Garments, which yesterday were content to hang in an orderly manner against the partitions of one's state-room, now obstinately persist in hanging at all sorts of peculiar and disgraceful angles. Hat boxes, trunks, and the other movables of the voyager manifest great hilarity at the change in the weather, and dance about the floor in a manner that must satisfy the most fastidious beholder. Every timber in the ship groans as if in pain. The omnipresent steward rushes about, closing up sky-lights and dead lights, and "chocking" his rattling crockery and glassware. On deck the change from the even keel and the clear sunlight of the day before is still more wonderful. The colour of the sky reminds you of the leaden lining of a tea-chest; that of the sea, of the dingy green paper which covers the same. The sails, which so many days of sunshine have bleached to a dazzling whiteness, are now all furled, except those which are necessary to keep some little headway on the ship. The captain has adorned his manly frame with a suit of India rubber, which certainly could not have been selected for its gracefulness, and has overshadowed his honest face with a sou'wester of stupendous proportions. With the exception of occasional visits to the sinking barometer, he spends his weary day on the wet deck, and tries to read the future in the blackening waves and stormy sky. The wheel, which heretofore has required but one man, now taxes the strength of two of the stoutest of our crew; – so hard is it to keep our bashful ship heading up to that rude sea, and to "ease her when she pitches." The breakfast suffers sadly from neglect, for every one is engrossed with the care of the weather. At noon there is a lull for half an hour or so, and, in spite of the threats of the remorseless barometer, some of our company try to look for an amelioration in the meteorological line. But their hopes are crushed when they find that the wind has shifted one or two points, and has set in to blow more violently than before. The sea, too, begins to behave in a most capricious and disagreeable style. When the ship has, with a great deal of straining and cracking, ridden safely over two mighty ridges of water, and seems to be easily settling down into a black valley between two foam-capped hills, there comes a sudden shock, as if she had met the Palisades of the Hudson in her path – a crackling, grating sound, like that of a huge nutmeg-grater operating on a coral reef, a crash like the combined force of all the battering-rams of Titus Flavius Vespasianus on one of the gates of Jerusalem, – and a hundred tons of angry water roll aft against the cabin doors, in a manner not at all agreeable to weak nerves. For a moment the ship seems to stand perfectly still, as if deliberating whether to go on or turn back; then, realizing that the ship that deliberates in such a time is lost, she rises gracefully over a huge pile of water which was threatening to submerge her.

The afternoon wears away slowly with the passengers. They say but little to one another, but look about them from the security of the wheel-house as if they were oppressed with a sense of the inestimable value of strong cordage. As twilight approaches, and all hands are just engaged in taking

supper, after having "mended the reefs," the ship meets a staggering sea, which seems to start every timber in her firm-set frame, and our main-top-gallant-mast breaks off like a stick of candy. Such things generally happen just at night, the sailors say, when the difficulties of clearing away the broken rigging are increased by the darkness. Straightway the captain's big, manly voice is heard above the war-whoop of the gale, ringing out as Signor Badiali's was wont to in the third act of *Ernani*. The wind seems to pin the men to the ratlines as they clamber up; but all the difficulties are overcome at length; the broken mast is lowered down, and snugly stowed away; and before nine o'clock all is quiet, except the howling wind, which seems to have determined to make a night of it. And such a night! It is one of those times that make one want one's mother. There is little sleeping done except among the "watch below" in the forecabin, who snore away their four hours as if they appreciated the reasoning of Mr. Dibdin when he extols the safety of the open sea as compared with the town with its falling chimneys and flying tiles, and commiserates the condition of the unhappy shore-folks in such a tempestuous time. The thumping of the sea against our wooden walls, the swash of water on deck as the ship rolls and pitches as you would think it impossible for any thing addicted to the cold water movement to roll or pitch, and over all the wild, changeless, shrieking of the gale, will not suffer sleep to visit those who are not inured to such things. Tired of bracing up with knee, and hand, and heel, to keep in their berths, they lie and wonder how many such blows as that our good ship could endure, and think that if June gets up such gales on the North Atlantic, they have no wish to try the quality of those of January.

Morning comes at last, and every heart is cheered by the captain's announcement, as he passes through the cabin, that the barometer is rising, and the weather has begun to improve. Some of the more hopeful and energetic of our company turn out and repair to the deck. The leaden clouds are broken up, and the sun trying to struggle through them; but to the inexperienced the gale appears to be as severe as it was yesterday. All the discomfort and danger of the time are forgotten, however, in the fearful magnificence of the spectacle that surrounds us. As far as the eye can reach it seems like a confused field of battle, where snowy plumes and white flowing manes show where the shock of war is felt most severely. To watch the gathering of one of those mighty seas that so often work destruction with the noblest ships, – to see it gradually piling up until it seems to be impelled by a fury almost intelligent, – to be dazzled by its emerald flash when it erects its stormy head the highest, and breaks into a field of boiling foam, as if enraged at being unable to reach us; – these are things which are worth all the anxiety and peril that they cost.

The captain's prognostications prove correct. Our appetites at dinner bear witness to them; and before sunset we find our ship (curtailed of its fair proportion, it is true, by the loss of its main-top-gallant-mast) is under full sail once more. The next day we have a few hours' calm, and when a light breeze does spring up, it comes from the old easterly quarter. It begins to seem as if we were fated to sail forever, and never get any where. But patience wears out even a head wind, and at last the long-looked-for change takes place. The wind slowly hauls to the south, and many are the looks taken at the compass to see how nearly the ship can come up to her course. Then our impatience is somewhat allayed by speaking a ship which has been out twelve days longer than our own – for, if it be true, as Rochefoucauld says, that "there is something not displeasing to us in the misfortunes of our best friends," – how keen must be the satisfaction of finding a stranger-companion in adversity. The wind, though steady, is not very strong, and many fears are expressed lest it should die away and give *Eurus* another three weeks' chance. But our forebodings are not realized, and a sunshiny day comes when we are all called up from dinner to see a long cloud-like affair, (very like a whale,) which, we are told, is the Old Head of Kinsale. Straightway all begin to talk of getting on shore the next day; but when that comes, we find that we are drawing towards Holyhead very rapidly, as our favourable wind has increased to a gale – so that when we have got round Holyhead, and have taken our pilot, (that burly visitor whose coming every one welcomes, and whose departure every one would speed,) the aforesaid pilot heaves the ship to, and, having a bed made up on the cabin floor, composes himself

to sleep. The next morning finds the gale abated, and early in the forenoon we are running up to the mouth of the river. The smoke (that first premonitory symptom of an English town) hangs over Liverpool, and forms a strong contrast with the bright green fields and verdant hedges which deck the banks of the Mersey. The ship, after an immense amount of vocal power has been expended in that forcible diction which may be termed the marine vernacular, is got into dock, and in the afternoon a passage of thirty-three days is concluded by our stepping once more upon the "inviolable island of the sage and free," and following our luggage up the pier, with a swing in our gait which any stage sailor would have viewed with envy. The examination at the Custom House is conducted with a politeness and despatch worthy of imitation among the officials of our Uncle Samuel. The party of passengers disperses itself about in various hotels, without any circumstance to hinder their progress except falling in with an exhibition of Punch and Judy, which makes the company prolific in quotations from the sayings of Messrs. Codlin and Short, and at last the family which never had its harmonious unity disturbed by any thing, is broken up forever.

Liverpool wears its old thriving commercial look – perhaps it is a few shades darker with smoke. The posters are on a more magnificent scale, both as regards size and colour, than ever before, and tell not only of the night's amusements, but promise the acquisition of wealth outrunning the dreams of avarice in lands beyond the farthest Thule. Melbourne and Port Philip vie in the most gorgeous colours with San Francisco; and the United States seem to have spread wide their capacious arms to welcome the down-trodden Irishman. Liverpool seems to be the gate to all the rest of the world. I almost fear to walk about lest I should find myself starting off, in a moment of temporary insanity, for Greenland's icy mountains, or India's coral strand.

LONDON

Dull must he be of soul who could make the journey from Liverpool to the metropolis in the month of June, and not be lifted above himself by the surpassing loveliness of dear mother Nature. Even if he were chained to a ledger and cash book – if he never had a thought or wish beyond the broker's board, and his entire reading were the prices current – he must forget them all, and feel for the time what a miserable sham his life is – or he does not deserve the gift of sight. It is Thackeray, I think, who speaks somewhere of the "charming friendly English landscape that seems to shake hands with you as you pass along" – and any body who has seen it in June will say that this is hardly a figurative expression. I used to think that it was my enthusiastic love for the land of the great Alfred which made it seem so beautiful to me when I was younger; but I find that it wears too well to be a mere fancy of my own brain. People may complain of the humid climate of England, and curse the umbrella which must accompany them whenever they walk out; but when the sun does shine, it shines upon a scene of beautiful fertility unequalled elsewhere in the world, and which the moist climate produces and preserves. And then, too, it seems doubly grateful to the eyes of one just come from sea. The bright freshness of the whole landscape, the varied tints of green, the trim hedges, the luxuriant foliage which springs from the very trunks of the trees, and the high state of cultivation which makes the whole country look as if it had been swept and dusted that morning, – all these things strike an American, for he cannot help contrasting them with the parched fields of his own land in summer, surrounded by their rough fences and hastily piled-up stone walls. The solidity of the houses and cottages, which look as if they were built, not for an age, but for all time, makes him think of the country houses of America, which seem to have grown up in a night, like our friend Aladdin's, and whose frailty is so apparent that you cannot sneeze in one of them without apprehending a serious calamity. Then the embankments of the railways present not only a pleasant sight to the eye of the traveller, but a pretty little hay crop to the corporation; and at every station, and bridge, and crossing, wherever there is a switch to be tended, you see the neat cottages of the keepers, and the gardens thereof – the railway companies having learned that the expenditure of a few hundred pounds in this way saves an expenditure of many thousands in surgeons' bills and damages, and is far more satisfactory to all concerned.

What a charming sight is a cow – what a look of contentment she has – ambitious of nothing beyond the field of daily duty, and never looking happier than when she comes at night to yield a plenteousness of that fluid without which custards were an impossibility! Wordsworth says that "heaven lies about us in our infancy" – surely he must mean that portion of the heavens called by astronomers the Milky Way. It is pleasant to see a cow by the side of a railway – provided she is fenced from danger – to see her lift her head slowly as the train goes whizzing by, and gaze with those mild, tranquil eyes upon the noisy, smoke-puffing monster, – just as the saintly hermits of olden times might have looked from their serene heights of contemplation upon the dusty, bustling world. The taste of the English farmers for fine cattle is attested by a glance at any of their pastures. On every side you see the representatives of Alderney's bovine aristocracy; and scores of cattle crop the juicy grass, rivalling in their snowy whiteness any that ever reclined upon Clitumno's "mild declivity of hill," or admired their graceful horns in its clear waters. Until I saw them, I never comprehended what farmers meant when they spoke of "neat cattle."

What an eloquent preacher is an old church-tower! Moss-crowned and ivy-robed, it lifts its head, unshaken by the tempests of centuries, as it did in the days when King John granted the Great Charter or the holy Edward ruled the realm, and tells of the ages when England was one in faith, and not a poor-house existed throughout the land. Like a faithful sentinel, it stands guard over the humbler edifices around it, and warns their inhabitants alike of their dangers and their duties by the music of its bells. Erect in silent dignity, it receives the first beams of the morning, and when twilight

has begun to shroud every thing in its neighbourhood, the flash of sunset lingers on its gray summit. It looks down with sublime indifference upon the changing scene below, as if it would reproach the actors there with their forgetfulness of the transitoriness of human pursuits, and remind them, by its unchangeableness, of the eternal years.

At last we draw near London. A gentleman, whose age I would not attempt to guess, – for he was very carefully made up, and boasted a deportment which would have excited the envy of Mr. Turveydrop, senior, – so far forgot his dignity as to lean forward and inform me that the place we were passing was "'Arrow on the 'Ill," which made me forget for the moment both his appearance and his uncalled-for "exasperation of the haitches." Not long after, I found myself issuing from the magnificent terminus of the North Western Railway, in Euston Square, in a cab marked V. R. 10,276. The cab and omnibus drivers of London are a distinct race of beings. Who can write their natural history? Who is competent to such a task? The researches of a Pritchard, a Pickering, a Smyth, would seem to cover the whole subject of the history of the human species from the anthropophagi and bosjesmen to the drinkers of train oil in the polar regions; but the cabmen are not included. They would require a master mind. The subject would demand the patient investigation of a Humboldt, the eloquence of a Macaulay, and the humour of a Dickens – and even then would fall short, I fear, of giving an adequate idea of them. Your London cab driver has no idea of distance; as, for instance, I ask one the simple question, —

"How far is it to the Angel in Islington?"

"Wot, sir?"

I repeat my interrogatory.

"Oh, the Hangel, sir! Four shillings."

"No, no. I mean what distance."

"Well, say three, then, sir."

"But I mean – what distance? How many miles?"

"O, come, sir, jump in – don't be 'ard on a fellow – I 'aven't 'ad a fare to-day. Call it 'arf a crown, sir."

Leigh Hunt says somewhere that if there were such a thing as metamorphosis, Dr. Johnson would desire to be transformed into an omnibus, that he might go rolling along the streets whose very pavements were the objects of his ardent affection. And he was about right. What better place is there in this world to study human nature than an omnibus? All classes meet there; in the same coach you may see them all – from the poor workwoman to the genteelly dressed lady, who looks as if she disapproved of such conveyances, but must ride nevertheless – from the young sprig, who is constantly anxious lest some profane foot should dim the polish of his boots, to the urbane old gentleman, who regrets his corpulence, and would take less room if he could. And then the top of the omnibus, which usually carries four or more passengers, what a place is that to see the tide of life which flows unceasingly through the streets of London! I know of nothing which can furnish more food for thought than a ride on an omnibus from Brompton to the Bank on a fine day. It is a pageant, in which all the wealth, pomp, power, and prosperity of this world pass before you; and for a moral to the whirling scene, you must go to the nearest churchyard.

London is ever the same. The omnibuses follow each other as rapidly as ever up and down the Strand, the white-gloved, respectable-looking policemen walk about as deliberately, and the tail of the lion over the gate of Northumberland House sticks out as straight as ever. The only great change visible here is in the newspapers. The tone of society is so different from what it was formerly, in all that concerns France, that the editors must experience considerable trouble in accustoming themselves to the new state of things. Once, France and Louis Napoleon furnished Punch with his chief materials for satire and amusement, and if any of the larger and more dignified journals wished to let off a little ill humour, or to say any thing particularly bitter, they only had to dip their pens in *Gaul*; but times are changed, and now nothing can be said too strong in favour of "our chivalric allies,

the French." The memory of St. Helena seems to have given place to what they call here the *entente cordiale*, which those who are acquainted with the French language assure me means an agreement by which one party contracts to "play second fiddle" to another, through fear that if he does not he will not be permitted to play at all.

To the man who thoroughly appreciates the Essays of Elia, and Boswell's Life of Johnson, London can never grow tiresome. He can never turn a corner without finding "something new, something to please, and something to instruct." Its very pavements are classical. And there is nothing to abate, nor detract from, such a man's enthusiasm. The traveller who visits the Roman Forum, or the Palace of the Cæsars, experiences a sad check when he finds his progress impeded by unpoetical obstacles. But in London, all is harmonious; he sees on every side, not only that which tells of present life and prosperity, but the perennial glories of England's former days. Would he study history, he goes to the Tower, "rich with the spoils of time"; or to Whitehall, where mad fanaticism consummated its treasonable work with the murder of a sovereign; or to the towering minster, to gaze upon the chair in which the monarchs of a thousand years have sat; or to view the monuments, and read the epitaphs, of that host of

"Bards, heroes, sages, side by side,
Who darkened nations when they died."

Is he a lover of English literature? Here are scenes eloquent of that goodly company of wits and worthies, whose glowing pages have been the delight of his youth and the consolation of his riper years; here are the streets in which they walked, the taverns in which they feasted, the churches where they prayed, the tombs where they repose.

And London wears well. To revisit it when age has sobered down the enthusiasm of youth, is not like seeing a theatre by daylight; but you think almost that you have under-estimated your privileges. How well I remember the night when I first arrived in the metropolis! It was after ten o'clock, and I was much fatigued; but before I booked myself in my hotel, or looked at my room, I rushed out into the Strand, "with breathless speed, like a soul in chase." I pushed along, now turning to look at Temple Bar, now pausing to take breath as I went up Ludgate Hill. I saw St. Paul's and its dome before me, and I was satisfied. No, I was not satisfied; for when I returned up Fleet Street, I looked out dear old Bolt Court, and entered its Johnsonian precincts with an awe and veneration which a devout Mussulman, taking the early train for Mecca, would gladly imitate. And then I posted down Inner Temple Lane, and looked at the house in which Charles Lamb and his companions held their "Wednesday nights"; and, going still farther, I saw the river – I stood on the bank of the Thames, and I was satisfied. I looked, and all the associations of English history and literature which are connected with it filled my mind – but just as I was getting into a fine frenzy about it, a watchman hove in sight, and the old clock chimed out eleven. So I started on, and soon reached my hotel. I was accosted on my way thither by a young and gayly dressed lady, whom I did not remember ever to have seen before, but who expressed her satisfaction at meeting me, in the most cordial terms. I told her that I thought that it must be a mistake, and she responded with a laugh which very much shocked an elderly gentleman who was passing, who looked as if he might have been got up for the part of the uncle of the unhappy G. Barnwell. I have since learned that such mistakes and personal misapprehensions very frequently occur in London in the evening.

Speaking of Temple Bar, it gratifies me to see that this venerable gateway still stands, "unshaken, unseduced, unterrified," by any of the recent attempts to effect its removal. The old battered and splashed doors are perhaps more unsightly than before; but the statues look down with the same benignity upon the crowd of cabs and omnibuses, and the never-ending tide of humanity which flows beneath them, as they did upon the Rake's Progress, so many years ago. The sacrilegious commissioners of streets long to get at it with their crows and picks, but the shade of Dr. Johnson

watches over the barrier of his earthly home. It is not an ornamental affair, to be sure, and it would be difficult for Mr. Choate, even, to defend it against the charge of being an obstruction; but its associations with the literature and history of the last two or three centuries ought to entitle its dingy arches to a certain degree of reverence, even in our progressive and irreverent age. The world would be a loser by the demolition of this ancient landmark, and London, if it should lose this, though it might still be the metropolis of the British empire, would cease to be the London of Johnson and Goldsmith, of Addison and Pope, of Swift and Hogarth.

Perhaps some may think, from what I have said in the commencement of this letter, that my enthusiasm has blinded me to those great moral and social evils which are apparent in English civilization; but it is not so. I love England rather for what she has been than for what she is; I love the England of Alfred and St. Edward; and when I contrast the present state with what it might have been under a succession of such rulers, I cannot but grieve. Truly the court of St. James under Victoria is not what it was under Charles II., nor even under Mr. Thackeray's favourite hero, "the great George IV.," – but are not St. James and St. Giles farther apart than ever before? Is not Lazarus looked upon as a nuisance, which legislation ought, for decency's sake, to put out of the way? What does England do for the poor? Nothing; absolutely nothing, if you except a system of workhouses, compared with which prisons are delightful residences, and which seems to have been intended more for the punishment of poverty than as a work of charity. No; on the contrary, she discountenances works of charity; when a few earnest men among the clergy of her divided church make an effort in that direction, there is an outcry, and they must be put down; and their bishops, whose annual incomes are larger than the whole treasury of Alfred, admonish them to beware how they thus imitate the superstitions of the middle ages. No; your Englishman of the present day has something better to do than to look after the beggar at his doorstep; he is too respectable a man for that; he pays his "poor rates," and the police must order the thing of shreds and patches to "move on"; his progress must not be impeded, for his presence is required at a meeting of the friends of Poland, or of Italy, or of a society for the abolition of American slavery, and he has no time to waste on such common, every-day matters as the improvement of the miserable wretches who work his coal mines, or of those quarters of the town where vice parades its deformity with exulting pride, and the air is heavy with pestilence. There is proportionably more beggary in London at this hour than in any continental city. And such beggary! Not the comfortable, jolly-looking beggars you may see in Rome or Naples, who know that charity is enjoined upon the people as a religious duty, but the thin, pallid, high-cheeked supplicants, whose look is a petition which tells a more effective story than words can frame of destitution and starvation.

But there is another phase of this part of London life, sadder by far than that of mere poverty. It is an evil which no attempt is made to prevent, and so great an evil that its very mention is forbidden by the spirit of this age of "superficial morality and skin-deep propriety." I pity the man who can walk through Regent Street or the Strand in the evening, unsaddened by what he shall see on every side. How ridiculous do our boasts of this Christian nineteenth century seem there! Here is this mighty Anglo-Saxon race, which can build steam engines, and telegraphs, and clipper ships, which tunnels mountains, and exerts an almost incredible mastery over the forces of nature, – and yet, when Magdalene looks up to it for a merciful hand to lift her from degradation and sin, she finds it either deaf or powerless. There is a work yet to be done in London which would stagger a philanthropist, if he were gifted with thrice the heroism, and patience, and self-forgetfulness of a St. Vincent of Paul.

I cannot resist the inclination to give in this connection a passage from the personal experience of a friend in London, which, had I read it in any book or newspaper, I should have hesitated to believe. One evening, as he was passing along Pall Mall, he was addressed by a young woman, who, when she saw that he was going to pass on and take no notice of her, ran before him, and said in a tone of the most pathetic earnestness, —

"Well, if you'll not go with me, for God's sake, sir, give me a trifle to buy bread!"

Thus appealed to, and somewhat shaken by the voice and manner, he stopped under a gaslight, and looked at the speaker. Vice had not impressed its distinctive seal so strongly upon her as upon most of the unfortunate creatures one meets in London's streets; indeed, there was a shade of melancholy on her face which harmonized well with her voice and manner. So my friend resolved to have a few words more with her, and buttoning up his coat, to protect his watch and purse, he told her that he feared she wanted money to buy gin rather than bread. She assured him that it was not so, but that she wished to buy food for her little child, a girl of two or three years. Then he asked how she could lead such a life, if she had a child growing up, upon whom her example would have such an influence; and she said that she would gladly take up with an honest occupation, if she could find one, – indeed, she did try to earn enough for the daily wants of herself and child with her needle, but it was impossible, – and her only choice was between starvation and the street. At that time she said that she was learning the trade of a dressmaker, and she hoped that before long she should be able to keep herself above absolute necessity. Encouraged by a kind word from my friend, she went on in a simple, womanly manner, and told him of her whole career. It was the old story of plighted troth, betrayed affection, and flight from her village home, to escape the shame and reproach she would there be visited with. She arrived in London without money, without friends, without employment, – without any thing save that natural womanly self-respect which had received such a severe blow: – necessity stared her in the face, and she sank before it. My friend was impressed by the recital of her misfortunes, and thinking that she must be sincere, he took a sovereign from his purse and gave it to her. She looked from the gift to the giver, and thanked him again and again. He continued his walk, but had not gone more than three or four rods, when she came running after him, and reiterated her expressions of thankfulness with a trembling voice. He then walked on, and crossed over to the front of the Church of St. Martin, (that glorious soldier who with his sword divided his cloak with the beggar,) when she came after him yet again, and seizing hold of his hand, she looked up at him with streaming eyes, and said, holding the sovereign in her hand, —

"God bless you, sir, again and again for your kindness to me! Pray pardon me, sir, for troubling you so much – but – but – perhaps you meant to give me a shilling, sir, – perhaps you don't know that you gave me a sovereign."

How many models of propriety and respectability in every rank of life, – how many persons who have the technical language of religion constantly on their lips, – how many of those who, nurtured amid the influences of a good home, have never really known what temptation is, – how many such persons are there who might learn a startling lesson from this fallen woman, whom they seem to consider themselves religiously bound to despise and neglect! I have a great dread of these severely virtuous people, who are so superior to all human frailty that they cannot afford a kind word to those who have not the good fortune to be impeccable. But we all of us, I fear, need to be reminded of Burns's lines —

"What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted."

If we thought of this, keeping our own weaknesses in view, which of us would not shrink from judging uncharitably, or casting the first stone at an erring fellow-creature? Which of us would dare to condemn the poor girl who preserved so much of the spirit of honesty in her degradation, and to commend the negative virtues which make up so many of what the world calls good lives?

ANTWERP AND BRUSSELS

It is a very pleasant thing to get one's passport *viséd* (even though a pretty good fee is demanded for it,) and to make preparations for leaving London, at almost any time; but it is particularly so when the weather has been doing its worst for a fortnight, and the atmosphere is so "thick and slab" that to compare it to pea-soup would be doing that excellent compound a great injustice. It is very pleasant to think of getting out from under that blanket of smoke and fog, and escaping to a land where the sun shines occasionally, and where the manners of the people make a perpetual sunshine which renders you independent of the weather. If there ever was a day to which that expressive old Saxon epithet *nasty* might be justly applied, it was the one on which I left the greasy pavements of London, and (after a contest with a cabman, which ended, as such things generally do, in a compromise) found myself on board one of the fast-sailing packets of the General Steam Navigation Company, at St. Catharine's Wharf, just below the esplanade of the Tower. The beautiful banks of the river below the city, the fine pile of buildings, and the rich foliage of the park at Greenwich, seemed to have laid aside their charms, and shrouded themselves in mourning for the death of sunshine. The steamer was larger than most of those which ply in the Channel; but the crowded cabins and diminutive state-rooms made me think with envy of the passengers from New York to Fall River that afternoon. And there was a want of attention to those details which would have improved the appearance of the boat greatly – which made me wish that her commander might have served his apprenticeship on Long Island Sound or on the Hudson.

The company was composed of about the usual admixture of English and foreign beauty and manliness; and the English, French, Dutch, and German languages were confounded in such a manner as to bring to mind the doings of the committee on the construction of public works recorded in Genesis. Among the crowd of young Cockneys in jockeyish-looking caps, with travelling pouches strapped to their sides, there was a rather tall gentleman in a clerical suit, with his throat covered with the usual white bandages. His highly respectable look, and the eminently "evangelical" expression of the corners of his mouth, made me feel quite sure that I had found a character. He had three little boys with him; and as far as appearance went, he might have been Dickens's model for Dr. Blimber, (the principal of that celebrated academy where they had mental green peas and intellectual asparagus all the year round,) for he had the eye of a pedagogue "to threaten and command," and his fixed look was the one which my old schoolmaster's face wore when he turned up his wristbands, and, taking his ruler, said, "I am very sorry, Andrew; but you know that it is for your good." His conversation savoured so strongly of the dictionary, that, even if I had been blind, I should have said that the speaker had spent years in correcting the compositions of ingenuous youth. I shall not forget his look of wonder when he asked one of the engineers what was the matter with a dog that was yelping about the deck, and received for a reply that he tumbled off the quarter deck, and was *strained in the garret*. However, I enjoyed two or three hours' conversation with him very much – if it could be called conversation when he did all the talking.

Towards evening, when we found ourselves in the open sea, the south-westerly swell rolled up finely from the Goodwin Sands, and produced a scene to remind a disinterested spectator of Punch's touching pictorial representation of the commencement of the continental tour of Messrs. Brown, Jones, and Robinson. I soon perceived that a conspicuous collection of white bowls, which adorned the main saloon, was not a mere matter of ornament. The amount of medicine for the prevention or cure of seasickness, which was taken by my fellow-voyagers from flat bottles covered with wicker-work, would have astonished the most ardent upholder of the old allopathic practice. But all the pitching and rolling of the steamer, and the varied occupations of the passengers, did not interfere with my repose. I slept as soundly in my narrow accommodations as if I had been within hearing of the rattling of the omnibuses of my native city.

The next morning I was out in good season; and though I do not consider myself either "remote," "unfriended," "melancholy," or "slow," I found myself upon the "lazy Scheldt," with Antwerp's heaven-kissing spire climbing up the hazy perspective. The banks of the Scheldt are not very picturesque; indeed, a person of the strongest poetical susceptibilities might approach Flanders without the slightest apprehension of an attack of his weakness. I could not help congratulating myself, though, on having been spared to see the country which was immortalized by the profanity of a great military force.

We Americans usually consider ourselves up to the times, and are prone to sneer at Russia for being eleven days behind the age; but we do not yet "beat the Dutch" in progress, for they are half an hour in advance, as I found, very soon after landing, that all the church clocks, with a great deal of formality and precision, struck nine, when the hands only pointed to half past eight; and I noted a similar phenomenon while I was taking breakfast an hour after. Antwerp is a beautiful old city, and its quiet streets are very pleasant, after the tumult and roar of London; but – there is one drawback – it is too scrupulously clean. I almost feared to walk about, lest I should unknowingly do some damage; and every door-handle and bell-pull had a most unhospitable polish, which seemed to say with the placards in the Crystal Palace, "Please not to handle." Cleanliness is a great virtue; but when it is carried to such an extent that you cannot find your books and papers which you left carefully arranged yesterday on your table, – when it gets to be a monomania with man or woman, – it becomes a bore. How strangely the first two or three hours in a Dutch town strike a stranger! – the odd, high-gabled houses, the queer head-dresses, (graceful because of their very ungracefulness,) the wooden shoes, and the language, which sounds like English spoken by a toothless person. But one very soon gets accustomed to it. It is like being in an Oriental city, where the great variety of costumes and languages, and the different manners of the people, make up an *ensemble* which a stranger thinks will be a lasting novelty; but on his second day he finds himself taking about as much notice of a Persian caravan as he would of a Canton Street or Sixth Avenue omnibus.

I might here indulge in a little harmless enthusiasm about this grand old cathedral of Antwerp. I might talk about the "long-drawn aisle and fretted vault," and give an elaborate description of it, – its enormous dimensions and artistic glories, – if I did not know that any reader who desires such things can find them set down with greater exactness than becomes me, in any of the guide books for Belgium. I spent the greater proportion of my waking hours in Antwerp under the solemn arches of that majestic old church. I wonder, shall we ever see any thing in America to remind us even faintly of the glories of Antwerp, Cologne, Rouen, Amiens, York, or Milan? I fear not. The ages that built those glorious piles thought less of fat dividends than this boastful nineteenth century of ours, and their religion was not the mere one-day-out-of-seven affair that the improved Christianity of to-day is. The architects who conceived and executed those marvels of sublimity never troubled themselves with our popular query, "Will it pay?" any more than Dante interrupted the inspiration of his *Paradiso*, or Beethoven the linked harmony of his matchless symphonies, with their solicitude about the amount of their copyright. No; their work inspired them, and while it reflected their genius, it imparted to them something of its own divine dignity. Their art became religion, and its laborious processes acts of the most fervent devotion. But we have reformed all that, and now inspiration has to give way to considerations of the greatest number of "sittings," that can possibly be provided, and if the expenses of the sacred enterprise can be lessened by contriving accommodation for shops or storage in the basement, who does not rejoice? There are too many churches nowadays built upon the foundation of the *profits*, leaving the apostles entirely out of the question.

But while I lament our want of those wonderful constructions whose very stones seem to have grown consciously into forms of beauty, I must record my satisfaction at the improvement in architectural taste which is visible in most of our cities at home. If we must have banks, and railway stations, and shops, it is some compensation to have them made pleasant to our sight. Buildings are the books that every body unconsciously reads; and if they are a libel on the laws of architecture,

they will surely vitiate in time the taste of those who become familiarized to their deformity. Dr. Johnson said, that "if a man's hands were dirty, his thoughts would be dirty"; and it may be declared, with much more reason, that those who are obliged to look, day after day, at ungraceful, mean, and unsubstantial objects, lose, by degrees, their sense of the beautiful and the harmonious, and set forth, in the poverty of their minds, the meanness of their surroundings.

On one account I have again and again blessed the star that guided me to Antwerp, – that is, for the pleasure afforded me by its treasures of art. I have, in times past, fed fat my appetite for the beautiful in the galleries of Italy, and therefore counted but little on the contents of the museum and churches of this ancient city. Do not be frightened, beloved reader; I am not going to launch out into the muddy stream of artistic criticism. I despise most of that which passes current under that dignified name, as heartily as you do. Even the laurels of Mr. Ruskin cannot rob me of a moment's repose. I cannot if I would, nor would I if I could, talk learnedly about pictures. So I can safely promise not to bore you with any "breadth of colouring," and to keep very "shady" about *chiaro 'scuro*. I only wish to say that he who has never been in Antwerp does not know who Rubens was. He may know that an industrious painter of that name once lived, and painted (as I used to think, judging from most of his works that I had seen elsewhere) a variety of fat, flaxen-haired women; but of Rubens, the great master, the painter of the Crucifixion, and the Descent from the Cross, he is as ignorant as a fourth-form boy in the public schools of Patagonia. It is worth a month of seasick voyaging to see the works of Rubens and Vandyck which Antwerp possesses; and the only regret connected with my visit there has been, that I could not give more days to the study of them than I could hours.

It is but fifteen miles from Antwerp to Mechlin, or Malines, (as the people here, in the depths of their ignorance, insist upon calling it,) and as a representative of a nation whose sole criterion is success, and whose list of the cardinal virtues is headed by Prosperity, I felt that it would be a grievous sin of omission for me not to stop and visit that thriving old town. It did not require much time to walk through its nice, quiet streets, and look at the pictures and wood carvings in its venerable churches. The white-capped and bright-eyed lace-makers sat in windows and doorways, their busy fingers forming fabrics, the sight of which would kindle the fire of covetousness in any female heart. Three hours in Mechlin sufficed to make me about as well acquainted with it as if I had daily waked up its echoes with the creaking of my shoes, until their thick soles were worn out past all hope of tapping. Selecting one of the numerous railways that branch out from Mechlin, like the reins from the hand of a popular circus rider in his favourite "six-horse-act," the "Courier of St. Petersburg," I took a ticket for Brussels, and soon found myself spinning along over these fertile plains, whose joyous verdure I had not sufficient time to appreciate before I found myself in the capital of Belgium.

And what a charming place this city of lace and carpets is! Clean as a parlour, not a speck nor a stain to be seen any where, with less of Dutch stiffness and more of French ease, so that you do not feel so much like an intruder as in most other strange cities. Brussels is a kind of vestibule to Paris; its streets, its shops, its public edifices are all reflections in miniature of those of the French metropolis. It has long seemed to me so natural a preparation for the meridian splendours of Paris, that to go thither in any other way than through Brussels, is as if you should enter a saloon by a back window, rather than through the legitimate front door. In one respect I prefer Brussels to Paris; it is smaller, and your mind takes it all in at once. In the French capital, its very vastness bewilders you. You are in the condition of the gentleman whose wife was so fat that when he wished to embrace her, he was obliged to make two actions of the feat, and use a bit of chalk to insure the proper distribution of his caress. But in Brussels every thing is so harmoniously and compactly combined, that you can enjoy it all at once. How does one's mind treasure up his rambles through these fair streets and gay arcades, his leisurely walks on these spacious boulevards, or under the dense shade of this lovely park, his musings in this fine old church of Ste. Gudule, whose gorgeous windows symbolize the heavenly bow, and whose air of devotion is eloquent of the undying hope which abides within its consecrated precincts! How one looks back years after leaving Brussels, and conjures up, in his memory, its public

monuments, from that exceedingly diminutive and peculiar statue near the Hôtel de Ville, which has pursued its useful and ornamental career for so many centuries, to the heroic equestrian figure of Godfrey of Bouillon, in the Place Royale! How vividly does one remember the old Gothic hall, which has remained unchanged during the many years that have passed since the Emperor Charles V. there laid down the burden of his power, and exchanged the throne for the cloister.

One of the most delightful recollections of my term of residence in Brussels, is of a bright summer day, when I made an excursion to the field of Waterloo. Some Englishmen have established a line of coaches for the purpose – real old fashioned coaches, with a driver and a guard, which latter functionary performed Yankee Doodle most admirably on his melodious horn as we rattled out of town. The roadside views cannot have changed much since the night when the pavement shook beneath the heavy artillery and thundering tramp of Wellington's army. The forest of Soignies (or, to use its poetical name, Arden) looked as it might have looked before it was immortalized by a Tacitus and a Shakspeare; and its fresh foliage was "dewy with Nature's tear-drops," over our two coach loads of pleasure-seekers, just as Byron describes it to have been over the "unreturning brave," who passed beneath it forty years ago. Our party was shown over the memorable field by an old English sergeant who was in the battle; a fine bluff old fellow, and a gentleman withal, who, though his head was white, had all the enthusiasm of a young soldier. It was the most interesting trip of the kind that I ever made, far surpassing my expectations, for the ground remains literally *in statu quo ante bellum*. No commissioners of highways have interfered with its historical boundaries. It remains, for the most part, under cultivation, as it was before it became famous, and the grain grows, perhaps, more luxuriantly for the chivalric blood once shed there. There they are, unchanged, those localities which seem to so many mere inventions of the historian, Mont St. Jean, the farm of La Haye Sainte, the château of Hougoumont, the orchard with its low brick wall, over which the chosen troops of France and England fought hand to hand, and the spot where the last great charge was made, and the spell which held Europe in awe of the name of Napoleon, and made that name his country's watchword, and the synonyme of victory, was broken forever. Perhaps I err in saying forever, for France is certainly not unmindful of that name even now. That showery afternoon, when the great conqueror saw his veterans, against whom scores of battle fields, and all the terrors of a Russian campaign, proved powerless, cut to pieces and dispersed by a superior force, to which the news of coming reënforcements gave new strength and courage, – that very afternoon a boy, without a thought of battles or their consequences, was playing in the quiet grounds of the château of Malmaison. If Napoleon could have looked forward forty years, if he could have foreseen the romantic career of that child, and followed him through thirty years of exile, imprisonment, and discouragement, until he saw him reëstablish the empire which was then overthrown, and place France on a higher pinnacle of power than she ever knew before, how comparatively insignificant would have seemed to him the consequences of that last desperate charge! If he could have seen that it was reserved to his nephew, the grandchild of his divorced but faithful Josephine, to avenge Waterloo by an alliance more fatal to England's prestige than any invasion could be, and that the armies which had that day borne such bloody witness to their unconquerable daring, would forty years later be united to resist the encroachments of the power which first checked him in his career of victory, he would have had something to think of during that gloomy night besides the sad events that had wrought such a fearful change in his condition.

I returned to Brussels in the afternoon, meditating on the scenes I had visited, and repeating the five stanzas of Childe Harold in which Byron has commemorated the battle of Waterloo. In the evening I read, with new pleasure, Thackeray's graphic Waterloo chapter in *Vanity Fair*, and dreamed all night of falling empires and "garments rolled in blood." And now I turn my face towards Italy.

GENOA AND FLORENCE

It is a happy day in every one's life when he commences his journey into Italy. That glorious land, "rich with the spoils of time" above all others, endeared to every heart possessing any sense of the beautiful in poetry and art, or of the heroic in history, rises up before him as it was wont to do in the days of his youth, when Childe Harold's glowing numbers gave a tone of enthusiasm to his every thought, and filled him with longings, for the realization of which he hardly dared to hope. For the time, the commonest actions of the traveller seem to catch something of the indescribable charm of the land to which he is journeying. The ticketing of luggage and the securing of a berth on board a steamer – occupations which are not ordinarily considered particularly agreeable – become invested with an attractiveness that makes him wonder how he could ever have found them irksome. If he approaches Italy by land from France or Switzerland, with what curiosity does he study the varied features of the Piedmontese landscape! He recognizes the fertile fields which he read about in Tacitus years ago, and endeavours to find in the strange dialect which he hears spoken in the brief stops of the diligence to change horses, something to remind him even faintly of the melodious tongue with whose accents Grisi and Bosio had long since made him familiar. Meanwhile his imagination is not idle, and his mind is filled with historical pictures drawn from the classical pages which he once found any thing but entertaining. Though he may be fresh from the cloudless atmosphere of fair Provence, he fancies that the sky is bluer and the air more pure than he ever saw before.

It is a great advantage to enter Italy from the sea. In this way you perceive more clearly the national characteristics, and enter at once into the Italian way of life. You avoid in this way that gradual change from one pure nationality to another, which is eminently unsatisfactory. You do not weary yourself with the mixed population and customs of those border towns which bear about the same relation to Italy that Boulogne, with its multitude of English residents, bears to France. It was my good fortune when I first visited Italy, years ago, to make the voyage from America direct to the proud city of Genoa. Fifty-five weary days passed away before the end of the voyage was reached. Twenty-six of those days were spent in battling with a terrible north-easter, before whose might many a better craft than the one I was in went down into the insatiable depths. My Italian anticipations kept me up through all the cheerlessness of that time. The stormy sky, the wet, the cold, and all the discomfort could not keep from my mind's eye the vineyards, palaces, churches, and majestic ruins which made up the Italy I had looked forward to from childhood. My first sight of that romantic land did somewhat shock, I must acknowledge, my preconceived notions. I was called on deck early one December morning to see the land which is associated in most minds with perpetual sunshine. Facing a biting, northerly blast, I saw the maritime range of the Alps covered with snow and looking as relentless as arctic icebergs. My disappointment was forgotten, however, two mornings after, when Genoa, wearing "the beauty of the morning," lay before our weather-beaten bark. It was something to remember to my dying day – that approach to the city of palaces. Surrounded by its amphitheatre of hills crested on every side with heavy fortifications, its palaces, and towers, and domes, and terraced gardens rising apparently from the very edge of that tideless sea, there sat Genoa, surpassing in its splendour the wildest imaginings of my youth. I shall never forget the thrill that ran through every fibre of my frame, when the sun rose above those embattled ridges, and poured his flood of saffron glory over the whole wonderful scene, and the bells from a hundred churches and convents rang out as cheerily as if the sunbeams made them musical, like the statue in the ancient fable, and there was no further need of bell ropes. The astonishment of Aladdin when he rubbed the lamp and saw the effects of that operation could not have equalled mine, when I saw Genoa put on the light and life of day like a garment. It was like a scene in a theatrical pageant, or one of the brilliant changes in a great firework, so instantaneous was the transition from the subdued light and calmness of early morning to the activity and golden light of day. All the discomfort of the eight preceding weeks

was forgotten in the exultation of that moment. I had found the Italy of my young dreams, and my happiness was complete.

This time, however, I entered Italy from the north. I pass by clean, prosperous-looking Milan, with its elegant churches, and its white-coated Austrian soldiers standing guard in every public place. I have not a word of lament to utter at seeing a stranger force sustaining social order there. It is better that it should be sustained by a despotism far more cruel than that of Austria, than to become the prey of that sanguinary anarchy which is dignified in Europe with the name of republicanism. The most absolute of all absolute monarchies is to be preferred to the best government that could possibly be built upon such a foundation as Mazzini's stiletto. Far better is the severest military despotism than the irresponsible tyranny of those who deny the first principles of government and common morality, and who seem to consider assassination the chief of virtues and the most heroic of actions. I pass by that magnificent cathedral, with its thousands of pinnacles and shining statues piercing the clear atmosphere like the peaks of a stupendous iceberg, and its subterranean chapel, glittering with precious metals and jewels, where, in a crystal shrine, repose the relics of the great St. Charles, and the lamps of gold and silver burn unceasingly, and symbolize the shining virtues of the self-forgetful successor of St. Ambrose, and the glowing gratitude of the faithful Milanese for his devotion to the welfare of their forefathers.

I lingered among the attractions of Genoa for a few days. I enjoy not only those magnificent palaces with their spacious quadrangles, broad staircases, and sculptured façades, but those narrow, winding streets of which three quarters of the city are composed – so narrow indeed that a carriage never is seen in them, and a donkey, pannier-laden, after the manner of Ali Baba's faithful animal, compels you to keep very close to the buildings. Genoa is the very reverse of Philadelphia. Its streets are as narrow and crooked as those of Philadelphia are broad and straight. The Quaker City was always a wearisome place to me. Its rectangular avenues – so wide that they afford no protection from the wintry blast nor shelter from the canicular sunshine, and as interminable as a tale in a weekly newspaper – tire me out. They make me long for something more social and natural than their straight lines. Man is a gregarious animal. It is his nature to snuggify himself. But the Quaker affects a contempt for snugness, and includes Hogarth's line of beauty among the worldly vanities which his religion obliges him to shun. Every time I think of Philadelphia my disrespect for the science of geometry is increased, and I find myself more and more inclined to believe the most unkind things that Lord Macaulay can say about Mr. Penn, its founder. Cherishing such sentiments as these, is it wonderful that I find Genoa a pleasant city? I enjoy its gay port, its thronged market place, its sumptuous churches, with gilded vaults and panels, and checkered exteriors, its well-dressed people, from the bluff coachman, who laughed at my attempts to understand the Genoese dialect, to the devout feminines in their graceful white veils, which give the whole city a peculiarly festive and nuptial appearance: but it must be acknowledged, that the up-and-down-stairsy feature of the town is not grateful to my gouty feet.

I must not weary you, dear reader, with any attempts to describe the delightful four days' journey from Genoa to Florence, in a *vettura*. The Cornice road, with its steep cliffs or trim villas on one side, and the clear blue Mediterranean on the other, – those pleasant old towns, pervaded with an air of respectable antiquity, Chiavari, Sestri, Sarzana, Spezzia, with its beautiful gulf, whose waters looked so pure and calm that it was difficult to think that they could ever have swallowed poor Percy Shelley, and robbed English literature of one of its brightest ornaments, – Pietra Santa, Carrara, with its queer old church, its quarries, its doorsteps and window-sills of milk-white marble, and its throng of artists, – the little marble city of Massa Ducale, nestling among the mountains, – the vast groves of olives, whose ash-coloured leaves made noontide seem like twilight, – all these things would require a great expenditure of time and rhetoric, and therefore I will not even allude to them.

Neither will I tire you with any reference to my brief sojourn in Pisa. I will not tell how delightful it was to perambulate the clean streets of that peaceful city, – how I enjoyed the view from the bridges,

the ancient towers and domes, and the lofty palaces, whose fair fronts are mirrored in the soft-flowing Arno. I will not attempt to describe the enchantment produced by that noble architectural group, – the Cathedral, the Baptistery, the Campanile, and the Campo Santo, – nor the joy I felt on making a closer acquaintance with that graceful tower, whose inexplicable dereliction from the perfect uprightness which is inculcated as a primary duty in all similar structures, was made familiar to me at an early age, through the medium of a remarkable wood-cut in my school Geography. I will not tell how I fatigued my sense with the forms of beauty with which that glorious church is filled, – how refreshing its holy quiet and subdued light were to my travel-worn spirit, – nor how the majestic cloisters of the Campo Santo, with their delicate traceries, antique frescoes, and constantly varying light and shade, elevated and purified my heart of the sordid spirit of this mean, practical age, until I felt that to live amid such scenes, and to be buried at last in the earth of Palestine, under the shade of those solemn arches, was the only worthy object of human ambition.

I entered Florence late in the afternoon, under cover of a fog that would have done credit to London in the depths of its November nebulosity. It was rather an unbecoming dress for the style of beauty of the Tuscan capital, – that mantle of chill vapour, – but it was worn but a few hours, and the sun rose the next morning in all his legitimate splendour, and darted his rays through as clear and frosty an atmosphere as ever fell to the lot of even that favoured country. I have once or twice heard the epithet "beautiful" applied to this city; indeed, I will not be sure that I have not met with it in some book or other. It is, in fact, the only word that can be used with any propriety concerning this charming place. It is not vast like Rome, nor is the soul of its beholder saddened by the sight of mighty ruins, or burdened with the weight of thousands of years of heroic history. It does not possess the broad Bay of Naples, nor is it watched over by a stupendous volcano, smoking leisurely for want of some better occupation. But it lies in the valley of the Arno, one of the most harmonious and impressive works of art that the world has ever seen, surrounded by natural beauties that realize the most ecstatic dreams of poesy.

Firenze la bella! Who can look at her from any of the terraced hills that enclose her from the rude world, and deny her that title? That fertile plain which stretches from her very walls to the edge of the horizon – those picturesque hills, dotted with lovely villas – those orchards and vineyards, in their glory of gold and purple – that river, stealing noiselessly to the sea – and far away the hoary peaks of the Apennines, changing their hue with every hour of sunlight, and displaying their most gorgeous robes, in honour of the departing day, – I pity the man who can look upon them without a momentary feeling of inspiration. The view from Fiesole is consolation enough for a life of disappointment, and ought to make all future earthly trials seem as nothing to him who is permitted to enjoy it.

And then, those domes and towers, so eloquent of the genius of Giotto and Brunelleschi and of the public spirit and earnest devotion of ages which modern ignorance stigmatizes as "dark," – who can behold them without a thrill? The battlemented tower of the Palazzo Vecchio – which seems as if it had been hewn out of solid rock, rather than built up by the patient labour of the mason – looks down upon the peaceful city with a composure that seems almost intelligent, and makes you wonder whether it appeared the same when the signiory of Florence held their councils under its massive walls, and in those dark days when the tyrannous factions of Guelph and Ghibelline celebrated their bloody carnival. The graceful Campanile of the cathedral, with its coloured marbles, seems too much like a mantel ornament to be exposed to the changes of the weather. Amid the other domes and towers of the city rises the vast dome of the cathedral, the forerunner of that of St. Peter's, and almost its equal. It appears to be conscious of its superiority to the neighbouring architectural monuments, and merits Hallam's description – "an emblem of the Catholic hierarchy under its supreme head; like Rome itself, imposing, unbroken, unchangeable, radiating in equal expansion to every part of the earth, and directing its convergent curves to heaven."

There is no city in the world so full of memories of the middle ages as Florence. Its very palaces, with their heavily barred basement windows, look as if they were built to stand a siege. Their sombre

walls are in strong contrast with the bloom and sunshine which we naturally associate with the valley of the Arno. Their magnificent proportions and the massiveness of their construction oppress you with recollections of the warlike days in which they were erected. You wonder, as you stand in their courtyards, or perambulate the streets darkened by their overhanging cornices, what has become of all the cavaliers; and if a gentleman in "complete steel" should lift his visor to accost you, it would not startle you so much as to hear two English tourists with the inevitable red guide-books under their arms, conversing about the "Grand Juke." Wherever one may turn his steps in Florence, he meets with some object of beauty or historical interest; yet among all these charms and wonders there is one building upon which my eyes and mind are never tired of feeding. The Palazzo Riccardi, the cradle of the great Medici family, is not less impressive in its architecture than in its historic associations. Its black walls have a greater charm for me than the variegated marbles of the Duomo. It was built by the great Cosmo de' Medici, and was the home of that family of merchant princes in the most glorious period of its history, when a grateful people delighted to render to its members that homage which is equally honourable to "him that gives and him that takes." The genius of Michel Angelo and Donatello is impressed upon it. It was within those lofty halls that Cosmo and his grandson, Lorenzo the Magnificent, welcomed pontiffs and princes, and the illustrious but untitled nobility of literature and art, which was the boast of their age. The ancient glories of the majestic pile are kept in mind by an inscription which greets him who enters it with an exhortation to "reverence with gratitude the ancient mansion of the Medici, in which not merely so many illustrious men, but Wisdom herself abode – a house which was the nurse of revived learning."

I wonder whether any one ever was tired of strolling about these old streets and squares. At my time of life, walking is not particularly agreeable, even if it be not interfered with by either of those foes to active exercise and grace of movement – rheumatism or gout; but I must acknowledge that I have found such pleasure in rambling through the familiar streets of this delightful city, that I have taken no note of bodily fatigue, and have forgotten the crutch or cane which is my inseparable companion. It is all the same to me whether I walk about the streets, or loiter in the Boboli Gardens, or listen to the delicious music of the full military band that plays daily for an hour before sunset under the shade of the Cascine. They all afford me a kind of vague pleasure – very much that sort of satisfaction which springs from hearing a cat purr, or from watching the fitful blaze of a wood fire. I have no fondness for jewelry, and the great Kohinoor diamond and all the crown jewels of Russia could not invest respectable uselessness or aristocratic vice with any beauty for me, nor add any charm to a bright, intelligent face, such as lights up many a home in this selfish world; yet I have spent hours in looking at the stalls on the Jeweller's Bridge, and enjoying the covetous looks bestowed by so many passers-by upon their glittering contents.

There are some excellent bookstalls here, and I have renewed the joys of past years and the memory of Paternoster Row, Fleet Street, Holborn, the Strand, and of the quays of Paris, in the inspection of their stock. I have a strong affection for bookstalls, and had much rather buy a book at one than in a shop. In the first place it would be cheaper; in the second place it would be a little worn, and I should become the possessor, not only of the volume, but of its associations with other lovers of books who turned over its leaves, reading here and there, envying the future purchaser. For books, so long as they are well used, increase in value as they grow in age. Sir William Jones's assertion, that "the best monument that can be erected to a man of literary talents is a good edition of his works," is not to be denied; but who would think of reading, for the enjoyment of the thing, a modern edition of Sir Thomas Browne, or Izaak Walton? Who would wish to read Hamlet in a volume redolent of printers' ink and binders' glue? Who would read a clean new copy of Robinson Crusoe when he might have one that had seen service in a circulating library, or had been well thumbed by several generations of adventure-loving boys? A book is to me like a hat or coat – a very uncomfortable thing until the newness has been worn off.

It is in the churches of Florence that my enthusiasm reaches its meridian. This solemn cathedral, with its richly dight windows, – whose warm hues must have been stolen from the palette of Titian or Tintoretto, – makes me forget all earthly hopes and sorrows; and the majestic Santa Maria Novella and San Lorenzo, with their peaceful cloisters and treasures of literature and art, appeal strongly to my religious sensibilities, while they completely satisfy my taste. And then Santa Croce, solemn, not merely as a place of worship, but as the repository of the dust of many of those illustrious men whose genius illumined the world during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries! I have enjoyed Santa Croce particularly, because I have seen more of the religious life of the Florentine people there. For more than a week I have been there every evening, just after sunset, when the only light that illuminated those ancient arches came from the high altar, which appeared like a vision of heaven in the midst of the thickest darkness of earth. The nave and aisles of that vast edifice were thronged: men, women, and children were kneeling upon that pavement which contains the records of so much goodness and greatness. I have heard great choirs; I have been thrilled by the wondrous power of voices that seemed too much like those of angels for poor humanity to listen to; but I have never before been so overwhelmed as by the hearty music of that vast multitude.

The galleries of art need another volume and an abler pen than mine. Free to the people as the sunlight and the shade of the public gardens, they make an American blush to think of the niggardly spirit that prevails in the country which he would fain persuade himself is the most favoured of all earthly abodes. The Academy, the Pitti, the Uffizi, make you think that life is too short, and that art is indeed long. You wish that you had more months to devote to them than you have days. Great as is the pleasure that I have found in them, I have found myself lingering more fondly in the cloisters and corridors of San Marco than amid the wonderful works that deck the walls of the palaces. The pencil of Beato Angelico has consecrated that dead plastering, and given to it a divine life. The rapt devotion and holy tranquillity of those faces reflect the glory of the eternal world. I ask no more convincing proof of the immortality of the soul, than the fact that those forms of beauty and holiness were conceived and executed by a mortal.

It is enough to excite the indignation of any reflective Englishman or American to visit Florence, and compare – or perhaps I ought rather to say contrast – the facts which force themselves upon his attention, with the prejudices implanted in his mind by early education. Surely, he has a right to be astonished, and may be excused if he indulges in a little honest anger, when he looks for the first time at the masterpieces of art which had their origin in those ages which he has been taught to consider a period of ignorance and barbarism. He certainly obtains a new idea of the "barbarism" of the middle ages, when he visits the benevolent institutions which they have bequeathed to our times, and when he sees the admirable working of the *Compagnia della Misericordia*, which unites all classes of society, from the grand duke to his humblest subject, in the bonds of religion and philanthropy. He may be pardoned, too, if he comes to the conclusion that the liberal arts were not entirely neglected in the age that produced a Dante and a Petrarch, a Cimabue and a Giotto, – not to mention a host of other names, which may not shine so brightly as these, but are alike superior to temporal accidents, – and he cannot be considered unreasonable if he refuses to believe that the ages which witnessed the establishment of universities like those of Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, Prague, Bologna, Salamanca, Vienna, Ferrara, Ingolstadt, Louvain, Leipsic, &c., were quite so deeply sunk in darkness, or were held in an intellectual bondage so utterly hopeless, as the eulogists of the nineteenth century would persuade him. The monuments of learning, art, and benevolence, with which Florence is filled, will convince any thinking man that those who speak of the times I have alluded to as the "dark ages," mean thereby the ages concerning which they are in the dark; and admirably exemplify in their own shallow self-sufficiency the ignorance they would impute to the ages when learning and all good arts were the handmaids of religion.

ANCIENT ROME

The moment in which one takes his first look at Rome is an epoch in his life. Even if his education should have been a most illiberal one, and he himself should be as strenuous an opponent of pontifical prerogatives as John of Leyden or Dr. Dowling, he is sure to be, for the time, imbued in some measure with the feelings of a pilgrim. The sight of that city which has exercised such a mighty influence on the world, almost from its very foundation, fills his mind with "troublings of strange joy." His vague notions of ancient history assume a more distinct form. The twelve Cæsars pass before his mind's eye like the spectral kings before the Scotch usurper. The classics which he used to neglect so shamefully at school, the historical lessons which he thought so dull, have been endowed with life and interest by that one glance of his astonished eye. But if he loved the classics in his youth, – if the wanderings of Æneas and the woes of Dido charmed instead of tiring him, – if "Livy's pictured page," the polished periods of Sallust and Tacitus, and the mighty eloquence of Cicero, were to him a mine of delight rather than a task, – how does his eye glisten with renewed youth, and his heart swell as his old boyish enthusiasm is once more kindled within it! He feels that he has reached the goal to which his heart and mind were turned during his purest and most unselfish years; and if he were as unswayed by human respect as he was then, he would kneel down with the travel-worn pilgrims by the wayside to give utterance to his gratitude, and to greet the queen city of the world: *Salve, magna parens!*

I shall not easily forget the cloudless afternoon when I first took that long, wearisome ride from Civita Vecchia to Rome. There was no railway in those days, as there is now, and the diligence was of so rude and uncomfortable a make that I half suspected it to be the one upon the top of which Hannibal is said to have crossed the Alps, (*summâ diligentia*.) I shared the *coupé* with two other sufferers, and was, like them, so fatigued that it seemed as if a celestial vision would be powerless to make me forgetful of my aching joints, when (after a laborious pull up a hill which might be included among the "everlasting hills" spoken of in holy writ) our long-booted postilion turned his expressive face towards us, and banished all our weariness by exclaiming, as he pointed into the blue distance with his short whip-handle, "*Ecco! Roma! San Pietro!*"

A single glance of the eye served to overcome all our fatigue. There lay the world's capital, crowned by the mighty dome of the Vatican basilica, and we were every moment drawing nearer to it. It was evening before we found ourselves staring at those dark walls which have withstood so many sieges, and heard the welcome demand for passports, which informed us that we had reached the gate of the city.

I was really in Rome, – I was in that city hallowed by so many classical, historical, and sacred associations, – and it all seemed to me like a confused dream. Twice, before the diligence had gone a hundred yards inside the gate, I had pinched myself to ascertain whether I was really awake; and even after I passed through the lofty colonnade of St. Peter's, and had gazed at the front of the church and the vast square which art has made familiar to every one, and had seen the fountains with the moonbeams flashing in their silvery spray, I feared lest something should interrupt my dream, and I should wake to find myself in my snug bedroom at home, wondering at the weakness which allowed me to be seduced into the eating of a bit of cheese the evening before. It was not so, however; no disorganizing cheese had interfered with my digestion; it was no dream; and I was really in Rome. I slept soundly when I reached my hotel, for I felt sure that no hostile Brennus lay in wait to disturb the city's peace, and the grateful hardness of my bed convinced me that all the geese of the capital had not been killed, if the enemy should effect an entrance.

There are few people who love Rome at first sight. The ruins, that bear witness to her grandeur in the days of her worldly supremacy, oppress you at first with an inexpressible sadness. The absence of any thing like the business enterprise and energy of this commercial age makes English and

American people long at first for a little of the bustle and roar of Broadway and the Strand. The small paving stones, which make the feet of those who are unaccustomed to them ache severely, the brick and stone floors of the houses, and the lack of the little comforts of modern civilization, render Rome a wearisome place, until one has caught its spirit. Little does he think who for the first time gazes on those gray, mouldering walls, on which "dull time feeds like slow fire upon a hoary brand," or walks those streets in which the past and present are so strangely commingled, – little does he realize how dear those scenes will one day be to him. He cannot foresee the regret with which he will leave those things that seem too common and familiar to deserve attention, nor the glowing enthusiasm which their mention will inspire in after years; and he would smile incredulously if any one were to predict to him that his heart, in after times, will swell with homesick longings as he recalls the memory of that ancient city, and that he will one day salute it from afar as his second home.

I make no claims to antiquarian knowledge; for I do not love antiquity for itself alone. It is only by force of association that antiquity has any charms for me. The pyramids of Egypt would awaken my respect, not so much by their age or size, as by the remembrance of the momentous scenes which have been enacted in their useless and ungraceful presence. Show me a scroll so ancient that human science can obtain no key to the mysteries locked up in the strange figures inscribed upon it, and you would move me but little. But place before me one of those manuscripts (filled with scholastic lore, instinct with classic eloquence, or luminous with the word of eternal life) which have come down to us from those nurseries of learning and piety, the monasteries of the middle ages, and you fill me with the intensest enthusiasm. There is food for the imagination hidden under those worm-eaten covers and brazen clasps. I see in those fair pages something more than the results of the patient toil which perpetuated those precious truths. From those carefully penned lines, and brilliant initial letters, the pale, thoughtful face of the transcriber looks upon me – his contempt of worldly ambition and sacrifice of human consolations are reflected there – and from the quiet of his austere cell, he seems to dart from his serene eyes a glance of patient reproach at the worldlier and more modern age which reaps the fruit of his labour, and repays him by slanderous his character. Show me a building whose stupendous masonry seems the work of Titan hands, but whose history is lost in the twilight of the ages, so that no record remains of a time when it was any thing but an antique enigma, and its massive columns and Cyclopean proportions will not touch me so nearly as the stone in Florence where Dante used to stand and gaze upon that dome which Michel Angelo said he would not imitate, and could not excel.

Feeling thus about antiquities, I need not say that those of Rome, so crowned with the most thrilling historical and personal associations, are not wanting in charms for me. Yet I do not claim to be an antiquarian. It is all one to me whether the column of Phocas be forty feet high or sixty, – whether a ruin on the Palatine that fascinates me by its richness and grandeur, was once a Temple of Minerva or of Jupiter Stator; or whether its foundations are of travertine or tufa. I abhor details. My enjoyment of a landscape would be at an end if I were called upon to count the mild-eyed cattle that contribute so much to its picturesqueness; and I have no wish to disturb my appreciation of the spirit of a place consecrated by ages of heroic history, by entertaining any of the learned conjectures of professional antiquarians. It is enough for me to know that I am standing on the spot where Romulus built his straw-thatched palace, and his irreverent brother leaped over the walls of the future mistress of the nations. Standing in the midst of the relics of the grandeur of imperial Rome, the whole of her wonderful history is constantly acting over again in my mind. The stern simplicity of those who laid the foundations of her greatness, the patriotic daring of those who extended her power, the wisdom of those who terminated civil strife by compelling the divided citizens to unite against a foreign foe, are all present to me. In that august place where Cicero pleaded, gazing upon that mount where captive kings did homage to the masters of the world, your mere antiquarian, with his pestilent theories and measurements, seems to me little better than a profaner. When I see such a one scratching about the base of some majestic column in the Forum (although I cannot but be grateful to those whose

researches have developed the greatness of the imperial city,) I do long to interrupt him, and remind him that his "tread is on an empire's dust." I wish to recall him from the petty details in which he delights, and have him enjoy with me the grandeur and dignity of the whole scene.

The triumphal arches, – the monuments of the cultivation of those remote ages, no less than of the power of the state which erected them, – the memorials of the luxury that paved the way to the decline of that power – all these things impress me with the thought of the long years that intervened between that splendour and the times when the seat of universal empire was inhabited only by shepherds and their flocks. It wearies me to think of the long centuries of human effort that were required to bring Rome to its culminating point of glory; and it affords me a melancholy kind of amusement to contrast the spirit of those who laid the deep and strong foundations of that prosperity and power, with that of some modern sages, to whom a hundred years are a respectable antiquity, and who seem to think that commercial enterprise and the will of a fickle populace form as secure a basis for a state as private virtue, and the principle of obedience to law. I know a country, yet in the first century of its national existence, full of hope and ambition, and possessing advantages such as never before fell to the lot of a young empire, but lacking in those powers which made Rome what she was. If that country, "the newest born of nations, the latest hope of mankind," which has so rapidly risen to a power surpassing in extent that of ancient Rome, and bears within itself the elements of the decay that ruined the old empire, – wealth, vice, corruption, – if she could overcome the vain notion that hers is an exceptional case, and that she is not subject to that great law of nature which makes personal virtue the corner-stone of national stability and the lack of that its bane, and could look calmly upon the remains of old Rome's grandeur, she might learn a great lesson. Contemplating the patient formation of that far-reaching dominion until it found its perfect consummation in the age of Augustus, (*Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem*.) she would see that true national greatness is not "the hasty product of a day"; that demagogues and adventurers, who have made politics their trade, are not the architects of that greatness; and that the parchment on which the constitution and laws of a country are written, might as well be used for drum-heads when reverence and obedience have departed from the hearts of its people.

A gifted representative of a name which is classical in the history of the drama, some years ago gave to the world a journal of her residence in Rome. She called her volume "A Year of Consolation" – a title as true as it is poetical. Indeed I know of nothing more soothing to the spirit than a walk through these ancient streets, or an hour of meditation amid these remains of fallen majesty. To stand in the arena of the Coliseum in the noonday glare, or when those ponderous arches cast their lengthened shadows on the spot where the first Roman Christians were sacrificed to make a holiday for a brutalized populace, – to muse in the Pantheon, that changeless temple of a living, and monument of a dead, worship, and reflect on the many generations that have passed beneath its majestic portico from the days of Agrippa to our own, – to listen to the birds that sing amid the shrubbery which decks the stupendous arches of the Baths of Caracalla, – to be overwhelmed by the stillness of the Campagna while the eye is filled with that rolling verdure which seems in the hazy distance like the waves of the unquiet sea – what are all these things but consolations in the truest sense of the word? What is the bitterest grief that ever pierced a human heart through a long life of sorrows, compared to the dumb woe of that mighty desolation? What are our brief sufferings, when they are brought into the august presence of a mourner who has seen her hopes one by one taken from her, through centuries of war and rapine, neglect and silent decay?

Among all of Rome's monuments of antiquity, there are few that impress me so strangely as those old Egyptian obelisks, the trophies of the victorious emperors, which the pontiffs have made to contribute so greatly to the adornment of their capital. It is almost impossible to turn a corner of one of the principal streets of the city without seeing one of these peculiar shafts that give a fine finish to the perspective. If their cold granite forms could speak, what a strange history they would reveal! They were witnesses of the achievements of a power which reached its noonday splendour centuries

before the shepherd Faustulus took the foundling brothers into his cottage on the banks of the Tiber. The civilization of which they are the relics had declined before the Roman kings inaugurated that which afterwards reclaimed all Europe from the barbarians. Yet there they stand as grim and silent as if they had but yesterday been rescued from the captivity of the native quarry, and had never seen a nobler form than those of the dusty artisans who wrought them – as dull and unimpressible as some of the stupid tourists whom I see daily gazing upon these glorious monuments, and seeing only so much brick and stone.

MODERN ROME

Acknowledging as I do the charms which the Rome of antiquity possesses for me, it must still be confessed that the Rome of the present time enchants me with attractions scarcely less potent. Religion has consecrated many of the spots which history had made venerable, and thus added a new lustre to their associations. I turn from the broken columns and gray mouldering walls of old Rome to those fanes, "so ancient, yet so new," in which the piety of centuries has found its enduring expression. Beneath their sounding arches, by the mild light of the lamps that burn unceasingly around their shrines, who would vex his brain with antiquarian lore? We may notice that the pavement is worn away by the multitudes which have been drawn thither by curiosity or devotion; but we feel that Heaven's chronology is not an affair of months and years, and that Peter and Paul, Gregory and Leo, are not mere personages in a drama upon the first acts of which the curtain long since descended. Who thinks of antiquity while he inhabits that world of art which Rome encloses within her walls? Those are not the triumphs of a past age alone; they are the triumphs of to-day. The Apollo's bearing is not less manly, its step not less elastic, than it was in that remote age when its unknown sculptor threw aside his chisel and gazed upon his finished work. To-day's sunshine is not more clear and golden than that which glows in the landscapes of Claude Lorraine, though he who thus made the sunbeams his servants has been sleeping for nearly two centuries in the dusty vaults of *Trinita de' Monti*. Were Raphael's deathless faces more real while he was living than they are now? Were Guido's and Domenichino's triumphs more worthy of admiration while the paint was wet upon them? or were the achievements of that giant of art, Michel Angelo, ever more wonderful than now? No; these great works take no note of time, and confer upon the city which contains them something of their own immortality.

I have heard people regret that so many of our artists should expatriate themselves, and spend their lives in Rome or Florence. To me, however, nothing seems more natural; and if I were a painter, or a sculptor, I feel certain that I should share the common weakness of the profession for a place of residence in harmony with my art. What sympathy can a true artist feel with a state of society in which he is regarded by nine people out of ten as a useless member, because he does not directly aid in the production of a given quantity of grain or of cloth? Every stroke of his brush, every movement of his hands in moulding the obedient clay, is a protest against the low, mean, materialistic views of life which prevail among us; and it is too much to ask of any man that he shall spend his days in trying to live peaceably in an enemy's camp. When figs and dates become common articles of food in Lapland, and the bleak sides of the hills of New Hampshire are adorned with the graceful palm tree and the luxuriant foliage of the tropics, you may expect art to flourish in a community whose god is commerce, and whose chief religious duty is money-getting.

Truly the life of an artist in Rome is about as near the perfection of earthly happiness as is commonly vouchsafed to mortal man. The tone of society, and all the surroundings of the artist, are so congenial that no poverty nor privation can seriously interfere with them. The streets, with their architectural marvels, the trim gardens and picturesque cloisters of the old religious establishments, the magnificent villas of the neighbourhood of the city, and the vast, mysterious Campagna, with its gigantic aqueducts and its purple atmosphere, and those glorious galleries which at the same time gratify the taste of the artist and feed his ambition, – these are things which are as free to him as the blessed sunlight or the water that sparkles in the countless fountains of the Holy City. I do not wonder that artists who have lived any considerable time in Rome are discontented with the feverish restlessness of our American way of life, and that, after "stifling the mighty hunger of the heart" through two or three wearisome years in our western world, they turn to Rome as to a fond mother, upon whose breast they may find that peace which they had elsewhere sought in vain.

The churches of Rome impress me in a way which I have never heard described by any other person. I do not speak of St. Peter's, (that "noblest temple that human skill ever raised to the honour of the Creator,") nor do I refer to those other magnificent basilicas in which the Christian glories of eighteen centuries sit enthroned. These have a dignity and majesty peculiarly their own, and the most thoughtless cannot tread their ancient pavement without being for the time subdued into awe and veneration. But the parish churches of Rome, the churches of the various religious orders and congregations, and those numerous little temples which are so thickly scattered through the city, attract me in manner especially fascinating. There is an air of cosiness and at-home-ateness about them which cannot be found in the grander fanes. Some of them seem by their architectural finish to have been built in some fine street or square, and to have wandered off in search of quiet to their present secluded positions. It is beneath their arches that the Roman people may be seen. Before those altars you may see men, women, and children kneeling, their lips scarcely moving with the petitions which are heard only in another world. No intruding tourists, eye-glassed and Murrayed, interfere with their devotions, and the silence of the sacred place is unbroken, save by the rattling of a rosary, or at stated times by the swell of voices from the choir chapel. These are the places where the real power of the Catholic religion makes itself felt more unmistakably than in the grandest cathedrals, where every form and sound is eloquent of worship. I remember with pleasure that once in London, as I was passing through that miserable quarter which lies between Westminster Abbey and Buckingham Palace, I was attracted by the appearance of a number of people who were entering a narrow doorway. One or two stylish carriages, with crests upon their panels, and drivers in livery, stood before the dingy building which seemed to wear a mysterious air of semi-cleanliness in the midst of the general squalour. I followed the strange collection of the representatives of opulence and the extremest poverty through a long passage-way, and found myself in a large room which was tastefully fitted up for a Catholic chapel. The simplicity of the place, joined with its strictly ecclesiastical look, the excellent music, the crowded and devout congregation, and the almost breathless attention which was paid to the simple and persuasive eloquence of the preacher, who was formerly one of the chief ornaments of the established church, whose highest honours he had cast aside that he might minister more effectually to the poor and despised, – all these things astonished and delighted me. To see that church preserving, even in its hiddenness and poverty, its regard for the comeliness of God's worship, and adorning that humble chapel in a manner which showed that the spirit which erected the shrines of Westminster, Salisbury and York, had not died out, carried me back in spirit to the catacombs of Rome, where the early Christians left the abiding evidences of their zeal for the beauty of the house of God. I was at that time fresh from the continent, and my mind was occupied with the remembrance of the gorgeous churches of Italy. Yet, despite my recollection of those "forests of porphyry and marble," those altars of *lapis lazuli*, those tabernacles glittering with gold, and silver, and precious stones, and those mosaics and frescoes whose beauty and variety almost fatigue the sense of the beholder, – I must say that it gave me a new sense of the dignity and grandeur of the ancient Church, to see her in the midst of the poverty and obscurity to which she is now condemned in the land which once professed her faith, and was once thickly planted with those institutions of learning and charity which are the proudest monuments of her progress. A large ship, under full sail, running off before a pleasant breeze, is a beautiful sight; but it is by no means so grandly impressive as that of the same ship, under close canvas, gallantly riding out the merciless gale that carried destruction to every unseaworthy craft which came within its reach.

I am not one of those who lament over the millions which have been expended upon the churches of Rome. I am *not* inclined to follow the sordid principle of that apostle who is generally held up rather as a warning than an example, and say that it had been better if the sums which have been devoted to architectural ornament had been withheld and given to the poor. Religion has no need, it is true, of these visible splendours, any more than of set forms and modes of speech. For it is the heart that believes, and loves, and prays. But we, poor mortals, so enslaved by our senses, so

susceptible to external appearances, need every thing that can inspire in us a respect for something higher than ourselves, or remind us of the glories of the invisible, eternal world. And can we doubt that He who praised the action of that pious woman who poured the precious ointment upon His sacred head, looks with complacency upon the sacrifices which are made for the adornment of the temples devoted to His worship? Is it a right principle that people who are clad in expensive garments, who are not content unless they are surrounded by carved or enamelled furniture, and whose feet tread daily on costly tapestries, should find fault with the generous piety which has made the churches of Italy what they are, and should talk so impressively about the beauty of spiritual worship? I have no patience with these advocates for simplicity in every thing that does not relate to themselves and their own comforts.

"Shall we serve Heaven with less respect
Than we do minister to our gross selves?"

I care not how simple our private houses may be, but I advocate liberality and splendour in our public buildings of all kinds, for the sake of preserving a due respect for the institutions they enshrine. I remember, in reading one of the old classical writers, – Sallust, I think, – in my young days, being greatly impressed by his declaration that private luxury is a sure forerunner of a nation's downfall, and that it is a fatal sign for the dwellings of the citizens to be spacious and magnificent, while the public edifices are mean and unworthy. Purely intellectual as we may think ourselves, we are, nevertheless, somewhat deferential to the external proprieties of life, and I very much doubt whether the most reverential of us could long maintain his respect for the Supreme Court if its sessions were held in a tap-room, or for religion, if its ministers prayed and preached in pea-jackets and top-boots.

Displeasing as is the presence of most of the English-speaking tourists one meets in Rome, there are two places where they delight to congregate, which yet have charms for me that not even Cockney vulgarity or Yankee irreverence can destroy. The church of the convent of *Trinità de' Monti* wins me, in spite of the throng that fills its nave at the hour of evening every Sunday and festival day. Some years since, when I first visited Rome, the music which was heard there was of the highest order of merit. At present the nuns of the Sacred Heart have no such great artistes in their community as they had then, but the music of their choir is still one of those things which he who has once heard can never forget. It is the only church in Rome in which I have heard female voices; and, though I much prefer the great male choirs of the basilicas, there is a soothing simplicity in the music at *Trinità de' Monti* which goes home to almost every heart. I have seen giddy and unthinking girls, who laughed at the ceremonial they did not understand, subdued to reverence by those strains, and supercilious Englishmen reduced to the humiliating necessity of wiping their eyes. Indeed, the whole scene is so harmoniously impressive that its enchantment cannot be resisted. The solemn church, lighted only by the twilight rays, and the tapers upon the high altar, – the veiled forms of the pious sisterhood and their young pupils in the grated sanctuary, – the clouding of the fragrant incense, – the tinkling of that silvery bell and of the chains of the swinging censer, – those ancient and dignified rites, – and over all, those clear, angelic voices praying and praising, in litany and hymn – all combine to make up a worship, one moment of which would seem enough to wipe away the memory of a lifetime of folly, and disappointment, and sorrow.

The Sistine Chapel is another place to which I am bound by an almost supernatural fascination. My imperfect eyesight will not permit me to enjoy fully the frescoes that adorn its lofty walls; but I feel that I am in the presence of the great master and some of his mightiest conceptions. I do not know whether the chapel is most impressive in its empty state, or when thronged for some great religious function. In the former condition, its fine proportions and its simplicity satisfy me so completely, that I hardly wish for the pomp and splendour which belong to it on great occasions. I know of nothing more grand than the sight of that simple throne of the Sovereign Pontiff, when it is occupied by that

benignant old man, to whom more than two hundred millions of people look with veneration as to a father and a teacher, – and surrounded by those illustrious prelates and princes who compose a senate of moral and intellectual worth, such as all the world beside cannot parallel. Those venerable figures – those gray hairs – those massive foreheads, and those resplendent robes of office, seem to be a part of some great historical picture, rather than a reality before my eyes. There is nothing more severe in actual experience, or more satisfactory in the recollection, than Holy Week in the Sistine Chapel. The crowd, the fatigue, and the presence of so many sight-seers, who have come with the same feeling that they would attend an opera or a play, are not calculated to increase one's bodily comfort, or to awaken the sentiments proper to so sacred a season as that which is then commemorated. But after these have passed away, there remains the recollection, which time does not diminish, but makes more precious, of that darkening chapel and the bowed-down heads of the Pope and cardinals, of the music, "yearning like a god in pain," of the melodious woe of the *Miserere*, the plaintive majesty of the Lamentations and the Reproaches, and the shrill dissonance of the shouts of the populace in the gospel narrative of the crucifixion. These are things which would outweigh a year of fatigue and pain. I know of no greater or more sincere tribute to the perfections of the Sistine choir, and the genius of Allegri and Palestrina, than the patience with which so many people submit to be packed, like herring in a box, into that small chapel. But old and gouty as I am, I would gladly undergo all the discomforts of that time to hear those sounds once more.

I hear some people complain of the beggars, and wonder why Rome, with her splendid system of charities for the relief of every form of suffering, permits mendicancy. For myself, I am not inclined to complain either of the beggars or of the merciful government, which refuses to look upon them as offenders against its laws. On the contrary, it appears to me rather creditable than otherwise to Rome, that she is so far behind the age, as not to class poverty with crime among social evils. I have a sincere respect for this feature of the Catholic Church; this regard for the poor as her most precious inheritance, and this unwillingness that her children should think that, because she has organized a vast system of benevolence, they are absolved of the duty of private charity. In this wisdom, which thus provides for the exercise of kindly feelings in alms-giving, may be found one of the most attractive characteristics of the Roman Church. This, no less than the austere religious orders which she has founded, shows in what sense she receives the beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." And the same kind spirit of equality may be seen in her churches and cathedrals, where rich and poor kneel upon the same pavement, before their common God and Saviour, and in her cloisters, and universities, and schools, where social distinctions cannot enter.

When I walk through the cloisters of these venerable institutions of learning, or gaze upon the ancient city from *Monte Mario*, or the Janiculum, it seems to me that never until now did I appreciate the world's indebtedness to Rome. Dislike it as we may, we cannot disguise the fact, that to her every Christian nation owes, in a great measure, its civilization, its literature, and its religion. The endless empire which Virgil's muse foretold, is still hers; and, as one of her ancient Christian poets said, those lands which were not conquered by her victorious arms are held in willing obedience by her religion. When I think how all our modern civilization, our art, letters, and jurisprudence, sprang originally from Rome, it appears to me that a narrow religious prejudice has prevented our forming a due estimate of her services to humanity. To some, the glories of the ancient empire, the memory of the days when her sovereignty extended from Britain to the Ganges, and her capital counted its inhabitants by millions, seem to render all her later history insignificant and dull; but to my mind the moral dignity and power of Christian Rome is as superior to her old military omnipotence as it is possible for the human intellect to conceive. The ancient emperors, with all their power, could not carry the Roman name much beyond the limits of Europe; the rulers who have succeeded them have made the majestic language of Rome familiar to two hemispheres, and have built up, by spiritual arms, the mightiest empire that the world has ever seen. For me, Rome's most enduring glories are the memories of the times when her great missionary orders civilized and evangelized

the countries which her arms had won, when her martyrs sowed the seed of Christianity with their blood, and her confessors illumined the world with their virtues; when her pontiffs, single-handed, turned back barbarian invasions, or mitigated the severities of the feudal age, or protected the people by laying their ban upon the tyrants who oppressed them, or defended the sanctity of marriage, and the rights of helpless women against divorce-seeking monarchs and conquerors. These things are the true fulfilment of the glowing prophecy of Rome's greatness, which Virgil puts into the mouth of Anchises, when Æneas visits the Elysian Fields, and hears from his old father that the mission of the government he is about to found is to rule the world by moral power, to make peace between opposing nations, to spare the subject, and to subdue the proud:

"Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento;
Hæ tibi erunt artes, pacisque imponere morem,
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos."

ROME TO MARSEILLES

The weather was fearfully hot the day of my departure from Rome. The sun was staring down, without winking, upon that wonderful old city, as if he loved the sight. The yellow current of old Father Tiber seemed yellower than ever in the glare. Except from sheer necessity, no person moved abroad; for the atmosphere, which early in the morning had seemed like airs from heaven, before noon had become most uncomfortably like a blast from the opposite direction. The Piazza di Spagna was like Tadmor in the wilderness. Not a single English tourist, with his well-read Murray under his arm, was to be seen there; not a carriage driver broke the stillness of the place with his polyglot solicitations to ride. The great staircase of *Trinità de' Monti* seemed an impossibility; to have climbed up its weary ascent under that broiling sun would have been poor entertainment for man or beast. The squares of the city were like furnaces, and made one mentally curse architecture, and bless the narrow, shady streets. The soldiers on guard at the gates and in the public places looked as if they couldn't help it. Now and then a Capuchin monk, in his heavy, brown habit, girded with the knotted cord, toiled along on some errand of benevolence, and made one marvel at his endurance. Occasionally a cardinal rolled by in scarlet state, looking as if he gladly would have exchanged the bondage of his dignity and power for a single day of virtuous liberty in linen pantaloons.

Traffic seemed to have departed this life; there were no buyers, and the shopkeepers slumbered at their counters. The *cafés* were shrouded in their long, striped awnings, and seemed to invite company by their well-wet pavement. A few old Romans found energy enough to call for an occasional ice or lemonade, and talked in the intervals about *Pammerstone*, and his agent, Mazzini. How the sun blazed down into the Coliseum! Not a breath of air stirred the foliage that clothes that mighty ruin. Even the birds were mute. To have crossed that broad arena would have perilled life as surely as in those old days when the first Roman Christians there confessed their faith. On such a day, one's parting visits must necessarily be brief; so I left the amphitheatre, and walked along the dusty *Via Sacra*, pausing a moment to ponder on the scene of Cicero's triumphs, and of so many centuries of thrilling history, and coming to the conclusion that, if it were such a day as that when Virginius in that place slew his dear little daughter, the blow was merciful indeed. The market-place in front of the Pantheon, usually so thronged and lively, was almost deserted. The fresh, bright vegetables had either all been sold, or had refused to grow in such a heat. But the Pantheon itself was unchanged. There it stood, in all its severe grandeur, majestic as in the days of the Cæsars, the embodiment of heathenism, the exponent of the worship of the old, inexorable gods, – of justice without mercy, and power without love. Its interior seemed cool and refreshing, for no heat can penetrate that stupendous pile of masonry, – and I gathered new strength from my short visit. It was a fine thought in the old Romans to adapt the temples of heathenism to the uses of Christianity. The contrasts suggested to our minds by this practice are very striking. When we see that the images of the old revengeful and impure divinities have given place to those of the humble and self-denying heroes of Christianity, that the Saviour of the world stretches out His arms upon the cross, in the place from which the haughty Jupiter once hurled his thunderbolts, we are borne at once to a conclusion more irresistible than any that the mere force of language could produce. One of our own poets felt this in Rome, and expressed this same idea in graceful verse: —

"The goddess of the woods and fields,
The healthful huntress undefiled,
Now with her fabled brother yields
To sinless Mary and her Child."

But I must hurry on towards St. Peter's. There are three places in Rome which every one visits as soon as possible after he arrives, and as short a time as may be before his departure – the Coliseum, the Pantheon, and St. Peter's. The narrow streets between the Pantheon and the Bridge of St. Angelo were endurable, because they were shady. It was necessary to be careful, however, and not trip over any of the numerous Roman legs whose proprietors were stretched out upon the pavement in various picturesque postures, sleeping away the long hours of that scorching day. At last the bridge is reached Bernini's frightful statues, which deform its balustrades, seem to be writhing under the influence of the sun. I am quite confident that St. Veronica's napkin was curling with the heat. The bronze archangel stood as usual upon the summit of the Castle of St. Angelo. I stopped a few moments, thinking that he might see the expediency of sheathing his sword and retreating, before he should be compelled, in the *confusion* of such a blaze as that, to *run* away; but it was useless. I moved on towards St. Peter's, and he still kept guard there as brazen-faced as ever. The great square in front of the basilica seemed to have scooped up its fill of heat, and every body knows that it is capable of containing a great deal. The few persons whom devotion or love of art had tempted out in such a day, approached it under the shade of its beautiful colonnades. I was obliged to content myself with the music of one of those superb fountains only, for the workmen were making a new basin for the other. St. Peter's never seemed to me so wonderful, never filled me up so completely, as it did then. The contrast of the heat I had been in with that atmosphere of unchangeable coolness, the quiet of the vast area, the fewness of people moving about, all conspired to impress me with a new sense of the majesty and holiness of the place. The quiet, unflickering blaze of the numerous lamps that burn unceasingly around the tomb of the Prince of the Apostles seemed a beacon of immortality. To one who could at that hour recall the bustle and turmoil of the Boulevards of Paris, or of the Strand, or of Broadway, the vast basilica itself seemed to be an island of peace in the tempestuous ocean of the world. I am not so blind a lover of Gothic architecture that I can find no beauty nor religious feeling in the Italian churches. I prefer, it is true, the "long-drawn aisle and fretted vault," and the "storied windows richly dight"; but I cannot for that reason sneer at the gracefully turned arches, the mosaic walls and domes rich in frescoes and precious marbles, that delight one's eyes in Italy. Both styles are good in their proper places. The Gothic and Norman, with their high-pitched roofs, are the natural growth of the snowy north, and to attempt to transplant them to a land where heat is to be guarded against, were as absurd as to expect the pine and fir to take the place of the fig tree and the palm. Talk as eloquently as we may about being superior to external impressions, I defy any man to breathe the quiet atmosphere of any of these old continental churches for a few moments, without feeling that he has gathered new strength therefrom to tread the thorns of life. Lamartine has spoken eloquently on this theme: "Ye columns who veil the sacred asylums where my eyes dare not penetrate, at the foot of your immovable trunks I come to sigh! Cast over me your deep shades, render the darkness more obscure, and the silence more profound! Forests of porphyry and marble! the air which the soul breathes under your arches is full of mystery and of peace! Let love and anxious cares seek shade and solitude under the green shelter of groves, to soothe their secret wounds. O darkness of the sanctuary! the eye of religion prefers thee to the wood which the breeze disturbs! Nothing changes thy foliage; thy still shade is the image of motionless eternity!"

There was not time to linger long. The pressure of worldly engagements was felt even at the shrine of the apostles. I walked about, and tried to recall the many splendid religious pageants I had there witnessed, and wondered sorrowfully whether I should ever again listen to that matchless choir, or have my heart stirred to its depths by the silver trumpets that reëcho under that sonorous vault in the most solemn moment of religion's holiest rite. Once more out in the clear hot atmosphere which seemed hotter than before. The Supreme Pontiff was absent from his capital, and the Vatican was comparatively empty. The Swiss guards, in their fantastic but picturesque uniform, were loitering about the foot of the grand staircase, and sighing for a breath of the cool air of their Alpine home. I took a last long gaze at that grand old pile of buildings, – the home of all that is most wonderful

in art, the abode of that power which overthrew the old Roman empire, inaugurated the civilization of Europe, and planted Christianity in every quarter of the globe, – and then turned my unwilling feet homewards. In my course I passed the foot of the Janiculum Hill: it was too hot, however, to think of climbing up to the convent of Sant' Onofrio – though I would gladly have paid a final visit to that lovely spot where the munificence of Pius IX. has just completed a superb sepulchre for the repose of Tasso. So I crossed the Tiber in one of those little ferry boats which are attached to a cable stretched over the river, and thus are swung across by the movement of the current, – a labour-saving arrangement preëminently Roman in its character, – and soon found myself in my lodgings. However warm the weather may be in Rome, one can keep tolerably comfortable so long as he does not move about, – thanks to the thick walls and heavy wooden window shutters of the houses, – so I found my room a cool asylum after my morning of laborious pleasure.

At last, the good byes having all been said, behold me, with my old portmanteau, (covered with its many-coloured coat of baggage labels, those trophies of many a hard campaign of travel,) at the office of the diligence for Civita Vecchia. The luggage and the passengers having been successfully stowed away, the lumbering vehicle rolled down the narrow streets, and we were soon outside the gate that opens upon the old Aurelian Way. Here the passports were examined, the postilions cracked their whips, and I felt indeed that I was "banished from Rome." It is a sad thing to leave Rome. I have seen people who have made but a brief stay there shed more tears on going away than they ever did on a departure from home; but for one who has lived there long enough to feel like a Roman citizen – to feel that the broken columns of the Forum have become a part of his being – to feel as familiar with St. Peter's and the Vatican as with the King's Chapel and the Tremont House – it is doubly hard to go away. The old city, so "rich with the spoils of time," seems invested with a personality that appeals most powerfully to every man, and would fain hold him back from returning to the world. The lover of art there finds its choicest treasures ever open to him; the artist there finds an abundance of employment for his chisel or his brush; the man of business there finds an asylum from the vexing cares of a commercial career; the student of antiquity or of history can there take his fill amid the "wrecks of a world whose ashes still are warm," and listen to the centuries receding into the unalterable past with their burdens of glory or of crime; the lover of practical benevolence will there be delighted by the inspection of establishments for the relief of every possible form of want and suffering; the enthusiast for education finds there two universities and hundreds of public schools of every grade, and all as free as the bright water that sparkles in Rome's countless fountains; the devout can there rekindle their devotion at the shrines of apostles and martyrs, and breathe the holy air of cloisters in which saints have lived and died, or join their voices with those that resound in old churches, whose pavements are furrowed by the knees of pious generations; the admirer of pomp, and power, and historic associations can there witness the more than regal magnificence of a power, compared to which the houses of Bourbon or of Hapsburg are but of yesterday; the lover of republican simplicity can there find subject for admiration in the facility of access to the highest authorities, and in the perfection of his favourite elective system by which the supreme power is perpetuated. There is, in short, no class of men to whom Rome does not attach itself. People may complain during their first week that it is dull, or melancholy, or dirty; but you generally find them sorry enough to go away, and looking back to their residence there as the happiest period of their existence. Somebody has said, – and I wish that I could recall the exact words, they are so true, – that when we leave Paris, or Naples, or Florence, we feel a natural sorrow, as if we were parting from a cherished friend; but on our departure from Rome we feel a pang like that of separation from a woman whom we love!

At last Rome disappeared from sight in the dusk of evening, and the discomforts of the journey began to make themselves obtrusive. The night air in Italy is not considered healthy, and we therefore had the windows of the diligence closed. Like Charles Lamb after the oyster pie, we were "all full inside," and a pretty time we had of it. As to respiration, you might as well have expected the performance of that function from a mackerel occupying the centre of a well-packed barrel of his

finny comrades, as of any person inside that diligence. Of course there was a baby in the company, and of course the baby cried. I could not blame it, for even a fat old gentleman who sat opposite to me would have cried if he had not known how to swear. But it is useless to recall the anguish of that night: suffice it to say that for several hours the only air we got was an occasional vocal performance from the above-mentioned infant. At midnight we reached Palo, on the sea coast, where I heard "the wild water lapping on the crag," and felt more keenly than before that I had indeed left Rome behind me. The remainder of the journey being along the coast, we had the window open, though it was not much better on that account, as we were choking with dust. It was small comfort to see the cuttings and fillings-in for the railway which is destined soon to destroy those beastly diligences, and place Rome within two or three hours of its seaport.

At five o'clock in the morning, after ten toilsome hours, I found myself, tired, dusty, and hungry, in Civita Vecchia, a city which has probably been the cause of more profanity than any other part of the world, including Flanders. I was determined not to be fleeced by any of the hotel keepers; so I staggered about the streets until I found a barber's shop open. Having repaired the damage of the preceding night, I hove to in a neighbouring *café* long enough to take in a little ballast in the way of breakfast. Afterwards I fell in with an Englishman, of considerable literary reputation, whom I had several times met in Rome. He was one of those men who seem to possess all sorts of sense except common sense. He was full of details, and could tell exactly the height of the dome of St. Peter's, or of the great pyramid, – could explain the process of the manufacture of the Minié rifle or the boring of an artesian well, and could calculate an eclipse with Bond or Secchi, – but he could not pack a carpet-bag to save his life. That he should have been able to travel so far from home alone is a fine commentary on the honesty and good nature of the people of the continent. I could not help thinking what a time he would have were he to attempt to travel in America. He would think he had discovered a new nomadic tribe in the cabmen of New York. He had come down to Civita Vecchia in a most promiscuous style, and when I discovered him he was trying to bring about a union between some six or eight irreconcilable pieces of luggage. I aided him successfully in the work, and his look of perplexity and despair gave way to one of gratitude and admiration for his deliverer. Delighted at this escape from the realities of his situation, he launched out into a profound dissertation on the philosophy of language and the formation of provincial dialects, and it was some time before I could bring him down to the common and practical business of securing his passage in the steamer for Marseilles. Ten o'clock, however, found us on board one of the steamers of the *Messageries Impariales*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.