

ABBOTT JACOB

ROLLO IN
GENEVA

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Rollo in Geneva:

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Rollo in Geneva



THE CASTLE OF CHILLON.

PRINCIPAL PERSONS OF THE STORY

Rollo; twelve years of age.

Mr. and Mrs. Holiday; Rollo's father and mother,
travelling in Europe.

Thanny; Rollo's younger brother.

Jane; Rollo's cousin, adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Holiday.
Mr. George; a young gentleman, Rollo's uncle.

Chapter I.

The Fame of Geneva

Geneva is one of the most remarkable and most celebrated cities in Europe. It derives its celebrity, however, not so much from its size, or from the magnificence of its edifices, as from the peculiar beauty of its situation, and from the circumstances of its history.

Geneva is situated upon the confines of France, Switzerland, and Sardinia, at the outlet of the Lake of Geneva, which is perhaps the most beautiful, and certainly the most celebrated, lake in Switzerland. It is shaped like a crescent,—that is, like the new moon, or rather like the moon after it is about four or five days old. The lower end of the lake—that is, the end where Geneva is situated—lies in a comparatively open country, though vast ranges of lofty mountains, some of them covered with perpetual snow, are to be seen in the distance all around. All the country near, however, at this end of the lake, is gently undulating, and it is extremely fertile and beautiful. There are a great many elegant country seats along the shore of the lake, and on the banks of the River Rhone, which flows out of it. The waters of the lake at this end, and of the river which issues from it, are very clear, and of a deep and beautiful blue color. This blue color is so remarkable that it attracts the attention of every

one who looks down into it from a bridge or from a boat, and there have been a great many suppositions and speculations made in respect to the cause of it; but I believe that, after all, nobody has yet been able to find out what the cause is.

The city of Geneva is situated exactly at the lower end of the lake, that is, at the western end; and the River Rhone, in coming out of the lake, flows directly through the town.

The lake is about fifty miles long, and the eastern end of it runs far in among the mountains. These mountains are very dark and sombre, and their sides rise so precipitously from the margin of the water that in many places there is scarcely room for a road along the shore. Indeed, you go generally to that end of the lake in a steamer; and as you advance, the mountains seem to shut you in completely at the end of the lake. But when you get near to the end, you see a narrow valley opening before you, with high mountains on either hand, and the River Rhone flowing very swiftly between green and beautiful banks in the middle of it. Besides the river, there is a magnificent road to be seen running along this valley. This is the great high road leading from France into Italy; and it has been known and travelled as such ever since the days of the old Romans.

The River Rhone, where it flows into the lake at the eastern end of it, is very thick and turbid, being formed from torrents coming down the mountain sides, or from muddy streams derived from the melting of the glaciers. At the western end, on the other hand, where it issues from the lake, the water is beautifully

pellucid and clear. The reason of this is, that during its slow passage through the lake it has had time to settle. The impurities which the torrents bring down into it from the mountains all subside to the bottom of the lake, and are left there, and thus the water comes out at the lower end quite clear. The lake itself, however, is of course gradually filling up by means of this process.

There are several large and handsome houses on the northern shore of the lake; but Geneva, at the western end of it, entirely surpasses them all.

Geneva is, however, after all, a comparatively small town. It contains only thirty or forty thousand inhabitants. It would take ten Genevas to make a New York, and nearly a hundred to make a Paris or London.

Why, then, since Geneva is comparatively so small, is it so celebrated? Almost every person who goes to Europe visits Geneva, and talks of Geneva when he comes back; while there are multitudes of other cities and towns, many times as large in extent and population, that he never thinks of or speaks of at all.

There are several reasons for this.

1. The first reason is, that this town stands on the great high road leading from England and France into Italy. Of course it comes naturally in the way of all travellers making the grand tour. It is true that at the present day, since steam has been introduced upon the Mediterranean, a very large proportion of travellers, instead of passing through Switzerland, go down the Rhone to

Marseilles, and embark there. But before the introduction of steam, for many ages, the way by Geneva was almost the only way to Italy; and the city acquired great celebrity through the accounts of tourists and travellers who visited it on their journeys.

2. The second reason is, that Geneva is a convenient and agreeable point for entering Switzerland, and for making excursions among the Alps. There are two great avenues into Switzerland from France and Germany—one by way of Geneva, and the other by way of Basle. By the way of Basle we go to the Jungfrau and the Oberland Alps which lie around that mountain, and to the beautiful lakes of Zurich and of Lucerne. All these lie in the eastern part of the Alpine region. By the way of Geneva we go to the valley of Chamouni and Mont Blanc, and visit the vast glaciers and the stupendous mountain scenery that lie around this great monarch of the Alps.

There is a great question among travellers which of these two Alpine regions is the most grand. Some prefer the mountains about Mont Blanc, which are called the Alps of Savoy. Others like better those about the Jungfrau, which are called the Oberland Alps. The scenery and the objects of interest are very different in the two localities; and it seems to me that any difference which travellers may observe in the grandeur of the emotions which they severally produce upon the mind must be due to the peculiar circumstances or moods of mind in which they are visited. It is true you can get nearer to the Jungfrau than you can to Mont Blanc, and so can obtain a more impressive view

of his icy and rocky sides and glittering summit. But then, on the other hand, Mont Blanc is really the highest peak, and is looked upon as the great monarch of them all.

And here, as the name of Mont Blanc will of course often appear in this volume, I have a word or two to say in respect to the proper pronunciation of it in America; for the proper mode of pronouncing the name of any place is not fixed, as many persons think, but varies with the language which you are using in speaking of it. Thus the name of the capital of France, when we are in France, and speaking French, is pronounced *Par-ree*; but when we are in England and America, and are speaking English, we universally pronounce it *Par-is*. It is so with almost all names of places. They change the pronunciation, and often the mode of spelling, according to the analogy of the language used by the person speaking of them.

Many persons suppose that in order correctly to pronounce the name of any place we must pronounce it as the people do who live in and around the place. But this is not so. The rule, on the other hand, is, that we must pronounce it as the people do who live in and around the place *the language of which we are speaking*. Thus the people of France call their capital *Par-ree*; those of Spain call theirs something like this,—*Madhreedth*; the Italians pronounce theirs *Roma*; but we, in talking English, say simply, *Paris, Madrid, and Rome*; in other words, when we are talking English, we *talk English throughout*, using English words for names of things, and English pronunciation for names of places,

in all cases where there is an English pronunciation established, —as there is in respect to all the rivers, towns, mountains, and other localities on the globe that are well known and often spoken of in the English world.

Mont Blanc is one of these. Like the word *Paris* it has its French pronunciation for the French, and its English pronunciation for the English; and its English pronunciation is as if it were spelled Mount Blank or Mont Blank. Under this name it has been known and spoken of familiarly all over England and America for centuries; and this, it seems to me, is the proper name to give it when we are speaking English.

Its French pronunciation is very different. It is one which none but a practical French scholar can possibly imitate, except in a very awkward manner. Those who have visited France and Switzerland, and have been accustomed to the French sound, often give the word the French pronunciation; but it is not at all necessary to do so. The word, like *Paris*, has its own established English sound; and if it is not pedantry to attempt to give it the French sound when speaking English, it certainly is not a mispronunciation to give it the English one. Indeed, to require the French pronunciation of the word from English speakers would be in effect to banish it almost altogether from conversation; for among the ten millions, more or less, in England or America, who speak English well, there is probably not one in a thousand that can possibly give the word its true French pronunciation.

In reading this book, therefore, and in speaking of the great

Swiss mountain, you are perfectly safe in giving it its plain English sound, as if it were written Mont Blank; and remember the principle, as applicable to all other similar cases. Wherever a foreign name has become so familiar to the English world as to have obtained an established English pronunciation, in speaking English we give it that pronunciation, without any regard to the usage of the people who live on the spot.

But now I must return to Geneva, and give some further account of the reasons why it has been so celebrated.

3. The third reason why Geneva has acquired so much celebrity among mankind is the great number of learned and distinguished philosophers and scholars that have from time to time lived there. Switzerland is a republic, and the canton of Geneva is Protestant; and thus the place has served as a sort of resort and refuge for all the most distinguished foes both of spiritual and political tyranny that have risen up in Europe at intervals during the last five hundred years. Geneva was indeed one of the chief centres of the Reformation; and almost all the great reformers visited it and wrote about it, and thus made all the world familiar with it, during the exciting times in which they lived.

Besides this, Geneva has been made the residence and home of a great many moral and political writers within the last one or two centuries; for the country, being republican, is much more open and free than most of the other countries of Europe. Men who have incurred the displeasure of their own governments by

their writings or their acts find a safe asylum in Geneva, where they can think and say what they please. All this has tended very strongly to attract the attention of mankind to Geneva, as to a sort of luminous point in respect to moral and political science, from which light radiates to every part of the civilized world.

4. There is one more reason, very different from the preceding, which tends to make Geneva famous, and to draw travellers to visit it at the present day; and that is, it is a great manufacturing place for watches and jewelry—one of the greatest, indeed, in the world. Travellers, in making the tour of Europe,—and American travellers in particular,—always wish to bring home with them a great number and variety of purchases; and the things that they buy they very naturally desire to buy at the places where they are made. It is not merely that they hope to get them better and cheaper there, but it is a pleasant thought to be associated always afterwards with any object of use or luxury that we possess, that we bought it ourselves at the place of its original manufacture. Thus the gentlemen who travel in Europe like to bring home a fowling-piece from Birmingham, a telescope from London, or a painting from Italy; and the ladies, in planning their tour, wish it to include Brussels or Valenciennes for laces, and Geneva for a watch.

Thus, for one reason or another, immense numbers of people go every year to Geneva, in the course of the tour they make in Europe, either for business or pleasure. It is estimated that the number of these visitors annually is not less than thirty thousand;

and the chief streets and quays of the town are marked almost as strikingly by the conspicuousness and splendor of the hotels as Broadway in New York.

The place of departure in France for Geneva is Lyons. If you look upon the map you will see the situation of Lyons on the River Rhone, almost opposite to Geneva. There is a railroad from Paris to Lyons, and so on down the Rhone to Marseilles. But from Lyons up to Geneva—which is likewise situated on the Rhone, at the place where it issues from the Lake of Geneva—there was no railroad at the time of Rollo's visit, though there was one in the process of construction. The party were obliged to travel by *diligence* on that part of the journey. The diligence is the French stage coach. The diligence leaves Lyons in the evening, and travels all night. As Mr. Holiday arrived at Lyons the evening before, Rollo had the whole of the day to walk about the town before setting out for his evening ride. His father gave him leave to go out alone, and ramble where he pleased.

"The most curious places," said his father, "are on the other side of the river, where the silk weavers live. Notice what bridge you go over, so that you will know it again, and then if you get lost on the other side it will be no matter. All you will have to do is to keep coming down hill till you reach the river, and then look up and down till you see the bridge where you went over. That will bring you home. And be sure to be at home by five o'clock. We are going to have dinner at half past five."

"Then won't it be in season," asked Rollo, "if I am at home

by half past five?"

"In season for what?" asked his father.

"Why, to save my dinner," said Rollo.

"Yes," said his father; "it might be in season to save your dinner, but that is not what I am planning to save. I have no particular uneasiness about your dinner."

"Why, father!" said Rollo, surprised.

"I have no wish to have you go hungry," replied his father; "but then if by any chance you happened to be late at dinner, it would be of no great consequence, for you could buy something, and eat it in the diligence by the way. So I was not planning to save your dinner."

"Then what were you planning to save, father?" asked Rollo.

"My own and mother's quiet of mind," replied Mr. Holiday, "especially mother's. If five minutes of the dinner hour were to come and you should not appear, she would begin to be uneasy; and indeed so should I. In such cases as this, children ought always to come before the time when their parents would begin to feel any uneasiness respecting them."

Rollo saw at once the correctness of this principle, and he secretly resolved that he would be at home a quarter before five.



Chapter II.

Planning

"What part of the diligence are we going to ride in, father?" asked Rollo, as they were seated at dinner.

"In the coupé,"¹ said Mr. Holiday.

"Ah, father!" said Rollo; "I wish you would go on the banquette. We can see so much better on the banquette."

"It would be rather hard climbing for mother," said Mr. Holiday, "to get up to the banquette—such a long ladder."

"O, mother can get up just as easily as not," said Rollo. "Couldn't you, mother?"

"I am more afraid about getting *down* than getting up," said his mother.

"But it is a great deal pleasanter on the banquette," said Rollo. "They keep talking all the time—the conductor, and the drivers, and the other passengers that are there; while in the coupé we shall be all by ourselves. Besides, it is so much cheaper."

"It is cheaper, I know," said Mr. Holiday; "but then as to the talking, I think we shall want to be quiet, and go to sleep if we can. You see it will be night."

"Yes, father, that is true," said Rollo; "but I had rather hear them talk. I can understand almost all they say. And then I like to

¹ Pronounced *coupay*.

see them change horses, and to see the conductor climb up and down. Then, besides, at almost all the villages they have parcels to leave at the inns; and it is good fun to see them take the parcels out and toss them down, and tell the bar maid at the inn what she is to do with them."

"All that must be very amusing," said Mr. Holiday; "but it would not be so comfortable for your mother to mount up there. Besides, I have engaged our places already in the coupé, and paid for them."

"Why, father!" said Rollo. "When did you do it?"

"I sent last evening," said Mr. Holiday. "It is necessary to engage the places beforehand at this season. There is so much travelling into Switzerland now that the diligences are all full. I had to send to three offices before I could get places."

"Are there three offices?" asked Rollo.

"Yes," said his father; "there are three different lines.

"But I'll tell you what you may do, Rollo, if you please," continued his father. "You may go to the bureau,² and see if you can exchange your seat in the coupé for one in the banquette, if you think you would like better to ride there. There may be some passenger who could not get a place in the coupé, on account of my having taken them all, and who, consequently, took one on the banquette, and would now be glad to exchange, and pay the difference."

² Bureau is the French word meaning office; and English people, when travelling in France, fall into the habit of using the word in that sense.

"How much would the difference be?" asked Rollo.

"I don't know," said Mr. Holiday; "five or six francs, probably. You would save that sum by riding on the banquette, and you could have it to buy something with in Geneva."

"Well, sir," said Rollo, joyfully, "I should like that plan very much."

"But do you think," said Mrs. Holiday, "that you know French enough to explain it at the bureau, and make the change?"

"O, yes, mother," said Rollo; "I have no doubt I can."

So Rollo said he would finish his dinner as soon as he could, and go off at once to the bureau.

"There is one other condition," said his father. "If I let you ride on the banquette, and let you have all the money that you save for your own, you must write a full account of your night's journey, and send it to your cousin Lucy."

"Well, sir," said Rollo, "I will."

Rollo left the dinner table while his father and mother were taking their coffee. The table was one of a number of separate tables arranged along by the windows on the front side of a quaint and queer-looking dining room—or *salle à manger*, as they call it—in one of the Lyons inns. Indeed, the whole inn was very quaint and queer, with its old stone staircases, and long corridors leading to the various apartments, and its antique ceiling,—reminding one, as Mr. Holiday said, of the inns we read of in Don Quixote and other ancient romances.

Rollo left his father and mother at this table, taking their

coffee, and sallied forth to find his way to the bureau of the diligence.

"If you meet with any difficulty," said Mr. Holiday, as Rollo went away, "engage the first cab you see, and the cabman will take you directly there for a franc or so."

"Yes, sir," said Rollo, "I will."

"And if you don't find any cab readily," continued his father, "engage a commissioner to go with you and show you the way."

"Yes, sir," said Rollo.

A commissioner is a sort of porter who stands at the corners of the streets in the French towns, ready to do any thing for any body that calls upon him.

Rollo resolved not to employ either a cabman or a commissioner, if it could possibly be avoided. He took the address of the bureau from his father, and sallied forth.

He first went round the corner to a bookstore where he recollected to have seen a map of Lyons hanging in the window. He looked at this map, and found the street on it where he wished to go. He then studied out the course which he was to take. Lyons stands at, or rather near, the confluence of the two rivers Rhone and Saone. In coming to Lyons from Paris, the party had come down the valley of the Saone; but now they were to leave this valley, and follow up that of the Rhone to Geneva, which is situated, as has already been said, on the Rhone, at the point where that river issues from the Lake of Geneva.

The hotel where Rollo's father had taken lodgings was near

the Saone; and Rollo found that the bureau was on the other side of the town, where it fronts on the Rhone.

So Rollo followed the course which he had marked out for himself on the map. In a short time he saw before him signs of bridges and a river.

"Ah," says he to himself; "I am right; I am coming to the Rhone."

He went on, drawing nearer and nearer. At length he came out upon the broad and beautiful quay, with large and elegant stone buildings on one side of it, and a broad but low parapet wall on the other, separating the quay from the water. There was a sidewalk along this wall, with many people walking on it; and here and there men were to be seen leaning upon the wall, and looking over at the boats on the river. The river was broad, and it flowed very rapidly, as almost all water does which has just come from Switzerland and the Alps. On looking up and down, Rollo saw a great number of bridges crossing this stream, with teams and diligences, and in one place a long troop of soldiers passing over. On the other side, the bank was lined with massive blocks of stone buildings. In a word, the whole scene presented a very bright and animated spectacle to view.

Nearly opposite to the place where Rollo came out upon the river, he saw, over the parapet wall that extended along on the outer side of the quay, a very large, square net suspended in the air. It was hung by means of ropes at the four corners, which met in a point above, whence a larger rope went up to a pulley which

was attached to the end of a spar that projected from the stern of a boat. The net was slowly descending into the water when Rollo first caught a view of it; so he ran across, and looked over the parapet to see.



THE GREAT NET.

The net descended slowly into the water. It was let down by

men in the boat paying out the line that held it.

"Ah," said Rollo to himself; "that's a curious way to rig a net. I should like to stay and see them pull it up again, so as to see how many fish they take; but business first and pleasure afterwards is the rule."

So he left the parapet, and walked along the quay towards the place where the bureau was situated.

"I'll come back here," said he to himself, "when I have got my place on the banquette, and see them fish a little while, if I find there is time."

In a few minutes Rollo came to the place he was seeking. It was in a little square, called Concert Place, opening towards the river. Rollo knew the bureau by seeing the diligence standing before the door. It had been brought up there to be ready for the baggage, though the horses were not yet harnessed to it.

Rollo went into the office. He found himself in a small room, with trunks and baggage arranged along on one side of it, and a little enclosure of railings, with a desk behind it, on the other. There was a young man sitting at this desk, writing.

"This must be a clerk, I suppose," said Rollo to himself.

Opposite to where the clerk was sitting there was a little opening in the railings, for people to pay their money and take their tickets; for people take tickets for places in the diligence, in Europe, just as they do for the railroad. Rollo advanced to this opening, and, looking through it, he stated his case to the clerk. He said that he had a place in the coupé that his father had

taken for him, but that he would rather ride on the banquette, if there was room there, and if any body would take his place in the coupé.

The clerk said that there had been a great many persons after a place in the coupé since it had been taken, and that one lady had taken a place on the banquette, because all the other places in the coach had been engaged.

"I think," said the clerk, "that she will be very glad to exchange with you, and pay you the difference. She lives not far from here, and if you will wait a few minutes, I will send and see."

So the clerk called a commissioner who stood at the door, and after giving him his directions, sent him away. In a few minutes the commissioner returned, saying that the lady was very glad indeed to exchange. He brought in his hand a five franc piece and three francs, which was the difference in the price of the two places. The clerk gave this money to Rollo, and altered the entry on his books so as to put the lady in the coupé and Rollo on the banquette. Thus the affair was all arranged.

Rollo found that it was now six o'clock. The diligence was not to set out until half past seven; but by the rules of the service the passengers were all to be on the spot, with their baggage, half an hour before the time; so that Rollo knew that his father and mother would be there at seven.

"That gives me just an hour," said he to himself; "so I shall have plenty of time to go and see how they manage fishing with that big net."

He accordingly went to see the fishing, but was very careful to return some minutes before the appointed time.

Rollo had a very pleasant ride that night to Geneva. He wrote a long and full account of it afterwards, and sent it to his cousin Lucy. This letter I shall give in the next chapter.

The reason why Rollo wrote so long an account of his journey was this: that his father required him, when travelling, to spend one hour and a half every day in study of some kind; and writing letters, or any other intellectual occupation that was calculated to advance his education, was considered as study. In consequence of this arrangement, Rollo was never in a hurry to come to the end of his letters, for he liked the work of writing them better than writing French exercises, or working on arithmetic, or engaging in any of the other avocations which devolved upon him when he had no letters on hand.



Chapter III.

The Ride To Geneva

"Dear Lucy:

"I am going to give you an account of my night ride from Lyons to Geneva.

"I got to the diligence office before father came, because I was going to ride up in the bellows-top. I call it the bellows-top so that you may understand it better. It is a place up in the second story of the diligence, where there are seats for four persons, and a great bellows-top over their heads. *I* think it is the best place, though people have to pay more for the coupé, which is right under it. I got eight francs, which is more than a dollar and a half, for exchanging my seat in the coupé for one on the banquette. I exchanged with a lady. I suppose she did not like to climb up the ladder. You see in the coupé you step right in as you would into a carriage; but you have to go up quite a long ladder to get to the banquette. I counted the steps. There were thirteen.

"When I got to the office, the men were using the ladder to put up the baggage. They put the baggage on the top of the diligence, along the whole length of it behind the bellows-top. They pack it all in very closely, beginning immediately behind, and coming regularly forward, as far as it will reach. There is a frame over it, and a great leather covering. They pull the covering forward as

fast as they get the trunks packed, until at last the baggage is all covered over as far forward as to the back of the bellows-top.

"The men were using the ladders when I came, getting up the baggage; so I climbed up by the little steps that are made on the side of the diligence. I liked my seat very much. Before me was a great leather boot. The boot was fastened to an iron bar that went across in front, so that it did not come against my knees. Above me was the bellows-top, to keep off the rain. Up under the roof of the bellows-top there was a sash folded together and fastened up by straps. I unfastened one of the straps, and saw that I could let down the sash if I wished, and thus make a glass window in front of me, so as to shut me in nicely from the wind, if it should grow cold in the night. Behind me was a curtain. The curtain was loose. I pushed it back, and found I could look out on the top of the diligence where the men were at work packing the trunks and baggage. The men wore blue frocks shaped like cartmen's frocks.³

"Right before the boot was the postilion's seat. It was a little lower than my seat, and was large enough for two. The conductor's seat was at the end of my seat, under the bellows-top. There was one thing curious about his seat, and that is, that there was a joint in the iron bar of the boot, so that he could open his end of it, and get out and in without disturbing the boot

³ Such a frock is called a *blouse*—pronounced *blooze*. Almost all working men in France wear them. Hence the class of workmen in France are sometimes called the *blouses*.

before the rest of the passengers. When I wanted to get out I had to climb over the boot to the postilion's seat, and so get down by the little iron steps.

"The reason I wanted to get down was so as to buy some oranges. There was a woman down there with oranges to sell. She had them in a basket. I thought perhaps that I might be thirsty in the night, and that I could not get down very well to get a drink of water. So I climbed down and bought four oranges. I bought one for myself, and two to give father and mother, and one more because the woman looked so poor. Besides, they were not very dear—only fifteen centimes apiece. It takes five centimes to make a sou, and a sou is about as much as a cent.

"When I had bought my oranges I climbed up into my place again.

"There were several people beginning to come and stand about the door of the bureau. I suppose they were the travellers. Some came in cabs, with their trunks on before with the postilion. I counted up how many the diligence would hold, and found that in all, including the two postilion's seats, and the conductor's, that there were places for twenty-one. But when we started we had twenty-four in all. Where the other three sat you will see by and by.⁴

"As fast as the passengers came to the office, the men took

⁴ The diligence is very large. It has four separate compartments. For a more full account of the construction of the vehicle, and for one or two engravings representing it, see Rollo's Tour in Switzerland.

their baggage and packed it with the rest, on the top of the diligence, and the passengers themselves stood about the door, waiting for the horses to be put in.

"Some of the passengers came on foot, with commissioners to bring their baggage. The commissioners carried their baggage on their backs. They had a frame something like an old-fashioned kitchen chair strapped to their shoulders, and the baggage was piled upon this very high. One commissioner that came had on his frame, first a big black trunk, placed endwise, and then a portmanteau, then a carpet bag, and on the top a bandbox. The bandbox reached far above his head. I should not think they could possibly carry such heavy loads.

"Presently I saw father and mother coming in a cab. So I climbed down to meet them. The men in the blouses took their trunk and carried it up the ladder, and then I opened the coupé door for them, and let them get in. I told mother that my place was exactly over her head, and that I was then going to climb up to it, and that when I was there I would knock on the floor, and she would know that I had got there safely; and I did.

"By and by they got all the baggage packed, and they pulled the great leather covering over it, and fastened it to the back of the bellows-top. Then I could push up the curtain behind me and look in at the place where the baggage was stowed. It looked like a garret. It was not quite full. There was room for several more trunks at the forward end of it.

"Pretty soon after this they brought round the horses and

harnessed them in. Then the clerk came out of the bureau and called off the names of the passengers from his list. First he called the names of those who were to go in the coupé. He said, in a loud voice,—

"Monsieur Holiday and Madame Holiday!"

"And he looked in at the coupé door, and father said, 'Here.'"

"Then he called out,—

"Madame Tournay!"

"That was the name of the lady that had changed places with me. So she got into the coupé. That made the coupé full.

"In the same manner the clerk called off the names of those who were to go in the interior, which is the centre compartment. The interior holds six.

"Then he called off the names of those that were to go in the 'rotonde,' which is the back compartment. You get into the rotonde by a door behind, like the door of an omnibus.

"Then the clerk called out the names of the people that were to come up to the banquette with me. There were six of them, and there seemed to be only room for three. So I could not imagine where they were all going to sit. They came in a row, one behind the other, up the ladder. Very soon I saw how they were going to sit; for the three that came first—a man and woman and a girl—when they came into the banquette, pushed up the curtain at the back side of it, and so climbed in behind to the garret, and sat on the trunks. When the curtain was down, after they were in, they were all in the dark there.

"However, pretty soon they contrived to fasten up the curtain, and then they could see out a little over our shoulders. The girl sat directly behind me. I asked her if she could see, and she said she could, very well.

"The postilion then climbed up, with the reins in his hand, and called out to the horses to start on. He talked to his horses in French, and they seemed to understand him very well. The great thing, though, was cracking his whip. You can scarcely conceive how fast and loud he cracked his whip, first on one side and then on the other, till the whole court rang again. The horses sprang forward and trotted off at great speed out of the place, and wheeled round the corner to the quay; and while they were going, the conductor came climbing up the side of the coach to his place.

"The conductor never gets into his place before the diligence starts. He waits till the horses set out, and then jumps on to the step, and so climbs up the side while the horses are going.

"A diligence is a monstrous great machine; and when it sets out on a journey in a city, the rumbling of the wheels on the pavement, and the clattering of the horses' feet, and the continual cracking of the coachman's whip, and the echoes of all these sounds on the walls of the buildings, make a wonderful noise and din, and every body, when the diligence is coming, hurries to get out of the way. Indeed, I believe the coachman likes to make all the noise he can; for he has sleigh bells on the harness, and, besides cracking his whip, he keeps continually shouting

out to the horses and the teamsters on the road before him; and whenever he is passing through a town or a village he does all this more than any where else, because, as I suppose, there are more people there to hear him.

"Presently, after driving along the quay a little way, we turned off to one of the great stone bridges that lead across the Rhone. We went over this bridge in splendid style. I could see far up and down the river, and trains of wagons and multitudes of people going and coming on the other bridges. The water in the river was running very swift. There were some boats along the shore, but I don't see how the people could dare to venture out in them in such a current.

"As soon as we had got over the bridge, we struck into a beautiful road across the country, and the postilion cracked on faster and harder than ever. We had five horses, three abreast before, and two behind. They went upon the gallop, and the postilion kept cracking his whip about them and over their ears all the time. I thought for a while that he was whipping them; but when I leaned forward, so that I could look down and see, I found that he did not touch them with his whip at all, but only cracked the snapper about them, and shouted at them in French, to make them go. The road was as hard and smooth as a floor, and it was almost as white as a floor of marble.

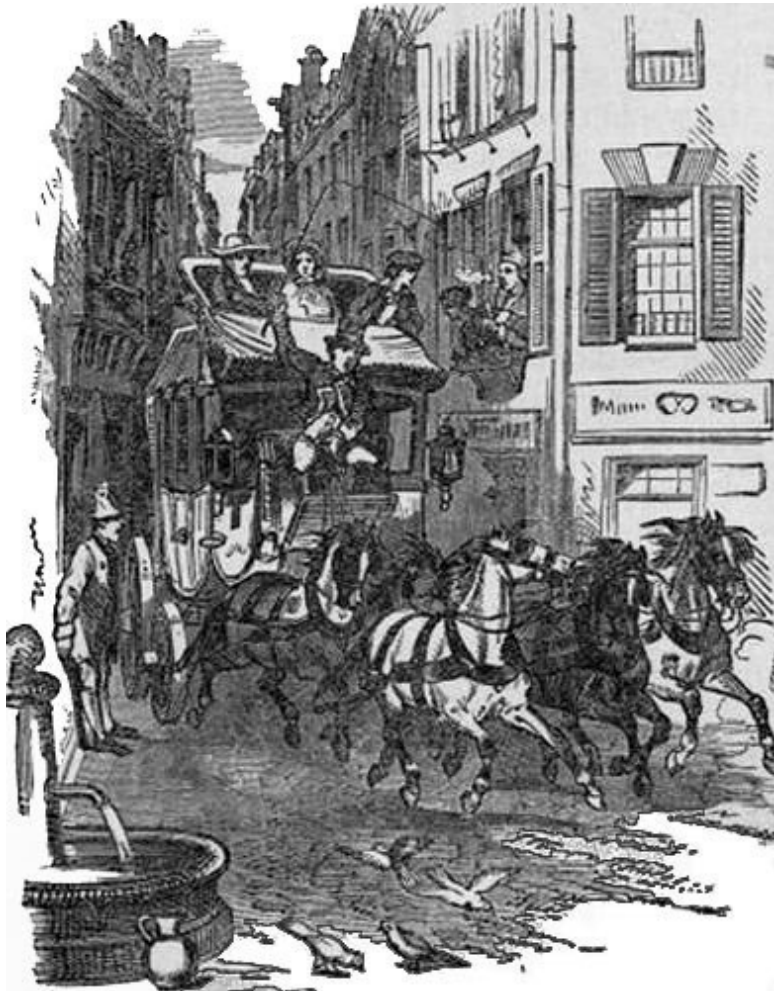
"The country was very beautiful as long as we could see. There were no fences, but there were beautiful fields on each side of the road, divided into squares, like the beds of a garden, with all

sorts of things growing in them.

"Every now and then we came to a village. These villages were the queerest looking places that you can imagine. They were formed of rows of stone houses, close to each other and close to the street. They were so close to the street, and the street was usually so narrow, that there was scarcely room sometimes to pass through. I could almost shake hands with the people looking out the second story windows. I cannot imagine why they should leave the passage so narrow between the houses on such a great road. If there were any people in the street of the village when we went through, they had to back up against the wall when we passed them, to prevent being knocked down.

"When we were going through any of these villages, the postilion drove faster than ever. He would crack his whip, and cheer on his horses, and make noise and uproar enough to frighten half the town.

"We went on in this way till it began to grow dark. The postilion handed the lanterns up to the conductor, and he lighted them with some matches that he carried in his pocket. The lanterns had reflectors in the back of them, and were very bright. When the postilion put them back in their places on the front of the coach, the light shone down on the road before us, so that the way where the horses were going was as bright as day.



GOING THROUGH THE VILLAGE.

"After a time the moon rose, and that made it pretty bright every where. Still I could not see very far, and as the people around me were talking, I listened to what they were saying. The conductor was telling stories about diligences that had been robbed. He said that once, when he was travelling somewhere, the diligence was attacked by robbers, and he was shot by one of them. He was shot in the neck; and he had to keep in his bed six months before he got well. I listened as well as I could, but the diligence made

such a noise that I could not understand all he said, and I did not hear where it was that this happened. I suppose it was probably in Italy, for I have heard that there were a great many robbers there.

"After a while I began to feel sleepy. I don't remember going to sleep, for the first thing I knew after I began to feel sleepy was that I was waking up. We were stopping to change horses. We stopped to change horses very often—oftener than once an hour. When we changed horses we always changed the postilion too. A new postilion always came with every new team. It was only the conductor that we did not change. He went with us all the way.

"We changed horses usually in a village; and it was very curious to see what queer-looking hostlers and stable boys came out with the new teams. Generally the hostlers were all ready, waiting for the diligence to come; but sometimes they would be all asleep, and the conductor and the postilion would make a great

shouting and uproar in waking them up.

"When the new team was harnessed in, the new postilion would climb up to his seat, with the reins in his hands, and, without waiting a moment, he would start the horses on at full speed, leaving the poor conductor to get on the best way he could. By the time the horses began to go on the gallop, the conductor would come climbing up the side of the coach into his place.

"It was curious to see how different the different teams were in regard to the number of horses. Sometimes we had four horses, sometimes five, and once we had seven. For a long time I could not tell what the reason was for such a difference. But at last I found out. It was because some of the stages were pretty nearly level, and others were almost all up hill. Of course, where there was a great deal of up hill they required more horses. At the time when they put on seven horses I knew that we had come to a place where it was almost all up hill; and it was. The road went winding around through a region of hills and valleys, but ascending all the time. Still the road was so hard and smooth, and the horses were so full of life, that we went on the full trot the whole way. Four horses could not have done this, though, with such a heavy load. It took seven.

"In almost all the villages we came to we saw long lines of wagons by the road side. They were very curious wagons indeed. They were small. Each one was to be drawn by one horse. There was no body to them, but only two long poles going from the forward axletree to the back axletree; and the load was packed

on these poles, and covered with canvas. It looked just like a big bundle tied up in a cloth. These were wagons that had stopped for the night. Afterwards, when the morning came, we overtook a great many trains of these wagons, on the road to Geneva. They were loaded with merchandise going from France into Switzerland. There was only one driver to the whole train. He went along with the front wagon, and all the rest followed on in a line. The horses were trained to follow in this way. Thus one man could take charge of a train of six or eight wagons.

"There was one very curious thing in the arrangement, and that was, that the last horse in the train had a bell on his neck, something like a cow bell. This was to prevent the driver from having to look round continually to see whether the rest of the horses were coming or not. As long as he could hear the bell on the last one's neck he knew they were all coming; for none of the middle ones could stop without stopping all behind them.

"I suppose that sometimes some of the horses in the train would stop; then the driver would observe that the bell ceased to ring, and he would stop his own wagon, and go back to see what was the matter. If he found that any of them stopped to eat grass by the way, or because they were lazy, he would give them a whipping, and start them on, and that would teach them to keep marching on the next time.

"I know what I would do if I were the last horse. Whenever I wanted to stop and rest I would keep shaking my head all the time, and that would make the driver think that I was coming

along.

"One time, when we were stopping to change horses, I heard some one below me calling to me,

"'Rollo!'

"I believe I was asleep at that time, and dreaming about something, though I don't remember what it was. I started up and reached out as far as I could over the boot, and looked down. I found it was my mother calling to me.

"'Rollo,' says she, 'how do you get along?'

"'Very nicely indeed, mother,' says I; 'and how do you get along?'

"'Very well,' says she.

"Just then I happened to think of my oranges; so I asked mother if she was not thirsty, and she said she was a little thirsty, but she did not see how she could get any drink until the morning, for the houses were all shut up, and the people were in bed and asleep. So I told her that I had an orange for her and for father. She said she was very glad indeed.

"I could not get down very well to give the oranges to her, so I put them in my little knapsack, and let them down by a string. I had the string in my pocket.

"Mother took the oranges out of the knapsack, and then I pulled it up again. I told her that I had plenty more for myself.

"Father cut a hole in one of the oranges that I sent down to mother, and then she squeezed the juice of it out into her mouth. She said afterwards that I could not conceive how much

it refreshed her. I don't think *she* could conceive how glad I was that I had bought it for her.

"A little while after sunrise we came to a village where we were going to change horses, and the conductor said that we should stop long enough to go into the inn if we pleased, and get some coffee. So father and mother got out of the coupé, and went in. I climbed down from my place, and went with them. Mother said she went in more to see what sort of a place the inn was than for the sake of the coffee.

"It was a very funny place. The floor was of stone. There was one table, with cups on it for coffee, and plates, and bread and butter. The loaves of bread were shaped like a man's arm—about as big round, and a good deal longer. The coffee was very good indeed, on account of there being plenty of hot milk to put into it.

"After we had had our breakfast we went on, and the rest of our ride was through a most magnificent country. There was a long, winding valley, with beautiful hills and mountains on each side, and a deep chasm in the middle, with the River Rhone roaring and tumbling over the stones down at the bottom of it. The road went wheeling on down long slopes, and around the hills and promontories, with beautiful green swells of land above it and below it. The horses went upon the run. The postilion had a little handle close by his seat—a sort of crank—that he could turn round and round, and so bring a brake to bear against the wheels, and thus help to hold the carriage back. When he began to go down a slope he would turn this crank round and round as

fast as he could, till it was screwed up tight, cheering the horses on all the time; and then he would take his whip and crack it about their ears, and so we go down the hills, and wheel round the great curves, almost on the run, and could look down on the fields and meadows and houses in the valley, a thousand feet below us. It was the grandest ride I ever had.

"But I have been so long writing this letter that I am beginning to be tired of it, though I have not got yet to Geneva; so I am going to stop now. The rest I will tell you when I see you.

*"Your affectionate cousin,
"Rollo."*

"P.S. There is one thing more that I will tell you, and that is, that we went through a castle at one place in the valley. It was a castle built by the French to guard their frontier. Indeed, there were two castles. The road passes directly through one of them, and the other is high up on the rocks exactly above it. The valley is so narrow, and the banks are so steep, that there is no other possible place for the road except through the lower castle. The road has to twist and twine about, too, just before it comes to the castle gates, and after it goes away from them on the other side, so that every thing that passes along has some guns or other pointing at them from the castle for more than a mile. I don't see how any enemy could possibly get into France this way.

"There was also a place where the Rhone goes under ground, or, rather, under the rocks, and so loses itself for a time, and then after a while comes out again. It is a place where the

river runs along in the bottom of a very deep and rocky chasm, and the rocks have fallen down from above, so as to fill up the chasm from one side to the other, and all the water gets through underneath them. We looked down into the chasm as the diligence went by, and saw the water tumbling over the rocks just above the place where it goes down. I should have liked to stop, and to climb down there and see the place, but I knew that the diligence would not wait."



Chapter IV.

The Town

The valley described by Rollo in his letter to Lucy, contained in the last chapter, is indeed a very remarkable pass. The Romans travelled it nearly two thousand years ago, in going from Italy to France, or, as they called it, Gaul. Cæsar describes the country in his Commentaries; and from that day to this it has been one of the greatest thoroughfares of Europe.

The valley is very tortuous, and in some places it is very narrow; and the road runs along through it like a white thread, suspended, as it were, half way between the lofty summits of the mountains and the roaring torrent of the Rhone in the deep abyss below.

After emerging from this narrow pass, the road comes out into an open country, which is as fertile and beautiful, and as richly adorned with hamlets, villas, parks, gardens, and smiling fields of corn and grain, as any country in the world. At length, on coming over the summit of a gentle swell of land, that rises in the midst of this paradise, the great chain of the Alps, with the snowy peak of Mont Blanc crowning it with its glittering canopy of snow, comes suddenly into view.

"Look there!" said the conductor to the company on the banquette. "See there! the Mont Blanc, all uncovered!"

The French always call Mont Blanc *the* Mont Blanc, and for *all clear and in plain view* they say *all uncovered*.

It is calculated that there are only about sixty days in the year, upon an average, when Mont Blanc appears with his head uncovered. They, therefore, whose coming into Switzerland he honors by taking off his cap, have reason greatly to rejoice in their good fortune.

Rollo had seen snow-covered mountains shining in the sun before; but he was greatly delighted with this new view of them. There is indeed a peculiar charm in the sight of these eternal snows, especially when we see them basking, as it were, in the rays of a warm summer's sun, that is wholly indescribable. The sublime and thrilling grandeur of the spectacle no pen or pencil can portray.



VIEW OF GENEVA

After passing over the hill, and descending into the valley again, the company in the diligence came soon in sight of the environs of Geneva. They passed by a great many charming country seats, with neat walls of masonry bordering the gardens, and wide gateways opening into pretty courts, and little green lawns surrounding the chateaux. At length the diligence came thundering down a narrow paved street into the town. Every thing made haste to get out of the way. The postilion cracked his whip, and cheered on his horses, and shouted out to the cartmen and footmen before him to clear the way, and made generally as much noise and uproar as possible, as if the glory of a diligence

consisted in the noise it made, and the sensation it produced in coming into town.

At length the immense vehicle wheeled round a corner, and came out upon a broad and beautiful quay. The quay had a range of very elegant and palace-like looking houses and hotels on one side, and the water of the lake—exceedingly clear, and bright, and blue—on the other. The place was at the point where the water of the lake was just beginning to draw in towards the outlet; so that there was a pretty swift current.

The engraving represents the scene. In the foreground we see the broad quay, with the buildings on one side, and the low parapet wall separating it from the water on the other. In the middle distance we see the diligence just coming out upon the quay from the street by which it came into the town. A little farther on we see the bridge by which the diligence will pass across to the other side of the river—the diligence offices being situated in the row of buildings that we see on the farther side. This bridge is not straight. There is an angle in it at the centre. From the apex of this angle there is a branch bridge which goes out to a little island in the lake. This island is arranged as a promenade, and is a great place of resort for the people of Geneva. There are walks through it and all around it, and seats under the trees, and a parapet wall or railing encircling the margin of it, to prevent children from falling into the water.

As the diligence rolled along the quay, and turned to go over the bridge, Rollo could look out in one direction over the broad

surface of the lake, which was seen extending for many miles, bordered by gently sloping shores coming down to the water. On the other side the current was seen rapidly converging and flowing swiftly under another bridge, and thence directly through the very heart of the town.

The diligence went over the bridge. While it was going over, Rollo looked out first one way, towards the lake, and then the other way, down the river. On the lake side there was a steamboat coming in. She was crowded with passengers, and the quay at the other end of the bridge, where the steamer was going to land, was crowded with people waiting to see.

On the other side of the bridge, that is, looking down the stream, Rollo saw a deep blue river running more and more swiftly as it grew narrower. There were several other bridges in sight, and an island also, which stood in the middle of the stream, and was covered with tall and ancient-looking buildings. These buildings indeed more than covered the original island; they extended out over the water—the outer walls seeming to rest on piles, between and around which the water flowed with the utmost impetuosity. The banks of the river on each side were walled up, and there were streets or platform walks along the margin, between the houses and the water. There were a great many bridges, some wide and some narrow, leading across from one bank to the other, and from each bank to the island between.

The diligence passed on so rapidly that Rollo had very little opportunity to see these things; but he resolved that as soon as

they got established in the hotel he would come out and take a walk, and explore all those bridges.

"It is just such a town as I like," said he to himself. "A swift river running through the middle of it—water as clear as a bell—plenty of foot bridges down very near to the water, and ever so many little platforms and sidewalks along the margin, where you can stand and fish over the railings."

In the mean time the diligence went thundering on over the bridge, and then drove along the quay, on the farther side, past one office after another, until it came to its own. Here the horses were reined in, and the great machine came to a stand. The doors of the lower compartments were opened, and the passengers began to get out. Two ladders were placed against the side, one for the passengers on the banquette to get down by, and the other to enable the blouses that stood waiting there to uncover and get down the baggage. Rollo did not wait for his turn at the ladder, but climbed down the side of the coach by means of any projecting irons or steps that he could find to cling to.

"Now, Rollo," said Mr. Holiday, "the hotel is pretty near, and we are going to walk there. I am going to leave you here to select out our baggage, when they get it down, and to bring it along by means of a porter."

"Yes, sir," said Rollo; "I should like to do that. But what hotel is it?"

"The Hotel de l'Ecu," said Mr. Holiday.

So Mr. and Mrs. Holiday walked along the pier to the hotel,

leaving Rollo to engage a porter and to follow in due time.

The porter carried the baggage on his back, by means of a frame, such as has been already described. Rollo followed him, and thus he arrived at last safely at the hotel.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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