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Содержание

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MEMOIRS OF THE HOLY LAND. [1]

BY JACOB ABBOTT

THE DEAD SEA

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

How strongly associated in the minds of men, are the ideas of guilt and ruin, unspeakable and awful, with the names of Sodom and Gomorrah. The very words themselves seem deeply and indelibly imbued with a mysterious and dreadful meaning.

The account given in the Sacred Scriptures of the destruction of these cities, and of the circumstances connected with it, has, perhaps, exercised a greater influence in modifying, or, rather, in forming, the conception which has been since entertained among mankind in respect to the character of God, than any other one portion of the sacred narrative. The thing that is most remarkable about it is, that while in the destruction of the cities we have a most appalling exhibition of the terrible energy with which God will punish confirmed and obdurate wickedness, we have in the attendant circumstances of the case, a still more striking illustration of the kind, and tender, and merciful regard with which he will protect, and encourage, and sustain those who are attempting, however feebly, to please him, and to do his will. We are told elsewhere in the Scriptures, didactically, that God is love, and also that he is a consuming fire. In this transaction we see the gentleness and the tenderness of his love, and the terrible severity of his retributive justice, displayed together. Let us examine the account somewhat in detail.

"And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous,

"I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know." —*Gen.* xviii. 20, 21.

There is a certain dramatic beauty in the manner in which the designs and intentions of Jehovah are represented in such cases as this, under the guise of words spoken. This rhetorical figure is adopted very frequently by the Hebrew writers, being far more spirited and graphic than the ordinary mode of narration, and more forcible in its effect upon common minds that are not accustomed to abstractions and generalizations. Thus, instead of saying, And God determined to create man, it is, And God said, I will make man. In the same manner, where a modern historian in speaking of the discovery of America would have written: Columbus, having learned that trunks of trees were brought by western winds to the shores of Europe, inferred that there was land in that direction, and resolved to go in

[1] Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1852, by Harper and Brothers, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern District of New York.

search of it, a Hebrew writer would have said, And it was told to Columbus, that when western winds had long been blowing, trees were thrown up upon the European shores; and Columbus said, I will take vessels and men and go and search for the land whence these trees come.

The verses which we have quoted above, accordingly, though in form ascribing words to Jehovah, in reality are meant only to express, in a manner adapted to the conceptions of men, the cautious and deliberate character of the justice of God. "I have heard the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, the cry of grievous violence and guilt, and I will go down and see if the real wickedness that reigns there, is as great as would seem to be denoted by the cry. And if not, I will know." In other words, God would not condemn hastily. He would not judge from appearances, since appearances might be fallacious. He would cautiously inquire into all the circumstances, and even in the case of wickedness so enormous as that of Sodom and Gomorrah, he would carefully ascertain whether there were any considerations that could extenuate or soften it. How happy would it be for mankind, if we all, in judging our neighbors, would follow the example of forbearance and caution here presented to us. It was undoubtedly with reference to its influence as an example for us, that the sacred writer has thus related the story.

In the same manner, how strikingly the narrative which is given of the earnest intercession made by Abraham, to save the cities, and of the apparent yielding of the Almighty Judge, again and again, to humble prayers in behalf of sinners, offered by a brother sinner, illustrates the long-suffering and the forbearance of God – his reluctance to punish, and his readiness to save. There is a special charm in the exhibition which is made of these divine attributes in this case, assuming the form as they do of a divine sympathy with the compassionate impulses of man. The great and almighty Judge allows himself to be led to deal mercifully with sinners through the pity and the prayers of a brother sinner, deprecating the merited destruction. The intercession of Abraham was after all unavailing, for there were not ten righteous men to be found to fulfill the condition on which he had obtained the promise that the city should be spared. The narrative, however, of the intercession, the final result of it in the promise of God to spare the whole monstrous mass of wickedness, if only ten righteous men could be found in the city, and the measures which he adopted, when it was ascertained that there were not ten to be found, to warn and rescue all that there were, give to the whole story a great power in bringing home to the hearts of men, a sense of the compassion of God, and the regard which he feels for human sympathies and desires. There is no portion of the sacred Scriptures which has more encouraged and strengthened the spirit of prayer, than the narration of the circumstances that preceded the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

SITUATION OF THE PLAIN

Sodom and Gomorrah are described as the cities of the plain, and this plain is spoken of as the plain of Jordan. And yet the place where the cities are supposed to have stood, is near the southern end of the Dead Sea, while the Jordan empties into the northern end of it. If, therefore, the plain on which the cities stood was the plain of the Jordan, in the time of Lot, it would seem that the sea itself could not have existed then, but that the river must have continued its flow, beyond the point which now forms the southern termination of the sea. The sea as at present existing, is bounded on both sides by ranges of lofty and precipitous mountains, which lie parallel to each other, and extend north and south for several hundred miles. The space which lies between these ranges, forms a long and narrow ravine, very deeply depressed below the ordinary level of the earth's surface, as if it were an enormous crevasse, with the bed of it filled up to a certain level, in some places with water and in others with alluvial soil, either fertile or barren according to the geological structure of the different sections of it. This remarkable ravine divides itself naturally into five sections. The first, reckoning from north to south, contains the sources of the Jordan, and the lakes Merom and Tiberias. The second is the valley of the Jordan. Here the bottom of the ravine consists of a long and narrow plain of fertile land, with the river meandering through it. The third section is the bed of the Dead Sea. The waters here fill the whole breadth of the valley so completely, that in many places it is impossible to pass along the shore between the mountains and the sea. The water is deepest near the northern part of the sea, and grows more and more shallow toward the southern part, until at length the land rises above the level of the surface of the water, and then the bottom of the ravine presents again a plain of land, instead of a sheet of water. This is the fourth section. It extends, perhaps, a hundred miles, rising gradually all the way, and forming in summer the bed of a small stream which flows northward to the Dead Sea. This part of the great fissure is called the valley of Arabah.[2] At length the level of the bottom of the valley reaches its highest point, and the land descends again to the south, forming the fifth or southern-most section of the vast crevasse. The waters of the Red sea flow up some hundred miles into this section, forming the eastern one of the two forks into which that sea divides itself, at its northernmost extremity.

It will be seen thus that it is at the Dead Sea that the depression of the valley is the greatest. In fact, the bed of the valley descends in both directions toward the Dead Sea for a hundred miles. Some writers have supposed that the whole of this depression was produced at the time of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and that previous to that time, the Jordan continued its course through the whole length of the valley to the Red Sea, being bordered throughout this whole distance by fertile plains extending on either hand from its banks to the base of the mountains; and that it was on this plain, near the place where now lies the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, that the cities Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, were built. In adopting this hypothesis we must suppose that the destruction of the cities was attended with some volcanic convulsion, by which all that part of the valley was sunk so far below its natural level that the river could no longer continue its course. The waters then, we must imagine, gradually filled up the deep bed so suddenly made for them, until the surface became so extended that the evaporation from it was equal to the supply from the river; and thus the sea was formed, and its size and configuration permanently determined.

Others supposed that the sea existed from the most ancient times substantially as at present, occupying the whole breadth of the valley, from side to side, though not extending so far to the southward as now. On this supposition the cities destroyed were situated on a fertile plain which then bordered the southern extremity of the sea, but which is now submerged by its waters. It is no longer possible to determine which of these hypotheses, if either, is correct. A much greater physical change

[2] Wadi Arabah.

is implied in the former than in the latter supposition, but perhaps the latter is not on that account any the less improbable. When the question is of an actual sinking of the earth, whether we suppose the causes to be miraculous or natural, it is as easy to conceive of a great subsidence, as of a small one. The enlargement of a sea, whether by the agency of an earthquake, or by the direct power of God, is as great a wonder as the creation of it would be.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITIES

The account given by the sacred writers of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is this. Lot was dwelling, at the time, in Sodom. He was warned by the messengers of God, that the city was to be destroyed, and was directed to make his escape from it with all his family. This warning was given to Lot in the night. He went out immediately to the houses of his sons-in-law, to communicate the awful tidings to them and to summon them to flee. They however did not believe him. They ridiculed his fears and refused to accompany him in his flight. Lot returned to his house much troubled and perplexed. He could not go without his daughters, and his daughters could not go without their husbands. The two messengers urged him not to delay. They entreated him to take his daughters with him and go, before the fated hour should arrive. Finally they took him by the hand, and partly by persuasion and partly by force, they succeeded in bringing him out of the city. His wife and his daughters accompanied him. His sons-in-law, it seems, were left behind.

It was very early in the morning when Lot came forth from the city – not far from the break of day. As soon as he was without the walls, the messengers urged him not to tarry there or imagine that he was yet safe, but to press forward with all speed, until he reached the mountain. "Escape for thy life," said they "Look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain lest thou be consumed." Lot was, however, afraid to go into the mountains. They were wild and desolate. His wife and his daughters were with him and it was yet dark. To take so helpless a company into such solitudes at such a time, seemed awful to him, and he begged to be permitted to retire to Zoar. Zoar was a small town on the eastern side of the plain, just at the foot of the mountains, at a place where a lateral valley opened, through which a stream descended to the plain. Lot begged that he might be permitted to go to Zoar, and that that city might be spared. His prayer was granted. A promise was given him that Zoar should be saved, and he was directed to proceed thither without delay. He accordingly went eastward across the plain and reached Zoar, just as the sun was rising. His wife, instead of going diligently on with her husband, lingered and loitered on the way, and was lost. The words are, "She became a pillar of salt." Precisely what is intended by this expression is somewhat uncertain; at any rate she was destroyed, and Lot escaped with his daughters alone into Zoar. Immediately afterward Sodom and Gomorrah were overwhelmed. The description of the catastrophe is given in the following words:

"The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.

"And he overthrew those cities and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities and that which grew upon the ground.

"And Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord:

"And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." —*Gen.* xix. 24, 25, 27, 28.

PHILOSOPHIZING ON THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH

There has been a great deal of philosophical speculation on the nature of the physical causes which were called into action in the destruction of these cities, and of the plain on which they stood. These speculations, however, are to be considered as ingenious and curious rather than useful, since they can not lead to any very tangible results. We can, in fact, know nothing positive of the phenomenon except what the sacred narrative records. And yet there is a certain propriety in making philosophical inquiries in respect to the nature even of miraculous effects, for we observe in respect to almost all of the miracles recorded in the Old Testament, that, though they transcend the power of nature, still, in character, they are always in a certain sense in harmony with it. Thus the plagues which were brought upon the Egyptians, in the time of Pharaoh, are the ordinary calamities to which the country was subject, following each other in a rapid and extraordinary succession, and developed in an aggravated and unusual form. The children of Israel, in their journeys through the desert, were fed miraculously on manna. There is a natural manna found in those regions as an ordinary production, from which undoubtedly the type and character of the miraculous supply were determined. The waters of the Red Sea were driven back at the time when the Israelites were to cross it, by the blowing of a strong east wind. The blowing of a wind has a natural tendency to drive back such waters, and to lay the shoals and shallows of a river bare. The effects produced in all these cases were far greater than the causes would naturally account for, but they were all, so to speak, in the same direction with the tendency of the causes. They transcended the ordinary course of nature; still, in character, they were in harmony with its laws. It is right and proper for us, therefore, where a miraculous effect is described, to look into the natural laws related to it, for the sake of observing whatever of analogy or conformity between the causes and effects may really appear.

With reference to such analogies, the character and the physical constitution of the gorge in which the Dead Sea lies, has excited great interest in every age. The valley has been generally considered as of volcanic formation, though it is somewhat doubtful how far it is strictly correct thus to characterize it, since no signs of lava or of extinct craters appear in any part of it. The whole region, however, is subject to earthquakes, and many substances that are usually considered as volcanic productions are found here and there along the valley, especially near the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. One of the most remarkable of these substances is bitumen, a hard and inflammable mineral which has been found, from time to time, in all ages, on the shores of the sea. Some writers have supposed that the "pits," which are referred to in the passage, "And the vale of Siddim was full of slime pits," were pits of liquified bitumen or asphaltum, – that the plain of Sodom was composed in a great degree of these and similar inflammable substances – that they were set on fire by lightning from heaven or by volcanic ignition from below, and that thus the plain itself on which the cities stood was consumed and destroyed. Others suppose that under the influence of some great volcanic convulsion, attended, as such convulsions often are, by thunderings and lightnings – the brimstone and fire out of heaven, referred to in the sacred record – a sinking, or subsidence of the land at the bottom of the valley, took place; and that the waters of the Jordan overflowed and filled the cavity, thus forming, or else greatly enlarging the Dead Sea. That the waters of the sea now flow where formerly a tract of fertile land extended, seems to be implied in the passage, Gen. xiv. 3, in which it is stated that certain kings assembled their forces, "in the vale of Siddim which is the Salt Sea." The meaning is undoubtedly as if the writer had said, The armies were gathered at a place which was then the vale of Siddim, but which is now the Salt Sea.

THE DEAD SEA IN THE MIDDLE AGES

After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the valley of the Dead Sea seemed to be forsaken of God, and to be abhorred and shunned by man, so that it remained for a great many centuries, the very type and symbol of solitude, desolation, and death. A few wild Arabs dwelt along its shores, building their rude and simple villages in the little dells that open among the mountains that border it, and feeding their camels on the scanty herbage which grew in them. Now and then some party of Crusaders, or some solitary pilgrim travelers, descended the valley from the fords of the Jordan, till they reached the sea – or looked down upon it from some commanding position among the mountains, on the eastern or western sides – and caravans or beasts of burden were accustomed to go to its southern shores to procure salt for the people of the interior. Through these and other similar channels, vague and uncertain tidings of the deadly influences of the sea and of the awful solitude and desolation which reigned around it, came out, from time to time, to more frequented regions, whence they spread in strange and exaggerated rumors throughout the civilized world. It was said that the waters of the sea filled the gloomy valley which they occupied with influences so pestiferous and deadly that they were fatal to every species of life. No fish could swim in them, no plant could grow upon their shores. It was death for a man to bathe in them, or for a bird to fly over them; and even the breezes which blew from them toward the land, blighted and destroyed all the vegetation that they breathed upon. The surface and margin of the water, instead of being adorned with verdant islands, or fringed with the floating vegetation of other seas, was blackened with masses of bitumen, that were driven hither and thither by the winds, or was bordered with a pestiferous volcanic scum; while all the approaches to the shores in the valley below were filled with yawning pits of pitchy slime, which engulfed the traveler in their horrid depths, or destroyed his life by their poisonous and abominable exhalations. In a word, the valley of the Dead Sea was for two thousand years regarded as an accursed ground, from which the wrath of God, continually brooding over it, sternly excluded every living thing. Within the last half century, however, many scientific travelers have visited the spot, and have brought back to the civilized world more correct information in respect to the natural history of the valley.

BURCKHARDT'S VISIT TO THE VALLEY OF ARABAH

One of the earliest of the scientific travelers, to whom we have alluded, was John Lewis Burckhardt, who spent several years, in the early part of the present century, in exploring the countries around the southeastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, under the auspices of a society established in London, called the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa. Burckhardt prepared himself for his work, by taking up his residence for several years in Aleppo, and in other Oriental cities, for the purpose of studying the Arabic language, and making himself perfectly familiar with the manners and customs of the people, so that in traveling through the countries which he was intending to explore, he might pass for a native, and thus be allowed to go where he pleased without molestation. He succeeded perfectly in attaining this object. He acquired the Arabic language, assumed the Arabic dress, and learned to accommodate himself, in all respects, to the manners and customs of the country. He thus passed without hindrance or suspicion where no known European or Christian would have been allowed to go.

Burckhardt explored the valley of Arabah, which extends from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea, forming, as has already been said, a southern continuation of the great Jordan gorge. He was, in fact, the first to bring the existence of this southern valley to the notice of the civilized world. The valley of the Jordan, as he describes it, widens about Jericho, where the hills which border it, join the chains of mountains which inclose the Dead Sea. At the southern extremity of the sea they again approach each other, leaving between them a valley or Ghor, similar in form to the northern Ghor, through which the Jordan flows; though the southern valley, from want of water, is a desert, while the Jordan and its tributaries make the other a fertile plain. In the southern Ghor, the rivulets which descend from the mountains are lost in the sand and gravel which form their beds, long before they reach the valley below. The valley itself, therefore, is entirely without water, and is, consequently, barren and desolate. The whole plain, as Burckhardt viewed it, presented the appearance of an expanse of shifting sands, the surface varied with innumerable undulations and low hills. A few trees grow here and there in the low places, and at the foot of the rocks which line the valley; but the depth of the sand, and the total want of water in the summer season, preclude the growth of every species of herbage. A few Bedouin tribes encamp in the valley in the winter, when the streams from the mountains being full, a sufficient supply of water is produced to flow down into the valley, causing a few shrubs to grow, on which the sheep and goats can feed.

Burckhardt and his party were an hour and a half in crossing the valley. It was in the month of August that they made the tour, and they found the heat almost intolerable. There was not the slightest appearance of a road or of any other work of man at the place where they crossed it. Still they met with no difficulty in prosecuting their journey, for the sand, though deep, was firm, and the camels walked over it without sinking. In the various journeys which Burckhardt made in these solitary regions, he carefully noted all that he saw, and copious reports of his observations were afterward published by the society in whose service he was engaged. The only instrument which he had, however, for making observations, was a pocket compass, and this he was obliged to conceal in the most careful manner from his Arab attendants, for fear of betraying himself to them. If they had seen such an instrument in his possession, they would not only have suspected his true character, but would have believed the compass to be an instrument of magic, and would have been overwhelmed with superstitious horror at the sight of it. Accordingly, Burckhardt was compelled, not only to keep his compass in concealment, as he journeyed, but also to resort to a great variety of contrivances and devices to make observations with it without being seen. Sometimes, when riding on horseback, he would stop for a moment in the way, and watching an opportunity when the attention of his companions was turned in another direction, would hastily glance at his compass unseen, covering it, while he did so, beneath his wide Arabian cloak. When riding upon a camel he could not adopt this method, for a single

camel in a caravan can not be induced to stop while the train is going on. To meet this emergency, the indefatigable traveler learned to dismount and mount again without arresting the progress of the animal. He would descend to the ground, and straying away for a moment into a copse of bushes, or behind some angle of a rock, would crouch down, take out his compass, ascertain the required bearing, make a note of it secretly in a little book which he carried for the purpose in the pocket of his vest, and then returning to the camel, would climb up to his seat and ride on as before.

It was by such means as these that the existence and the leading geographical features of the valley of Arabah were first made known to the Christian world.

ROBINSON'S VISIT TO EN-GEDI

Edward Robinson is a distinguished American philosopher and scholar, who has devoted a great deal of attention to the geography and history of Palestine, and whose researches and explorations have perhaps accomplished more in throwing light upon the subject, than those of any other person, whether of ancient or modern times. He has enjoyed very extraordinary facilities for accomplishing his work; for, in his character, and in the circumstances in which he has been placed, there have been combined, in a very remarkable degree, all the qualifications, and all the opportunities necessary for the successful prosecution of it. Having been devoted, during the greater portion of his life, to the pursuit of philological studies, he has acquired a very accurate knowledge of the languages, as well as of the manners and customs of the East; and, being endued by nature with a temperament in which great firmness and great steadiness of purpose are combined with a certain quiet and philosophical calmness and composure, and a quick and discriminating apprehension with caution, prudence, and practical good sense, he is very eminently qualified for the work of an Oriental explorer. In the year 1838, he made an extended tour, or, rather, series of tours, in the Holy Land, a very minute and interesting report of which he afterward gave to the world. He is now, in 1852, making a second journey there; and the Christian world are looking forward, with great interest, to the result of it.

During Robinson's first tour in Palestine, he made an excursion from Jerusalem to the western shores of the Dead Sea, where he visited a spot which is marked by a small tract of fertile ground, under the cliffs on the shore, known in ancient times as En-gedi, but called by the Arabs of the present day Ain Jidy. From Jerusalem he traveled south to Hebron, and thence turning to the east, he traversed the mountains through a succession of wild and romantic passes which led him gradually toward the sea. The road conducted him at length into the desolate and rocky region called in ancient times the Wilderness of En-gedi, the place to which David retreated when pursued by the deadly hostility of Saul. It was here that the extraordinary occurrences took place that are narrated in 1 Sam. xxiv. David, in endeavoring to escape from his enemy, hid in a cave. Saul, in pursuing him, came to the same cave, and being wearied, lay down and went to sleep there. While he was asleep, David, coming out, secretly cut off the skirt of his robe, without attempting to do him any personal injury; thus showing conclusively that he bore him no ill-will. Robinson found the region full of caves, and the scenery corresponded, in all other respects, with the allusions made to it in the Scripture narrative.

VIEW OF THE SEA

As our traveler and his party journeyed on toward the sea, they found the country descending continually, and as they followed the road down the valleys and ravines through which it lay, they imagined that they had reached the level of the sea, long before they came in sight of its shores. At length, however, to their astonishment, they came suddenly out upon the brow of a mountain, from which they looked down into a deep and extended valley where the broad expanse of water lay, fifteen hundred feet below them. The surprise which they experienced at finding the sea at so much lower a level than their estimate made it, illustrates the singular accuracy of Robinson's ideas in respect to the topography of the country which he was exploring; for, if the Dead Sea had been really at the same level with the Mediterranean, as was then generally supposed to be the case, it would have presented itself to the party of travelers precisely as they had expected to find it. The unlooked for depth was owing to a very extraordinary depression of the valley, the existence and the measure of which has since been ascertained.

Robinson and his companions, from the summit of a small knoll which lay on one side of their path, looked down upon the vast gulf beneath them with emotions of wonder and awe. It was the Dead Sea which they saw extended before them. There it lay, filling the bottom of its vast chasm, and shut in on both sides by ranges of precipitous mountains, whose steep acclivities seemed sometimes to rise directly from the water, though here and there they receded a little from the shore, so as to leave a narrow beach beneath the rocks below. From the point where our observers stood the whole southern half of the sea was exposed to view. The northern part was partly concealed by a precipitous promontory, called Ras Mersed, which rose abruptly from the shore a little north of their position.

The southern part of the sea, as viewed from this point, was remarkable for the numerous shoals and sand bars which appeared projecting in many places from the shore, forming long and low points and peninsulas of sandy land. There was one very large and remarkable peninsula of higher land, in the southeast part of the sea. The position and configuration of this peninsula may be seen upon the map. It is formed in some respect like a human foot, with the heel toward the sea. Of course, the ankle of the foot is the isthmus which connects the peninsula with the main land. The length of this peninsula, from north to south, is five or six miles. Our observers, from their lofty position at En-gedi, looked down upon it, and could trace almost the whole of its outline. North of it, too, there was a valley, which opened up among the mountains to the eastward, called the Valley of Kerak. At the head of this valley, several miles from the shore of the sea, lies the town of Kerak, a place sometimes visited by pilgrims and travelers, who pass that way along a road which traverses that part of the country on a line parallel to the shore of the sea. The course of the valley was such that the position of our observers on the mountain at En-gedi commanded a full view of the whole extent of it. They could even see the town of Kerak, with its ancient castle on a rock – far up near the summit of the mountain. It is in the lower part of this valley, a little to the eastward of the isthmus which has been already described, that the town of Zoar stood, as it is supposed, where Lot sought refuge at the time of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

THE PASS

After remaining on the cliff about three quarters of an hour, to observe and to record every thing worthy of notice in the extended view before them, the party began to go down the pass to the shore. The descent was frightful, the pathway having been formed by zigzags down the cliff, the necessary width for the track having been obtained, sometimes by cutting into the face of the rock, and sometimes by means of rude walls built from below. As they looked back up the rocks after they had descended, it seemed impossible to them that any road could have been formed there – and yet so skillfully had the work been planned and executed, that the descent, though terrific, was accomplished without any serious difficulty. In fact, the road was so practicable, that loaded camels sometimes passed up and down. One of Mr. Robinson's companions had crossed the heights of Lebanon and the mountains of Persia, and he himself had traversed all the principal passes of the Alps, but neither of them had ever met with a pass so difficult and dangerous as this. The way was really dangerous as well as difficult. An Arab woman, not long before the time of Robinson's visit, in descending the road, had fallen off over the brink of the precipice to the rocks below. She was, of course, killed by the fall.

After descending for about three quarters of an hour, the party reached a sort of dell, where a copious and beautiful fountain, springing forth suddenly from a recess in the rock, formed at once an abundant stream, that flowed tumultuously down a narrow ravine toward the sea, still four hundred feet below. This fount was the Ain Jidy, the word Ain signifying fountain in the Arabic tongue. The meaning of the whole name is the *fountain of the kid*. The course of the stream in its descent from its source was hidden from view by a luxuriant thicket of trees and shrubs which grew along its bed, nourished by the fertilizing influence of the waters. The party halted at the spring, and pitched their tents, determining to make their encampment at this spot with a view of leaving their animals here and going down on foot to the shore below. They had originally intended not to go up the pass again, but to proceed to the northward along the shore of the sea, having been informed that they could do so. They now learned, however, that there was no practicable passage along the shore, and that they must reascend the mountain in order to continue their journey. They accordingly determined, for the purpose of saving the transportation of their baggage up and down, to encamp at the fountain.

While pitching their tents, an alarm was given, that some persons were coming down the pass, and, on looking upward, they saw at the turns of the zigzag, on the brow of the precipice far above, two or three men, mounted and armed with guns. The party were for a moment alarmed, supposing that the strangers might be robbers. Their true character, however, very soon appeared; for, as they drew near, they were found to be a troop of laboring peasants of the neighborhood, mounted on peaceful donkeys, and coming down to the shore in search of salt; and so the alarm ended in a laugh. The party of peasants stopped a short time at the fountain to rest, and then continued their descent to the shore. They gathered the salt, which they came to procure, on the margin of the sea; for the waters of the sea are so impregnated with saline solutions, that whenever pools of it are evaporated by the sun, along the shore, inflorescences and incrustations remain, which can be easily gathered. After a time, the train of donkeys, bearing their heavy burdens, went toiling up the steep ascent again, and disappeared.

THE SHORE OF THE SEA

After remaining for some time at the encampment, Robinson and his companions set out at five o'clock, to go down to the shore. The declivity was still steep, though less so than in the pass above. The ground was fertile, and bore many plants and trees, and the surface of it appeared to have been once terraced for tillage and gardens. At one place, near the foot of the descent, were the ruins of an ancient town. From the base of the declivity, there was a rich and fertile plain which lay sloping gradually nearly half a mile to the shore. The bed of the brook could be traced across this plain to the sea, though at the season of this visit, the waters which the fountain supplied, copious as they appeared where they first issued from the rock, were absorbed by the earth long before they reached the shore. The rivulet, therefore, of Ain Jidy is the most short-lived and transitory of streams. It breaks forth suddenly from the earth at its fountain, and then, after tumbling and foaming for a short distance over its rocky bed, it descends again into the ground, disappearing as suddenly and mysteriously as it came into being.

The plain which this evanescent stream thus gave up its life to fertilize, was all under cultivation at the time that Robinson visited it, being divided into gardens, which belonged to a certain tribe of wandering Arabs. This tribe were, however, not now encamped here, but had gone away to a tract of ground belonging to them in another part of the country, having left only a few sentinels to watch the fruits that were growing in the gardens. Robinson and his party went across the plain, and finally came to the margin of the sea, approaching it at last over a bank of pebbles which lined the shore, and formed a sort of ridge of sand and shingle, six or eight feet higher than the level of the water. The slope of these pebbles, on the seaward side, was covered with saline incrustations.

The water had a greenish hue, and its surface was very brilliant. To the taste, the travelers found it intensely and intolerably salt, and far more nauseous than the waters of the ocean. The great quantity of saline matter, which it contains, makes it very dense, and, of course, very buoyant in respect to bodies floating in it. This property of the sea has been observed and commented upon by visitors in every age. Swimmers, and those who can not swim, as an ancient writer expressed it, are borne up by it alike. Robinson himself bathed in the sea, and though, as he says, he had never learned to swim, he found, that in this water he could sit, stand, lie, or float in any position without difficulty. The bottom was of clean sand and gravel, and the bathers found that the water shoaled very gradually as they receded from the shore, so that they were obliged to wade out many rods before it reached their shoulders. Its great density produced a peculiar effect in respect to the appearance that it presented to the eye, adding greatly to its brilliancy, and imparting a certain pearly richness and beauty to its reflections. The objects seen through it on the bottom appeared as if seen through oil.

MEASUREMENTS

After having spent some time in noting these general phenomena, Robinson, finding that the day was wearing away, called the attention of his party to the less entertaining but more important work of making the necessary scientific measurements and observations. He laid off a base line on the shore, fifteen hundred feet in length; and from the extremities of it, by means of a large and accurate compass, which he carried with him in all his travels for this express purpose, he took the bearings of all the principal points and headlands which could be seen around the sea, as well as of every mountain in view. By this means he secured the data for making an exact map of the sea, at least so far as these leading points are concerned; for, by the application of certain principles of trigonometry, it is very easy to ascertain the precise situation of any object whatever, provided its precise bearing from each of two separate stations, and also the precise distance between the two stations is known. Accordingly, by establishing two stations on the plain, and measuring the distance between them, and then taking the bearings of all important points on the shores of the sea, from both stations, the materials are secured for a correct map of it, in its general outline.

This work being accomplished, and the day being now fully spent, the party bade the shores of the sea farewell; and, weary with the fatigues and excitement of the day, they began, with slow and toilsome steps, to reascend the path toward their encampment by the fountain. They at length arrived at their tent, and spent the evening there to a late hour, in writing out their records of the observations which they had made, and of the adventures which they had met with during the day. From time to time, as the hours passed on, they looked out from their tent to survey the broad expanse of water now far below them. The day had been sultry and hot, but the evening was cool. The air was calm and still, and the moon rising behind the eastern mountains shone in upon their encampment, and cheered the solitude of the night, illuminating, at the same time, with her beams, the quiet and lonely surface of the sea.

THE SALT MOUNTAIN OF USDUM

At a subsequent period of his tour in the Holy Land, Robinson approached the Dead Sea again, near the southern extremity of it, and there examined and described a certain very remarkable geological formation, which is justly considered one of the greatest wonders of this most wonderful valley. It is called the Salt Mountain of Usdum. It is a lofty ridge that extends for a great distance along the shore of the sea, and consists of a solid mass of rock-salt. The situation of this mountain, as will be seen from the map, is on the southwestern shore of the sea. There is a narrow tract of low and level land between the mountain and the water. The road passes along this plain, close under the cliffs, giving the traveler a very convenient opportunity of examining the formation of the mountain as he journeys with his caravan slowly along.

The existence of such a mountain of salt was asserted by certain travelers many centuries ago, but the accounts which they gave of it were not generally believed, the spot being visited too seldom, and the accounts which were brought from it being too vague and imperfect to confirm sufficiently so extraordinary a story. Robinson, however, and other travelers who have, since his day, fully explored the locality, have found that the ancient tales were true. The ridge is very uneven and rugged, its summit and its sides having been furrowed by the rains which sometimes, though at very distant intervals, fall in this arid region. The height of the ridge is from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet. The surface of the hill is generally covered, like that of other rocky ridges, with earth and marl, and sometimes with calcareous strata of various kinds, so that its true character is in some measure concealed from ordinary and casual observers. The mass of salt, however, which underlies these superficial coverings, breaks out in various places along the line of the hills, and sometimes forms perpendicular precipices of pure crystalized fossil salt, forty or fifty feet high, and several hundred feet long. The traveler who beholds these crystaline cliffs is always greatly astonished at the spectacle, and can scarcely believe that the mountain is really what it seems, until he has gone repeatedly to the precipice and broken off a fragment from the face of it, to satisfy himself of the true character of the rock, by tasting the specimen.

The mountain extends for two or three miles along the shore, drawing nearer and nearer to it toward the south, until at last it approaches so closely to the margin of the sea, that the waters, when high, wash the foot of the precipice. Along the road which lies between the cliffs and the shore, and upon the beach, masses of salt are found, which, having been broken off from the heights above, have fallen down to the level land below, where they lie like common rocks upon the ground. Here and there ravines are found, forming little dells, down which small streams are constantly trickling; and, in some seasons of the year rains fall, and, dissolving small portions of the rock, flow with the solution into the sea below. Of course, what salt finds its way into the sea remains there forever, except so far as it is carried away by man – for the process of evaporation takes up the aqueous particles alone, from saline solutions. A very small annual addition is therefore sufficient to keep up the saltness of such a sea. It is supposed that this mountain is the source which furnishes the supply in this case. If so, the Dead Sea, geologically speaking, is simply an accumulation of the waters of the Jordan, formed in a deep depression of its valley, and made salt by impregnation from a range of soluble rocks, the base of which they lave.

THE CAVERN

At one point in the eastern face of the Usdum mountain, that is the face which is turned toward the sea, there is a cavern. This cavern seems to have been formed by a spring. A spring of water issuing from among soluble strata will, of course, always produce a cavern, as its waters must necessarily dissolve and wear away the substance of the rock, and so, in the process of ages, form an open recess leading into the heart of the mountain. The few European travelers who have ever passed the road that leads along the base of this mountain, have generally stopped to examine and explore this cavern. It is irregular in its form, but very considerable in extent. The mouth of it is ten or twelve feet high, and about the same in breadth. Robinson and his party went into it with lights. They followed it for three or four hundred feet into the heart of the mountain, until at length they came to a place where it branched off into two small fissures, which could not be traced any farther. A small stream of water was trickling slowly along its bed in the floor of the cavern, which, as well as the walls and roof, were of solid salt. There were clear indications that the quantity of water flowing here varied greatly at different seasons; and the cavern itself was undoubtedly formed by the action of the stream.

AN INCIDENT OF ORIENTAL TRAVELING

When Robinson and his party came out from the cavern in the Salt Mountain, an incident occurred which illustrates so forcibly both the nature of Oriental traveling, and the manners and customs of the semi-savage tribes that roam about the shores of the Dead Sea, that it well deserves a place in this memoir. When they were about entering the cavern, a report came from some of the scouts, of whom it was always customary to have one or more ahead, when traveling on these expeditions, that a troop of riders were in sight, coming round the southern end of the sea. This report had been confirmed during the time that Robinson and his companions had been in the cave, and when they came out they found their camp in a state of great confusion and alarm. The strangers that were coming were supposed, from their numbers, and from the manner in which they were mounted, to be enemies or robbers. The Arab attendants of the party were greatly excited by this intelligence. They were getting their guns in readiness, and loading and priming them. A consultation was held, and it was determined by the party that they would not leave their encampment at the mouth of the cavern, since the position which they occupied there was such as to afford them a considerable advantage, as they judged, in the case of an attack. They accordingly began to strengthen themselves where they were with such means as they had at their command, and to make the best disposition they could of the animals and baggage, with a view to defending them. At the same time they sent forward an Arab chieftain of the party, to reconnoitre and learn more particularly the character of the enemy.

The messenger soon returned, bringing back a report which at once relieved their fears. The dreaded troop of marauders proved to be a flock of sheep, driven by a few men on donkeys. Of course, all alarm was at once dispelled, and the expedition immediately resumed its march, pursuing its way as before along the strand. But this was not the end of the affair, for the Arabs of Robinson's escort, finding that they were now the stronger party, at once assumed the character of robbers themselves, and began immediately to make preparations for plundering the strangers. The customs of the country as they understood the subject, fully justified them in doing so, and before Robinson was aware of their intentions, they galloped forward, and attacked the peaceful company of strangers, and began to take away from them every thing valuable on which they could lay their hands. One seized a pistol, another a cloak, and a third stores of provisions. Robinson and his companions hastened to the spot and arrested this proceeding, though they had great difficulty in doing it. The Arabs insisted that these men were their enemies, and that they had a right to rob them wherever they found them. To which Robinson replied, that that might perhaps be the law of the desert, but that while the Arabs were in his employ they must be content to submit to his orders. At length the stolen property was reluctantly restored, and the strangers went on their way. They proved to be a party in the service of a merchant of Gaza, a town on the Mediterranean coast, nearly opposite this part of the Dead Sea. This merchant had been to Kerak – the village which has already been mentioned as seen by our party from their position on the heights of Ain Jidy, at the head of the valley which opens on the eastern side of the sea beyond Zoar – and there he had purchased a flock of sheep, and was now driving them, with the assistance of some peasants whom he had hired for the purpose, home to Gaza.

THE FORD

As has already been stated, the water of the Dead Sea, though deep in the northern part, spreads out toward the southward over an immense region of flats and shallows, so that sometimes the water is only a few feet deep over an extent of many miles. There are, moreover, southward of the sea, vast tracts of low and sandy land, which are sometimes covered with water and sometimes bare, on account of the rising and falling of the sea, the level of which seems to vary many feet in different years and in different seasons, according to the state of the snows on Mount Lebanon and the quantity of water brought down by the Jordan and other streams. The shallowness of the water becomes very marked and apparent at the peninsula, and various rumors were brought to Europe, from time to time, in the middle ages, of a fording place there, by means of which caravans, when the water was low, could cross over from the eastern shore to the western, and thus save the long detour around the southern end of the sea. The most direct and tangible evidence in respect to this ford, was given by the two celebrated travelers, Irby and Mangles, who relate that in descending from Kerak to the peninsula, they fell in with a small company of Arabs that were going down to the sea – riding upon asses and other beasts of burden. The Arabs of this caravan said that they were going to cross the sea at the ford. The travelers did not actually see them make the passage, for they were themselves engaged in exploring the eastern and northern part of the peninsula at the time, and the caravan was thus hidden from view when they approached the water, by the high land intervening between them and the travelers. After a short time, however, the travelers came over to the western side of the promontory, and there they saw the place of the ford indicated by boughs of trees set up in the water. The caravan had passed the ford, and were just emerging from the water on the western side of the sea. This evidence was considered as very direct and very conclusive, and yet other travelers who visited the same region, both before and afterward, could obtain no certain information in respect to the ford. Allusions to it exist in some very ancient records, and yet the Arabs themselves who live in the vicinity, when inquired of in respect to the subject, often denied the possibility of such a passage. The only way, apparently, of reconciling these seemingly contradictory accounts, is to suppose that the sea is subject to great changes of level, and that for certain periods, perhaps at distant intervals from each other, the water is so low that caravans can cross it – and that afterward it becomes again too deep to be passable, continuing so perhaps for a long series of years, so that the existence of the ford is for a time in some measure forgotten.

LIEUTENANT LYNCH

The information which the Christian world obtained in respect to the Dead Sea and the character of the country around it, was, after all, down to quite a late period, of a very vague and unsatisfactory character, being derived almost entirely from the reports of occasional travelers who approached the shores of it, from time to time, at certain points more accessible than others, but who remained at their places of observation for so brief a period, and were so restricted in respect to their means and facilities for properly examining the localities that they visited, that, notwithstanding all their efforts, the geography and natural history of the region were very imperfectly determined. Things continued in this state until the year 1847, when Lieutenant Lynch, of the United States naval service, made his celebrated expedition into the Holy Land, for the express purpose of exploring the River Jordan and the Dead Sea. We have already, in our article on the River Jordan, given an account of the landing of this party at the Bay of Acre, of their extraordinary journey across the country to the Sea of Galilee, and of their passage down the Jordan in the metallic boats, the Fanny Mason and the Fanny Skinner, which they had brought with them across to the Mediterranean. We now propose to narrate briefly the adventures which the intrepid explorer met with in his cruise around the Dead Sea. When he commenced the undertaking, it was considered both by himself and his companions, and also by his countrymen and friends at home, to be extremely doubtful whether he would be able to accomplish it. All previous attempts to navigate the sea had failed, and had proved fatal to their projectors. Some had been destroyed by the natives – others had sunk under the pestiferous effects of the climate. When, therefore, the boats of this party, heavily laden with their stores of provisions and their crews, came from the mouth of the Jordan out into the open sea, the hearts of the adventurous navigators were filled with many forebodings.

A GALE

The party expected to spend several weeks upon the sea, and their plan was to establish fixed encampments from time to time on the shore, to be used as stations where they could keep the necessary stores and supplies, and from which they could make excursions over the whole surface of the sea. The first of these stations was to be at a place called the Fountain of Feshkah; a point on the western shore of the sea, about five miles from the mouth of the Jordan. The caravan which had accompanied the expedition along the bank while they had been descending the river, were to go around by land, and meet the boats at the place of rendezvous at night. Things being thus arranged, the land and water parties took leave of each other, and the boats pushed out upon the sea – turning to the westward and southward as soon as they had rounded the point of land which forms the termination of the bank of the river – and shaped their course in a direction toward the place of rendezvous. Their course led them across a wide bay, which forms the northwestern termination of the sea. There was a fresh northwestern wind blowing at the time, though they did not anticipate any inconvenience from it when they left the river. The force of the wind, however, rapidly increased, and the effects which it produced were far more serious than would have resulted from a similar gale in any other sea. The weight of the water was so great, on account of the extraordinary quantity of saline matter which it held in solution, that the boats in encountering the waves, suffered the most tremendous concussions. The surface of the sea became one wide spread sheet of foaming brine, while the spray which dashed over upon the men, evaporating as it fell, covered their faces, their hands, and their clothes with encrustations of salt, producing, at the same time, prickling and painful sensations upon the skin, and inflammation and smarting in the eyes. The party, nevertheless, pushed boldly on for some time toward the west, in the hope of reaching the shore. The wind, however, being almost directly ahead, they made very little progress. They began to fear that they should be driven entirely out to the open sea, and at length, about the middle of the afternoon, when they had been for some hours in this dangerous situation, the gale increased to such a degree that the boats were in imminent danger of foundering. The officers were obliged to order their supplies of water to be thrown overboard, in order to lighten the burden. They gave up all hope of gaining the land; and, expecting to spend the night on the sea, they thought only of the means of saving themselves from sinking. At length, however, about six o'clock, the wind suddenly ceased, and the waves, on account of the great weight of the water, almost immediately went down. The voyagers now, though almost exhausted with their toils, had little difficulty in gaining the land.

THE FIRST ENCAMPMENT

It was, however, now dark, and Mr. Lynch felt much solicitude in respect to the difficulty of finding the place of rendezvous on the coast where the party in the boats were to meet the caravan. They rowed along the shore to the southward, looking out on all the cliffs and headlands for lights or other signals. They had an Arab chieftain on board as a guide, and on him the party had depended for direction to the place where the fountain of Feshkah was to be found. The Arab had, however, become so bewildered by the terror which the storm had inspired, or, perhaps, by the strange and unusual aspect which the land presented to him, as seen from the side toward the sea and in the night, that he seemed to be entirely lost. At length the boatmen saw the light of a fire on the beach to the southward of them. They discharged a gun as a signal, and pulled eagerly toward the fire. The light, however, soon disappeared. The men were then at a loss again, and while resting upon their oars, awaiting another signal, they suddenly saw flashes, and heard reports of guns and sounds of voices on the cliffs, not far from them, and immediately afterward heard other reports from a considerable distance back, at a place which they had passed in coming along the shore. These various and uncertain sounds quite embarrassed the boatmen. They might indicate an attack from some hostile force upon their friends on the land, or some stratagem, to draw the boats into an ambuscade. They, however, determined, at length, that they would, at all events, ascertain the truth; so closing in with the shore, they pulled along the beach, sounding as they proceeded. About eight o'clock they arrived at the place of rendezvous, where they found their friends awaiting them at the fountain. The shouts and signal-guns which they had heard had proceeded from two portions of the caravan that had become separated on the march, and were thus attempting to communicate with each other. The party in the boats were greatly relieved on reaching the land, for the whole scene through which they had passed in approaching it, had been one of the wildest and most exciting character. The sea itself, mysterious and unknown, the lonely and desolate coast, the dark and gloomy mountains, the human voices heard in shouts and outcries on the cliffs, with the flashes of the guns, and the reports reverberating along the shore, joined to the dread uncertainty which the boatmen felt in respect to what the end of the adventure was to be, combined to impress the minds of all the party with the most sublime and solemn emotions.

The boats, they found, for some reason or other, could not land at the place which had been chosen for the encampment, but were obliged to proceed about a mile to the southward, where, at length, they were safely drawn up upon the beach. Some Arabs were placed here to guard them, while the seamen were conducted to the camp, in order that they might enjoy a night of repose. The camp was pitched in a cane-brake, not far from the shore, the vegetation which covered the spot proving that there was nothing very specially deleterious in the atmosphere of the sea. In fact, during the remainder of the excursion, Mr. Lynch's party always found, in landing along the shores, that there was always abundance of vegetation whenever there was fresh water from the mountains to sustain it. The water of the sea seems to be itself too deeply impregnated with saline solutions to nourish vegetable life; but beyond the reach of the spray, which the wind drives only to a short distance from the margin of the shore, it exerts, apparently no perceptible influence on either plants or animals. Many animals were seen at different times in the vicinity of the sea, some on the land, and others flying freely over the water. The water itself, however, seemed to produce no living thing. Some few shells were found in two or three instances on the beach, but they were of such a character, and appeared under such circumstances as to lead to the supposition that they were brought down to the sea by the torrents from the mountains, or by the current of the Jordan.

The scene which presented itself to the party as the night came on at this their first encampment on the shore of the Dead Sea, was solemn and sublime. The dark and gloomy mountains, barren and desolate – their declivities fretted and furrowed by the tooth of time, rose behind them in dismal grandeur; the waters of the sea lay reposing heavily in their vast caldron before them, covered with

a leaden-colored mist; while the moon, which rose toward midnight above the mountains beyond, cast spectre-like shadows from the clouds over the broad and solemn expanse, in a wild and fantastic manner. Every thing seemed strange and unnatural, and wore an expression of unspeakable loneliness and desolation. And yet about midnight the death-like silence and repose which reigned around, was strangely broken by the distant tolling of a bell!

The tolling of the bell which the travelers heard, proceeded from the Convent of Mar Saba, a rude and lonely structure, situated in the middle of the desolate gorge which the brook Kedron forms in traversing the mountains that lie between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. The place of the convent was seven or eight miles from the shore where our travelers were encamped, but yet the tones of the bell, calling the monks to their devotions, made their way to the spot through the still evening air. The travelers felt cheered and encouraged in their solitude, by being thus connected again, even by so slender a bond as this, with the common family of man, from which they had seemed before to have undergone an absolute and total separation.

THE VOYAGE TO EN-GEDI

After remaining a day or two at Feshkah, and making various excursions across the sea and along the shores, from that station, for the purpose of measuring distances and taking soundings, the party broke up their encampment, and prepared to proceed to the southward. They made arrangements for taking every thing with them on board the boats, except a load from one single camel, which was to be sent along the shore. Their intention was to proceed to En-gedi, and to encamp there at the foot of the cliffs, on the little plain which Robinson had visited about ten years before. This encampment at En-gedi was to be a sort of permanent station for the party during all the time necessary for the survey of the middle and southern portions of the sea. It was a suitable spot for such a post, on account of its central position, and also on account of the abundant supply of fresh water which could be obtained there from the fountain. The company were obliged to hasten their departure from Feshkah; for the water of the fountain at the place of their first encampment was brackish and unfit for use, while the supply which they had brought from the Jordan was nearly exhausted. Their stock of provisions, too, was well-nigh spent, and Lieutenant Lynch felt a considerable degree of uneasiness in respect to the means of sufficiently replenishing it. He sent off detachments from his party to Hebron and to Jerusalem, to procure supplies, directing them to bring whatever they could procure to En-gedi. He also sent an Arab chieftain, named Akil, round to the eastern side of the sea, to Kerak, to purchase provisions there. The Arab, if successful, was to bring down his stores to the sea, at the peninsula, and at the proper time, Lieutenant Lynch was to send one of the boats across from En-gedi to receive them.

Things being thus arranged, the tents were struck, the boats pushed off from the land, while a train of Arabs attended by the loaded camel, took up their line of march along the beach. As they proceeded, the boats stopped from time to time, to note and to record every thing worthy of notice that appeared along the shore. They passed the mouth of the brook Kedron, a deep gorge, narrow at the base, and yawning wide at the summit. The sides of this frightful ravine were twelve hundred feet high. The bed of it was perfectly dry; the waters of the stream at this season of the year being wholly absorbed by the sands long before reaching the sea. They passed many caves, some opening into the face of the rock, far up the mountain sides, in positions wholly inaccessible. The shores were generally barren and desolate, consisting of dark brown mountains, which looked as if they had been scorched by fire, with a narrow beach equally dreary and desolate below. Here and there, however, little valleys opened, which sustained a scanty vegetation, and birds and other animals were occasionally seen. There seemed to be no vegetation, except at points where streams or springs of fresh water flowed down from the land.

The boats proceeded onward in this manner till night, and then rounding a point which was covered sparsely with bushes and trees, and with tufts of cane and grass, they came into a little bay which opened to a dell, fertilized by a fountain. The name of the fountain was Turabeh. Flowers were growing here, and certain fruits, the sight of which gladdened the eyes of our voyagers, though in any other situation they would have attracted little attention. The stream which sustained this vegetation was extremely small. The water trickled down from the spring so scantily that the Arabs were forced to dig holes in the sand, and wait for them to fill, in order to procure enough for drink. Still its influence was sufficient to clothe its narrow dell with something like verdure and fruitfulness. The little oasis had its inhabitants, too, as well as its plants and flowers. One of the party saw a duck at a little distance from the shore, and fired at her; though it might have been thought that no one could have had the heart to disturb even a duck in the possession of so solitary and humble a domain. In fact, it seems the sportsman must have had some misgivings, and was accordingly not very careful in his aim, for the bird was not harmed by the shot. She flew out to sea a little way, alarmed by the report, and then alighting on the glassy surface of the water, began to swim back again toward

the shore, as if thinking it not possible that the strange intruders into her lonely home, whoever and whatever they might be, could really intend to do her any harm.

Soon after the party in the boats had landed, the camel with his attendants arrived, and they all encamped on this spot for the night. The scene which presented itself when the arrangements had been made for the night was, as usual in such cases, very solemn and impressive. The tents stood among the trees. The Arab watch-fires were burning. The boats were drawn up upon the shore. The dark and sombre mountains rose like a wall behind the encampment; while the smooth and placid sea was spread out before it, reflecting with a sort of metallic lustre the silver radiance of the moon. The stillness, too, which reigned around seemed strange and fearful, it was so absolute and profound.

In the morning, the party, after breakfasting under the trees on the shore, resumed their voyage. After proceeding a few miles along the coast, they saw an Arab on the beach. The Arab hailed the party, and they attempted to communicate with him, but could not understand what he said. At one place they stopped to examine a mass of ruins which they saw standing a short distance up the mountain side. The ruins proved to be the remains of a wall, built to defend the entrances to several caves which opened in the face of the precipice directly behind them. The caves were perfectly dry, and one of them was large enough to contain twenty or thirty men. There were openings cut from them through the rock to the air above, intended apparently to serve the purpose of chimneys. These caves were in the wilderness of En-gedi.

In fact, the boats were now drawing near to their place of destination. At noon they arrived at the spot, and the party landing, unloaded the boats and hauled them up upon the shore. They selected a spot for their encampment on the little plain at the foot of the cliffs, not far from the place where the stream descends to it from the mountain above. They found that the gardens and other marks of vegetation which Robinson had observed at the time of his visit, had disappeared; in other respects, every thing corresponded with his description. The water was gushing from the fountain as copiously as ever, and was disappearing as rapidly in the sands of its thirsty bed, after running its short and foaming course along its little dell. After a brief survey of the scene, the ground was marked out, the tents were pitched, and the stores deposited within them; the boats were hauled up and examined for repairs, and all the arrangements made for a permanent encampment; for this was to be the head-quarters of the expedition during all the remaining time that they were to spend upon the sea. They named it "Camp Washington."

EXPLORINGS

The encampment thus established at En-gedi continued to be occupied as the head-quarters of our party for two or three weeks, during which time many expeditions were fitted out from it, for exploring the whole southern portion of the sea, and the country around. The engineer of the party measured a base line on the beach, and from the two stations at the extremities of it took the bearings of all the important points on the shores of the sea. He made the necessary astronomical observations also for determining the exact latitude and longitude of the camp. Parties were sent out, too, sometimes along the shores and up the mountains to collect plants and specimens, and at other times across to the eastern shore to measure the breadth of the sea, and to make soundings for determining the depth of it in every part. They preserved specimens and memorials of every thing. Even the mud and sand, and the cubical crystals of salt which their sounding apparatus brought up from the bottom of the sea, were put up in airtight vessels to be brought home for the inspection of naturalists and philosophers in America. Thus the whole party were constantly employed in the various labors incident to such an undertaking, meeting from time to time with strange and romantic adventures, and suffering on many occasions most excessively from exposure and fatigue.

One of the most remarkable of the expeditions which they made from their camp at En-gedi, was a cruise of four days in the southern portion of the sea, in the course of which they circumnavigated the whole southern shore. In following down the western coast in first commencing their voyage, they found the scenery much the same as it had been in the northern part of the sea, the coast being formed of bald and barren mountains, desolate and gloomy, with a low, flat beach below, and sometimes a broad peninsula, or delta, formed, at the mouths of the ravines, by the detritus brought down from above. Farther south, however, the water became very shoal, so much so, that at last they could not approach the shore near enough to land, without wading for a great distance through water and mire. In fact, the line of demarkation between the land and the sea was often scarcely perceptible, the land consisting of low flats and slimy mud, coated with incrustations of salt, and sometimes with masses of drift-wood lying upon it, while the water was covered with a frothy scum, formed of salt and bitumen. Sometimes for miles the water was only one or two feet deep, and the men in such cases, leaving the boats, waded often to a great distance from them. Every night, of course, they stopped and encamped on the land.

THE SIROCCO

The party suffered on some occasions most intensely from heat and thirst. Their supply of water was not abundant, and one of the principal sources of solicitude which the officers of the expedition felt throughout the cruise, was to find fountains where they could replenish their stores. One night they were reduced to the greatest extreme of misery from the influence of an intolerably hot and suffocating wind, which blew upon them from off the desert to the southward. It was the Sirocco. It gave them warning of its approach on the evening before by a thin purple haze which spread over the mountains a certain unnatural and lurid hue, that awakened a mysterious emotion of awe and terror. Something dreadful seemed to be portended by it. It might be a thunder-tempest; it might be an earthquake, or it might be some strange and nameless convulsion of nature incident to the dreadful region to which they had penetrated, but elsewhere unknown. The whole party were impressed with a sentiment of solemnity and awe, and deeming it best for them to get to the land as soon as possible, they took in sail, turned their boats' heads to the westward, and rowed toward the shore.

In a short time they were struck suddenly by a hot and suffocating hurricane, which blew directly against them, and, for a time, not only stopped their progress, but threatened to drive them out again to sea. The thermometer rose immediately to 105°. The oarsmen were obliged to shut their eyes to protect them from the fiery blast, and to pull, thus blinded, with all their strength to stem the waves. The men who steered the boats were unable, of course, thus to protect themselves, and their eyelids became dreadfully inflamed by the hot wind before they reached the land.

At length, to their great joy, they succeeded in getting to the shore. They landed at a most desolate and gloomy spot at the mouth of a dismal ravine; and the men, drawing the boats up on the beach, immediately began to seek, in various ways, some means of escape from the dreadful influences of the blast. Several went up the ravine in search of some place of retreat, or shelter. Others finding the glare of the sun upon the rocks insupportable, while they remained on the shore, returned to the boats and crouched down under the awnings. One of the officers put spectacles upon his eyes to protect them from the lurid and burning light, but the metal of the bows became so hot, that he was obliged to remove them. Every thing metallic, in fact, such as the arms, and even the buttons on the clothes of the men, were almost burning to the touch, and the wind, instead of bringing the usual refreshing influences of a breeze, was now the vehicle of heat, and blew hot and suffocating along the beach, as if coming from the mouth of an oven.

Intolerable as the influence was of this ill-fated blast, it increased in power, until it blew a gale. The distant mountains, seen across the surface of the sea, were curtained by mists of a purple and deadly hue. The sky above was covered with bronze-colored clouds, through which the declining sun shone, red and rayless, diffusing over the whole face of nature, instead of light, a sort of lurid and awful gloom.

The sun went down, and the shades of the evening came on, but the heat increased. The thermometer rose to 106°. The wind was like the blast of a furnace. The men, without pitching their tents or making any other preparations for the night, threw themselves down upon the ground, panting and exhausted, and oppressed with an intolerable thirst. They went continually to the "water breakers," in which their supplies of water were kept, and drank incessantly, but their thirst could not be assuaged.

Things continued in this state till midnight. The wind then went down, and very soon afterward a gentle breeze sprung up from the northward. The thermometer fell to 82°, and the Sirocco was over.

THE PILLAR OF SALT

Mr. Lynch's party visited the salt mountain of Usdum, of which we have already spoken, and examined it throughout its whole extent, in a very careful and thorough manner. They found at one place, at the head of a deep and narrow chasm, a remarkable conformation of the salt rock, consisting of a tall cylindrical mass, standing out detached, as it were, from the mountain behind it, and appearing like an artificial column. It was in fact literally a pillar of salt. It was forty or fifty feet high, and was capped above with a layer of limestone, a portion perhaps of the once continuous calcareous stratum, which at some remote geological period had been deposited over the whole bed of salt. The appearance of the pillar was as if it were itself a portion of the salt mountain that had been left by the gradual disintegration and wearing away of the adjoining mass, having assumed and preserved its tall and columnar form, through the protecting influence of the cap of insoluble rock on its summit. The mass, though as seen in front it appeared to stand isolated and alone like a pillar, was connected with the precipice behind it by a sort of buttress, by means of which some of the party climbed up to the top of the gigantic geological ruin, and standing upon the pinnacle, looked down upon their companions below, and upon the wide scene of desolation and death which was spread out before them.

EXCURSION TO KERAK

As we have already mentioned, an Arab chieftain who accompanied the expedition, had been sent round to the eastern side of the sea to the town of Kerak, which was situated, as will be recollected, at the head of the valley beyond Zoar, to negotiate with the natives and to procure provisions, and a day had been appointed for him to come down to the shore, at a certain point on the peninsula, where a boat was to be sent to meet him. When the time arrived for fulfilling this appointment, Lieutenant Lynch organized a party for the excursion, and embarked for the eastern shore. On approaching the land at the appointed place of rendezvous, they saw an Arab lurking in the bushes, apparently watching for them, and soon afterward several more appeared. At first the voyagers doubted whether these were the friends whom they had come to meet or whether they were enemies lying in wait to entrap them. On approaching nearer to the beach, however, they soon recognized Akil. He seemed greatly rejoiced to see them. He informed them that he had been kindly received at Kerak, and he brought down an invitation to Lieutenant Lynch, from the chieftain that ruled there, to come up to the valley and make him a visit. After some hesitation, Lieutenant Lynch concluded to accept this invitation. He encamped, however, first on the shore for a day or two, to make the necessary explorations and surveys in the neighborhood. During this time he went out with two Arabs across the plain, to examine the supposed site of ancient Zoar. He found ruins of an ancient village there, and fragments of pottery, and other similar vestiges on the ground. At length, on the morning of the third day, leaving his boat in the care of a guard, he put himself and his party of attendants under Akil's guidance, and set out to ascend the valley. The party were fourteen in number. The sailors were mounted on mules. The officers rode on horseback. The cavalcade was escorted by a troop of twenty armed Arabs – twelve mounted and the rest on foot.

They found the valley which they had to ascend in going up to Kerak, a gloomy gorge, of the wildest and grandest character. The path was steep and very difficult, overhanging on one side a deep and yawning chasm, and being itself overhung on the other with beetling crags, blackened as if by fire, and presenting an aspect of unutterable and frightful desolation. To complete the sublimity of the scene, a terrific tempest of thunder, lightning, and rain swept over the valley while our party were ascending it, and soon filled the bottom of the gorge with a roaring and foaming torrent, which came down from the mountains and swept on toward the sea with a thundering sound. At length the party reached the brow of the table land, three thousand feet above the level of the sea, and came out under the walls of the town.

The town proved to be a dreary and comfortless collection of rude stone houses, without windows or chimneys, and blackened within with smoke. The inhabitants were squalid and miserable. Three-fourths of the people were nominally Christian. The visit of the Americans of course excited great interest. We have not time to detail the various adventures which the party met with in their intercourse with the inhabitants, or to describe the singular characters which they encountered and the extraordinary scenes through which they passed. They remained one night at Kerak, and then after experiencing considerable difficulty in escaping the importunities with which they were besieged by the chieftains for presents, they succeeded in getting away and in returning safely to their boat on the shore.

THE DEPRESSION OF THE SEA

Our party, after having spent about three weeks in making these and similar excursions from their various encampments, during which time they had thoroughly explored the shores on every side, and sounded the depths of the water in every part, made all the necessary measurements and observations both mathematical and meteorological, collected specimens for fully illustrating the geology and natural history of the region, and carefully noted all the physical phenomena which they had observed, found that their work was done. At least all was done which could be accomplished at the sea itself. One thing only remained to be determined, and that was the measure of the *depression* of the sea. This could be positively and precisely ascertained only by the process of "leveling a line," as it is termed, across from the sea to the shores of the Mediterranean. This work they now prepared to undertake, making arrangements at the same time for taking their final leave of the dismal lake which they had been so long exploring.

It had been long supposed that the Dead Sea lay below the general level of the waters of the earth's surface, and various modes had been adopted for ascertaining the amount of the depression. The first attempt was made by two English philosophers in 1837. The method by which they attempted to measure the depression was by means of the boiling point of water. Water requires a greater or a less amount of heat to boil it according to the degree of pressure which it sustains upon its surface from the atmosphere – boiling with less heat on the tops of mountains where the air is rare, and requiring greater in the bottoms of mines, where the density and weight of the atmosphere is increased in proportion to the depth. Heights and depths, therefore, may be approximately measured by an observation of the degree of heat indicated by the thermometer in the locality in question, when water begins to boil. By this test the English philosophers found the depression of the Dead Sea to be five hundred feet.

A short time after this experiment was performed a very careful observation was made by means of a barometer, which also, measuring, as it does, the density of the air, directly, may be made use of to ascertain heights and depths. It is, in fact, often thus employed to measure the heights of mountains. The result of observations with the barometer gave a depression to the surface of the sea of about six hundred feet.

A third method is by trigonometrical calculation. This mode is much more laborious and difficult than either of the other modes which we have alluded to, but it is more to be relied upon in its results. The data for a trigonometrical calculation are to be obtained by observing, in a very accurate manner, a series of angles of elevation and depression on a line between the points, the relative levels of which are to be obtained. Lieutenant Symonds, an officer of the English service, made such a survey with great care, a few years after the preceding experiments were performed. He carried a line across from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea, connecting the two extremes of it by means of a series of vertical angles which he measured accurately, with instruments of the most exact construction. The result of the computation which he made from these data, was that the sea was depressed *one thousand three hundred and twelve feet* below the level of the Mediterranean.

The surprise which had been felt at the results of the experiments first mentioned, was greatly increased by the announcement of this result. No one was disposed really to question the accuracy of the engineer's measurements and calculations, but it seemed still almost incredible that a valley lying so near the open sea could be sunken so low beneath its level. There was one remaining mode of determining the question, and that was by carrying an actual level across the land, by means of leveling instruments, such as are used in the construction of railroads and canals. This would be, of course, a very laborious work, but there was a general desire among all who took an interest in the subject that it should be performed and Lieutenant Lynch determined to undertake it.

Accordingly, when the time arrived for leaving the shores of the sea, he organized a leveling party, furnishing them with the necessary instruments and with proper instructions, and commissioned them to perform this service. They began by scaling the face of the mountain which rose almost perpendicularly from the shore of the sea at the place of the last encampment. They then proceeded slowly along, meeting with various adventures, and encountering many difficulties, but persevering steadily with the work, until at last, in twenty-three days from the time of leaving the Dead Sea, they arrived on the shore of the Mediterranean at Jaffa. The result confirmed in a very accurate manner the calculations of Lieutenant Symonds, for the difference of level was found to be a little over thirteen hundred feet – almost precisely the same as Lieutenant Symonds had determined it. The question is, therefore, now definitely settled. The vast accumulation of waters lies so far below the general level of the earth's surface that, if named after the analogy of its mighty neighbor, it might well have been called the Subterranean Sea.

Lieutenant Lynch had great reason to congratulate himself on this successful result of his labors; for the work which he had undertaken was one not only of toil, exposure, and suffering, but also of great danger. He was warned by the fatal results which had almost invariably attended former attempts to explore these waters, that if he ventured to trust himself upon them, it was wholly uncertain whether he would ever return. He followed in a track which had led all who had preceded him in taking it, to destruction; and the only hope of safety and success which he could entertain in renewing an experiment which had so often failed before, was in the superior sagacity and forethought which he and his party could exercise in forming their plans, and in the greater energy and courage, and the higher powers of endurance, which they could bring into play in the execution of them. The event proved that he estimated correctly the resources which he had at his command.

THE STORY OF COSTIGAN

Among the stories which were related to Mr. Lynch, when he was preparing at the Sea of Galilee to commence his dangerous voyage, to discourage him from the undertaking, was that of the unfortunate Costigan. Costigan was an Irish gentleman who, some years before the period of Lieutenant Lynch's expedition, had undertaken to make a voyage on the Dead Sea, in a boat, with a single companion – a sailor whom he employed to accompany him, to row the boat, and to perform such other services as might be required. Costigan laid in a store of provisions and water, sufficient, as he judged, for the time that would be consumed in the excursion, and then taking his departure from a point on the shore near the mouth of the Jordan, he pushed out with his single oarsman over the waters of the sea.

About eight days afterward, an Arab woman, wandering along the shore near the place where these voyagers had embarked, found Costigan lying upon the ground there, in a dying condition, alone, and the boat at a little distance on the beach, stranded and abandoned. The woman took pity upon the sufferer, and calling some Arab men to the spot, she persuaded them to take him up, and carry him to Jericho. There they found the sailor, who, better able as it would seem to endure such hardships than his master, had had strength enough left, when the boat reached the land, to walk, and had, accordingly, made his way to Jericho, leaving his master on the shore while he went for succor. At Jericho Costigan revived a little, and was then taken to Jerusalem, where he was lodged in a convent, and every effort was made to save his life and to promote his recovery, but in vain. He died in two days, and was never able to give any account of the events of his voyage.

The sailor, however, when questioned in respect to the events of the cruise, gave an account of such of them as a mere sailor would be likely to remember. They moved, he said, in a zigzag direction on the lake, crossing and recrossing it a number of times. They sounded every day, and found the depth of the water in many places very great. The sufferings, the sailor said, which they both endured from the heat, were very great; and the labor of rowing was excessively exhausting. In three days, however, they succeeded in reaching the southern extremity of the sea, and then set out on their return. During all this time Costigan himself took his turn regularly at the oars, but on the sixth day the supply of water gave out, and then Costigan's strength entirely failed. On the seventh day, they had nothing to drink but the water of the sea. This only aggravated instead of relieving their thirst, and on the eighth day the sailor undertook to make coffee from the sea water, hoping, by this means, to disguise in some measure its nauseating and intolerable saltness. But all was in vain. No sustenance or strength could be obtained from such sources, and the sailor himself soon found his strength, too, entirely gone. All attempts at rowing were now, of course, entirely abandoned, and although the boat had nearly reached the land again, at the mouth of the Jordan, the ill fated navigators must have perished floating on the sea, had it not happened that a breeze sprung up just at this juncture – blowing toward the land. The sailor, though too much exhausted to row, contrived to raise the sail, and to guide the helm, so that the boat at length attained the shore. There he left his master, while he himself made his way to Jericho, as has been already described.

These and several other attempts somewhat similar in their nature and results, which had been made in previous years, made it evident to Lieutenant Lynch, when he embarked in his enterprise, that he was about to engage in a very dangerous undertaking. The arrangements and plans which he formed, however, were on a much greater scale and far more complete than those of any of his predecessors, and he was enabled to make a much more ample provision than they for all the various emergencies which might occur in the course of the expedition. By these means, and through the extraordinary courage, energy, and resolution displayed by himself and by the men under his command, the enterprise was conducted to a very successful result.

THE FUTURE

The true character and condition of the whole valley of the Dead Sea having been thus fully ascertained, and all the secrets of its gloomiest recesses having been brought fully to light, it will probably now be left for centuries to come, to rest undisturbed in the dismal and death-like solitude which seems to be its peculiar and appropriate destiny. Curious travelers may, from time to time, look out over its waters from the mouth of the Jordan, or survey its broad expanse from the heights at En-gedi, or perhaps cruise along under the salt cliffs of Usdum, on its southeastern shore, in journeying to or from the Arabian deserts; but it will be long, probably, before any keel shall again indent its salt-encrusted sands, or disturb the repose of its ponderous waters. It is true that the emotion of awe which its gloomy and desolate scenery inspires has something in it of the sublime; and the religious associations connected with the past history of the sea, impart a certain dread solemnity to its grandeur, and make the spot a very attractive one to those who travel into distant climes from love of excitement and emotion. But the physical difficulties, dangers, exposures, and sufferings, which are unavoidably to be incurred in every attempt to explore a locality like this, are so formidable, and the hazard to life is so great, while the causes from which these evils and dangers flow lie so utterly beyond all possible or conceivable means of counteraction, that the vast pit will probably remain forever a memorial of the wrath and curse of God, and a scene of unrelieved and gloomy desolation.

THE PALACES OF FRANCE

BY JOHN S. C. ABBOTT

Versailles. It was a beautiful morning in May, when we took the cars in Paris for a ride to Versailles, to visit this most renowned of all the voluptuous palaces of the French kings. Nature was decked in her most joyous robes. The birds of spring had returned, and, in their fragrant retreats of foliage and flowers, were filling the air with their happy warblings. In less than an hour we alighted at Versailles, which is about twelve miles from Paris.

When Henry IV., three hundred years ago, attained the sovereignty of France, an immense forest spread over the whole region now occupied by the princely residences of Versailles. For a hundred years this remained the hunting ground of the French monarchs. Lords and ladies, with packs of hounds in full chase of the frightened deer, like whirlwinds swept through the forests, and those dark solitudes resounded with the bugle notes of the huntsmen, and with the shouts of regal revelry. Two hundred years ago Louis XIII., in the midst of this forest, erected a beautiful pavilion, where, when weary with the chase, the princely retinue, following their king, might rest and feast, and with wine and wassail prolong their joy. The fundamental doctrine of political economy then was that *people* were made simply to earn money for kings to spend. The art of governing consisted simply in the art of keeping the people submissive while they earned as much as possible to administer to the voluptuous indulgences of their monarchs.

Louis XIV. ascended the throne. He loved sin and feared its consequences. He could not shut out reflection, and he dreaded death and the scenes which might ensue beyond the grave. Whenever he approached the windows of the grand saloon of his magnificent palace at St. Germain, far away, in the haze of the distant horizon, he discerned the massive towers of the church of St. Denis. In damp and gloomy vaults, beneath those walls, mouldered the ashes of the kings of France. The sepulchral object ever arrested the sight and tortured the mind of the royal debauchee. It unceasingly warned him of death, judgment, retribution. He could never walk the magnificent terrace of his palace, and look out upon the scene of loveliness spread through the valley below, but there rose before him, in sombre majesty, far away in the distance, the gloomy mausoleum awaiting his burial. When heated with wine and inflamed by passion he surrendered himself to dalliance with all forbidden pleasures, his tomb reproached him and warned him, and the troubled king could find no peace. At last he was unable to bear it any longer, and abandoning St. Germain, he lavished uncounted millions in rearing, for himself, his mistresses, and his courtiers, at Versailles, a palace, where the sepulchre would not gloomily loom up before their eyes. It is estimated that the almost incredible sum of two hundred millions of dollars were expended upon the buildings, the gardens, and the park. Thirty thousand soldiers, besides a large number of mechanics, were for a long time employed upon the works. A circuit of sixty miles inclosed the immense park, in the midst of which the palace was embowered. An elegant city rose around the royal residence, as by magic. Wealthy nobles reared their princely mansions, and a population of a hundred thousand thronged the gay streets of Versailles. Water was brought in aqueducts from a great distance, and with a perfectly lavish expenditure of money, to create fountains, cascades, and lakes. Forests, and groves, and lawns arose as by creative power, and even rocks were made of cement, and piled up in precipitous crags to give variety and picturesqueness to the scene. Versailles! It eclipsed Babylon in voluptuousness, extravagance, and sin. Millions toiled in ignorance and degradation from the cradle to the grave, to feed and clothe these proud patricians, and to fill to superfluity the measure of their indulgences. The poor peasant, with his merely animal wife

and animal daughter, toiled in the ditch and in the field, through joyless years, while his king, beneath gilded ceilings, was feasting thousands of nobles, with the luxuries of all climes, from plate of gold.

It is in vain to attempt a description of Versailles. The main palace contains five hundred rooms. We passed the long hours of a long day in rapidly passing through them. The mind becomes bewildered with the magnificence. Here is the chapel where an offended God was to be appeased by gilding his altar with gold, and where regal sinners cheaply purchased pardon for the past and indulgence for the future. It is one of the essentials of luxurious iniquity to be furnished with facile appliances to silence the reproaches of the soul; and nothing more effectually accomplishes this than a religion of mere ceremony. Upon this chapel Louis XIV. concentrated all the taste and grandeur of the age. It was an easy penance for a profligate life to expend millions, wrested from the toiling poor, to embellish an edifice consecrated to an insulted God. Before this gorgeous altar stood Maria Antoinette and Louis XVI., in consummation of that nuptial union which terminated in the most melancholy tragedy earth has ever known. The exquisite paintings, the rich carvings and gildings, the graceful spring of the arched ceiling, the statues of marble and bronze, the subdued light, which gently penetrates the apartment, through the stained glass, the organ in its tones so soft and rich and full, all conspire to awaken that luxury of poetic feeling which the human heart is so apt to mistake for the spirit of devotion – for love to God. "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments."

But every spot in this sumptuous abode is so alive with the memories of other days, is so peopled with the spirits of the departed, that we linger and linger, as historical incidents of intensest interest crowd the mind.

"Voici la salle de l'Opéra," exclaims the guide, and he rattles off a voluble description, which falls upon your ear like the unintelligible moaning of the wind, as, lost in reverie, you recall to mind the scenes which have transpired in the theatre of Versailles. Sinking down upon the cushioned sofa, where Maria Antoinette often reclined in her days of bridal beauty and ambition, the vision of private theatricals rises before you. The deserted stage is again peopled. The nobles of the Bourbon court, in all the regalia of aristocratic pomp and pride, crowd the brilliant theatre, blazing with the illumination of ten thousand waxen lights. Maria, the queen of France, enacts a tragedy, little dreaming that she is soon to take a part in a real tragedy, the recital of which will bring tears into the eyes of all generations. Maria performs her part upon the stage with triumphant success. The courtiers fill the house with tumultuous applause. Her husband loves not to see his wife a play-actress. He hisses. The wife is deaf to every sound but that one piercing note of reproach. In the midst of resounding triumph she retires overwhelmed with sorrow and tears.

Suddenly the vision changes. The dark hours of the monarchy have come. The people, ragged, beggared, desperate, have thundered at the doors of the palace, declaring that they will starve no longer to support kings and nobles in such splendor. Poor Maria, educated in the palace, is amazed that the people should be so unreasonable and so insolent. She had supposed that as the horse is made to bear his rider, and the cow to give milk to her owner, so the *people* were created to provide kings with luxury and splendor. But the maddened populace have lost all sense of mercy. They burn the chateaus of the nobles and hang their inmates at the lamp-posts. The high civil and military officers of the king rally at Versailles to protect the royal family. In this very theatre they hold a banquet to pledge to each other undying support. In the midst of their festivities, when chivalrous enthusiasm is at its height, the door opens, and Maria enters, pale, wan, and woe-stricken. The sight inflames the wine-excited enthusiasts to frenzy. The hall is filled with shoutings and with weeping; with acclamations and with oaths of allegiance. But we must no longer linger here. The hours are fast passing and there are hundreds of rooms, gorgeous with paintings and statues, and crowded with historical associations, yet to explore. We must not, however, forget to mention, in illustration of the atrocious extravagance of these kings, that the expense of every grand opera performed in that theatre was twenty-five thousand dollars.

There were two grand suites of apartments, one facing the gardens on the north, belonging to the king, the other facing the south, belonging to the queen. The king's apartments, vast in dimensions and with lofty ceilings decorated with the most exquisite and voluptuous paintings, are encrusted with marble and embellished with a profusion of the richest works of the pencil and the chisel. The queen's rooms are all tastefully draped in white, and glitter with gold. Upon this gorgeous couch of purple and of fine linen, she placed her aching head and aching heart, seeking in vain that repose which the defrauded peasants found, but which fled from the pillow of the queen. Let society be as corrupt as it may, in a nominally Christian land, no woman can be happy when she is but the prominent slave in the harem of her husband. The paramours of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. trod proudly the halls of Versailles; their favor was courted even more than that of their queen, and the neglected wife and mother knew well the secret passages through which her husband passed to the society of youth, and beauty, and infamy.

The statues and the paintings which adorn these rooms seem to have been inspired by that one all-powerful passion, which, properly regulated, fills the heart with joy, and which unregulated is the most direful source of wretchedness which can desolate human homes. It is said that art is in possession of a delicacy which rises above the instinctive modesty of ordinary life. France has adopted this philosophy, and it is undeniable that France, with all her refinement and politeness, has become an indelicate nation. The evidence is astounding and revolting. No gentleman, no lady, from other lands can long reside in Paris without being amazed at the scenes which Paris exhibits. The human frame in its nudity is so familiar to every eye, that it has lost all its sacredness. In all the places of public amusement, the almost undraped forms of living men and women pass before the spectators, and all the modesties of nature are profaned. The pen can not detail particulars, for we may not even record in America that which is done in France. The connection is plain. The effect comes legitimately from the cause. No lady can visit Versailles without having her sense of delicacy wounded. It is said that "to the pure all things are pure." But alas for humanity! a fleeting thought will sully the soul. There is much, very much in France to admire. The cordiality and the courtesy of the French are worthy of all praise. But the delicacy of France has received a wound, deplorable in the extreme, and a wound from which it can not soon recover.

The grand banqueting room of Versailles is perhaps the most magnificent apartment in the world, extending along the whole central façade of the palace, and measuring 242 feet in length, 35 feet in width, and 43 feet in height. It is lighted by 17 large arched windows, with corresponding mirrors upon the opposite wall. The ceiling is painted with the most costly creations of art. Statues of Venus and Adonis, and of every form of male and female beauty, embellish the niches. Here Louis XIV. displayed all the grandeur of royalty, and this vast gallery was often filled to its utmost capacity with the brilliant throng of lords and ladies, whom the people here supported, Versailles was the Royal alms-house of the kingdom. The French Revolution, in its terrible reprisals, was caused by strong provocatives.

The cabinet of the king, a very beautiful room, is near. Here is a large round table in the centre of the saloon. History informs us that one day Louis XV. was sitting at this table, with a packet of letters before him. The petted favorite, Madame du Barri, came in, and suspecting that the package was from a rival, she snatched it from the king's hand. He rose indignantly, and pursued her. She ran around the table, chased by the angry monarch, till finding herself in danger of being caught, she threw the letters into the glowing fire of the grate. The fascinating and guilty beauty perished in the Revolution. She was condemned by the revolutionary tribunal. Her long hair was shorn, that the knife of the guillotine might more keenly cut its way. But clustering ringlets, in beautiful profusion, fell over her brow and temples, and vailing her voluptuous features reposed upon her bosom, from which the executioner had brutally torn the dress. The yells of the maddened populace, deriding her exposure and her agony of terror, filled the air. The drunken mob danced exultingly around the aristocratic courtesan as the cart dragged her to the block. But the shrieks of the appalled victim pierced through

the uproar which surrounded her. "Life – life – life!" she screamed, frantic with fright; "O, save me, save me!" The mob laughed and shouted, and taunted her with coarse witticisms upon the soft pillow of the guillotine, upon which her head would soon repose. The coarse executioners, with rude violence, bound her graceful, struggling limbs to the plank, the slide fell, and her shrieks were hushed in death.

And here is the room in which her royal lover died. It was midnight, the 10th of May, 1774. The small-pox, in its most loathsome form, had swollen his frame into the mockery of humanity. The courtiers had fled in consternation from the monarch whom they hated and despised. In his gorgeous palace the king of thirty millions of people was left, to struggle with death, unpitied and alone. An old woman sat unconcerned in an adjoining room, waiting till he should be dead. Occasionally she rose and walked to his bedside to see if he still breathed, and, disappointed that he lived so long, returned again to her chair. A lamp flickers at the window, a signal to the courtiers, at a safe distance, that the king is not yet dead. They watch impatiently through the hours of the night the glimmer of that dim torch. Suddenly it is extinguished, and gladness fills all hearts.

"So live, that sinking in thy last long sleep,
Smiles may be thine, while all around thee weep."

And here is the gorgeous couch upon which the monarch who reared these walls expired. It was the 30th of August, 1715. The gray-haired king, emaciate with remorse and physical suffering, reclined upon the regal bed, whose velvet hangings were looped back with heavy tassels and ropes of gold. The vast apartment was thronged with princes and courtiers in the magnificent costume of the times. Ladies sunk upon their knees around the bed where the proudest monarch of France was painfully gasping in the agonies of death. His soul was harrowed with anguish, as he reflected upon the bitter past, and anticipated the dread future. Publicly he avowed with gushing tears his regret, in view of the scenes of guilt through which he had passed. "Gentlemen," said the dying king, in a faltering voice to those around him, "I implore your pardon for the bad example I have set you. Forgive me. I trust that you will sometimes think of me when I am gone." Then exclaiming, "Oh, my God, come to my aid, and hasten to help me," he fell back insensible upon his pillow, and soon expired.

As he breathed his last, one of the high officers of the household approached the window of the state apartment, which opened upon the great balcony, and threw it back. A vast crowd was assembled in the court-yard below, awaiting the tidings which they knew could not long be delayed. Raising his truncheon above his head, he broke it in the centre, and throwing the pieces among the crowd exclaimed, with a loud and solemn voice, "The king is dead!" Then seizing another staff from an attendant, he waved it in the air, shouting joyfully, "Long live the king!" The dead king is instantly and forever forgotten. The living king, who alone had favors to confer, was welcomed to his throne by multitudinous shouts, echoing through the apartment of death.

But upon this balcony a scene of far greater moral sublimity has transpired. It was the morning of the 8th of October, 1789. The night had been black and stormy. The infuriated mob of Paris, drenched with rain, men, women, boys, drunken, ragged, starving, in countless thousands, had all the night long been howling around their watch-fires, ravenous for the life of the queen. Clouds, heavy with rain, were still driven violently through the stormy sky, and pools of water filled the vast court-yard of the palace. Muskets were continually discharged, and now and then the crash of a bullet through a window was heard. At last the mob, pressing the palace in an innumerable throng, with a roar which soon became simultaneous, like an uninterrupted peal of thunder, shouted, "The Queen! the Queen!" demanding that she should appear upon the balcony. With that heroic spirit which ever inspired her, she fearlessly stepped out of the low window, leading her children by her side. "Away with the children!" shouted thousands of voices. Even this maddened multitude had not the heart to massacre youth and innocence. Maria, whose whole soul was roused to meet the sublimity of the

occasion, without the tremor of a nerve led back her children, and again appearing upon the balcony, folded her arms and raised her eyes to heaven, as if devoting herself a sacrifice to the wrath of her subjects. Even degraded souls could appreciate the heroism of such a deed. A murmur of admiration ensued, followed by a simultaneous shout, which pierced the skies, "Vive la Reine! Vive la Reine!"

And now we enter the chamber where Maria slept on that night – or rather where she did not sleep, but merely threw herself for a few moments upon her pillow, in the vain attempt to soothe her agitated spirit. The morning had nearly dawned ere she retired to her chamber. A dreadful clamor upon the stairs roused her. The mob had broken into the palace. The discharge of fire-arms and the clash of swords at her door, proclaimed that the desperadoes were struggling with her guard. At the same moment she heard the dying cry of her faithful sentinel, as he fell beneath the blows of the assassins, calling to her, "Fly! fly for your life!" She sprang from her bed, rushed to the private door which led to the king's apartment, and had but just time to close the door behind her, when the tumultuous assailants rushed into the room, and plunged their bayonets, with all the vigor of their brawny arms, into her bed. Unfortunately, Maria had escaped. Happy would it have been for the ill-fated queen had she died in that short agony. But she was reserved for a fate perhaps more dreadful than has ever befallen any other daughter of our race.

Poor Maria! fancy can not create so wild a dream of terror as was realized in her sad life. The annals of the world contain not another tragedy so mournful.

Every room we enter has its tale to tell. Providence deals strangely in compensations. The kings of France robbed the nation to rear for themselves these gorgeous palaces. And yet the poor unlettered peasant in his hut, was a stranger to those woes, which have ever held high carnival within these gilded walls. Few must have been the hours of happiness which have been found in the Palace of Versailles. The paintings which adorn the saloons and galleries of this princely abode, are executed in the highest style of ancient and modern art. One is never weary of gazing upon them. Many of them leave an impression upon the mind which a lifetime can not obliterate. All the great events of France are here chronicled in that universal language which all nations can alike understand. David's magnificent painting of the Coronation of Napoleon attracts the special attention of every visitor. The artist has seized upon the moment when the Emperor is placing the crown upon the brow of Josephine. When the colossal work was finished, many criticisms were passed upon the composition, which met the Emperor's ear. Among other things, it was specially objected that it was not a picture of the coronation of Napoleon but of that of Josephine. When the great work was entirely completed, Napoleon appointed a day to inspect it in person, prior to its public exhibition. To confer honor upon the distinguished artist, he went in state, attended by a detachment of horse and a military band, accompanied by the Empress Josephine, the princes and princesses of the family, and the great officers of the crown.

Napoleon for a few moments contemplated the painting in thoughtful silence, and then, turning to the artist, said, "M. David, this is well – very well, indeed. The empress, my mother, the emperor, all are most appropriately placed. You have made me a French knight, and I am gratified that you have thus transmitted to future ages the proofs of affection I was desirous of testifying toward the empress." Josephine was at the time standing at his side, leaning upon his right arm. M. David stood at his left. After contemplating the picture again for a few moments in silence, he dropped the arm of the empress, advanced two steps, and turning to the painter, uncovered his head, and bowing to him profoundly, exclaimed, "M. David, I salute you!"

"Sire!" replied the painter, with admirable tact, "I receive the compliment of the emperor, in the name of all the artists in the empire, happy in being the individual one you deign to make the channel of such an honor."

When this painting was afterward removed to the Museum, the emperor wished to see it a second time. M. David, in consequence, attended in the hall of the Louvre, accompanied by all of his pupils. Napoleon on this occasion inquired of the illustrious painter who of his pupils had

distinguished themselves in their art. Napoleon immediately conferred upon those young men the decoration of the Legion of Honor. He then said, "It is requisite that I should testify my satisfaction to the master of so many distinguished artists; therefore I promote you to be Officer of the Legion of Honor. M. Duroc, give a golden decoration to M. David." "Sire, I have none with me," answered the Grand Marshal. "No matter," replied the Emperor; "do not let this day pass without executing my order."

The King of Wirtemberg, himself quite an artist, visited the painting, and exceedingly admired it. As he contemplated the glow of light which irradiated the person of the Pope, he exclaimed, "I did not believe that your art could effect such wonders. White and black, in painting, afford but very weak resources. When you produced this you had no doubt a sunbeam upon your pencil!"

But we must no longer linger here. And yet how can we hurry along through the midst of this profusion of splendor and of beauty. Room after room opens before us, in endless succession, and the mind is bewildered with the opulence of art. In each room you wish to stop for hours, and yet you can stop but moments, for there are hundreds of these gorgeous saloons to pass through, and the gardens and the parks to be visited, the fountains and the groves, the rural palaces of the Great Trianon and the Little Trianon, and above all the Swiss village. The Historical Museum consists of a suite of eleven magnificent apartments, filled with the most costly paintings illustrating the principal events in the history of France up to the period of the revolution. You then enter a gallery, three hundred feet in length, filled with the busts, statues, and monumental effigies of the kings, queens, and illustrious personages of France. The Hall of the Crusades consists of a series of five splendid saloons in the Gothic style, filled with pictures relating to that strange period of the history of the world. But there seems to be no end to the artistic wonders here accumulated. The Grand Gallery of Battles is a room 393 feet in length, 43 in breadth, and the same in height. The vaulted ceiling is emblazoned with gold, and the walls are brilliant with the most costly productions of the pencil. One vast gallery contains more than three hundred colossal pictures, illustrating the military history of Napoleon. In one of the apartments, on the ground floor, are seen two superb carriages. One is that in which Charles X. rode to his coronation. It was built for that occasion, at an expense of one hundred thousand dollars. The resources of wealth and art were exhausted in the construction of this voluptuous and magnificent vehicle. The other was built expressly for the christening of the infant Duke of Bordeaux.

But let us enter the stables, for they also are palaces. The nobles of other lands have hardly been as sumptuously housed as were the horses of the kings of France. The Palace of Versailles is approached from the town by three grand avenues – the central one 800 feet broad. These avenues open into a large space called the Place of Arms. Flanking the main avenue, and facing the palace, were placed the Grand Stables, inclosed by handsome iron railings and lofty gate-ways, and ornamented with trophies and sculptures. These stables were appropriated to the carriages and the horses of the royal family. Here the king kept his stud of 1000 of the most magnificent steeds the empire could furnish. It must have been a brilliant spectacle, in the gala days of Versailles, when lords and ladies, glittering in purple and gold, thronged these saloons, and mounted on horses and shouting in chariots, with waving plumes, and robes like banners fluttering in the air, swept as a vision of enchantment through the Eden-like drives which boundless opulence and the most highly cultivated taste had opened in the spacious parks of the palace. The poor peasant and pale artisan, whose toil supplied the means for this luxury, heard the shout, and saw the vision, and, ate their black bread, and looked upon the bare-footed daughter and the emaciate wife, and treasured up wrath. The fearful outrages of the French revolution, concentrated upon kings and nobles in the short space of a few years, were but the accumulated vengeance which had been gathering through ages of wrong and violence in the hearts of oppressed men. But those days of kingly grandeur have passed away from France forever. Versailles can never again be filled as it has been. It is no longer a regal palace. It is a museum of art, opened freely to all the people. No longer will the blooded Arabians of a proud monarch fill those stables. One has already been converted into cavalry barracks, and the other into

an agricultural school. It is to be hoped that the soldiers will soon follow the horses, and that the sciences of peace will eject those of war.

What tongue can tell the heart-crushing dramas of real life which have been enacted in this palace. Its history is full of the revealings of the agonies of the soul. Love, in all its delirium of passion, of hopelessness, of jealousy, and of remorse, has here rioted, causing the virtuous to fall and weep tears of blood, the vicious to become demoniac in reckless self-abandonment. After years of soul-harrowing pleasure and sin, the Duchesse de la Vallière, with pallid cheek, and withered charms, and exhausted vivacity, retired from these sumptuous halls and from her heartless, selfish, discarding betrayer, to seek in the glooms of a convent that peace which the guilty love of a king could never confer upon her heart. For thirty years, clothed in sackcloth, she mourned and prayed, till the midnight tollings of the convent bell consigned her emaciate frame to the tomb.

Madame Montespan, a lady of noble rank, beautiful and brilliant, abandoning her husband, willingly threw herself into the arms of the proud, mean, self-worshiping monarch. The patient, gentle, pious, martyr wife of Louis XIV. looked silently on, and saw Madame Montespan become the mother of the children of the king. But Madame Montespan's cheek also, in time, became pale with jealousy and sorrow, as another love attracted the vagrant desires of the royal debauchee. He sent a messenger to inform the ruined, woe-stricken, frantic woman, that her presence was no longer desired, that she was but a supernumerary in the palace, that she must retire. With insult almost incredible he informed the unhappy woman, that as the children to whom she had given birth were his own they might be received and honored in the palace, but that as she had been only his mistress, it was not decorous that she should longer be seen there. The discarded favorite, in the delirium of her indignation and her agony, seized a dessert knife upon the table, and rushing upon her beautiful boy, the little Count of Toulouse, whom the king held by the hand, shrieked out, "I will leave the palace, but first I will bury this knife in the heart of that child." With difficulty the frantic woman was seized and bound, and the affrighted child torn from her grasp. And here we stand in the very saloon in which this tragedy occurred. The room is deserted and still. The summer's sun sleeps placidly upon the polished floor. But far away in other worlds the perfidious lover and his victim have met before a tribunal, where justice can not be warded off, by sceptre or by crown. Madame Maintenon, whom the king gained by a private marriage, which he afterward was meanly ashamed to acknowledge, succeeded Madame Montespan in the evanescent love of the king.

The fate of this proud beauty, once one of the most envied and admired of the gilded throng, which crowded Versailles, was indeed peculiar. Upon her dying bed, in accordance with the gloomy superstitions of the times, she bequeathed her body to the family tomb, her heart to the convent of La Flèche, and her entrails to the priory of St. Menoux. A village surgeon performed the duty of separating from the body those organs, which were to be conveyed as sacred relics to the cloister. The heart, inclosed in a leaden case, was forwarded to La Flèche. The intestines were taken out and placed in a small trunk. The trunk was intrusted to the care of a peasant, who was directed to convey them to St. Menoux. The porter, having completed half of his journey, sat down under a tree to rest. His curiosity was excited to ascertain the contents of the box. Astonished at the sight, he thought that some comrade was trifling with him, desiring to make merry at his expense. He therefore emptied the trunk into a ditch beside which he sat. Just at that moment, a lad who was herding swine drove them toward him. Groveling in the mire they approached the remains and instantly devoured them! She had bequeathed the sacred relics as a legacy to the church, to be approached with reverence through all coming time. The filthiest animals in the world rooted them into the mire and ate them, devouring a portion of the remains of one of the proudest beauties who ever reigned in an imperial palace.

It has often been said that the French revolution merely overthrew a Bourbon to place upon the throne a Bonaparte. But Napoleon, a democratic king, with all the energy of his impassioned nature consulting for the interests of the people of France, was as different in his character, and in the great objects of his ambition, and his life, from the old feudal monarchs, as is light from darkness.

The following was the ordinary routine of life, day after day, and year after year, with Louis XIV., in the palace of Versailles.

At eight o'clock in the morning two servants carefully entered the chamber of the king. One, if the weather was cold or damp, brought dry wood to kindle a cheerful blaze upon the hearth, while the other opened the shutters, carried away the collation of soup, roasted chicken, bread, wine, and water, which had been placed, the night before, at the side of the royal couch, that the king might find a repast at hand in case he should require refreshment during the night. The valet de chambre then entered and stood silently and reverently at the side of the bed for one half hour. He then awoke the monarch, and immediately passed into an ante-room to communicate the important intelligence that the king no longer slept. Upon receiving this announcement an attendant threw open the double portals of a wide door, when the dauphin and his two sons, the brother of the king, and the Duke of Chartres, who awaited the signal, entered, and approaching the bed with the utmost solemnity of etiquette, inquired how his majesty had passed the night. After the interval of a moment the Duke du Maine, the Count de Toulouse, the first lord of the bed-chamber, and the grand master of the robes entered the apartment, and with military precision took their station by the side of the couch of recumbent royalty. Immediately there followed another procession of officers bearing the regal vestments. Fagon, the head physician, and Telier, the head surgeon, completed the train.

The head valet de chambre then poured upon the hands of the king a few drops of spirits of wine, holding beneath them a plate of enameled silver, and the first lord of the bed-chamber presented to the monarch, who was ever very punctilious in his devotions, the holy water, with which the king made the sign of the cross upon his head and his breast. Thus purified and sanctified he repeated a short prayer, which the church had taught him, and then rose in his bed. A noble lord then approached and presented to him a collection of wigs from which he selected the one which he intended to wear that day, and having condescended to place it, with his own royal hands upon his head, he slipped his arms into the sleeves of a rich dressing-gown, which the head valet de chambre held ready for him. Then reclining again upon his pillow, he thrust one foot out from the bed clothes. The valet de chambre reverently received the sacred extremity, and drew over it a silk stocking. The other limb was similarly presented and dressed, when slippers of embroidered velvet were placed upon the royal feet. The king then devoutly crossing himself with holy water, with great dignity moved from his bed and seated himself in a large arm-chair, placed at the fire-side. The king then announced that he was prepared to receive the First Entrée. None but the especial favorites of the monarch were honored with an audience so confidential. These privileged persons were to enjoy the ecstatic happiness of witnessing the awful ceremony of shaving the king. One attendant prepared the water and held the basin. Another religiously lathered the royal chin, and removed the sacred beard, and with soft sponges, saturated with wine and water, washed the parts which had been operated upon and soothed them with silken towels.

And now the master of the robes approaches to dress the king. At the same moment the monarch announces that he is ready for his Grand Entrée. The principal attendants of royalty, accompanied by several valets de chambre and door keepers of the cabinet, immediately took their stations at the entrance of the apartment. Princes often sighed in vain for the honor of an admission to the Grand Entrée. The greatest precautions were observed that no unprivileged person should intrude. As each individual presented himself at the door, his name was whispered to the first lord of the bed chamber, who repeated it to the king. If the monarch made no reply the visitor was admitted. The duke in attendance marshaled the newcomers to their several places, that they might not approach too near the presence of His Majesty. Princes of the highest rank, and statesmen of the most exalted station were subjected alike to these humiliating ceremonials. The king, the meanwhile, regardless of his guests, was occupied in being dressed. A valet of the wardrobe delivered to a gentleman of the chamber the garters, which he in turn presented to the monarch. Inexorable etiquette would allow the king to clasp his garters in the morning, but not to unclasp them at night. It was the exclusive privilege of

the head valet de chambre to unclasp that of the right leg, while an attendant of inferior rank might remove the other. One attendant put on the shoes, another fastened the diamond buckles. Two pages, gorgeously dressed in crimson velvet, overlaid with gold and silver lace, received the slippers as they were taken from the king's feet.

The breakfast followed. Two officers entered; one with bread on an enameled salver, the other with a folded napkin between two silver plates. At the same time the royal cup bearers presented to the first lord a golden vase, into which he poured a small quantity of wine and water, which was tasted by a second cup bearer to insure that there was no poison in the beverage. The vase was then rinsed, and being again filled, was presented to the king upon a golden saucer. The dauphin, as soon as the king had drank, giving his hat and gloves to the first lord in waiting, took the napkin and presented it to the monarch to wipe his lips. The frugal repast was soon finished. The king then laid aside his dressing-gown, while two attendants drew off his night shirt, one taking the left sleeve and the other the right. The monarch then drew from his neck the casket of sacred relics, with which he ever slept. It was passed from the hands of one officer to that of another, and then deposited in the king's closet, where it was carefully guarded. The royal shirt, in the mean time, had been thoroughly warmed at the fire. It was placed in the hands of the first lord, he presented it to the dauphin, and he, laying aside his hat and gloves, approached and presented it to the king. Each garment was thus ceremoniously presented. The royal sword, the vest, and the blue ribbon were brought forward. A nobleman of high rank was honored in the privilege of putting on the vest, another buckled on the sword, another placed over the shoulders of the monarch a scarf, to which was attached the cross of the Holy Ghost in diamonds, and the cross of St. Louis. The grand master of the robes presented to the king his cravat of rich lace, while a favorite courtier folded it around his neck. Two handkerchiefs of most costly embroidery and richly perfumed were then placed before his majesty, on an enameled saucer, and his toilet was completed.

The king then returned to his bedside. Obsequious attendants spread before him two soft cushions of crimson velvet. In all the pride of ostentatious humility he kneeled upon these, and repeated his prayers, while the bishops and cardinals in his suit, with suppressed voice, uttered responses. But our readers will be weary of the recital of the routine of the day. From his chamber the king went to his cabinet, where, with a few privileged ones, he decided upon the plans or amusements of the day. He then attended mass in the chapel. At one o'clock he dined alone, in all the dignity of unapproachable majesty. The ceremony at the dinner table was no less punctilious and ridiculous than at the toilet. After dinner he fed his dogs, and amused himself in playing with them. He then, in the presence of a number of courtiers, changed his dress, and leaving the palace by a private staircase, proceeded to his carriage, which awaited him in the marble court-yard. Returning from his drive, he again changed his dress, and visited the apartments of Madame Maintenon, where he remained until 10 o'clock, the hour of supper. The supper was the great event of the day. Six noblemen stationed themselves at each end of the table to wait upon the king. Whenever he raised his cup, the cup bearer exclaimed aloud to all the company, "drink for the king." After supper he held a short ceremonial audience with members of the royal family, and at midnight went again to feed his dogs. He then retired, surrounded by puerilities of ceremony too tedious to be read.

Such was the character of one of the most majestic kings of the Bourbon race. France wearied with them, drove them from the throne, and placed Napoleon there, a man of energy, of intellect, and of action; toiling, night and day, to promote the prosperity of France in all its varied interests. The monarchs of Europe, with their united millions, combined and chained the democratic king to the rock of St. Helena, and replaced the Bourbon. But the end is not even yet. In view of the wretched life of Louis XIV., Madame Maintenon exclaimed: "Could you but form an idea of what kingly life is! Those who occupy thrones are the most unfortunate in the world."

On one occasion Louis gave a grand entertainment in the magnificent banqueting-room of the palace. Seventy-five thousand dollars were expended in loading the tables with every luxury. After the

feast the gaming tables were spread. Gold and silver ornaments, jewels and precious stones, glittered on every side. For these treasures thus profusely spread, the courtiers of both sexes gambled without incurring any risk.

As the visitor leaves the palace for the gardens and the park, he enters a labyrinth of enchantment, to which there is apparently no end. Groves, lawns, parterres of flowers, fountains, basins, cascades, lakes, shrubbery, forests, avenues, and serpentine paths bewilder him with their profusion and their opulence of beauty. It is in vain to begin to describe these works. There is the Terrace of the Chateau, the Parterre of Water with its miniature lakes and twenty-four magnificent groups of statuary. Now you approach the Parterre of the South, embellished with colossal vases in bronze; again you saunter through the Parterre of the North, with antique statues in marble, with its group of Tritons and Sirens, with its basins and its gorgeous flower beds. Your steps are invited to the Baths of Diana, to the Grove of the Arch of Triumph, to the Grove of the Three Crowns, to the Basin of the Dragon, and to the magnificent Basin of Neptune, with its wilderness of sculpture and its fantastic jets from which a deluge of water may be thrown. The Basin of Latona presents a group consisting of Latona, with Apollo and Diana. The goddess has implored the vengeance of Jupiter against the peasants of Libya, who had refused her water. Jupiter has transformed the peasants, some half and others entirely, into frogs or tortoises, and they are surrounding Latona and throwing water upon her in liquid arches of beautiful effect. The Fountain of Fame and the Fountain of the Star are neatly represented in the accompanying cuts.

The Parterre of the North, which is represented in the illustration, on page 808, extends in front of the northern wing of the palace, the apartments on the second floor of which are occupied by the king. This parterre is approached by descending a flight of steps constructed of white marble. Fourteen magnificent bronze vases crown the terraced wall which separate these walks of regal luxury from the Parterre d'Eau, which is spread out in front of the palace. Statues and vases of exquisite workmanship crowd the grounds; most of the statues tending to inflame a voluptuous taste. The beautiful flower beds, filled with such a variety of plants and shrubs, as always to present an aspect of gorgeous bloom, are ornamented with two smaller fountains, called the Basins of the Crown, and one large fountain, called the Fountain of the Pyramid. The two smaller basins or fountains are so named from the chiseled groups of Tritons and Sirens supporting crowns of laurel, from the midst of which issue, in graceful curves, columns of water. The Pyramid consists of several round basins rising one above another in a pyramidal form, supported by statues of lead. The water issues from many jets and flows beautifully over the rims of the basins. Just below the Fountain of the Pyramid are the Baths of Diana, which are not represented in this illustration. This basin is embellished with finely executed statuary, representing Diana and her nymphs, in voluptuous attitudes, enjoying the luxury of the bath.

Directly in front of the palace is the Terrace of the Chateaux, embellished with walks, shrubbery, flowers, basins, fountains, and colossal statues in bronze. Connected with this is the Parterre of Water, with two splendid fountains, ever replenishing two large oblong basins filled with golden fishes. Groups of statuary enrich the landscape. From the centre of each of the basins rise jets of water. These grounds lie spread out before the magnificent banqueting hall of the palace. It is difficult to imagine a scene more beautiful than is thus presented to the eye. Let the reader recur to the plan of Versailles, and contemplate the vast expanse of lawn, forest, garden, grove, fountain, lake, walks, and avenues which are spread before him over a space of thirty-two thousand acres. From the Parterre of Water a flight of massive white steps conducts to the Fountain of Latona.

At the extremity of the park is a beautiful palace called the Grand Trianon. It was built by Louis XIV. for Madame Maintenon. This edifice, spacious and aristocratic as it is in all its appliances, possesses the charm of beauty rather than that of grandeur. It seems constructed for an attractive home of opulence and taste. It was a favorite retreat of the Bourbons, from the pomp and ceremony of Versailles. This was also one of the favorite resorts of Napoleon when he sought a few hours of

repose from the cares of empire. That he might reach it without loss of time, he constructed a direct road from thence to St. Cloud.

The Little Trianon, however, with its surroundings, constitutes to many minds the most attractive spot in this region of attractions. It is a beautiful house, about eighty feet square, erected by Louis XV. for the hapless Madame du Barri. It is constructed in the style of a Roman pavilion, and surrounded with gardens ornamented in the highest attainments of French and English art. Temples, cottages, groves, lawns, crags, fountains, lakes, cascades, embellish the grounds and present a scene of peaceful beauty which the garden of Eden could hardly have surpassed. This was the favorite abode of Maria Antoinette. She called it her home. In the quietude of this miniature palace, she loved to disembarrass herself of the restraints of regal life; and in the society of congenial friends, and in the privacy of her own rural walks to forget that she was an envied, hated queen. But even here the monotony of life wearied her, and deeply regretting that she had not formed in early youth intellectual tastes, she once sadly exclaimed to her companions, "What a resource, amidst the casualties of life, is to be found in a well cultivated mind. One can then be one's own companion, and find society in one's own thoughts." There is a beautiful sheet of water in the centre of the romantic, deeply wooded grounds of the Little Trianon, upon the green shores of which Maria, for pastime, erected a beautiful Swiss village, with its picturesque inn, its farm house and cow sheds, and its mill.

Here the regal votaries of pleasure, satiated with the gayeties of Paris, weary of the splendors and the etiquette of the Tuileries and Versailles, endeavored to step from the palace to the cottage, and in the humble employments of the humblest life, to alleviate the monotony of an existence devoted only to pleasure. They *played* that they were peasants, put on the garb of peasants, and engaged heartily in the employments of peasants. King Louis was the inn-keeper, and Maria Antoinette, with her sleeves tucked up and her apron bound around her, the inn-keeper's pretty and energetic wife. She courtesied humbly to the guests, whom her husband received at the door, spread the table, for them, and placed before them the fresh butter which, in the dairy, she had churned with her own hands. A noble duke kept the shop and sold the groceries. A graceful, high-born duchess was Betty, the maid of the inn. A marquis, who proudly traced his lineage through many centuries, was the miller, grinding the wheat for the evening meal.

The sun was just sinking beneath the horizon, on a calm, warm, beautiful afternoon, when we sauntered through this picturesque, lovely, silent, deserted village. It was all in perfect repair! The green lawn was of velvet softness. The trees and shrubbery were in full leaf. Innumerable birds filled the air with their warblings, and the chirp of the insect, the rustling of the leaves, the sighing of the wind, the ripple of the streamlet, and the silence of all human voices, so deep, so solemn, left an impress upon the mind never to be forgotten. How terrible the fate of those who once made these scenes resound with the voice of gayety. Some were burned in their chateaux, or massacred in the streets. Some died miserably on pallets of straw in dungeons dark, and wet, and cold. Some were dragged by a deriding mob to the guillotine to bleed beneath its keen knife. And some, in beggary and wretchedness, wandered through weary years, in foreign lands, envying the fate of those who had found a more speedy death. The palace of Versailles! It is a monument of oppression and pride. It will be well for the rulers of Europe to heed its monitory voice. The thoughtful American will return from the inspection of its grandeur, admiring, more profoundly than ever before, the beautiful simplicity of his own land. He will more highly prize those noble institutions of freedom and of popular rights which open before every citizen an unobstructed avenue to wealth and power, encouraging every man to industry, and securing to every man the possession of what he earns. The glory of America consists not in the pride of palaces and the pomp of armies, but in the tasteful homes of a virtuous, intelligent, and happy people.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

BY JOHN S. C. ABBOTT

THE CAMP AT BOULOGNE, AND THE BOURBON CONSPIRACY

Impartial History, without a dissenting voice, must award the responsibility of the rupture of the peace of Amiens to the government of Great Britain. Napoleon had nothing to hope for from war, and every thing to fear. The only way in which he could even approach his formidable enemy, was by crossing the sea, and invading England. He acknowledged, and the world knew, that such an enterprise was an act of perfect desperation, for England was the undisputed mistress of the seas, and no naval power could stand before her ships. The voice of poetry was the voice of truth —

> "Britannia needs no bulwarks, to frown along the steep,
> Her march is on the mountain-wave; her home is on the deep."

England, with her invincible navy, could assail France in every quarter. She could sweep the merchant ships of the infant Republic from the ocean, and appropriate to herself the commerce of all climes. Thus war proffered to England security and wealth. It promised the commercial ruin of a dreaded rival, whose rapid strides toward opulence and power had excited the most intense alarm. The temptation thus presented to the British cabinet to renew the war was powerful in the extreme. It required more virtue than ordinarily falls to the lot of cabinets, to resist. Unhappily for suffering humanity, England yielded to the temptation. She refused to fulfil the stipulations of a treaty solemnly ratified, retained possession of Malta, in violation of her plighted faith, and renewed the assault upon France.

In a communication which Napoleon made to the legislative bodies just before the rupture, he said: "Two parties contend in England for the possession of power. One has concluded a peace. The other cherishes implacable hatred against France. Hence arises this fluctuation in councils and in measures, and this attitude, at one time pacific and again menacing. While this strife continues, there are measures which prudence demands of the government of the Republic. Five hundred thousand men ought to be, and will be, ready to defend our country, and to avenge insult. Strange necessity, which wicked passions impose upon two nations, who should be, by the same interests and the same desires, devoted to peace. But let us hope for the best; and believe that we shall yet hear from the cabinet of England the councils of wisdom and the voice of humanity." Says Alison, the most eloquent, able, and impartial of those English historians who, with patriotic zeal, have advocated the cause of their own country, "Upon coolly reviewing the circumstances under which the conflict was renewed, it is impossible to deny that the British government manifested a feverish anxiety to come to a rupture, and that, so far as the transactions between the two countries are concerned, they were the aggressors."

When Mr. Fox was in Paris, he was one day, with Napoleon and several other gentlemen, in the gallery of the Louvre, looking at a magnificent globe, of unusual magnitude, which had been deposited in the museum. Some one remarked upon the very small space which the island of Great Britain seemed to occupy. "Yes," said Mr. Fox, as he approached the globe, and attempted to encircle it in his extended arms, "England is a small island, but with her power she girdles the world." This was not an empty boast. Her possessions were every where. In Spain, in the Mediterranean, in the

East Indies and West Indies, in Asia, Africa, and America, and over innumerable islands of the ocean, she extended her sceptre. Rome, in her proudest day of grandeur, never swayed such power. To Napoleon, consequently, it seemed but mere trifling for this England to complain that the infant republic of France, struggling against the hostile monarchies of Europe, was endangering the world by her ambition, because she had obtained an influence in Piedmont, in the Cisalpine Republic, in the feeble Duchy of Parma, and had obtained the island of Elba for a colony. To the arguments and remonstrances of Napoleon, England could make no reply but by the broadsides of her ships. "You are seated," said England, "upon the throne of the exiled Bourbons." "And your king," Napoleon replies, "is on the throne of the exiled Stuarts." "But the First Consul of France is also President of the Cisalpine Republic," England rejoins. "And the King of England," Napoleon adds, "is also Elector of Hanover." "Your troops are in Switzerland," England continues. "And yours," Napoleon replies, "are in Spain, having fortified themselves upon the rock of Gibraltar." "You are ambitious, and are trying to establish foreign colonies," England rejoins. "But you," Napoleon replies, "have ten colonies where we have one." "We *believe*," England says, "that you desire to appropriate to yourself Egypt." "You *have*," Napoleon retorts, "appropriated to yourself India." Indignantly England exclaims, "Nelson, bring on the fleet! Wellington, head the army! This man must be put down. His ambition endangers the liberties of the world. Historians of England! inform the nations that the usurper Bonaparte, by his arrogance and aggression, is deluging the Continent with blood."

Immediately upon the withdrawal of the British embassador from Paris, and even before the departure of the French minister from London, England, without any public declaration of hostilities, commenced her assaults upon France. The merchant ships of the Republic, unsuspicious of danger, freighted with treasure, were seized, even in the harbors of England, and wherever they could be found, by the vigilant and almost omnipresent navy of the Queen of the Seas. Two French ships of war were attacked and captured. These disastrous tidings were the first intimation that Napoleon received that the war was renewed. The indignation of the First Consul was thoroughly aroused. The retaliating blow he struck, though merited, yet terrible, was characteristic of the man. At midnight he summoned to his presence the minister of police, and ordered the immediate arrest of every Englishman in France, between the ages of eighteen and fifty. These were all to be detained as hostages for the prisoners England had captured upon the seas. The tidings of this decree rolled a billow of woe over the peaceful homes of England; for there were thousands of travelers upon the continent, unapprehensive of danger, supposing that war would be declared before hostilities would be resumed. These were the first-fruits of that terrific conflict into which the world again was plunged. No tongue can tell the anguish thus caused in thousands of homes. Most of the travelers were gentlemen of culture and refinement – husbands, fathers, sons, brothers – who were visiting the continent for pleasure. During twelve weary years these hapless men lingered in exile. Many died and moldered to the dust in France. Children grew to manhood strangers to their imprisoned fathers, knowing not even whether they were living or dead. Wives and daughters, in desolated homes, through lingering years of suspense and agony, sank in despair into the grave. The hulks of England were also filled with the husbands and fathers of France, and beggary and starvation reigned in a thousand cottages, clustered in the valleys and along the shores of the republic, where peace and contentment might have dwelt, but for this horrible and iniquitous strife. As in all such cases, the woes fell mainly upon the innocent, upon those homes where matrons and maidens wept away years of agony. The imagination is appalled in contemplating this melancholy addition to the ordinary miseries of war. William Pitt, whose genius inspired this strife, was a man of gigantic intellect, of gigantic energy. But he was an entire stranger to all those kindly sensibilities which add lustre to human nature. He was neither a father nor a husband, and no emotions of gentleness, of tenderness, of affection, ever ruffled the calm, cold, icy surface of his soul.

The order to seize all the English in France, was thus announced in the *Moniteur*: "The government of the Republic, having heard read, by the Minister of Marine and Colonies, a dispatch

from the maritime prefect at Brest, announcing that two English frigates had taken two merchant vessels in the bay of Audrieu, without any previous declaration of war, and in manifest violation of the law of nations:

"All the English, from the ages of 18 to 60, or holding any commission from his Britannic Majesty, who are at present in France, shall immediately be constituted prisoners of war, to answer for those citizens of the Republic who may have been arrested and made prisoners by the vessels or subjects of his Britannic Majesty previous to any declaration of hostilities.

(Signed) "Bonaparte."

Napoleon treated the captives whom he had taken with great humanity, holding as prisoners of war only those who were in the military service, while the rest were detained in fortified places on their parole, with much personal liberty. The English held the French prisoners in floating hulks, crowded together in a state of inconceivable suffering. Napoleon at times felt that, for the protection of the French captives in England, he ought to retaliate, by visiting similar inflictions upon the English prisoners in France. It was not an easy question for a humane man to settle. But instinctive kindness prevailed, and Napoleon spared the unhappy victims who were in his power. The cabinet of St. James's remonstrated energetically against Napoleon's capture of peaceful travelers upon the land. Napoleon replied, "You have seized unsuspecting voyagers upon the sea." England rejoined, "It is customary to capture every thing we can find, upon the ocean, belonging to an enemy, and therefore it is right." Napoleon answered, "I will make it customary to do the same thing upon the land, and then that also will be right." There the argument ended. But the poor captives were still pining away in the hulks of England, or wandering in sorrow around the fortresses of France. Napoleon proposed to exchange the travelers he had taken upon the land for the voyagers the English had taken upon the sea; but the cabinet of St. James, asserting that such an exchange would sanction the validity of their capture, refused the humane proposal, and heartlessly left the captives of the two nations to their terrible fate. Napoleon assured the detained of his sympathy, but informed them that their destiny was entirely in the hands of their own government, and to that alone they must appeal.

Such is war, even when conducted by two nations as enlightened and humane as England and France. Such is that horrible system of retaliation which war necessarily engenders. This system of reprisals, visiting upon the innocent the crimes of the guilty, is the fruit which ever ripens when war buds and blossoms. Napoleon had received a terrific blow. With instinctive and stupendous power he returned it. Both nations were now exasperated to the highest degree. The most extraordinary vigor was infused into the deadly strife. The power and the genius of France were concentrated in the ruler whom the almost unanimous voice of France had elevated to the supreme power. Consequently, the war assumed the aspect of an assault upon an individual man. France was quite unprepared for this sudden resumption of hostilities. Napoleon had needed all the resources of the state for his great works of internal improvement. Large numbers of troops had been disbanded, and the army was on a peace establishment.

All France was however roused by the sleepless energy of Napoleon. The Electorate of Hanover was one of the European possessions of the King of England. Ten days had not elapsed, after the first broadside from the British ships had been heard, ere a French army of twenty thousand men invaded Hanover, captured its army of 16,000 troops, with 400 pieces of cannon, 30,000 muskets, and 3500 superb horses, and took entire possession of the province. The King of England was deeply agitated when he received the tidings of this sudden loss of his patrimonial dominions.

The First Consul immediately sent new offers of peace to England, stating that in the conquest of Hanover, "he had only in view to obtain pledges for the evacuation of Malta, and to secure the execution of the treaty of Amiens." The British minister coldly replied that his sovereign would appeal for aid to the German empire. "If a general peace is ever concluded," said Napoleon often, "then only shall I be able to show myself such as I am, and become the moderator of Europe. France is enabled,

by her high civilization, and the absence of all aristocracy, to moderate the extreme demands of the two principles which divide the world, by placing herself between them; thus preventing a general conflagration, of which none of us can see the end, or guess the issue. For this I want ten years of peace, and the English oligarchy will not allow it." Napoleon was forced into war by the English. The allied monarchs of Europe were roused to combine against him. This compelled France to become a camp, and forced Napoleon to assume the dictatorship. The width of the Atlantic ocean alone has saved the United States from the assaults of a similar combination.

It had ever been one of Napoleon's favorite projects to multiply colonies, that he might promote the maritime prosperity of France. With this object in view, he had purchased Louisiana of Spain. It was his intention to cherish, with the utmost care, upon the fertile banks of the Mississippi, a French colony. This territory, so valuable to France, was now at the mercy of England, and would be immediately captured. Without loss of time, Napoleon sold it to the United States. It was a severe sacrifice for him to make, but cruel necessity demanded it.

The French were every where exposed to the ravages of the British navy. Blow after blow fell upon France with fearful vigor, as her cities were bombarded, her colonies captured, and her commerce annihilated. The superiority of the English, upon the sea, was so decisive, that wherever the British flag appeared victory was almost invariably her own. But England was inapproachable. Guarded by her navy, she reposed in her beautiful island in peace, while she rained down destruction upon her foes in all quarters of the globe. "It is an awful temerity, my lord," said Napoleon to the British embassador, "to attempt the invasion of England." But desperate as Napoleon acknowledged the undertaking to be, there was nothing else which he could even attempt. And he embarked in this enterprise with energy so extraordinary, with foresight so penetrating, with sagacity so conspicuous, that the world looked upon his majestic movements with amazement, and all England was aroused to a sense of fearful peril. The most gigantic preparations were immediately made upon the shores of the channel for the invasion of England. An army of three hundred thousand men, as by magic, sprung into being. All France was aroused to activity. Two thousand gun-boats were speedily built and collected at Boulogne, to convey across the narrow strait a hundred and fifty thousand troops, ten thousand horses, and four thousand pieces of cannon. All the foundries of France were in full blast, constructing mortars, howitzers, and artillery, of the largest calibre. Every province of the republic was aroused and inspirited by the almost superhuman energies of the mind of the First Consul. He attended to the minutest particulars of all the arrangements. While believing that destiny controls all things, he seemed to leave nothing for destiny to control. Every possible contingency was foreseen, and guarded against. The national enthusiasm was so great, the conviction was so unanimous that there remained for France no alternative but, by force, to repel aggression, that Napoleon proudly formed a legion of the Vendean royalists, all composed, both officers and soldiers, of those who, but a few months before, had been fighting against the republic. It was a sublime assertion of his confidence in the attachment of United France. To meet the enormous expenses which this new war involved, it was necessary to impose a heavy tax upon the people. This was not only borne cheerfully, but, from all parts of the republic, rich presents flowed into the treasury, tokens of the affection of France for the First Consul, and of the deep conviction of the community of the righteousness of the cause in which they were engaged. One of the departments of the state built and equipped a frigate, and sent it to Boulogne as a free-gift. The impulse was electric. All over France the whole people rose, and vied with each other in their offerings of good-will. Small towns gave flat-bottomed boats, larger towns, frigates, and the more important cities, ships-of-the-line. Paris gave a ship of 120 guns, Lyons one of 100, Bordeaux an 84, and Marseilles a 74. Even the Italian Republic, as a token of its gratitude, sent one million of dollars to build two ships: one to be called the President, and the other the Italian Republic. All the mercantile houses and public bodies made liberal presents. The Senate gave for its donation a ship of 120 guns. These free-gifts amounted to over ten millions of dollars. Napoleon established himself at Boulogne, where he spent much of his time, carefully studying the

features of the coast, the varying phenomena of the sea, and organizing, in all its parts, the desperate enterprise he contemplated. The most rigid economy, by Napoleon's sleepless vigilance, was infused into every contract, and the strictest order pervaded the national finances. It was impossible that strife so deadly should rage between England and France, and not involve the rest of the continent. Under these circumstances Alexander of Russia, entered a remonstrance against again enkindling the horrid flames of war throughout Europe, and offered his mediation. Napoleon promptly replied: "I am ready to refer the question to the arbitration of the Emperor Alexander, and will pledge myself by a bond, to submit to the award, whatever it may be." England declined the pacific offer. The *Cabinet* of Russia then made some proposals for the termination of hostilities. Napoleon replied: "I am still ready to accept the personal arbitration of the Czar himself; for that monarch's regard to his reputation will render him just. But I am not willing to submit to a negotiation conducted by the Russian Cabinet, in a manner not at all friendly to France." He concluded with the following characteristic words: "The First Consul has done every thing to preserve peace. His efforts have been vain. He could not refrain from seeing that war was the decree of destiny. He will make war; and he will not flinch before a proud nation, capable for twenty years of making all the powers of the earth bow before it."

Napoleon now resolved to visit Belgium and the departments of the Rhine. Josephine accompanied him. He was hailed with transport wherever he appeared, and royal honors were showered upon him. Every where his presence drew forth manifestations of attachment to his person, hatred for the English, and zeal to combat the determined foes of France. But wherever Napoleon went, his scrutinizing attention was directed to the dock-yards, the magazines, the supplies, and the various resources and capabilities of the country. Every hour was an hour of toil – for toil seemed to be his only pleasure. From this brief tour Napoleon returned to Boulogne.

The Straits of Calais, which Napoleon contemplated crossing, notwithstanding the immense preponderance of the British navy filling the channel, is about thirty miles in width. There were four contingencies which seemed to render the project not impossible. In summer, there are frequent calms, in the channel, of forty-eight hours' duration. During this calm, the English ships-of-the-line would be compelled to lie motionless. The flat-bottomed boats of Napoleon, impelled by strong rowers might then pass even in sight of the enemy's squadron. In the winter, there were frequently dense fogs, unaccompanied by any wind. Favored by the obscurity and the calm, a passage might then be practicable. There was still a third chance more favorable than either. There were not unfrequently tempests, so violent, that the English squadron would be compelled to leave the channel, and stand out to sea. Seizing the moment when the tempest subsided, the French flotilla might perhaps cross the Straits before the squadron could return. A fourth chance offered. It was, by skillful combinations to concentrate suddenly in the channel a strong French squadron, and to push the flotilla across under the protection of its guns. For three years, Napoleon consecrated his untiring energies to the perfection of all the mechanism of this Herculean enterprise. Yet no one was more fully alive than himself to the tremendous hazards to be encountered. It is impossible now to tell what would have been the result of a conflict between the English squadron and those innumerable gun-boats, manned by one hundred and fifty thousand men, surrounding in swarms every ship-of-the-line, piercing them in every direction with their guns, and sweeping their decks with a perfect hail-storm of bullets, while, in their turn, they were run down by the large ships, dashing, in full sail, through their midst, sinking some in their crushing onset, and blowing others out of the water with their tremendous broadsides. Said Admiral Decris, a man disposed to magnify difficulties, "by sacrificing 100 gun-boats, and 10,000 men, it is not improbable that we may repel the assault of the enemy's squadron, and cross the Straits." "One loses," said Napoleon, "that number in battle every day. And what battle ever promised the results which a landing in England authorizes us to hope for!"

The amount of business now resting upon the mind of Napoleon, seems incredible. He was personally attending to all the complicated diplomacy of Europe. Spain was professing friendship and alliance, and yet treacherously engaged in acts of hostility. Charles III., perhaps the most contemptible

monarch who ever wore a crown, was then upon the throne of Spain. His wife was a shameless libertine. Her paramour, Godoy, called the Prince of Peace, a weak-minded, conceited, worn-out debauchee, governed the degraded empire. Napoleon remonstrated against the perfidy of Spain, and the wrongs France was receiving at her hands. The miserable Godoy returned an answer, mean-spirited, hypocritical, and sycophantic. Napoleon sternly shook his head, and ominously exclaimed, "All this will yet end in a clap of thunder."

In the midst of these scenes, Napoleon was continually displaying those generous and magnanimous traits of character which were the enthusiastic love of all who knew him. On one occasion, a young English sailor had escaped from imprisonment in the interior of France, and had succeeded in reaching the coast near Boulogne. Secretly he had constructed a little skiff of the branches and the bark of trees, as fragile as the ark of bullrushes. Upon this frail float, which would scarcely buoy up his body, he was about to venture out upon the stormy channel, with the chance of being picked up by some English cruiser. Napoleon, informed of the desperate project of the young man who was arrested in the attempt, was struck with admiration in view of the fearless enterprise, and ordered the prisoner to be brought before him.

"Did you really intend," inquired Napoleon, "to brave the terrors of the ocean in so frail a skiff?"

"If you will but grant me permission," said the young man, "I will embark immediately."

"You must, doubtless, then, have some mistress to revisit, since you are so desirous to return to your country?"

"I wish," replied the noble sailor, "to see my mother. She is aged, poor, and infirm."

The heart of Napoleon was touched. "You shall see her," he energetically replied; "and present to her from me this purse of gold. She must be no common mother, who can have trained up so affectionate and dutiful a son."

He immediately gave orders that the young sailor should be furnished with every comfort, and sent in a cruiser, with a flag of truce, to the first British vessel which could be found. When one thinks of the moral sublimity of the meeting of the English and French ships under these circumstances, with the white flag of humanity and peace fluttering in the breeze, one can not but mourn with more intensity over the horrid barbarity and brutality of savage war. Perhaps in the next interview between these two ships, they fought for hours, hurling bullets and balls through the quivering nerves and lacerated sinews, and mangled frames of brothers, husbands, and fathers.

Napoleon's labors at this time in the cabinet were so enormous, dictating to his agents in all parts of France, and to his embassadors, all over Europe, that he kept three secretaries constantly employed. One of these young men, who was lodged and boarded in the palace, received a salary of 1200 dollars a year. Unfortunately, however, he had become deeply involved in debt, and was incessantly harassed by the importunities of his creditors. Knowing Napoleon's strong disapprobation of all irregularities, he feared utter ruin should the knowledge of the facts reach his ears. One morning, after having passed a sleepless night, he rose at the early hour of five, and sought refuge from his distraction in commencing work in the cabinet. But Napoleon, who had already been at work for some time, in passing the door of the cabinet to go to his bath, heard the young man humming a tune.

Opening the door, he looked in upon his young secretary, and said, with a smile of satisfaction, "What! so early at your desk! Why, this is very exemplary. We ought to be well satisfied with such service. What salary have you?"

"Twelve hundred dollars, sire," was the reply.

"Indeed," said Napoleon, "that for one of your age is very handsome. And, in addition, I think you have your board and lodging?"

"I have, sire?"

"Well, I do not wonder that you sing. You must be a very happy man."

"Alas, sire," he replied, "I ought to be, but I am not."

"And why not?"

"Because, sire," he replied, "I have too many *English* tormenting me. I have also an aged father, who is almost blind, and a sister who is not yet married, dependent upon me for support."

"But, sir," Napoleon rejoined, "in supporting your father and your sister, you do only that which every good son should do. But what have you to do with the *English*?"

"They are those," the young man answered, "who have loaned me money, which I am not able to repay. All those who are in debt call their creditors the *English*."

"Enough! enough! I understand you. You are in debt then. And how is it that with such a salary, you run into debt? I wish to have no man about my person who has recourse to the gold of the *English*. From this hour you will receive your dismission. Adieu, sir!" Saying this, Napoleon left the room, and returned to his chamber. The young man was stupefied with despair.

But a few moments elapsed when an aid entered and gave him a note, saying, "It is from Napoleon." Trembling with agitation, and not doubting that it confirmed his dismissal, he opened it and read:

"I have wished to dismiss you from my cabinet, for you deserve it; but I have thought of your aged and blind father, and of your young sister; and, for their sake, I pardon you. And, since they are the ones who must most suffer from your misconduct, I send you, with leave of absence for one day only, the sum of two thousand dollars. With this sum disembarrass yourself immediately of all the *English* who trouble you. And hereafter conduct yourself in such a manner as not to fall into their power. Should you fail in this, I shall give you leave of absence, without permission to return."

Upon the bleak cliff of Boulogne, swept by the storm and the rain, Napoleon had a little hut erected for himself. Often, leaving the palace of St. Cloud by night, after having spent a toilsome day in the cares of state, he passed, with almost the rapidity of the wind, over the intervening space of 180 miles. Arriving about the middle of the next day, apparently unconscious of fatigue, he examined every thing before he allowed himself a moment of sleep. The English exerted all their energies to impede the progress of the majestic enterprise. Their cruisers incessantly hovering around, kept up an almost uninterrupted fire upon the works. Their shells, passing over the cliff, exploded in the harbor and in the crowded camps. The laborers, inspired by the presence of Napoleon, continued proudly their toil, singing as they worked, while the balls of the English were flying around them. For their protection, Napoleon finally constructed large batteries, which would throw twenty-four pound shot three miles, and thus kept the English ships at that distance. It would, however, require a volume to describe the magnitude of the works constructed at Boulogne. Napoleon was indefatigable in his exertions to promote the health and the comfort of the soldiers. They were all well paid, warmly clothed, fed with an abundance of nutritious food, and their camp, divided into quarters traversed by long streets, presented the cheerful aspect of a neat, thriving, well ordered city. The soldiers, thus protected, enjoyed perfect health, and, full of confidence in the enterprise for which they were preparing, hailed their beloved leader with the most enthusiastic acclamations, whenever he appeared.

Spacious as were the quays erected at Boulogne, it was not possible to range all the vessels alongside. They were consequently ranged nine deep, the first only touching the quays. A horse, with a band passing round him, was raised, by means of a yard, transmitted nine times from yard to yard, as he was borne aloft in the air, and in about two minutes was deposited in the ninth vessel. By constant repetition, the embarkation and disembarkation was accomplished with almost inconceivable promptness and precision. In all weather, in summer and winter, unless it blew a gale, the boats went out to man[œuvre in the presence of the enemy. The exercise of landing from the boats along the cliff was almost daily performed. The men first swept the shore by a steady fire of artillery from the boats, and then, approaching the beach, landed men, horses, and cannon. There was not an accident which could happen in landing on an enemies' coast, except the fire from hostile batteries, which was not thus provided against, and often braved. In all these exciting scenes, the First Consul was every where present. The soldiers saw him now on horseback upon the cliff, gazing proudly upon their heroic exertions; again he was galloping over the hard smooth sands of the beach, and

again on board of one of the gun-boats going out to try her powers in a skirmish with one of the British cruisers. Frequently he persisted in braving serious danger, and at one time, when visiting the anchorage in a violent gale, the boat was swamped near the shore. The sailors threw themselves into the sea, and bore him safely through the billows to the land. It is not strange that those who have seen the kings of France squandering the revenues of the realm to minister to their own voluptuousness and debauchery, should have regarded Napoleon as belonging to a different race. One day, when the atmosphere was peculiarly clear, Napoleon, upon the cliffs of Boulogne, saw dimly, in the distant horizon, the outline of the English shore. Roused by the sight, he wrote thus to Cambèceres: "From the heights of Ambleteuse, I have seen this day the coast of England, as one sees the heights of Calvary from the Tuileries. We could distinguish the houses and the bustle. It is a ditch that shall be leaped when one is daring enough to try."

Napoleon, though one of the most bold of men in his conceptions, was also the most cautious and prudent in their execution. He had made, in his own mind, arrangements, unrevealed to any one, suddenly to concentrate in the channel the whole French squadron, which, in the harbors of Toulon, Ferrol, and La Rochelle, had been thoroughly equipped, to act in unexpected concert with the vast flotilla. "Eight hours of night," said he, "favorable for us, will now decide the fate of the world."

England, surprised at the magnitude of these preparations, began to be seriously alarmed. She had imagined her ocean-engirdled isle to be in a state of perfect security. Now she learned that within thirty miles of her coast an army of 150,000 most highly-disciplined troops was assembled, that more than two thousand gun-boats were prepared to transport this host, with ten thousand horses, and four thousand pieces of cannon, across the channel, and that Napoleon, who had already proved himself to be the greatest military genius of any age, was to head this army on its march to London. The idea of 150,000 men, led by Bonaparte, was enough to make even the most powerful nation shudder. The British naval officers almost unanimously expressed the opinion, that it was impossible to be secure against a descent on the English coast by the French, under favor of a fog, a calm, or a long winter's night. The debates in Parliament as to the means of resisting the danger, were anxious and stormy. A vote was passed authorizing the ministers to summon all Englishmen, between the ages of 17 and 55, to arms. In every country town the whole male population were seen every morning exercising for war. The aged King George III. reviewed these raw troops, accompanied by the excited Bourbon princes, who wished to recover by the force of the arms of foreigners, that throne from which they had been ejected by the will of the people. From the Isle of Wight to the mouth of the Thames, a system of signals was arranged to give the alarm. Beacon fires were to blaze at night upon every headland, upon the slightest intimation of danger. Carriages were constructed for the rapid conveyance of troops to any threatened point. Mothers and maidens, in beautiful happy England, placed their heads upon their pillows in terror, for the blood-hounds of war were unleashed, and England had unleashed them. She suffered bitterly for the crime. She suffers still in that enormous burden of taxes which the ensuing years of war and woe have bequeathed to her children.

The infamous George Cadoudal, already implicated in the infernal machine, was still in London, living with other French refugees, in a state of opulence, from the money furnished by the British government. The Count d'Artois, subsequently Charles X., and his son, the Duke de Berri, with other persons prominent in the Bourbon interests, were associated with this brawny assassin in the attempts, by any means, fair or foul, to crush Napoleon. The English government supplied them liberally with money; asking no questions, for conscience sake, respecting the manner in which they would employ it. Innumerable conspiracies were formed for the assassination of Napoleon, more than thirty of which were detected by the police. Napoleon at last became exceedingly exasperated. He felt that England was ignominiously supplying those with funds whom she knew to be aiming at his assassination. He was indignant that the Bourbon princes should assume, that he, elected to the chief magistracy of France by the unanimous voice of the nation, was to be treated as a dog – to be shot

in a ditch. "If this game is continued," said he, one day, "I will teach those Bourbons a lesson which they will not soon forget."

A conspiracy was now organized in London, by Count d'Artois and others of the French emigrants, upon a gigantic scale. Count de Lisle, afterward Louis XVIII., was then residing at Warsaw. The plot was communicated to him; but he repulsed it. The plan involved the expenditure of millions, which were furnished by the British government. Mr. Hammond, under secretary of state at London, and the English ministers at Hesse, at Stuttgard, and at Bavaria, all upon the confines of France, were in intimate communication with the disaffected in France, endeavoring to excite civil war. Three prominent French emigrants, the Princes of Condé, grandfather, son, and grandson, were then in the service and pay of Great Britain, with arms in their hands against their country, and ready to obey any call for active service. The grandson, the Duke d'Enghien, was in the duchy of Baden, awaiting on the banks of the Rhine, the signal for his march into France; and attracted to the village of Ettenheim, by his attachment for a young lady there, a Princess de Rohan. The plan of the conspirators was this: A band of a hundred resolute men, headed by the daring and indomitable George Cadoudal, were to be introduced stealthily into France to waylay Napoleon when passing to Malmaison, disperse his guard, consisting of some ten outriders, and kill him upon the spot. The conspirators flattered themselves that this would not be considered assassination, but a battle. Having thus disposed of the First Consul, the next question was, how, in the midst of the confusion that would ensue, to regain for the Bourbons and their partisans their lost power. To do this, it was necessary to secure the co-operation of the army.

In nothing is the infirmity of our nature more conspicuous, than in the petty jealousies which so often rankle in the bosoms of great men. General Moreau had looked with an envious eye upon the gigantic strides of General Bonaparte to power. His wife, a weak, vain, envious woman, could not endure the thought that General Moreau should be only the second man in the empire; and she exerted all her influence over her vacillating and unstable husband, to convince him that the conqueror of Hohenlinden was entitled to the highest gifts France had to confer. One day, by accident, she was detained a few moments in the ante-chamber of Josephine. Her indignation was extreme. General Moreau was in a mood of mind to yield to the influence of these reproaches. As an indication of his displeasure, he allowed himself to repel the favors which the First Consul showered upon him. He at last was guilty of the impropriety of refusing to attend the First Consul at a review. In consequence, he was omitted in an invitation to a banquet, which Napoleon gave on the anniversary of the republic. Thus coldness increased to hostility. Moreau, with bitter feelings, withdrew to his estate at Grosbois, where, in the enjoyment of opulence, he watched with an evil eye, the movements of one whom he had the vanity to think his rival.

Under these circumstances, it was not thought difficult to win over Moreau, and through him the army. Then, at the very moment when Napoleon had been butchered on his drive to Malmaison, the loyalists all over France were to rise; the emigrant Bourbons, with arms and money, supplied by England, in their hands, were to rush over the frontier; the British navy and army were to be ready with their powerful co-operation; and the Bourbon dynasty was to be re-established. Such was this famous conspiracy of the Bourbons.

But in this plan there was a serious difficulty. Moreau prided himself upon being a very decided republican; and had denounced even the consulate for life, as tending to the establishment of royalty. Still it was hoped that the jealousy of his disposition would induce him to engage in any plot for the overthrow of the First Consul. General Pichegru, a man illustrious in rank and talent, a warm advocate of the Bourbons, and alike influential with monarchists and republicans, had escaped from the wilds of Sinamary, where he had been banished by the Directory, and was then residing in London. Pichegru was drawn into the conspiracy, and employed to confer with Moreau. Matters being thus arranged, Cadoudal, with a band of bold and desperate men, armed to the teeth, and with an ample supply of funds, which had been obtained from the English treasury, set out from London for Paris.

Upon the coast of Normandy, upon the side of a precipitous craggy cliff, ever washed by the ocean, there was a secret passage formed, by a cleft in the rock, known only to smugglers. Through the cleft, two or three hundred feet in depth, a rope-ladder could be let down to the surface of the sea. The smugglers thus scaled the precipice, bearing heavy burdens upon their shoulders. Cadoudal had found out this path, and easily purchased its use. To facilitate communication with Paris, a chain of lodging-places had been established, in solitary farm-houses, and in the castles of loyalist nobles; so that the conspirators could pass from the cliff of Biville to Paris without exposure to the public roads, or to any inn. Captain Wright, an officer in the English navy, a bold and skillful seaman, took the conspirators on board his vessel, and secretly landed them at the foot of this cliff. Cautiously, Cadoudal, with some of his trusty followers, crept along, from shelter to shelter, until he reached the suburbs of Paris. From his lurking place he dispatched emissaries, bought by his abundance of gold, to different parts of France, to prepare the royalists to rise. Much to his disappointment, he found Napoleon almost universally popular, and the loyalists themselves settling down in contentment under his efficient government. Even the priests were attached to the First Consul, for he had rescued them from the most unrelenting persecution. In the course of two months of incessant exertions, Cadoudal was able to collect but about thirty men, who, by liberal pay, were willing to run the risk of trying to restore the Bourbons. While Cadoudal was thus employed with the royalists, Pichegru and his agents were sounding Moreau and the republicans. General Lajolais, a former officer of Moreau, was easily gained over. He drew from Moreau a confession of his wounded feelings, and of his desire to see the consular government overthrown in almost any way. Lajolais did not reveal to the illustrious general the details of the conspiracy, but hastening to London, by the circuitous route of Hamburg, to avoid detection, told his credulous employers that Moreau was ready to take any part in the enterprise. At the conferences now held in London, by this band of conspirators, plotting assassination, the Count d'Artois had the criminal folly to preside – the future monarch of France guiding the deliberations of a band of assassins. When Lajolais reported that Moreau was ready to join Pichegru the moment he should appear, Charles, then Count d'Artois, exclaimed with delight, "Ah! let but our two generals agree together, and I shall speedily be restored to France!" It was arranged that Pichegru, Rivière, and one of the Polignacs, with others of the conspirators, should immediately join George Cadoudal, and, as soon as every thing was ripe, Charles and his son, the Duke of Berri, were to land in France, and take their share in the infamous project. Pichegru and his party embarked on board the vessel of Captain Wright, and were landed, in the darkness of the night, beneath the cliff of Biville. These illustrious assassins climbed the smugglers' rope, and skulking from lurking-place to lurking-place, joined the desperado, George Cadoudal, in the suburbs of Paris. Moreau made an appointment to meet Pichegru by night upon the boulevard de la Madelaine.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.