Adams William Henry Davenport

Celebrated Women Travellers of the Nineteenth Century

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Содержание

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COUNTESS DORA D'ISTRIA

The Princess Helena Koltzoff-Massalsky, better known by her pseudonym of Dora d'Istria,[1] came of the family of the Ghikas, formerly princes of Wallachia, and was born at Bucharest, on the 22nd of January, 1829. Through the care and conscientiousness of her instructor, Mons. Papadopoulos, and her own remarkable capacity, she acquired a very complete and comprehensive education. When but eleven years old, she composed a charming little story, and before she had reached womanhood, undertook a translation of the Iliad. She showed no inclination for the frivolous amusements of a frivolous society. Her view of life and its responsibilities was a serious one, and she addressed all her energies to the work of self-improvement and self-culture. She read and re-read the literary masterpieces of England, France and Germany. As a linguist she earned special distinction.

"Her intellectual faculties," says her master, M. Papadopoulos, "expanded with so much rapidity, that the professors charged with her instruction could not keep any other pupil abreast of her in the same studies. Not only did she make a wholly unexpected and unhoped-for progress, but it became necessary for her teachers to employ with her a particular method: her genius could not submit to the restraint of ordinary rules."

She was still in the springtime and flush of youth, when she went on a tour to Germany, and visited several German courts, where she excited the same sentiments of admiration as in her own country; it was impossible to see her without being attracted by so much intellect, grace and amiability. Travelling enlarged her horizon: she was able to survey, as from a watch-tower, the course of great political events, and she found herself mixing continually with the most celebrated savants and statesmen of the age. Her friendly relations with persons of very diverse opinions, while enabling her to compare and contrast a great variety of theories, did but strengthen in her "the idea and sentiment of liberty, which can alone conduct society to its true aim." Finally, from the Italian revolution of 1848, which awoke her warmest sympathies, she learned to understand the fatal consequences of despotic government, as well as the inevitable mistakes of freedom, when first unfettered and allowed to walk alone.

At the age of twenty she was married (February, 1849), and soon afterwards she set out for St. Petersburg, where she was recognised as the ornament of the higher society. In the midst of her numerous engagements, in the midst of the homage rendered to her wit and grace, she found time to collect a mass of valuable notes on the condition and inner life of the great Russian Empire, several provinces of which she knew from personal observation. From St. Petersburg to Moscow, from Odessa to Revel, her untiring activity carried her. Most social questions are at work under an apparent calm, and offer, therefore, subjects well worthy of careful study, especially to so grave and clear an intellect as that of Princess Dora d'Istria, who possessed, in the highest degree, the faculty of steady meditation amidst the movement and the world-stir that surrounded her. The world, charmed by her personal attractions, had no suspicion of the restlessness and activity of her inquiring mind.

Her departure to the South brought her inquiries and investigations to an end. She had suffered so much from the terrible winters of the great Northern capital, and her health was so seriously shaken, that her doctors presented to her the grave alternative of departure or death (1855).

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[1] A pseudonym derived from the ancient name of the Danube – Ister.

The Princess Dora d'Istria, as we have hinted, was a fine linguist. She made herself mistress of nine languages. Her historical erudition was profound; her mind was continually in search of new knowledge. She seemed to have inherited from one of her illustrious friends, M. von Humboldt, that "fever of study," that insatiable ardour, which, if not genius, is closely akin to it.

The great Berlin philosopher and the young Wallachian writer lived for some time in an intellectual confraternity, which, no doubt, is to this day one of the most valuable souvenirs of the brilliant author of "La Vie Monastique dans l'Eglise Orientale." In reference to this subject, we take leave to quote a passage from the graceful pen of M. Charles Yriarte: —

"The scene lies at Sans-Souci, in one of the celebrated saloons where the great Frederick supped with Voltaire, d'Alembert and Maupertuis. 'Old Fritz' has been dead a hundred years; but the court of Prussia, under the rule of Frederick William, is still the asylum of *beaux esprits*. The time is the first and brilliant period of his reign, when the king gathers around him artists and men of science, and writes to Humboldt invitations to dinner in verse, which he seals with the great Seal of State, in order that the philosopher may have no excuse for absenting himself. A few years later, and, alas, artists and poets give place to soldiers!

"The whole of the royal family are collected at a summer fête, and with them the most famous names in art and science, and some strangers of distinction.

"The prince has recently received a consignment of ancient sculptures and works of art, and while the royal family saunter among the groves of Charlottenhof, M. von Humboldt and the aged Rauch, the Prussian sculptor, examine them, and investigate their secrets. Rauch is a grand type of a man. This senior or *doyen* of the German artists, who died overwhelmed with glory and honours, had been a *valet de chambre* in the Princess Louisa's household. He had followed the princess to Rome, where, among the masterpieces of antiquity and of the Renaissance, she had divined the budding genius of him who was to carve in everlasting marble the monumental figure of the great Frederick.

"These two illustrious men are bending over a basso-relievo with a Greek inscription, when the king enters; he is accompanied by a gentleman, who has on either arm a fair young girl in the spring of her youth and beauty. The king invites M. von Humboldt to explain the inscription, and the gallant old man goes straight to one of the young girls, excusing himself for not attempting to translate it in the presence of one of the greatest Hellenists of the time.

"'Come, your Highness,' he says, 'make the oracle speak.'

"And the young princess reads off the inscription fluently, setting down M. von Humboldt's ignorance to the account of his politeness.

"The king compliments the handsome stranger, and Rauch, struck by her great beauty, inquires of his friend who may be this fair, sweet Muse, who gives to the marbles the tongue of eloquence, who, young and lovely as an antique Venus, seems already as wise and prudent as Minerva.

"You see that it is a pretty *tableau de genre*, worthy of the brush of Mentzel, the German painter, or of the French Meissonier. For background the canvas will have the picturesque Louis Quatorze interiors of Sans-Souci; in the foreground, the king and the great Humboldt, who inclines towards the young girl; farther off, her sister leaning on their father's arm, and the aged Rauch, who closes up the scene and holds in his hand the bas-relief.

"That young girl, who has just given a proof of her erudition is Helena Ghika, now famous under the literary pseudonym of Dora d'Istria. The old man is the Prince Michael, her father, whose family, originally of Epirus, has for the last two centuries been established in the Danubian Principalities, and has supplied Wallachia with Hospodars. The other young lady is Helena's sister."

Dora d'Istria was one of those fine, quick intelligences which look upon the world – that is, upon humanity – as, in the poet's words, "The proper study of mankind."

"It has always seemed to me," she one day observed, "that women, in travelling, might complete the task of the most scientific travellers; for, as a fact, woman carries certain special aptitudes into literature. She perceives more quickly than man everything connected with national life and the

manners of the people. A wide field, much too neglected, lies open, therefore, to her observation. But, in order that she may fitly explore it, she needs, what she too often fails to possess, a knowledge of languages and of history, as well as the capability of conforming herself to the different habitudes of nations, and the faculty of enduring great fatigues.

"Happily for myself, I was not deficient in linguistic knowledge. In my family the only language made use of was French. M. Papadopoulos at an early age taught me Greek, which in the East is as important as French in the West. The Germanic tongues terrified me at first, the peoples of Pelasgic origin having no taste for those idioms. But I was industrious enough and patient enough to triumph over all such difficulties, and though the study of languages is far from being popular in the Latin countries, I did not cease to pursue it until the epoch of my marriage.

"M. Papadopoulos has often referred to my passionate love of history even in my early childhood. This passion has constantly developed. The more I have travelled, the more clearly I have perceived that one cannot know a people unless one knows thoroughly its antecedents; that is, if one be not fully acquainted with its annals and its chief writers. In studying a nation only in its contemporary manifestations, one is exposed to the error into which one would assuredly fall if one attempted to estimate the character of an individual after living only a few hours in his company.

"Besides, to understand nations thoroughly, it is necessary to examine, without any aristocratic prejudice, all the classes of which they are composed. In Switzerland, I lived among the mountains, that I might gain an exact idea of the Alpine life. In Greece, I traversed on horseback the solitudes of the Peloponnesus. In Italy, I have established relations with people of all faiths and conditions, and whenever the opportunity has occurred, have questioned with equal curiosity the merchant and the savant, the fisherman and the politician. When I appear to be resting myself, I am really making those patient investigations, indispensable to all who would conscientiously study a country."

After residing for some years in Russia, she felt the need of living thenceforward in a freer atmosphere, and betook herself to Switzerland. Her sojourn in that country – a kind of Promised Land for all those who in their own country have never enjoyed the realisation of their aspirations – was very advantageous to her. She learned in Switzerland to love and appreciate liberty, as in Italy the fine arts, and in England industry.

The work of Dora d'Istria upon German Switzerland is less descriptive than philosophical. The plan she has adopted is open perhaps to criticism: such mixture of poetry and erudition may offend severer tastes; we grow indulgent, however, when we perceive that the writer preserves her individuality while passing from enthusiastic dithyrambs to the most abstract historical dissertations.

It is not, however, the woman of letters so much as the patient untiring female traveller whom we seek to introduce to our readers in these pages. We attempt therefore, no analysis of her works,[2] but proceed to speak of her mountaineering experiences: the most important is the ascent of the Mönch, a summit of the Jungfrau system – one of the lofty snow-clad peaks which enclose the ice-rivers of the Oberaar and the Unteraar. We shall allow Madame Dora d'Istria to conduct us in person through the difficulties of so arduous an enterprise.

"When I announced my project of scaling the highest summits of the Alps, the astonishment was general. Some imagined that it was a mere whim which would be fully satisfied by the noise it caused. Others exclaimed against a hardihood willing to encounter so many perils. None were inclined to regard my words as dictated by an intimate conviction. None could accustom themselves to the idea of so extraordinary a scheme. The excitement was redoubled at the departure of the different telegraphic despatches summoning from their village homes the guides spoken of as the most resolute in the district. One hope, however, remained: that these guides themselves would dissuade me from my

[2] The chief of which are: "La Vie Monastique dans l'Eglise Orientale," 1855; "La Suisse Allemande," 1856; "Les Héros de la Roumanie;" "Les Roumains et la Papauté" (in Italian); "Excursions en Roumélie et en Morée," 1863; "Les Femmes de l'Orient," 1858; "Les Femmes d'Occident;" "Les Femmes, par une Femme," 1865.

enterprise. Pierre was encouraged to dilate upon the dangers which I should incur among the glaciers. Through the telescope I was shown the precipices of the Jungfrau. All the manuals of travellers of Switzerland lay upon my tables. Everybody insisted on reading to me the most frightful passages – those most likely, as they thought, to unnerve me. But, on the contrary, these stirring stories did but sharpen my curiosity, did but quicken my impatience to set out. I ceased to think of anything but the snowy wildernesses which crown the lofty mountain summits.

"I summoned Pierre to my private apartment, and spoke to him with firmness, so as to strengthen his resolutions. My words reassured him. 'Whatever happens,' he said, 'do you take the responsibility?' 'Assuredly,' I answered; and I gave him my hand, engaging him at the same time to remain unmoved by any remonstrance, to encourage the guides on their arrival, before they could be exposed to any foreign influence. He promised, and his face brightened at the sight of my tranquil smile. He went away to superintend the preparations for the expedition, and arrange my masculine costume, which consisted of woollen pantaloons striped with black and white, of a closely buttoned coat descending to my knees, of a round felt hat like that of a mountaineer, and a pair of large strong boots. Oh, how slow the hours seemed to me! I dreaded so keenly any occurrence which might thwart my wishes, that I could scarcely listen to the questions put to me respecting the necessary arrangements. Everything wearied me, except the sight of the Jungfrau and of Pierre, who seemed to me a friend into whose hands I had entrusted my dearest hope.

"The first to arrive were the guides of Grindelwald. I uttered a cry of joy when Pierre Bohren appeared, a man of low stature but thickset limbs, and Jean Almer, who was tall and robust. Both were chamois hunters, renowned for their intrepidity. They looked at me with curious attentiveness. They confessed, with the frank cordiality peculiar to these brave mountaineers, that their experience would be of no service in the expedition I was undertaking, as they had never attempted any one like it. They knew, however, the perils of the glaciers, for every day they risked their lives among them. But Bohren, who had ventured the farthest, had not passed beyond the grotto of the Eiger.

"Before coming to a definite decision, we waited the arrival of Hans Jaun of Meyringen, who had accompanied M. Agassiz in his ascent of the Jungfrau (in 1841). He arrived towards morning, and called upon me in company with Ulrich Lauerer, of Lauterbrunnen. The latter was as tall as Almer, but did not seem so ready. I learned afterwards that he was still suffering from a fall which he had but recently met with while hunting. Hans Jaun was the oldest of all and the least robust. His hair was growing grey, his eyelids were rimmed with a blood-coloured border. However, he presided over the gathering. I had closed the door, so that no one should disturb our solemn conference. The guides appeared meditative, and sought to read in my eyes if my firmness were real or assumed.

"It was decided that we should take with us four porters loaded with provisions, ladders, ropes, and pick-axes; that towards evening I should start for Interlachen with Pierre and Jaun, and that the other guides should await me at Grindelwald. Then we separated with the friendly greeting, 'Au revoir.'

"Scarcely had the sun dropped below the horizon, streaked with long bars of fire, when I took my solitary seat in an open carriage. Peter occupied the box. We traversed the walnut-tree avenues of Interlachen and its smiling gardens. We followed the banks of the pale Lütschina, which bounds through the midst of abrupt rocks. Clouds accumulated on the sky. Soon we heard the distant roar of thunder. We passed into the presence of colossal mountains, whose rugged peaks rose like inaccessible fortresses. On turning round, I could see nothing in the direction of Interlachen but gloomy vaporous depths, impenetrable to the eye. Nearer and nearer drew the thunder, filling space with its sonorous voice. The wind whistled, the Lütschina rolled its groaning waters. The spectacle was sublime. Night gathered in all around, and the vicinity of Grindelwald I could make out only by the lights in the châlets scattered upon the hill.

"I had scarcely entered beneath the hospitable roof of the hotel of the Eagle, before the rain fell in torrents, like a waterspout. I elevated my soul to God. At this moment the thunder burst, the

avalanches resounded among the mountains, and the echoes a thousand times repeated the noise of their fall.

"The stars were paling in the firmament when I opened my window. Mists clothed the horizon. The rushing wind soon tore them aside, and drove them into the gorges, whence descend, in the shape of a fan, the unformed masses of the lower glacier, soiled with a blackish dust.

"The storm of the preceding evening, those dense clouds which gave to the Alps a more formidable aspect than ever, the well-meant remonstrances of the herdsmen of the valley, all awakened in the heart of my guides a hesitation not difficult to understand on the part of men who feared the burden of a great responsibility. They made another effort to shake my resolution. They showed me a black tablet attached to the wall of the church which crowns the heights: —

Aimé Munon, Min. du S. Ev.
Tomba dans un gouffre
De la Mer de Glace.
Ici repose son corps,
Retiré de l'abîme.

"I said to Pierre, after glancing at this pathetic inscription, 'The soul of this young man rests in peace in the bosom of the Everlasting. As for us, we shall soon return here to give thanks to God.'

"'Good!' replied Pierre; 'that is to say, nothing will make you draw back.'

"He rejoined his companions, and I went to shut myself up in my chamber.

"The deep solitude around me had in it something of solemnity. Before my eyes the Wetterhorn raised its scarped acclivities; to the right, the masses of the Eiger, to the left, the huge Scheideck and the Faulhorn. Those gloomy mountains which surrounded me, that tranquillity troubled only by the rash of the torrent in the valley and by an occasional avalanche, all this was truly majestic, and I felt as if transported into a world where all things were unlike what I had seen before. My mind had seldom enjoyed a calm so complete.

"I had not the patience to wait for morning. Before it appeared, I was on foot. I breakfasted in haste, and assumed my masculine dress, to which I found it difficult to grow accustomed. I was conscious of my awkwardness, and it embarrassed all my movements. I summoned Pierre, and asked him if I could by any means be conveyed as far as the valley. He sent, to my great satisfaction, for a sedan-chair. Meanwhile, I exercised myself by walking up and down my room, for I feared the guides would despair of me if they saw me stumble at every step. I was profoundly humiliated, and only weighty reasons prevented me from resuming my woman's dress. At last I bethought myself of an expedient. I made a parcel of my silk petticoat and my boots (*brodequins*), and gave it to a porter, so that I might resort to them if I should be completely paralyzed by those accursed garments which I found so inconvenient.

"We had to wait until eight o'clock before taking our departure. The sun then made its appearance, and the mountains gradually threw off their canopy of mist. Having wrapped myself in a great plaid, I took my seat in the sedan-chair and started, accompanied by four guides, four porters, and a crowd of peasants, among whom was a Tyrolean. All sang merrily as they marched forth, but those who remained looked sadly after us. It was the 10th of June, 1855.

"We marched without any attempt at order, and the people of Grindelwald carried our baggage as a relief to our porters. The sun was burning. The peasants took leave of us as soon as we struck the path which creeps up the Mettenberg, skirting the 'sea of ice.' Only the Tyrolean, accompanied by his young guide, remained with us. He said that curiosity impelled him to follow us as long as he could, that he might form some idea of the way in which we were going to get out of the affair. He sang like the rest of the caravan, his strong voice rising above all.

"It was the first time I had seen the immense glacier popularly called 'La Mer de Glace.' Through the green curtains of the pinewoods, I gazed upon the masses rising from the gulf, the depths

of which are azure-tinted, while the surface is covered with dirt and blocks of snow. The spectacle, however, did not impress me greatly, whether because I was absorbed in the thought of gaining the very summit of the Alps, or because my imagination felt some disappointment in finding the reality far beneath what it had figured.

"I descended from my sedan-chair when we arrived at an imprint in the marble rock known as 'Martinsdruck.' The gigantic peaks of the Schreckhorn, the Eiger, the Kischhorn, rose around us, almost overwhelming us with their grandeur. To the right, the Mittelegi, a spur of the Eiger, elevated its bare and polished sides. Suddenly the songs ceased, and my travelling companions uttered those exclamations, familiar to Alpine populations, which re-echoed from rock to rock. They had caught sight of a hunter, gliding phantom-like along the steep ascent of the Mittelegi, like a swallow lost in space. But in vain they pursued him with cries and questions; he continued to move silently along the black rock.

"At length we descended upon the glacier. They had abandoned me to my own resources, probably to judge of my address. I was more at ease in my clothes, and with a sure step I advanced upon the snow, striding across the crevasses which separated the different strata of ice. By accident, rather than by reflection, I looked out for the spots of snow and there planted my feet. Later I learned that this is always the safest route, and never leads one into danger. The Tyrolean took leave of us, convinced at last that I should get out of the affair. As for the guides, they gave vent to their feelings in shouts of joy. They said that, in recognition of my self-reliance, they would entrust to me the direction of the enterprise. After crossing the Mer de Glace, we began to climb the steep slopes of the Ziegenberg.

"For a long time the songs, a thousand times repeated, continued to answer each other from side to side of the glacier. Then we could hear no longer the voice of men, nor the bell of the church of Grindelwald, whose melancholy notes the wind had hitherto wafted to us. We were in the bosom of an immense wilderness, face to face with Heaven and the wonders of Nature. We scaled precipitous blocks of stone, and left behind us the snowy summits. The march became more and more painful. We crawled on hands and feet, we glided like cats, leaped from one rock to another like squirrels. Frequently, a handful of moss or a clump of brushwood was our sole support, where we found no cracks or crevices. Drops of blood often tinted, like purple flowers, the verdure we crushed under foot. When this was wanting we contrived to balance ourselves on the rock by the help of our alpenstocks, having recourse as seldom as possible to one another's arms, for fear of dragging the whole company into the abyss. Hundreds of feet below us glittered the deep crevasses of the glacier, in which the rays of the sun disported. The cold winds, blowing from the frozen heights, scarcely cooled our foreheads. We were streaming with perspiration, but our gaiety increased, instead of diminishing, with the dangers. When we came to a stretch of granite, our speed was doubled, and whoever first set foot upon it would announce the fact to the others. There we slipped but seldom, and by assisting one another, we could walk erect and more quickly. Bohren the younger, who was one of our porters and the youngest of the company, continued his merry song. In moments of peril his voice acquired a decided quaver, but he never paused in his march or in his cadences, and never fell back a step.

"The prospect, which embraced the whole valley, was magnificent. We could perceive the châlets of Grindelwald, like miniatures sprinkled over the greensward. My guides exclaimed, 'Ah, it is from the height of the heavens that we behold our wives!' And we continued our ascent, leaving beneath us the clouds floating everywhere like grey scarves. At eleven o'clock we halted on a promontory where we contrived to find room by sitting one behind the other.

"The fatigue and heat had exhausted us, and no one stirred, except the two Bohrens, who climbed a little higher in search of wood, so that we might light a fire, and prepare some refreshment. A crystalline spring, filtering through the marble and the brushwood, murmured close beside us. But all vigorous vegetation had disappeared. Nothing was to be seen but the grasses and mosses; the juniper, the wild thymes, which perfumed the air, and fields of purple rhododendron, the metallic

leaves of which mingled with the black lichens. At intervals, a few stunted larches were outlined against the everlasting snows. The Bohrens arrived with some brushwood, and soon a fire crackled and sparkled cheerily, the water boiled, and, to my great satisfaction, rhododendron flowers and fragments of juniper were put into it – my companions assuring me that this kind of tea was excellent and very wholesome.

"My thirst was keen, and I drank with avidity the odoriferous beverage, which seemed to me excellent.

"The guides had brought me a large posy of beautiful Alpine roses, and I made them into a wreath, which I twined around my hat.

"After an hour's halt, we resumed our march, and soon could see only the cold white snow around us, without the least sign of vegetation or life. The acclivity we were climbing was very steep, but having quitted the bare rocks, we no longer ran any risk of sliding. We endeavoured to quicken our steps, in order to reach, before nightfall, an immense cavern known only to two of our chamois hunters, who made use of it as a hiding-place when their unconquerable passion for heroic adventures tempted them to disregard the cantonal regulations. Joyous shouts broke forth when the yawning mouth of the grotto opened wide under thick layers of snow. Our songs recommenced, and, as night was coming on, we pressed forward rapidly. For some hours I had been unconscious of fatigue, and I could have marched for a considerably longer period without feeling any need of rest.

"But the guides were impatient to gain a shelter where we should not be exposed to the avalanches which rumbled in every direction.

"A mysterious twilight partly illumined the extensive cavern, its farthest recesses, however, remaining in deep shadow. We could hear rivulets trickling and drops of water falling with monotonous slowness. Never had I penetrated into a place of such savage beauty. In the middle of the cavern, opposite the entrance, was a great pillar of ice, resembling a cataract suddenly frozen. Beyond this marvellous block, glittering like crystal, spread a stream of delicious freshness. When we had kindled a large fire with branches of juniper, accumulated by the hunter who most frequented the retreat, the ice shone with a myriad diamond tints; everything seemed to assume an extraordinary form and life. The fantastically carved walls of rock sparkled with capricious gleams. From the sides of black granite hung pendent icicles, sometimes slender and isolated, sometimes grouped in fanciful clusters. In the hollows, where damp and darkness for ever reign, climbed a bluish-grey moss, a melancholy and incomplete manifestation of life in the bosom of this death-like solitude. Within, the whole scene impressed the imagination strongly, while without, but close beside us, resounded, like thunder, the avalanches which scattered their ruins over our heads, or plunged headlong into fathomless gulfs.

"Some white heifer-skins were laid down under a block which formed a kind of recess at the farther end of the grotto. I wrapped myself in my coverings and shawls, for the cold increased in severity, but I was protected from it by the assiduous care of my good guides, who heaped upon me all their furs and cloaks. Then, seated around the fire, they prepared the coffee which was to serve us the whole night. None of them thought of sleeping, nor felt inclined to repress their natural but modest gaiety. If one complained that his limbs were stiff, the others immediately cried out that he was as delicate as a woman, and that we had no cause of complaint while sojourning in a palace grander than kings' palaces. They inscribed my name upon the roof near to the entrance.

"Two of the guides had sallied forth to clear a pathway and cut steps in the snow, for there would be some difficulty in getting out of the grotto. On their return they informed us that we might rely on a fine day – words which were welcomed with loud applause. After undergoing so much fatigue, it was natural we should desire a complete success. I rejoiced to see so near me the immense glaciers and lofty peaks of the Alps, the image of which had often haunted my happiest dreams. Yet I felt somewhat uneasy at the symptoms of indisposition which would not be concealed. I experienced slight

attacks of nausea, and a depression which I sought to conquer by rising abruptly and giving the signal of departure. I was forced to change my boots, for those I had worn the day before were in shreds.

"About three o'clock in the morning we took leave of the hospitable cavern, but it was not without difficulty we crossed the precipices which frowned before us, and for the first time had to employ our long ladder. We supported it against the side of a chasm, the opposite brink of which lay several hundred feet below. We descended backwards the close and narrow steps, strictly forbidden to cast a downward glance. Day advanced rapidly. The masses of snow which rose around us resembled so many mountains piled upon other mountains. We were in the heart of the vast solitudes of the Eiger, which seemed astonished by the echoes of our steps. We often made use of the ladder. By the third time I had recovered my liberty of action, and no longer descended backward, but contemplating with an undefinable charm the gaping gulfs which vanished in the obscure recesses of the glacier, bluer than the skies of the East.

"The troop soon divided into two sections. We wore blue glasses to protect our eyes from the dazzling brilliancy of the snow, which every moment became less compact. Almer had even covered his face with a green veil, but mine I found inconvenient, and resolutely exposed my skin to the burning rays of the sun, which were reflected from the glittering frozen surfaces, though the sun itself was hidden by clouds. The fissures in the glacier were few and very narrow, and we employed the ladder but once or twice in the immense plain of powdery snow which, towards eight o'clock, opened before us. It was then that our real sufferings began. The heat was excessive; walking, slow and very difficult, for at each step we sank almost to our knees. Sometimes the foot could find no bottom, and when we withdrew it we found a yawning azure-tinted crevasse. The guides called such places *mines*, and feared them greatly. The air every instant grew more rarefied; my mouth was dry; I suffered from thirst, and to quench it swallowed morsels of snow and kirsch-wasser, the very odour of which became at last insupportable, though I was sometimes compelled to drink it by the imperative orders of the guides.

"It had taken us long to cross the region of springs and torrents; not so long to traverse that in which the fissures of the glacier were hidden under the snow; and now at last we trod the eternal and spotless shroud of the frozen desert. I breathed with difficulty, my weakness increased, so that it was with no small pleasure I arrived at the halting-place marked out by our foremost party. I threw myself, exhausted, but enchanted, on the bed of snow which had been prepared for me. Avalanches were frequent. Sometimes they rolled in immense blocks with a sullen roar; sometimes whirlwinds of snow fell upon us like showers of heavy hail. To our great alarm the mist rose on all sides so that we often lost sight of those of our party who were acting as pioneers. After leaving the plain of snow we ascended a steep and difficult incline. The guides had hardly strength enough to clear a path, so rude was the acclivity and so dense the snow.

"At length, about ten o'clock, we halted on a platform which stretched to the base of the Mönch, whose ridge or backbone rose before our eyes. Here a small grotto had been excavated in the ice in which I was bidden to rest myself, thoroughly well wrapped up. We were literally on the brink of a complete collapse, respiration failed us, and for some minutes I expectorated blood. However, I regretted neither my fatigues, nor the resolution which had carried me to this point. All that I feared was that I should not be able to go farther. The very air which I endured so badly was an object of interest and study on account of its extraordinary purity. One of the guides, having brought from the grotto a few juniper branches, kindled a fire and melted some snow, which we drank with eagerness. I then remarked that they had collected in a group at some distance apart, and were conversing in a low tone and with anxious faces. The Jungfrau had been indicated as the goal of our enterprise, and their apprehensive glances were turned towards that mountain, which rose on our left, shrouded in dense fogs. I felt a vague fear that they wished to interpose some obstacle to the complete realization of my projects; and, in fact, they soon came to tell me that it would not be possible to climb the Jungfrau that day; that there was still a long march to be made before we could reach its base, which,

by an optical illusion, seemed so near to us; and that from thence to the summit would be at least another three hours' climb.

"It seemed scarcely practicable to pass the night on the snow at so great an elevation, where the effort of breathing was a pain, and the icy cold threatened to freeze our aching limbs, and, besides, the guides were unanimous in predicting a violent storm in the evening. 'And then,' said they, 'what shall we do without shelter, without coverings, without fire, without any hot drink (for our supply of coffee was exhausted), in the midst of this ice?' I knew in my heart they were right, but I was keenly disappointed at failing to reach the goal when it seemed so near. As I could not make up my mind to adopt their opinion, Almer rose, and laying the ladder at my feet, said, with much energy, 'Adieu, I leave you, for my conscience as an honest man forbids me to lend a hand to a peril which I know to be inevitable.'

"I called him back, and rising in my turn, exclaimed: 'Will the difficulties be as great in the way of an ascent of the Mönch? There it is, only a few paces from us. It is free from mist, why should we not reach its summit?' At these words the astonishment was general, and everybody turned towards the peak I had named. The snow upon it seemed quite solid, and I thought it would be impossible to find there anything more dangerous than we had already experienced. Their hesitation surprised me. 'Are you aware,' said they, 'that yonder mountain has never been ascended?' 'So much the better,' said I, 'we will baptize it!' And, forgetting in a moment my weariness, I started off with a firm step. Pierre Jaun and Pierre Bohren, seeing me so resolved, seized our flag, set out in advance, and never rested till they had planted it on the loftiest summit of the Mönch, before the rest of us could get up. The flag was of three colours, white, yellow, and blue, and bore the beloved name of 'Wallachia,' embroidered in large letters. As if Heaven favoured our wishes, while clouds rolled upon all the surrounding mountains, they left free and clear the peak of the Mönch.

"Though the acclivity was much steeper than that of the Eiger, we did not find the difficulties much greater. The snow was hard, and as we did not sink far into it, our march was less fatiguing. We held to one another so as to form a chain, and advanced zigzag, fired with impatience to reach the summit. All around us I saw deep beds of snow, but nowhere such blocks of ice as M. Deser found upon the crest of the Jungfrau. It is probable that, owing to the season, the Mönch was still buried under the accumulated snows of winter, and this circumstance greatly contributed to our success.

"The image of the Infinite presented itself to my mind in all its formidable grandeur. My heart, oppressed, felt its influence, as my gaze rested upon the Swiss plain half hidden in the mists of the surrounding mountains, which were bathed in golden vapours. I was filled with such a sense of God that my heart – so it seemed to me – was not large enough to contain it. I belonged wholly to Him. From that moment my soul was lost in the thought of His incomprehensible power.

"But the time had come for our departure, and I must take leave of the mountain where I was so far from men! I embraced the flag, and at three o'clock we began our homeward march. With much toil and trouble we descended the declivities of the Mönch. We were obliged to lend each other more assistance than in ascending, and more than once we nearly fell into the abysses. But as soon as we regained the Eiger, we swept forward as rapidly as the avalanche which knows no obstacles, as the torrent which carves out its own channel, as the bird which on mighty pinions cleaves space. Seated on the snow, we allowed ourselves to slide easily down those steeps which we had so painfully climbed, even to the very brink of the precipices, which we had crossed on a ladder instead of bridge. We observed that the gulfs yawned wide which in the morning we had crossed upon the snow that covered them; for the aspect of these mountains changes with a truly extraordinary rapidity. Song and laughter soon broke forth again, provoked by our strange fashion of travelling. Great was our joy when we found ourselves once more in an atmosphere favourable to the life of vegetation, and all of us rushed headlong to the first brook, whose murmur sounded as sweet to us as the voice of a friend.

"But as soon as we reached the rocks free from snow, our troubles recommenced; difficulties reappeared, and were even more serious than those we had met with in our ascent. The peril was

extreme; and but for the courageous Pierre Bohren, who carried me rather than supported me, I could never have descended the bare rocks that skirt the edge of the glacier. When we struck the Mer de Glace, we fell in with so many gaping fissures that we could cross them only by hazardous leaps and bounds. We had not reached the other side before we were met by our porters with the sedan-chair; and we arrived singing and cheering at Grindelwald, where everybody eyed us with as much wonder as if we had risen from the dead. I asked for some citrons, which I devoured while changing my clothes. Though completely knocked up, I set out immediately for Interlachen, to reassure those who were awaiting me there. At the foot of the Grindelwald hill, I stopped at Pierre Bohren's châlet to pay a visit to his wife, who held in her arms an infant only a few days old. I embraced it and promised to be its godmother.

"About midway between Grindelwald and Interlachen, we were overtaken by a storm as violent as that which had heralded our departure.

"The guides, therefore, had made no mistake. We should have experienced this tempest among the loftiest summits of the Alps, if we had continued our excursion.

"When I rose next morning, my face was one great wound, and for a long time I endured the keenest sufferings. Not less fatigued than myself, the guides at length arrived singing, and brought me a superb diploma upon official paper."[3]

The princess afterwards travelled in Greece, where she received an enthusiastic welcome, and ovations were offered to her as to a sovereign. Everybody did homage to the bright and generous author of "La Nationalité Hellénique," – the liberal and zealous advocate of the rights, the manners, the character, and the future of Greece. But of nationalities she was always the defender, and her wide sympathies embraced not only the Greeks, but the Albanians and the Slavs.

After having studied the antiquities of Athens, undertaken sundry scientific and archæological excursions into Attica, and enjoyed a delightful intercourse at Athens with kindred spirits – such as Frederika Bremer – she traversed the nomarchies, or provinces, of the kingdom of Greece, with the view of obtaining an exact and comprehensive account of the moral and material condition of the rural population.

As M. Pommier remarks, this long excursion in a country which offers no facilities to travellers, and where one must always be on horseback, could not be accomplished without displaying a courage unexampled, an heroic perseverance, and a physical and moral strength equal to every trial. She had to undergo the strain of daily fatigue and the heat of a scorching sun; to fear neither barren rocks, nor precipices, nor dangerous pathways, nor brigands. In spite of the counsels of prudence and of a timorous affection, the intrepid traveller would not omit any portion of her itinerary; she traversed successively into Bœotia, Phocis, Ætolia, and the Peloponnesus. When the mountaineers of Laconia saw her passing on horseback through the savage gorges, they cried out in their enthusiasm, "Here is a Spartan woman!" And they invited her to put herself at their head and lead them to Constantinople.

From Greece she went into Italy, in 1861, and took up her residence, where she has ever since remained, at Florence. Garibaldi has saluted as his sister this ardent champion of the rights of nationalities, who, to this day, has continued her philanthropic exertions. In 1867, she published "La Nazionalità Albanese secondo i Canti popolari;" in 1869, "Discours sur Marco Polo;" in 1870, "Venise en 1867;" in 1871-1873, "Gli Albanesi in Rumenia," a history of the princely family of the Ghikas from the 17th century; in 1871, a couple of novels, "Eleanora de Hallingen," and "Ghizlaine;" in 1877, "La Poésie des Ottomans;" and in 1878, "The Condition of Women among the Southern Slavs."

The princess, besides plunging into historical labours, sedulously cultivates the Fine Arts, and is moreover a first-rate pistol-shot. A true Albanian, she loves arms, and handles them skilfully.

[3] See the princess's "La Suisse Allemande et l'Ascension du Mönch." 4 vols., 1856.

It cannot be denied, that she deserves her splendid reputation. Any one of her works, says a French critic, would make a man famous; and they are unquestionably marked by all the characteristics of an independent and observant mind. But it is her life that best justifies her renown – her life with its purity, its enthusiasm, its zeal for the oppressed, its intense love of knowledge, its vivid sympathies and broad charities, and its constant striving after truth and freedom, and the highest beauty.

THE PRINCESS OF BELGIOJOSO

A French writer observes, that in an age like ours, when firm convictions and settled beliefs are rare, it is no small satisfaction to have to record a career like that of the Princess of Belgiojoso – a career specially illustrious, because, above all things, honourable. But truly great minds, to paraphrase some words of Georges Sand, are always good minds.

The princess's chief titles to distinction are as a vigorous writer and a liberal thinker; she did not qualify herself for a place among great female travellers until unhappy events exiled her from her country.

Christina Trivulzia, Princess of Belgiojoso, was born on the 28th of June, 1808. At the early age of sixteen she was married to the Prince Emile de Barbian de Belgiojoso. She died in 1871.

Passionately devoted to the cause of a "free Italy," she was unable to live under the heavy yoke of the Austrian supremacy, and hastened to establish herself at Paris, where her rank, her fortune, her love of letters and the arts, and the boldness of her political opinions, made her the attraction of the highest society. She formed an intimate acquaintance with numerous great writers and celebrated statesmen, particularly of Mignet and Augustin Thierry, whose daily diminishing liberalism she rapidly and boldly outstripped. In 1848 she plunged with all the ardour of an enthusiastic nature – a child of the warm South – into that wild revolutionary movement which swept over almost every country in Europe, rolling from the Alps to the Carpathians, from Paris to Berlin. She hastened to Milan, which had expelled its Austrian garrison, and at her own expense equipped two hundred horse, whom she led against the enemy. But Italy was not then united; she was not strong enough to encounter her oppressor; the bayonets of Radetzky re-imposed the Austrian domination; the princess was compelled to fly, and her estates were confiscated.

During the insurrectionary fever at Rome, in 1849, she fearlessly made her way into the very midst of the fighting-men, and in her own person directed the ambulances. Her love of freedom and her humanity were rewarded by banishment from the territories of the Church. As she could nowhere in Italy hope for a secure resting-place, she resolved to reside for the future in the East, and, repairing to Constantinople, she founded there a benevolent institution for the daughters of emigrants.

But in a short time she withdrew from European Turkey, and at Osmandjik, near Sinope, laid the foundations of a model farm. In 1850 she published in a French journal, the *National*, her memorials of Veile; and as a relief to the stir and unrest of politics, she wrote, in the following year, her "Notions d'Histoire à l'usage des Enfants" (1851). The narrative of her journey in Asia Minor appeared at a later date in the well-known pages of the *Revue des deux Mondes*.

Having recovered possession of her estates, thanks to the amnesty proclaimed by the Emperor Francis Joseph, she sought in literary labour a field for the activity of her restless intellect. Balzac points to that great female artist and republican, the Duchess of San-Severins, in Stendhal's "La Chartreuse de Parme," as a portrait of the princess. Whether this be so or not, she was assuredly one of the most conspicuous and original figures of the time.

Her chief title to literary reputation rests upon her "Études sur l'Asie-Mineure et sur les Turcs." In reference to these luminous and eloquent sketches, a critic says: "I have read many works descriptive of Mussulman manners, but have never met with one which gave so exact and full an idea of Oriental life." But in the princess's writings we must not seek for those richly coloured pictures, those highly decorative paintings in which style plays the principal part – pictures composed for effect, and entirely indifferent to accuracy of detail or truth of composition. She never seeks to dazzle or beguile the reader; her language is direct and vigorous and full of vitality because it always embodies the truth.

No one has shown a juster appreciation of that strange Eastern institution, the harem, though it is no easy thing to form a clear and impartial judgment upon a system so alien to Western ideas and

revolting to Christian morality. A vast amount of unprofitable rhetoric has been expended upon this subject. Let us turn to the princess's discriminative statement of facts.

After explaining the many points of contrast between the people of the East and the people of the West, she continues: —

"Of all the virtues held in repute by Christian society, hospitality is the only one which the Mussulmans think themselves bound to practise. Where duties are few, it is natural they should be greatly respected. The Orientals, therefore, have recognized in its highest form this sole and unique virtue, this solitary constraint which they have agreed to impose upon themselves.

"Unfortunately, every virtue which is content with appearances is subject to sudden changes. This is what has happened – is happening to-day – in respect of Oriental hospitality. A Mussulman will never be consoled for having failed to observe the laws of hospitality. Take possession of his house; turn him out of it; leave him to stand in the rain or sun at his own door; plunder his store-rooms; use up his supplies of coffee and brandy; upset and pile one upon another his carpets, his mattresses, his cushions; break his crystal; ride his horses, and even founder them if it seems good to you – he will not utter a word of reproach, for you are a *monzapi*, a guest, – it is Allah himself who has sent you, and whatever you do, you are and will ever be welcome. All this is admirable; but if a Mussulman finds the means of appearing as hospitable as laws and customs require, without sacrificing an obolus, or even while gaining a large sum of money, fie upon virtue, and long live hypocrisy! And such is the case ninety-nine times out of a hundred. Your host overwhelms you while you sojourn beneath his roof; but if at your departure you do not pay him twenty times the value of what he has given you, he will wait until you have crossed his threshold, and consequently doffed your sacred title of *monzapi*, to throw stones at you.

"It goes without saying that I speak of the rude multitude, and not of the simple honest hearts who love the good because they find it pleasant, and practise it because in practising it they taste a secret enjoyment. My old mufti of a Tcherkess is one of these. His house, like all good houses in Eastern countries, consists of an inner division reserved for women and children, and an outer pavilion, containing a summer-saloon, and a winter-saloon, with one or two rooms for servants. The winter-saloon is a pretty apartment heated by a good stove, covered with thick carpets, and passably furnished with silken and woollen divans arranged all round the apartment.

"As for the furniture of the summer-saloon, it consists of a leaping, shining fountain in the centre, to which are added, when circumstances require it, cushions and mattresses on which to sit or recline. There are neither windows, nor doors, nor any kind of barrier, between the exterior and the interior. My old mufti, who, at the age of ninety, possesses numerous wives, the oldest of whom is only thirty, and children of all ages, from the baby of six months, up to the sexagenarian, professes the repugnance of good taste for the noise, disorder, and uncleanness of the harem. He repairs there every day, as he goes to his stable to see and admire his horses; but he dwells and he sleeps, according to the season, in one or other of the saloons. The good fellow understood that if long habit had not rendered the inconveniences of the harem tolerable to himself, it would be still worse for me, freshly disembarked from that land of enchantments and refinements which men here call 'Franguistan.' So at the outset he informed me that he would not relegate me to that region of obscurity and confusion, smoke and infection, named the harem, but would give up to me his own apartment. I accepted it with gratitude. As for himself, he took up his abode in the summer-saloon. Though it was the end of January, and snow was deep on the ground, both in town and country, he preferred his frozen fountain, his damp pavement and draughts of air, to the hot, but unwholesome, atmosphere of the harem.

"Perhaps I destroy a few illusions, in speaking of the harem with so little respect. We have all read of it in 'The Thousand and One Nights,' and other Oriental stories; we have been told that it is the dwelling-place of Love and Beauty; we are authorized to believe that the written descriptions, though exaggerated and embellished, are nevertheless founded upon reality, and that in this mysterious retreat are to be found all the marvels of luxury, art, magnificence and pleasure. How far from the truth!

Picture to yourself walls black and full of chinks, wooden ceilings, split in many places and dark with dust and spiders' webs, sofas torn and greasy, door-hangings in tatters, traces of oil and candle-grease everywhere. When for the first time I set foot in one of these supposed charming nooks, I was shocked; but the mistresses of the house detected nothing. Their persons are in harmony with the surroundings. Mirrors being very rare, the women bedizen themselves with tinsel, the bizarre effect of which they have no means of appreciating.

"They stick a number of diamond pins and other precious stones in the handkerchiefs of printed cotton which they twist around their head. To their hair they pay no attention, and none but the great ladies who have resided in the capital have any combs. As for the many-coloured ointment which they use so immoderately, they can regulate its application only by consulting one another, and as the women occupying the same house are all rivals, they willingly encourage one another in the most grotesque daubs of colouring. They put vermilion on the lips, rouge on the cheeks, nose, forehead and chin, white anywhere to fill up, blue round the eyes and under the nose. But strangest of all is the manner in which they tint the eyebrows. They have undoubtedly been told that, to be beautiful, the eyebrow should form a well-defined arch, and hence they have concluded that the greater the arch the greater will be the beauty, without asking if the place of that arch were not irrevocably fixed by nature. Such being the case, they give up to their eyebrows the whole space between the temples, and paint the forehead with two wide arches, which, starting from the origin of the nose, extend, one on each side, as far as the temple. Some eccentric beauties prefer the straight line to the curve, and describe a great streak of black all across the forehead; but they are few in number.

"Most deplorable is the influence of this painting when combined with the sloth and uncleanness natural to the women of the East. Each feminine countenance is a work of high art that cannot be reconstructed every morning. It is the same with the hands and feet, which, variegated with orange, fear the action of water as injurious to their beauty. The multitude of children and servants, especially of negresses, who people the harems, and the footing of equality on which mistresses and attendants live, are also aggravating causes of the general uncleanliness. I shall not speak of the children – everybody knows their manners and customs – but consider for a moment what would become of our pretty European furniture if our cooks and maids-of-all-work rested from their labours on our settees and fauteuils, with their feet on our carpets, and their back against our hangings. Remember, too, that glass windows in Asia are still but curiosities; that most of the windows are filled up with oiled paper, and that where corn-paper is scarce the windows are blocked up, and light enters only by the chimney – light more than sufficient for the inmates to drink and smoke by and to apply the whip to refractory children – the only occupations during the day of the mortal houris of faithful Mussulmans. Let not the reader suppose, however, that an Egyptian darkness prevails in these windowless apartments. The houses being all of one story, the chimneys being very wide and not rising above the level of the roof, it often happens that by stooping a little in front of the chimney-place you see the sky through the opening. What these apartments are really deficient in is air; but the ladies are far from making any complaint. Naturally chilly, and having no means of warming themselves by exercise, they remain for hours at a time huddled on the ground before the fire, and cannot understand that a visitor is almost choked by the atmosphere. If anything recalls to my mind these artificial caverns, crowded with tattered women and noisy children, I feel ready to faint."

The princess does not, on the whole, speak unfavourably of the Turkish character. Perhaps the reader would judge it more severely; but still the consensus of the best authorities supports the view taken by the princess, and it is the governing-class, rather than the masses, that seems to justify the general dislike. Of Turkish officials it would be difficult, perhaps, to say anything too severe; the ordinary Turk, however, has many good qualities, which need only the stimulus of good government for their happy development. As to the governing-class, their vices are the natural result of the corruption of the harems, and until these are reformed, it is useless to expect any elevation of the low moral standard which now unfortunately prevails among the pashas.

The Turkish people, if less enlightened than other European nations, are not without qualities that demand recognition. They are temperate, hospitable, and orderly. They are faithful husbands and good wives.

The Turkish peasant is at once father, husband, and lover to his wife, whom he never contradicts willingly and knowingly, and there is little to which he will not submit in the depth of his affection for her.

In these climates, and under the influence of coarse and unwholesome food, the woman ages early; whereas the man, better constituted to endure fatigue and privation, preserves his vigour almost to the last unimpaired. Nothing is more common here than to see an old man of eighty and odd surrounded by little children who are his flesh and bone. In spite of this disproportion between man and woman, the union, contracted almost in childhood, is only dissolved by death. The Princess de Belgiojoso tells us that she has seen hideous, decrepit, and infirm women tenderly cared for and adored by handsome old men, straight as the mountain pine, with beard silvered but long and thick, and eyes bright, clear, and serene.

One day, our traveller met an old woman, blind and paralytic, whom her husband brought to her in the hope that the princess would restore her sight and power of movement.

The woman was seated astride an ass, which her husband led by the bridle. On arriving, he took her in his arms, deposited her on a bench near the door, and installed her on a heap of cushions with all the solicitude of a mother for her child.

"You ought to be very fond of your husband," said the princess to the blind woman.

"I should like to be able to see clearly," answered she. The princess looked at the husband, he smiled sadly, but without any shadow of ill-will.

"Poor woman," he remarked, passing the back of his hand over his eyes, "her blindness renders her very unhappy. She cannot accustom herself to it But you will give her back her sight, will you not, Bessadée?"

As the Princess Christina shook her head, and began to protest her powerlessness, he plucked the skirt of her robe and made her a sign to be silent.

"Have you any children?"

"Alas! I had one, but he died a long time ago."

"And how is it you have not taken another wife, as your law allows – a strong and healthy woman who might have brought you children?"

"Ah, that is easily said; but this poor creature would have been sadly vexed, and then I could not have been happy with another, not even if she had brought me children. You see, Bessadée, we cannot have everything in this world. I have a wife whom I have loved for nearly forty years, and I shall make no second choice."

The man who spoke thus was a Turk. His wife was as much his property as a piece of furniture; none of his neighbours would have blamed, no law would have punished him, if he had got rid by any violent means of his useless burden. Happily, the character of the Turkish people neutralizes much of what is pernicious and odious in their customs and creed. They possess at bottom a wonderful quality of goodness, of gentleness, of simplicity, a remarkable instinct of reverence for that which is good and beautiful, of respect for that which is weak. This instinct has resisted, and will, let us hope, continue to resist, the influence of injurious institutions founded exclusively upon individual selfishness and the right of the strong hand. If you would understand the mildness and the serenity which are natural to the Turk, you must observe the peasant among his fields, or at the market, or on the threshold of a café. Seedtime and harvest, the price of grain, the condition of his family – these are the invariable topics of his simple childlike conversation. He never raises his voice in anger, never lets drop a pleasantry which might wound or even fatigue his companions, never indulges in those profanities and indecencies unhappily too common in the speech of the lower orders in European countries. This admirable reticence, this nobility and simplicity of manner, do they owe

it to education? Not at all; it is the gift of nature. In some respects nature has been very liberal to the Turkish people; but all the gifts she has bestowed upon them, their institutions tend to debase and invalidate. And in proportion as we carry our observations above the classes which so happily preserve their primitive characteristics, to the *bourgeoisie*, or into regions higher still, so shall we find the growth and development of vice; it extends, predominates, and finally reigns alone.

The peculiar interest and permanent value of the writings of the Princess de Belgiojoso are due to the fact that they owe nothing to received ideas. Moreover, she indulges in no conjectures regarding the subjects she takes up, she has investigated them carefully, and understands them thoroughly. In each page of her work upon Turkey we meet with calm statements of established facts which overthrow the speculations and fancies too often found in works of great popularity from the pen of distinguished writers. It is the truth she speaks; and her influence is all the greater because she makes no effort to convince or impose upon her readers; she writes gravely and deliberately, without passion and without imagination.

A few facts from the princess's pages will not be without interest for the reader, at a time when "the unspeakable Turk" is the object of so much public discussion.

"Passing through one of the streets of Pera (the European suburb), I was arrested by a score of persons grouped round a *gavas* (a kind of civic guard) who was endeavouring to persuade a negress to be conducted to the palace where she was expected, and where, he told her, she would meet with all the pleasures imaginable. The negress answered only with sobs, and the cry, 'Kill me rather!' The *gavas* resumed his enthusiastic and fanciful descriptions of the good bed, the good cheer, the fine clothes, the pipe always alight, the floods of coffee, all the delights which would convert this prison into a complete paradise. For half-an-hour I listened to the discussion, and when I went on my way no decision had been arrived at. I asked a kind of *valet de place* who accompanied me, why the *gavas* lost his time in attempting to convince the negress, instead of forcibly conveying her to her destination. 'A woman!' was his answer, completely scandalized by my question, and I began to suspect that the Turks were not such brutes as they are popularly supposed to be in Europe."

"The following anecdote also relates to my residence at Constantinople. A woman, a Marseillaise by birth but married to a Mussulman, was engaged in a law-suit on some matter which I have forgotten; but I know that her adversaries grounded their hopes and pretensions on a document which they had placed in the judge's hands. Informed of this circumstance, the Marseillaise repaired to the Cadi, and begged him to acquaint her with its contents. Nothing could be more reasonable. The Cadi took the paper, and prepared to read it to her; but he had scarcely perched his glasses on his nose when the lady leaped forward, sprang at his throat, seized the paper, put it in her pocket, made her obeisance, and calmly passed out through the vestibule, which was filled with slaves and servants. The Marseillaise defied her opponents to produce any written document in their favour, and she won her cause. When this story was told to me, I remarked that the judge must have been bribed by the Marseillaise, since nothing could have been easier for him than, if he wished it, to have her arrested by his guards, and deprived of the paper which she had carried off with so much audacity. Again I received the answer: 'But she was a woman!'"

Among female travellers the Princess of Belgiojoso must hold an honourable place, in virtue of the accuracy of her observation and the clearness of her judgment. Moreover, she is always impartial: she has no preconceived theories to support, and consequently she is at liberty neither to extenuate nor set down aught in malice. In picturesqueness of description she has been excelled by many, in soberness and correctness of statement by none; and, after all, it is more important that our travellers should tell us what they have really seen, than what they would have wished to see; should trust to their intelligence as observers rather than to their fancy as poets.

Note on the Harem, or Harum.– It is curious to compare with the princess's disillusionizing account of a harem, such a poetical and romantic description as the following, in which it becomes a bower of beauty, tenanted by an Oriental Venus: —

"The lady of the harum – couched gracefully on a rich Persian carpet strewn with soft billowy cushions – is as rich a picture as admiration ever gazed on. Her eyes, if not as dangerous to the heart as those of our country, where the sunshine of intellect gleams through a heaven of blue, are, nevertheless, perfect in their kind, and at least as dangerous to the senses. Languid, yet full, brimful of life; dark, yet very lustrous; liquid, yet clear as stars; they are compared by their poets to the shape of the almond and the bright timidness of the gazelle. The face is delicately oval, and its shape is set off by the gold-fringed turban, the most becoming head-dress in the world; the long, black, silken tresses are braided from the forehead, and hang wavily on each side of the face, falling behind in a glossy cataract, that sparkles with such golden drops as might have glittered upon Danaë, after the Olympian shower. A light tunic of pink or pale blue crape is covered with a long silk robe, open at the bosom, and buttoned thence downward to the delicately slippered little feet, that peep daintily from beneath the full silken trousers. Round the loins, rather than the waist, a cashmere shawl is loosely wrapt as a girdle, and an embroidered jacket, or a large silk robe with loose open sleeves, completes the costume. Nor is the fragrant water-pipe, with its long variegated serpent, and its jewelled mouth-piece, any detraction from the portrait.

"Picture to yourself one of Eve's brightest daughters, in Eve's own loving land. The woman-dealer has found among the mountains that perfection in a living form which Praxiteles scarcely realized, when inspired fancy wrought out its ideal in marble. Silken scarfs, as richly coloured and as airy as the rainbow, wreathe her round, from the snowy breast to the finely rounded limbs half buried in billowy cushions; the attitude is the very poetry of repose, languid it may be, but glowing life thrills beneath that flower-soft exterior, from the varying cheek and flashing eye, to the henna-dyed taper fingers, that capriciously play with her rosary of beads. The blaze of sunshine is round her kiosk, but *she* sits in the softened shadow so dear to the painter's eye. And so she dreams away the warm hours in such a calm of thought within, and sight or sound without, that she starts when the gold-fish gleam in the fountain, or the breeze-ruffled roses shed a leaf upon her bosom." – Eliot Warburton, "The Crescent and the Cross," etc. etc.

As European gentlemen are never admitted to the harem, it is hardly credible that Major Warburton could have had an opportunity of seeing the beauty which he paints in such glowing colours.

MADAME HOMMAIRE DE HELL

I

Not only as a persevering and enlightened traveller, but as a poet, Madame Hommaire de Hell has gained distinction. It is in the former capacity that she claims a place in these pages.

She was born at Artois, in 1819. While she was still an infant, her mother died; but it was her good fortune to find in the love of an only sister no inadequate substitute for maternal affection. Her father seems to have been one of those individuals whom Fortune tosses to and fro with pertinacious ill-humour; moreover, he had something of the nomad in his temperament, and without any real or sufficient motive, moved from place to place, entailing upon his young family sudden and burdensome journeys. Before Adela was seven years old, she had been carried from Franche-Comté into the Bourbonnais, thence into Auvergne, and thence to Paris. She was afterwards placed in a boarding-school at Saint-Maudé, but her father's death restored her to her sister's guardianship at Saint-Etienne.

A short time after her arrival in this town, she attracted the attention of Xavier Hommaire de Hell, since so justly celebrated as a traveller and a scientist. He fell passionately in love with her, and though she was but fifteen years of age, and had no fortune, he rested not until his family gave their consent to his marriage.

To provide for his child-wife he obtained an office in the railway administration, but only temporarily, for already he had made up his mind to seek fortune and reputation in some foreign country. He pushed his solicitations with so much energy that, in the first year of his wedded life, he secured an appointment under the Turkish Government. His wife, to whom a child had just been given, was unable to accompany him. The pain of separation was very great, but both knew that in France there was no present opening for his talents, and both were agreed that their separation should not be for long. And, indeed, before the end of the year, Madame de Hell clasped her babe to her bosom, and set out to join her husband.

Her poetical faculties were first stimulated by her voyage to the East. Previously she had cherished a deep love for nature, for the music of verse, for nobility of thought, but had made no attempt to define and record her impressions. The isles and shores of the Mediterranean, with their myriad charms and grand historic associations: —

"That great mid-sea that moans with memories,"[4]

loosened her genius, so to speak, and stimulated her to clothe her feelings and sentiments in a metrical form. It is not difficult to understand the effect which, on a warm imagination and sensitive temperament, that richly-coloured panorama of "the isles of Greece," and that exquisite prospect of Constantinople and the Golden Horn, would necessarily produce. For some time, as she herself tells us, she lived in a kind of moral and intellectual intoxication; she was absorbed in an ideal world, which bewildered while it delighted her.

The plague was then dealing heavily with the unfortunate Mussulman populations, but it did not terrify our enthusiastic travellers; as if they bore a charmed life, they went to and fro, seeing whatever was fine or memorable, and yet all unable to satisfy that thirst for beauty which the beautiful around them had excited. Madame de Hell was under the influence of a subtle spell; her quick fancy was profoundly impressed by the picturesque aspects of Oriental life, by its glow of colour and grace of

[4] George Eliot.

form, so different from the commonplace and monotonous realities of the West. She seemed to be living in the old days of the Khalifs – those days which the authors of the "Thousand and One Stories" have immortalized – to be living, for example, in the "golden prime of good Haroun Al-Raschid" – as she saw before her the motley procession of veiled women, Persians with their pointed bonnets, Hindu jugglers with lithe lissom figures, negro slaves, grey-bearded beggars looking like princes in disguise, and Armenians wrapped in their long furred cloaks. She delighted, accompanied by her husband, to explore the silent recesses of the hilly and almost solitary streets in the less frequented quarters of Stamboul, where a latticed window or a half-open door would suggest a romance of love and mystery, or a vision of some gorgeous palace interior, of

"Carven cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad basëd flights of marble stairs,
Run up with golden balustrade."

When Madame de Hell visited the East, it was considered dangerous for Franks to venture into the streets of Constantinople, and they occupied only the suburbs of Pera and Galata, which were exclusively made over to the Christian population, and separated from the Mussulman city by the arm of the sea known as the Golden Horn. And as in those days, which were long before the introduction of Mr. Cook's "personally conducted tours," tourists were few, the presence of a "giaour" in the Mohammedan quarter was an extraordinary event. Those who should have fallen in with our two young adventurers, their eager gaze roving everywhere in quest of new discoveries, strolling hither and thither like two children out for a holiday, would never for one moment have supposed that a terrible pestilence was raging through the city, and nowhere more fatally than in the very districts they had chosen for their explorations. But perhaps the danger from disease was not so imminent as the peril they incurred in penetrating into the chosen territory of Islam. Fortune favoured them, however, or their frank bearing disarmed fanaticism, and they escaped without molestation or even insult.

As Monsieur and Madame de Hell resided for a year in Constantinople, it is needless to say they remained long enough for the glamour to disappear, in which at first their lively imaginations had invested everything around them. The gorgeous visions vanished, and their eyes were opened to the hard realities of Mohammedan ignorance, bigotry and misgovernment. They learned, perhaps, that the order and freedom of Western civilization are infinitely more valuable than the picturesqueness of Oriental society. In 1838 they set out for Odessa, where Monsieur de Hell hoped to obtain a position worthy of his talents. The future of the young couple rested wholly on a letter of recommendation to General Potier, by whom they were warmly welcomed. The general, who owned a large estate in the neighbourhood, where he cultivated a famous breed of Merino sheep, had formed a project for erecting mills upon the Dnieper. To carry it out he needed an engineer, and in M. Hommaire de Hell he found one. Straightway they proceeded to his estate at Kherson, and M. de Hell set to work on the necessary plans. While thus engaged, he conceived the idea of a scientific expedition to the Caspian Sea – a basin of which little was then known to our geographers – and this idea held him so firmly that, a few months later, he gave up his employment in order to realize it. In one of his excursions to the cataracts of the Dnieper, where the mills were to be erected, his geological knowledge led him to the discovery of the rich veins of an iron mine, which has since been profitably worked.

"This period of my life," wrote Madame de Hell, afterwards, "spent in the midst of the steppes, remote from any town, appears to me now in so calm, tender, and serene a light, that the slightest memorial of it moves me profoundly. Only to see the shore where we passed whole days in seeking for shells, only to hear the sound of the great waves rolling on the sandbanks and among the seaweed, only to recall a single one of the impressions of that happy epoch, I would willingly repeat the voyage."

For his great scientific expedition, M. de Hell made vigorous preparations during the winter of 1838, and having obtained from Count Vorontzov, the governor of New Russia, strong letters of recommendation to the governors and officials of the provinces he would have to traverse, he and his wife started in the middle of May, 1839, accompanied by a Cossack, and an excellent dragoman, who spoke all the dialects current in Southern Russia.

Their journey through the country of the Don Cossacks we shall pass over, as offering nothing of special novelty or interest, and take up Madame de Hell's narrative at the point of her arrival on the banks of the Volga.

"A dull white line," she says, "scarcely perceptible through the gloom, announced the presence of the great river. We followed its course all night, catching a glimpse of it from time to time by the faint glimmer of the stars, and by the lights of the fishermen's lanterns flashing here and there along its banks. There was an originality in the scene that strongly affected the imagination. Those numerous lights, flitting from point to point, were like the will-o'-the-wisps that beguile the belated traveller; and then the Kalmuk encampments with their black masses that seemed to glide over the surface of the steppe, the darkness of the night, the speed with which our troika (set of three) carried us over the boundless plain, the shrill tinkle of the horse-bells, and, above all, the knowledge that we were in the land of the Kalmuks, wrought us up to a state of nervous excitement that made us see everything in the hues of fancy.

"At daybreak our eyes were turned eagerly towards the Volga, that flashed in the glories of the morning sky. From the elevation we had reached we could survey the whole country; and it may easily be conceived with what admiration we gazed upon the calm majestic river, and on its multitude of islands, fringed with aspen and alder. On the other side, the steppes, where the Kirghiz and Kalmuks encamp, extended as far as the eye could reach, till limited by a horizon as smooth and uniform as that of the ocean. It would be difficult to imagine a grander picture, or one more entirely in harmony with the ideas evoked by the Volga, to which its course of upwards of six hundred leagues assigns the foremost place among European rivers."

At the outset of her journey, Madame de Hell had exclaimed: "What happiness it is to escape from the prosaic details of every-day life, from social obligations, from the dull routine of habit, to take one's flight towards the almost unknown shores of the Caspian! It is strange, but it proves that my vocation is that of tourist, that what would daunt the majority of women is really what charms me most in the forecast of this journey."

Assuredly, the details of every-day life were left behind when the courageous lady embarked upon the Volga, and set out for the famous city of Astrakhan. All around her was new and strange, and each day, each hour, brought before her eager mind some fresh subject of speculation. She paid a visit to a Kalmuk prince, Prince Tumene, and found herself in the midst of a new world. The prince's palace was built, she says, in the Chinese style, and pleasantly situated on the green side of a gentle slope, about one hundred feet from the Volga. Its numerous galleries afforded views over every part of the island on which the palace was situated, and commanded a long reach of the shining river. From one angle the eye looked down on a mass of foliage embosoming the glittering cupola and the golden ball above. Beautiful meadows, studded with clumps of trees, and highly cultivated fields, spread out their verdure to the left of the palace, and formed a succession of landscapes, like pictures in a panorama. The whole was enlivened by the figures of Kalmuk horsemen galloping to and fro, of camels wandering here and there through the rich pastures, and officers conveying the orders of their chief from tent to tent. The spectacle was imposing; various in its details, but harmonious as a whole.

Madame de Hell was invited to visit the prince's sister-in-law, who, during the summer season, resided in her kibitka in preference to the palace. The curtain at the threshold of the pavilion having been raised, she was ushered into a spacious room, lighted from above, and draped with red damask, the reflection from which shed a glowing tint on every object; the floor was covered with a rich Turkey carpet, and the air was heavy with perfumes. In this rosy light and balmy atmosphere was seated the

princess, on a low platform at the further end of the tent, dressed in shining robes and motionless as an idol. Around her, crouching on their heels, were arranged some twenty women in full dress. Having allowed Madame de Hell a few minutes to admire her, the princess slowly descended the steps of the platform, approached with a dignified bearing, took her by the hand, embraced her affectionately, and led her to the seat she had just vacated. Through the medium of an Armenian interpreter a brief conversation followed, after which she made signs that dancing should begin. One of the ladies of honour then rose and performed a few steps, turning slowly upon herself; while another, who remained seated, drew forth from a balalaika (an Oriental guitar) certain doleful sounds, ill-adapted to the movements of a dancer. Nor were the attitudes and movements of her companion so much those of the dance as of the pantomime. There was evidently a meaning in them, though Madame de Hell could not unravel it. The young *figurante* frequently extended her arms and threw herself on her knees, as if in invocation of some unseen power.

The performance lasted for some considerable time, and Madame de Hell had ample opportunity of scrutinizing the princess, and of coming to the conclusion that her high reputation for beauty was not undeserved. Her figure was imposing and well-proportioned. The lips, beautifully arched and closing over pearly teeth; the countenance, expressive of great sweetness; the skin, of a brownish tint, but exquisitely delicate, would entitle her to be considered a very handsome woman, even in France, if the outline of her face and the arrangement of her features – the oblique eyes, the prominent cheek-bones – had been less pronouncedly Kalmuk.

A word as to her costume. Over a costly robe of Persian stuff, laced all over with silver, she wore a light silk tunic, open in front, and descending only to the knee. The high corsage was quite flat, and glittered with silver embroidery and fine pearls that covered every seam. Round her neck she wore a white cambric habit-shirt, in shape not unlike a man's collar (forty years ago), and fastened in front by a diamond button. Her luxuriant deep black hair fell over her bosom in two magnificent and remarkably long tresses. A yellow cap, edged with rich fur, and fashioned like the square cap of a French judge, was set jauntily on the crown of her head. But in her costume the two articles that most surprised Madame de Hell were an embroidered cambric handkerchief and a pair of black mittens, significant proofs that the products of the French loom found their way even to the toilet of a Kalmuk lady. Among the princess's ornaments must not be forgotten a large gold chain, which, after being twisted round her glossy tresses, was passed through her gold earrings and then allowed to fall upon her bosom.

Madame de Hell was afterwards entertained with a specimen of Kalmuk horsemanship. The moment she came out into the open, five or six mounted men, armed with long lassoes, rushed into the middle of the *taboon*, or herd of horses, collected for the purpose, keeping their eyes constantly on the princess's son, Madame de Hell's companion, who was to point out the animal they should seize.

At the signal, they immediately galloped forward and noosed a young horse with long dishevelled mane, whose dilated eyes and smoking nostrils revealed his inexpressible terror. A lightly clad Kalmuk, who followed them a-foot, sprang instantly upon the stallion, cut the thongs that were throttling him, and engaged with him in a contest of incredible agility and daring. It would scarcely be possible for any spectacle more vividly to affect the mind than that now presented to Madame de Hell's astonished gaze. Sometimes rider and horse rolled together on the grass, sometimes they shot through the air with arrowy speed, and then suddenly halted as if a wall had sprung up before them. All at once the impetuous animal would crawl on its belly, or rear in a manner that made the spectators shriek with terror, then, plunging forward in a mad gallop, he would dash through the startled herd, seeking by every possible means to rid himself of his unaccustomed burden.

But this exercise, violent and perilous as it looked to Europeans, seemed but sport to the Kalmuk, whose body followed every movement of the animal with so much suppleness, that one might have supposed both steed and rider to be animated by the same thought. The sweat poured in profuse streams from the stallion's flanks, and he trembled in every limb. As for the rider, his

coolness would have put to shame the most accomplished horseman in Europe. In the most critical moments he contrived so far to retain his self-command as to wave his arms in token of triumph; and, in spite of the passion and temper of his untrained steed, held sufficient control over it to keep it always within the circle of the spectators' vision. At a signal from the prince, two horsemen, who had remained as close as possible to the daring centaur, seized him with astonishing swiftness, and galloped away with him before those who looked on could understand the new manœuvre. The horse, for a moment stupefied, soon darted away at full speed and was lost in the midst of the herd. This exploit was several times repeated, and always without the rider suffering himself to be thrown.

Madame de Hell's account of the Kalmuks is, on the whole, very favourable, while it shows how closely she studied their manners and customs, and the habits of their daily life. As to physical details, she says that the Kalmuks have eyes set obliquely, with eyelids little opened, scanty black eyebrows, noses deeply depressed near the forehead, prominent cheek bones, spare beards, thin moustaches, and a brownish-yellow skin. The lips of the men are thick and fleshy, but the women, particularly those of the higher classes – the "white bones," as they are called – have heart-shaped mouths of more than ordinary beauty. All have great ears, projecting strongly from the head, and their hair is invariably black.

The Kalmuks are generally small, but with well-rounded figures and an easy carriage. Very few deformed persons are seen among them; for, with the wisdom of nature, they leave the development of their children's frames unchecked, nor, indeed, do they put any garments upon them until they reach the age of nine or ten. No sooner can they walk than they mount on horseback, and address themselves vigorously to wrestling and riding, the chief amusements of the tribes.

Like all who dwell upon vast plains, they enjoy an exceedingly keen sight. An hour after sunset they can distinguish a camel at a distance of upwards of three miles. Madame de Hell tells us that often when she could see nothing but a point on the horizon, they would clearly make out a horseman armed with lance and gun. They have also an extraordinary faculty for tracing their way through the pathless wildernesses. Without any apparent landmarks they would traverse hundreds of miles with their flocks, and never deviate from the right course.

The costume of the common Kalmuks exhibits no decided peculiarity, apart from the cap, which is invariably of yellow cloth trimmed with black lambskin, and is worn by both sexes. Madame de Hell seems inclined to think that some superstitious notions are connected with it, from the difficulty she experienced in procuring a specimen. The trousers are wide and open below. The well-to-do Kalmuks wear two long tunics, one of which is fastened round the waist, but the usual dress consists only of trousers and a jacket of skin with tight sleeves. The men shave a part of their heads, and the rest of the hair is collected into a single cluster, which hangs down on the shoulders. The women wear two tresses, which is really the sole visible distinction of their sex. The princes have adopted the Circassian costume, or the uniform of the Astrakhan Cossacks, to which body some of them belong. The ordinary *chaussure* is red boots with very high heels and generally much too short. The Kalmuks have almost as great a partiality for small feet as the Chinese, and, as they are constantly on horseback, their short boots cause them no great inconvenience. But for these reasons they are very bad pedestrians, their "cribbed, cabined, and confined" foot-gear obliges them to walk on their toes; and their distress is great when they have no horse to mount.

Like all pastoral people, the Kalmuks live frugally, because their wants are few, and their nomadic life is unfavourable to the growth of a liking for luxuries. They live chiefly upon milk and butter, with tea for their favourite beverage. Their bill of fare also includes meat, and particularly horse-flesh, which they prefer to any other, but they do not eat it raw, as some writers have pretended. As for cereals, which Europeans value so highly, their use is scarcely known; it is at rare intervals only that some of them buy bread or oatcake from the neighbouring Russians. Their mode of preparing tea would not commend itself to the denizens of Mayfair. It comes to them from China in the shape of very hard bricks, composed of the leaves and coarsest portions of the plant. After boiling it for a

considerable time in water, they add milk, butter, and salt. The infusion then acquires consistency, and a dull red colour. "We tasted the beverage," says Madame de Hell, "at Prince Tumene's, but must confess it was perfectly detestable… They say, however, that one easily gets accustomed to it, and eventually learns to think it delicious. It has, however, one good quality. By strongly stimulating perspiration it serves as an excellent preservative against the effect of sudden chills. The Kalmuks drink it out of round shallow little wooden vessels, to which they often attach a very high value. I have seen several," adds our traveller, "which were priced at two or three horses. They are generally made of roots brought from Asia. It is scarcely necessary to say that the Kalmuks know nothing of tea-kettles, and make their beverage in large iron pots. Next to tea, they love spirituous liquors. From mare's milk or ass's milk they manufacture a kind of brandy; but as it is a very feeble stimulant, they eagerly seek after Russian liquors; and therefore, to prevent the fatal consequences of their mania, the government has forbidden the establishment of any dram-shops among their hordes. The women crave the deadly liquor no less ardently than the men, but are so closely watched by their lords and masters that they have few opportunities of indulging the taste."

Among the Kalmuks, as among most Oriental peoples, the stronger sex looks with contempt upon all household matters, abandoning them entirely to the women; who work and take charge of the children, keep the tents in order, make up the garments and furs of the family, and attend to the cattle. The men hardly condescend to groom their horses; they hunt, drink tea or brandy, doze about upon felts, and smoke or sleep. Add to their daily occupations, if such they can be called, their joining in occasional games, such as chess and knuckle-bones, and you have a complete picture of the existence – we will not say life – of a Kalmuk *paterfamilias*. At their laborious days, however, the women never repine; they are accustomed to the burden, and bear it cheerfully; but they age very early, and after a few years of wedlock, not only lose their good looks, but acquire a coarseness of feature and a robustness of figure which make it exceedingly difficult to distinguish them from men. Nor is the difficulty lessened by the fact that the costume of both sexes is closely alike.

At Astrakhan the most dangerous as well as the most arduous part of the expedition of our two travellers began. They were compelled to carry provisions with them, if they did not wish to perish of hunger on the steppes. An escort was therefore necessary, and the Russian governor selected for the post one of his best officers; a young man famed for his skill as a hunter, and as the happy owner of a falcon from which he would never separate. Satisfied with providing so competent a purveyor, the governor, in presenting him to the travellers, said; "Now my conscience is at rest! I give you a brave soldier to protect you, and a travelling companion who will take care that you are not starved to death in the desert."

From Astrakhan they pushed forward to Vladimirofka, a town on the Kuma, which they entered with a good deal of pomp and circumstance. A britchka, drawn by three camels, and carrying Monsieur and Madame de Hell, led the van; then came a troop of four or five Cossacks, armed to the teeth, and several Kalmuks guiding a train of camels loaded with baggage. The Cossack officer, with falcon on wrist, and his long rifle slung behind him, rode by the side of the carriage, ready, with Muscovite precision, to transmit orders to the escort, and gallop off at the slightest signal; whilst the dragoman lolled on the box-seat with a fine air of contemptuous indifference to everything around him. After a few days' rest and refreshment, they resumed their journey, advancing rapidly towards the Caucasus, of which the highest summit, Mount Elburz, from time to time afforded them a glimpse of its lofty head, which was almost always shrouded in mist, as if to conceal it from the profane gaze. Tradition avows that Noah's dove alighted on its peak, and plucked thence the mystic branch which has ever since been hallowed as symbolic of peace and hope.

"We were now," writes Madame de Hell, "in an enchanted region, though but just beyond the verge of the steppes. The faint lines that chequered the sky gradually assumed a greater distinctness of form and colour; at first the mountains seemed so many light, transparent vapours, floating upon the wind; but by degrees the airy vision developed into forest-crowned mountains, deep shadowy gorges,

and domes clothed with mists. Our minds were almost overwhelmed with a multitude of emotions, excited by the prodigal nature before us, the magnificent vegetation, and the various hues of forest and mountain, peak, crag, ravine, and snowy summits. It was beautiful, superbly beautiful, and then it was the Caucasus! The Caucasus – a name associated with so many grand historic memories, with the earliest traditions and most fabulous creeds – the abode, in the world's grey morning, of the races whence have sprung so many famous nations. Around it hangs all the vague poetry of the ages, visible only to the imagination through the mysterious veil of antiquity."

At Georgief they rested on the threshold of the Caucasus. Thence they proceeded to Piatigorsk, celebrated for its mineral waters. On the road they fell in with a troop of Circassians. "I shall never forget," says Madame de Hell, "the glances which they flung on our Cossacks as they passed by, though it was only in looks they durst manifest the hatred that seethed in their hearts against everything Russian. They were all fully armed. Beneath their black bourkas glittered the sheen of their pistols and their damasked poniards. I confess their appearance pleased me most when they were just vanishing from sight on the summit of a hill, where their martial figures were outlined against the sky. Seeing them through the mist, I began to think of Ossian's heroes."

Piatigorsk is not so much a town as a pleasant cluster of country-houses, inhabited for some months of the year by a rich aristocracy. All about it is gay and pretty, and everywhere are those signs of affluence which the Russian nobles love to see around them. Nothing offends the eye; nothing touches the heart; there are no poor, no squalid huts, no indication of the wretchedness of poverty. It is a terrestrial Elysium, where great ladies and princes, courtiers and generals, look out upon none but agreeable images, selected from all that is charming in art and nature. Thermal springs are found on most of the surrounding heights, and the works that afford access to them do credit to the skill of the Russian engineers and the liberality of the Russian government. On one of the loftiest peaks rises an octagonal building, consisting of a cupola resting upon slender shapely columns, which are encircled at their base by a graceful balustrade. The interior, open on all sides, contains an Æolian harp, the melancholy notes of which, blending with all the mountain echoes, descend softly to the valley.

The route of our travellers, after quitting Piatigorsk, lay along the broad deep valley of the Pod Kouwa, which, on the right, is bounded by rocks piled one upon another, like billows suddenly petrified, and bearing witness to some great upheaval in the past; on the left, tier after tier of richly wooded mountains rise gradually to the majestic chain of the Kazbek. Eventually the road leaves the valley, at a point where it has become very narrow, and traverses a long sinuous ledge, parallel with the course of the torrent, until it begins to enter the mountains. Here the miry soil through which their horses had laboured with much difficulty, and the grey sky, and the moist atmosphere that had hitherto accompanied them, were at once exchanged for a dry air, cold, dust, and sunshine. This sudden contrast is a phenomenon peculiar to elevated regions.

Madame de Hell was strongly impressed by the wild picturesque character of the scenery of this part of the Caucasus. At certain intervals, conical mounds of earth, about sixty feet high, stood conspicuous – watch towers, where sentinels are stationed day and night. Their outlines, sharply marked against the sky, produce a curious and striking effect amidst the profound solitude. The sight of these Cossacks, with muskets shouldered, pacing up and down the small platform on the summit of each eminence, conveyed to the spectator's mind a knowledge of the rapid advance which Russian civilization had made into this remote region.

It was mid-October, but vegetation still retained its freshness. The steep mountain sides were covered with rich greenswards, which afforded abundant pasture for the scattered flocks of goats. Their keepers, clothed in sheepskins, and carrying, instead of the traditional crook, long guns slung across their shoulders, with two or three powder and ball cases at their waists, seemed in strange contrast to the pastoral sentiment of the landscape. Gigantic eagles, roused from their eyries, swept with heavy wing from crag to crag, the monarchs of these solitudes. Here our travellers really looked out upon those features of the Caspian wilderness on which their imaginations had so often dwelt.

Of the Circassian inhabitants of this mountain region, before they were completely subjugated by the despotism of the white Czar, Madame de Hell furnishes a graphic account. Bred amid the sights and sounds of war they went always well armed, carrying a rifle, a sabre, a long dagger, which they wore in front, and a pistol in the belt. Their picturesque costume consisted of tight pantaloons, and a short tunic, which was belted round the waist, and had cartridge pockets worked on the breast; a round laced cap, encircled with a black or white border of long-wooled sheepskin, formed their head-gear. In cold or rainy weather, they wore a *bashlik*, or hood, and a *bourka*, or cloak, of impervious felt. They were bold and skilful riders, and their horses, though small, were remarkable for spirit and endurance. It is well known that a Circassian horseman would cover twenty-five or even thirty leagues of ground in a night. When pursued by the Russians, they would leap the most rapid torrents. If their steeds were young, and unaccustomed to such perilous exploits, they would gallop them up to the brink of the ravine, cover the head with their bourkas, and then dash, almost always without mishap, down precipices from twenty to fifty feet in depth.

It is unnecessary to dwell on their address in the use of fire-arms and of their two-edged daggers. Armed only with the latter weapon, they were often known, during their long and heroic struggle for independence, to leap their horses over the Muscovite bayonets, stab the soldiers, and break up and put to flight their serried battalions. When surrounded in their forts or villages, and shut out from all hope of escape, they frequently sacrificed their wives and children – like the Jews in the last agonies of their war with Rome – set fire to their dwellings, and perished heroically in the flames. With true Oriental devotedness they stand by their dead and wounded to the last extremity, and fight with the most dogged courage to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy.

Madame de Hell is not disposed to endorse the reputation for beauty which so many writers have agreed in bestowing upon the Circassian women. She considers them even inferior, physically, to the men. "It is true," she says, "we were unable to visit any of the great centres of population, or to travel amongst the independent tribes, but we saw several *aouls* on the banks of the Kouban, and were entertained in a princely family, and nowhere did we meet with any of those surpassing beauties whom more fortunate travellers have celebrated." What she *did* observe in those daughters of the mountains was the elegance of their shape and the natural grace of their movements. A Circassian woman is never awkward. Dressed in rags or in brocade, she never fails to assume, spontaneously and without thought of display, the most graceful and picturesque attitudes. "In this respect," says Madame de Hell, "she is unquestionably superior to the highest efforts of fascination which Parisian art can achieve."

A visit to the family of a Circassian prince "at home" is thus narrated by our travellers:

The dwelling was a wretched mud hut, in front of which, on a mat, lay the prince in his shirt, and barefooted. He received his visitors very hospitably, and after the usual courtesies proceeded to make his toilette. He sent for his finest garments and costliest "leg gear," girded on his weapons, and then led the way into his "interior," which was as bare and unfurnished as any Connemara peasant's cabin, the only objects visible being a saddle, a few vessels, and a divan covered with reed matting. His guests having rested for a few minutes, the prince introduced them to his wife and daughter, who had been apprised of their arrival, and were anxious to see them.

These ladies occupied a hut of their own, consisting, like the prince's, of a single room. They rose at the entrance of their visitors, and saluted them with much grace; then, motioning them to be seated, the mother sat down in the Turkish fashion on her divan, while her daughter reclined against the couch on which the strangers had taken their places. They, when the reception was over, remarked with surprise that the prince had not crossed the threshold, but had simply put his head in at the door to answer their questions and converse with his wife. The explanation afforded was, that a Circassian officer cannot, consistently with honour, enter his wife's apartment during the day, and it seems that in all families with the slightest pretension to distinction this rule is rigorously observed.

A greater appearance of comfort was observable in the princess's apartment than in her husband's, as might well be the case. It contained two large divans, the silk cushions of which were gay with gold and silver embroidery, carpets of painted felt, several trunks, and a very pretty work-basket. A small Russian mirror and the prince's armorial trophies formed the decoration of the walls. But the floor was not boarded, the walls were rough plastered, and the only provision for light and air were two little holes furnished with shutters. The princess, a woman apparently between five-and-thirty and forty years of age, was by no means fitted to sustain the Circassian reputation for beauty. Her dress had a character of its own: under a brocaded pelisse, with short sleeves and laced seams, she wore a silk chemise, which displayed more of the bosom than European notions of decorum would approve. A velvet cap, trimmed with silver, smooth plaits of hair, cut heart-shape on the forehead, a white veil falling from the top of the head and covering over the bosom, and finally, a red shawl thrown carelessly over the lap —*voilà tout!* As for the daughter, she was charming. She wore a white robe fastened round the waist by a red kazavek. Her features were delicate; she had a complexion of exquisite fairness, revealing the play of "the pure and eloquent blood" which "spoke in her cheek, and so distinctly wrought that one might almost say her body thought;" and a profusion of glossy raven tresses escaped from under her cap.

Beyond all praise was the geniality of the two ladies. About the country of their visitors, their calling, and the objects of their journey, they put a thousand questions. The European costume, and especially the straw hats, interested them greatly. Yet there was a certain air of coldness and impassiveness about them, and not once did the princess smile, until a long curtain accidentally fell, and shut her out for a moment from her guests. After a short but rapid conversation the visitors asked the princess's permission to take her portrait and sketch the interior of her abode. She offered no objection. When the drawings were finished, a collation was served, consisting of fruits and cheese-cakes. In the evening, the strangers took their leave, and, on coming out of the hut, they found all the inhabitants of the *aoul* assembled to witness their departure and do them honour.

We must resume our narrative of Madame de Hell's journey. On their way to Stavropol, they experienced a mountain-storm, one of the grandest and most terrible they had ever witnessed. The roar of the thunder, repeated by every echo in cavern and ravine, mingled with the groaning and jarring of the great trees, with the loud gusts of the furious wind, with all those mysterious voices of the tempest which come we know not whence, but deeply stir the heart, and have so potent a harmony and such a sublimity and force of sound that the least superstitious mind involuntarily awaits some supernatural manifestation, some message from the other world. We have ourselves listened to a storm in a Highland glen – the wind sweeping down the rugged declivities with terrible impetuosity, and the thunder-peals reverberating from peak to peak, while the clouds

"From many a horrid rift abortive poured
Fierce rain with lightning mixed, water with fire,"

until the sense of an eerie and mysterious Presence has forced itself upon our mind, and we have been able to understand the emotions in which originated the visions of wraith and phantom of the bards of old. Our travellers, however, passed through the gale unhurt. A tremendous outburst of rain, the final effort of the tempest, cleared the sky, which towards the west was gradually lighted up with gleams of purple light, contrasting gloriously with the darkness of the rest of the firmament. A gorgeous rainbow, one foot of which rested on the highest peak of the Caucasus, while the other was enveloped in the mists of evening, rose before them for a few moments, like an image of hope, and then slowly faded into thin air. At length they reached the station, but in an unpleasant condition – wet, weary, dazed, and not a little surprised to find themselves safe and sound after the adventures of the day.

Descending the last spurs of the Caucasus, our travellers next day entered upon the region of the plains. The road was thronged with vehicles of all kinds, horsemen, and pedestrians, all hurrying to the great fair of Stavropol, and every variety of type which characterizes the peoples of the Caucasus: Circassians, Cossacks, Turcomans, Tartars, Georgians – some in brilliant costumes, caracolling on their high-bred Persian horses, others huddled up with their families in hide-covered carts, others again driving before them immense herds of sheep and swine, and others gravely leading a train of loaded camels. Madame de Hell particularly noticed a handsome young Circassian, mounted on a richly caparisoned horse, who rode constantly by the side of an unusually elegant pavosk (a kind of litter), the curtains of which were kept down. This carriage stimulated her curiosity, and, in such a country, was well adapted to suggest to a lively fancy the outlines of a romance. No doubt, she thought, the pavosk contained a young and beautiful Circassian, whose charms would fascinate some Oriental prince, and place a queen's diadem upon her brow. At an inn, in Stavropol, Madame de Hell again fell in with the Circassian and his mysterious charge, but the latter was veiled from head to foot "The young mountaineer," she says, "prepared a divan with cushions and pillows very like our own, and, a few moments afterwards, returned, carrying in his arms a woman completely shrouded in her veil; he placed her very delicately upon the divan, and seated himself by her side with every mark of tenderness. Occasionally he lifted the young girl's veil to question her in the most respectful manner. The whole scene was invested with a poetic charm which I vainly endeavour to express. In the attitudes, the costume, the physiognomy of this little group, there was an Oriental grace which would have impressed a painter. Not only was the picture pleasant to the eye, but it was suggestive to the imagination. Unfortunately, the delightful vision disappeared like a dream. A few minutes, and in came our host in search of the mysterious couple, to conduct them to a private apartment. Infinite precautions were taken in the removal of the unknown lady, who seemed to be on the brink of the grave. Next morning we questioned our host in reference to the incident, but he replied very vaguely, and all we could gather was, that the young girl had come to Stavropol to consult a famous physician respecting her condition, which offered but little hope. We could gain no information from them as to the relations existing between her and the young chief, the moral causes of her malady, or, in a word, the interesting part of the story."

MADAME HOMMAIRE DE HELL

II

From Stavropol, a pleasant and lively town, the capital of the Caucasus, our travellers journeyed toward the Don with singular rapidity, accomplishing the distance of 316 versts,[5] in two-and-twenty hours. They ate and slept in their carriage, and did not alight until they reached the river-side, where every kind of tribulation lay in wait for them. Madame de Hell would afterwards remark on the strange tenacity with which ill-luck adheres to us when it has overtaken us. At ten o'clock at night, when they were still at some distance from the Don, they were informed that the bridge across it was in a dangerous condition, and that probably they would be compelled to wait till the next day before they could cross. For such a delay they were unprepared, having calculated on a good supper and a good bed that night under a friendly roof in Rostov. Another reason for haste was the change in the weather, which had suddenly turned cold; so, disregarding the information given them, they continued to push forward until they reached the bridge. There the signs of its insecure condition were too numerous to be denied. Several carts stood unyoked, and peasants lay beside them, calmly waiting for daylight. Then was repeated the bad news which had already discouraged our travellers, and it seemed clear that they would have to spend some hours in the britchka, exposed to the chill night air, while, once on the other side, they could reach Rostov in a couple of hours.

So influential a consideration carried the day. They would not halt; they would cross the bridge – though not without taking all due precautions. Alighting from the carriage, they allowed it to go forward, the coachman driving slowly, while the Cossack, with his lantern, pointed out all the dangerous places. "I do not think," says Madame de Hell, "that in the whole course of my travels we were ever in so alarming a situation. The danger was urgent and real. The cracking of the woodwork, the darkness, the noise of waters dashing through the decayed floor that bent and trembled under their tread, and the cries of alarm uttered every moment by the coachman and the Cossack might well have filled us with apprehension; yet I do not think that the thought of death ever occurred, or, rather, my mind was too confused to formulate any thought at all. Frequently the wheels sank between the broken planks, and these were moments of terrible anxiety; but at last, by dint of patient effort, we reached the opposite bank in safety, after a passage of more than an hour. I could not have held out much longer; the water on the bridge was over our ankles. The reader will understand with what satisfaction we again took our places in the carriage. We were then better able to realize the nature of the perils we had incurred, and for a moment almost doubted our actual safety. For awhile we seemed to hear the dash of the waters breaking against the bridge; but this feeling was soon dispelled by others – the night's adventures were by no means at an end.

"At some versts from the Don," continues Madame de Hell, "our unlucky star threw us into the hands of a drunken driver, who, after losing his way, and jolting us over ditches and ploughed fields, actually brought us back in sight of the dreadful bridge, the thought of which still made us shudder. We would fain have persuaded ourselves that we were mistaken, but the truth was beyond dispute; there before us rolled the Don, and yonder stood Axai, the village through which we had passed after reseating ourselves in the britchka. Conceive our indignation at having floundered about for two hours only to find ourselves again at our point of departure! The sole resource we could think of was to pass the night in a peasant's cabin, but our abominable coachman, whom the sight of the river had suddenly sobered, and, perhaps, the fear of a sound thrashing, threw himself on his knees, and so earnestly

[5] A verst is equal to 3,500 feet.

implored us to try the road again, that we consented. The difficulty was, how to get back into the road, and many a false start was made before we effected it. In crossing a ditch the carriage was so violently shaken, that the coachman and our dragoman were thrown from their seats, the latter falling upon the pole in such a way that he was not easily extricated. His cries for help, and his grimaces when my husband and the Cossack had set him on his feet, were so desperate, that one might have supposed half his bones to be broken, though, in reality, he had sustained only a few bruises. As for the yemshik, he picked himself up very composedly, and climbed into his seat again as if nothing unusual had befallen him. From the quiet way in which he resumed the reins, one might have thought that he had just risen from a bed of roses; such is the uniform apathy of the Russian peasant!"

They spent a week with their friends at Taganrog, and thence proceeded to Odessa, the great commercial entrepôt of the Euxine. In one night the grim blasts of the Ural had swept away all that October had spared. The weather was still sunny when they arrived on the shores of the Sea of Azov; but next day the sky wore that sombre chilly hue which always precedes the *metels*, or snow-storms. All nature seemed to be prepared for the reception of winter – that eternal ruler of the North. Its advent was indicated by the thin ice-crust that covered the beach, the harsh winds, the frost bound soil, and the increasing lurid gloom of the atmosphere; symptoms which made our travellers apprehensive of possible suffering on their road to Odessa, their intended winter-quarters, whence they were distant about 900 versts.

It was indeed the worst season for travelling in Russia. Travellers have good reason to fear the first snows, which, as they are not firm enough to bear a sledge, are almost every year the cause of many accidents. The winds, too, at this season are excessively violent, and raise the drifts in terrific whirling snow-storms, which threaten the destruction of the traveller. Madame de Hell and her husband, however, accomplished their journey in safety, though not without enduring considerable pain and anxiety. Nothing can be more awful than the snowy wastes they were compelled to traverse, swept and ravaged as they were by furious blasts. All trace of man's existence – all trace of human labour – is buried beneath the great cold white billows, which lie heaped upon one another, like breakers on a stormy coast.

Madame de Hell and her husband spent the winter at Odessa; and in the following May departed on a visit to the Crimea, on board a brig belonging to the consul of the Netherlands. Their voyage was short, but it was not unmarked by incident, by sea-sickness and sudden squalls, by calm moonlit nights, by something of all the pain and pleasure of the sea. At sunrise on the second morning, the voyagers first caught sight of the coast of that gloomy peninsula which the ancients stigmatized as inhospitable, in allusion to the cruel custom of its inhabitants to massacre every stranger whose ill-fortune led him thither. The woes of Orestes, as depicted by the Greek poet, have for ever made the Tauris famous. Who does not remember the painful beauty of that grand sad drama, in which the vengeful cries of the Furies seem to echo along this wild and desert shore? As soon as Madame de Hell could distinguish the line of rocks that traced the vague horizon, she began to look for Cape Partheniké, the traditional site of the altar of the goddess, to whom the young priestess Iphigenia was on the point of sacrificing her brother. Assisted by the captain, she at length descried on a rocky headland a solitary chapel, dedicated, she was told, to the Virgin Mother. "What a contrast," she naturally remarks, "between the gentle worship of Mary and that of the sanguinary Taura, who was not content with the mariners' prayers and offerings, but demanded human victims!"

All this part of the coast is barren and bleak; a barrier of rock seems to shut out the stranger from the celebrated peninsula which warlike nations have ravaged and commercial nations coveted. Richly gifted by Nature's liberal hand, it has always been an object of desire to the people of Europe and Asia. Pastoral races have lusted after its green mountain ranges; commercial nations have striven to gain possession of its ports and straits; warrior tribes have pitched their tents in its fertile valleys; and all have craved a foothold in that land to which cling so many glorious memories of the Greek civilization. But in the eighteenth century the contention came to an end, at least so far as political

observers can determine, for ages, and under the rule of the Russian Czar, the Crimea has long enjoyed a profound tranquillity.[6]

"So that," as Mr. Kinglake puts it, "the peninsula which divides the Euxine from the Sea of Azov was an almost forgotten land, lying out of the chief paths of merchants and travellers, and far away from all the capital cities of Christendom. Rarely went thither any one from Paris, or Vienna, or Berlin; to reach it from London was a harder task than to cross the Atlantic; and a man of office receiving in this distant province his orders despatched from St. Petersburg, was the servant of masters who governed him from a distance of a thousand miles.

"Along the course of the little rivers which seamed the ground, there were villages and narrow belts of tilled land, with gardens and fruitful vineyards; but for the most part this neglected Crim-Tartary was a wilderness of steppe or of mountain-range, much clothed towards the west with tall stiff grasses, and the stems of a fragrant herb like southernwood. The bulk of the people were of Tartar descent, but no longer what they had been in the days when nations trembled at the coming of the Golden Horde; and although they yet hold to the Moslem faith, their religion has lost its warlike fire. Blessed with a dispensation from military service, and far away from the accustomed battle-fields of Europe and Asia, they lived in quiet, knowing little of war except what tradition could faintly carry down from old times in low monotonous chants. In their husbandry they were more governed by the habits of their ancestors than by the nature of the land which had once fed the people of Athens, for they neglected tillage and clung to pastoral life. Watching flocks and herds, they used to remain on the knolls very still for long hours together, and when they moved, they strode over the hills in their slow-flowing robes with something of the forlorn majesty of peasants descended from warriors."[7]

Into this secluded and remote peninsula Madame de Hell and her husband carried their rare powers of observation and description. They landed at Balaklava, since so famous in the annals of the British army, for it was there that "the thin red line" resisted unmoved all the fury and force of the Muscovite hosts. Its appearance from the sea is very attractive, for its port is surrounded with mountains, the highest of which still retains a memorial of the old Genoese dominion, while in part of its blue expanse lies the pretty Greek town, with its balconied houses and masses of foliage rising in terraces one above the other. Above it towers a ruined castle, whence the Genoese, in their days of supremacy, scanned with vulture-gaze the sweep of sea, prepared to pounce upon any hapless vessel wind-driven into these waters. It was Sunday when our travellers arrived, and the whole population were holiday making on the green shore or greener heights. Groups of mariners, Arnaouts in their quaint costume, and girls as graceful of shape as those who of old joined in the choric dances of Cytherea, wound their way up the steep path to the fortress, or tripped in mirthful measures to the shrill music of a balalaika.

The day after their arrival at Balaklava they undertook a boating excursion to explore the geological formation of the coast, and landed in a delightful little cove, embowered amid flowering trees and shrubs. On their return the boatmen decked themselves and their boat with wreaths of hawthorn and blossoming apple sprays, so that they entered the harbour with much festal pomp. In her poetic enthusiasm, Madame de Hell, as she gazed upon the cloudless sky and the calm blue sea and the Greek mariners, who thus, on a foreign shore, and after the lapse of so many centuries, retained the graceful customs of their ancestors, could not but be reminded of the deputations that were wont every year to enter the Piræus, the prows of their vessels bright with festoons of flowers, to share in the gorgeous festivals of Athens.

From Balaklava the travellers proceeded to Sevastopol, of which Madame de Hell supplies an excellent description, necessarily rendered valueless, however, by the events of the Crimean war. She speaks of its harbour as one of the most remarkable in Europe. It owes all its excellence to

[6] Except when broken by the war of 1855.

[7] A. W. Kinglake: "Invasion of the Crimea," Vol. i., c. 1, 6th edition.

Nature, which has here, without assistance from the science of the engineer, provided a magnificent roadstead, the branches of which form a number of basins admirably adapted for the requirements of a great naval station. The whole expanse of this noble harbour is commanded from the upper part of the town. The roadstead first catches the eye; it stretches east and west, penetrates inland to a depth of four miles and three-quarters, with a mean breadth of 1,000 yards; and forms the channel of communication between Sevastopol and the interior of the peninsula. The northern shore is girt by a line of cliffs; the southern shore, broken up by numerous natural basins. To the east, at the very foot of the hill on which the town stands, lies South Bay, nearly two miles in length, and completely sheltered by high limestone cliffs. Beyond lies the dockyard, and the dock, which is of great extent; and to the west may be seen Artillery Bay.

In spite of the historical interest which now attaches to Sevastopol, as the scene of the crowning struggle between Russia and the Western Powers, the most remarkable place in the Chersonese is Bagtche Serai, "that ancient city which, prior to the Muscovite conquest of the peninsula, might compete in wealth and power with the great cities of the East." Beautiful exceedingly is the approach to it, by a road running parallel with a chain of heights, and clothed with luxuriant orchards, studded with village and farm, and brightened by the sheen of brooks. Owing to an ukase of Catherine II., which allowed the Tartars to keep possession of their ancient capital, Bagtche Serai retains to this day its individuality of aspect. It is neither modernized nor Russianized. Sauntering through its narrow streets, and looking upon its mosques, shops, and cemeteries, the traveller feels that the atmosphere of the East is around him. And amid the courts and gardens of the old palace he may well believe himself transported to an "interior" in Bagdad or Aleppo.

This palace has been celebrated by the muse of Pushkin, the Russian poet; in fine, it is not possible to do justice to its charms, which seem to have powerfully impressed our traveller's susceptible imagination. "It is no easy task," she exclaims, "to describe the magic of this superb and mysterious abode, wherein the voluptuous Khans forgot the trials and sorrows of life: I cannot do it, as in the case of one of our Western palaces, by analyzing the style, the arrangement, and the details of its splendid architecture, by deciphering the idea of the artist in the regularity, grace, and simplicity of the noble edifice. All this may easily be understood or described, but one needs something of the poet's heart and brain to appreciate an Oriental palace, the attraction of which lies not in what one sees, but in what one feels (and imagines?). I have heard persons speak very contemptuously of Bagtche Serai. 'How' they ask, 'can any one apply the name of palace to that cluster of wooden houses, daubed with coarse paintings, and furnished only with divans and carpets?' From this point of view they are right. The positive cast of their minds prevents them from seeing the beautiful in aught but costly material, well-defined forms, and highly-polished workmanship: hence, to them Bagtche Serai must be a mere group of shabby huts adorned with paltry ornaments, and fit only for the habitation of miserable Tartars."

To this order of minds, however, Madame de Hell, as we have had abundant opportunities of observing, did not belong, and Bagtche Serai has justice done to it at her hands.

The Serai, or palace, is situated in the centre of the town; it is enclosed within walls and a moat, and fills the heart of a valley, which is surrounded by irregular heights. Entering the principal court you find yourself in the shade of flowering lilacs and tall poplars, and on your ear falls the murmur of a fountain, which sings its monotonous song beneath the willows. The palace, properly so called, displays externally the usual irregularity of Oriental architecture, but its want of symmetry is forgotten by him who surveys its broad colonnades, its bright decorations, its fantastic pavilions, and sheltering groves. As for the interior, it is a page out of the "Arabian Nights." In the first hall is the celebrated Fountain of Tears, to which Pushkin has dedicated a beautiful lyric. It derives its pathetic name from the sweet sad murmur of its pearly drops as they fall upon the marble basin. The sombre and mysterious aspect of the hall stimulates the tendency in the mind of the visitor to forget reality for the dreams of the imagination. The foot falls noiselessly upon soft Egyptian mats: the walls are

blazoned with sentences from the Koran, written in gold on a black ground in those fantastic Turkish characters which seem better adapted to express the vagaries of a poetical fancy than to become the vehicles of sober thought.

From the hall we pass into a large reception-salon, where a double row of windows of richly stained glass represent a variety of rural scenes. Ceiling and doors are richly gilded; the workmanship of the latter is exquisite. Broad divans, resplendent with crimson velvet, run all round the room. In the centre a fountain springs from a basin of porphyry. In this room everything is magnificent, but its effect is neutralized by the curious fashion in which the walls are painted, their surface being covered with the inventions of a prolific fancy in the shape of castles and harbours, bridges, rivers, islands – all crowded together with a sublime disregard for perspective – while in niches above the doors are collected all kinds of children's toys, such as wooden dolls' houses, fruit-trees, models of ships, and little figures of men writhing in a thousand contortions. These interesting objects were accumulated by one of the last of the Khans, who would shut himself up every day in this room in order to admire them. "Such childishness," as Madame de Hell remarks, "so common among the Orientals, would induce us to form an unfavourable opinion of their intelligence, were it not redeemed by their innate love of beauty and their genuine poetic sentiment. We may forgive the Khans the strange devices on their walls in consideration of the silvery fall of the shining fountain and the adjoining garden with its wealth of bloom."

The hall of the divan is of regal magnificence; the mouldings of the ceiling, in particular, are of exquisite delicacy. But every room has in it many evidences of the wealth and taste of its former occupants, and all are adorned with fountains, and the glow and gleam of colour. Not the least interesting is that which belonged to the beautiful Countess Potocki. It was her ill fate to inspire with a violent passion one of the last of the Crimean Khans, who carried her off and made her absolute queen and mistress of his palace, in which she lived for ten years, struggling between her love for an infidel, and the penitence that brought her prematurely to the grave. "The thought of her unhappy fortune," says Madame de Hell, "invested everything we beheld with a magic charm. The Russian officer, who acted as our cicerone, pointed out to us a cross carved above the mantel-piece of the bedroom. The mystic symbol, placed above a crescent, eloquently interpreted the condition of a life divided between love and grief. What tears, what conflicts of the heart and mind had it not beheld!"

The travellers passed through a succession of gardens and walled enclosures, in the course of their inspection of the various pavilions, kiosks, and buildings comprised within the precincts of the palace. To the one occupied by the harem has appropriately been given the name of "The Little Valley of Roses." It is a beautiful rose-bower, which echoes divinely with the sound of falling waters and the song of the nightingales.

A tower of considerable altitude, with a terrace fronted with gratings that can be raised or lowered at will, overlooks the principal court. It was erected to enable the inmates of the harem to watch, unseen, the martial exercises that were practised there. The prospect from the terrace, embracing a bird's-eye view of the labyrinth of buildings, gardens, and other enclosures, is very lovely. It includes a panorama of the town as it rises, tier upon tier, against the background of the sloping hills. The various voices of the town collected and reverberated within the limited space, are heard distinctly, especially at hush of eve, when the summons to prayer from every minaret mingles with the bleating of the weary flocks, and the cries of the shepherds returning from their pastures.

Before Madame de Hell quitted the Chersonese, she paid a visit to Karolez, a mountain village belonging to the Princess Adel Bey, who received her visitors with admirable courtesy.

"The guest-house was prepared with the ostentation which the Orientals are fond of displaying on all occasions. A double row of servants of all ages was drawn up in the vestibule when my husband and I dismounted; and one of the eldest and also the most sumptuously attired, introduced us into a saloon arranged in Oriental fashion, with brightly painted walls and red silk divans. The son of the princess, a charming boy of twelve, who spoke Russian fluently, attached himself to us, politely

translated our orders to the servants, and was careful that we should want for nothing. I gave him my letter of introduction, which he immediately carried to his mother, and soon afterwards, returning, he told me, to my great delight, that she would receive me when she had completed her toilette. In my eager curiosity I now counted every minute, until an officer followed by an aged female, veiled, came to usher me into the mysterious palace of which, as yet, I had seen only the lofty outer wall.

"My husband, as we had preconcerted, attempted to follow us, and, no impediment being offered, unceremoniously passed through the little door into the park, crossed the latter, boldly ascended a terrace adjoining the palace, and at last found himself – much surprised at his extraordinary good fortune – in a little room that seemed one of the princess's private apartments. Hitherto no male stranger except Count Worontzov, had entered the palace; the flattering and unlooked-for exception which the princess had made in my husband's favour, induced us to hope that she would carry her complaisance still further. We were soon undeceived. The officer who had acted as our guide, after offering us iced water, sweetmeats, and pipes, took my husband by the hand, and conducted him from the room with significant celerity. As soon as he had disappeared, a curtain was raised at the other end of the apartment, and a strikingly beautiful woman, richly clad, made her entry. Advancing with a singularly dignified air, she took both my hands, kissed me on both cheeks, and with many friendly demonstrations sat down by my side. She was highly rouged, her eyelids were painted black and met over the nose, communicating to her countenance a certain sternness, that, nevertheless, did not impair its agreeable character. To her still elegant figure fitted closely a vest of furred velvet. Altogether she was far more beautiful than I had imagined.

"We passed a quarter of an hour in close examination of each other, interchanging as well as we could a few Russian words which very inadequately expressed our thoughts. But in such cases, looks supply the deficiencies of speech, and mine must have expressed the admiration I felt. Hers, I own, in all humility, seemed to indicate much more surprise at, than approval of, my travelling costume. What would I not have given to know the result of her purely feminine analysis of my appearance! In this *tête-à-tête* I felt an inward twinge of conscience at having presented myself before her in male attire, which must have given her a strange idea of European fashions.

"I would fain have prolonged my visit in the hope of seeing her daughters, but the fear of appearing intrusive prompted me to take my leave. Checking me with a very graceful gesture, she said eagerly, '*Pastoy! Pastoy!*' (Stay, stay!) and clapped her hands several times. At the signal a young girl entered, who, by her mistress's orders, threw open a folding door, and immediately I was silent with surprise and admiration at the brilliant apparition before me. Let the reader imagine the most beautiful sultanas, or 'lights of the harem,' of whom poet and artist have endeavoured to give the presentment, and his conception will still fall far short of the enchanting models on whom my gaze rested. Each of these three was as lovely and as graceful as her companions. Two wore tunics of crimson brocade, embellished in front with broad gold lace. The tunics were open and disclosed beneath them cashmere robes, with very tight sleeves terminating in gold fringes. The youngest was attired in a tunic of azure brocade, with silver ornaments; this was the sole difference between her dress and that of her sisters. All these had superb black hair, which escaped in countless tresses from a fez of silver filagree, set like a diadem over their ivory foreheads; they wore gold embroidered slippers and wide trousers drawn close at the ankle.

"Skins of such dazzling purity, eyelashes of such length, a bloom of youth so delicate, I had never before looked upon. The calm repose that breathed from their lovely countenances had never been disturbed by any profane glance. None but their mother had ever told them that they were beautiful; and this reflection enhanced the charm of their beauty in my eyes. In our Europe, where women, exposed to the gaze of crowds, so quickly learn the art of coquetry, the imagination would not be able to form such a type of loveliness. The features of our maidens are too soon affected by the vivacity of their impressions, for the artist's eye to have any chance of discovering in them that divine grace of beauty and ignorance which so profoundly impressed me in the Tartar princesses. After

embracing me they withdrew to the end of the room, where they remained standing in those graceful Oriental attitudes no woman of the West can imitate. A dozen attendants, shrouded in white muslin, were gathered round the door, and regarded the scene with respectful curiosity. This delightful vision lasted an hour. When the princess saw that I had determined on taking my leave, she made signs that I should go and see her garden; but, though gratefully acknowledging the courteous attention, I prepared to rejoin my husband immediately, being impatient to relate to him all the particulars of the interview with which I was completely dazzled."

The Crimea is not without its memorable places. Madame de Hell refers to Parthenit, where still flourishes the great hazel under which the Prince de Ligne wrote to the modern Messalina, Catherine II.; Gaspra, the residence for some years of Madame de Krudener, the beautiful mystic and religious enthusiast who exercised so powerful an influence over the Czar Alexander; Koreis, the retreat of the Princess Galitzin, the soul of so many strange political intrigues, and afterwards one of the associates of Madame de Krudener, and the small villa on the seashore, near Delta, beneath the roof of which died, in 1823, the *soi-disant* Countess Guacher, now known to have been none other than the notorious Madame de Lamotte, who figured in the strange romantic history of "The Diamond Necklace," and as an accomplice of Cagliostro was whipped in the Place de Grève, and branded on both shoulders with a V for *Voleuse*, Thief.[8]

At Soudagh, a valley near Oulou-Ouzon, Madame de Hell visited one of the most remarkable women of her time, Mademoiselle Jacquemart, of whom a long but not wholly accurate biographical sketch appears in the Duc de Raguse's "Excursion en Crimée."

Few women have had a more eccentric career. In her early years her beauty, her wit, and her talents gained her a degree of fame such as rarely attaches to one in the humble position of a governess. From the age of sixteen, when she removed from Paris to St. Petersburg, and entered upon a professional life, she enjoyed an unparalleled social distinction. Suddenly, for no reason apparent to the world at large, she retreated to the Crimea, abandoning everything in which she had hitherto delighted, and voluntarily sentencing herself to a seclusion which to her, of all women, it might have been thought, would have proved most distasteful. Seeing her in the semi-masculine costume, studying geology, painting, music, and poetry, without the shadow of a pretension, one could not help asking oneself in what mysterious drama her strange existence had been involved. Having been apprised, the day before, of Madame de Hell's intended visit, she hastened to meet her, and received her with an unaffectedly cordial welcome. Her guest could not look at her, however, without a feeling of astonishment. Attired in a long brown petticoat, and a vest which concealed her figure, she wore a manly virile aspect, according thoroughly with the character of the life she had adopted.

Her cottage consisted of a single room on the ground floor, which served as dining-room, drawing-room, and bedroom; it was adorned with a guitar, a violin-case, a collection of animals, art-objects, and arms. The exceeding solitariness of her dwelling exposed her to frequent attacks by night, and hence a brace of pistols always hung at the head of her bed. Her fruit, her poultry, and even her vines suffered from prowling depredators; she was continually on the watch, and especially had to guard against a repetition of the cruel attempt to which on one occasion she nearly fell a victim.

Her account of this affair was as follows: – Two days before it occurred, a Greek applied to her for work and food. The former she was unable to give; the latter she would never deny. The next day but one, as she was returning in the twilight from a geological excursion, carrying in her hand a small hatchet which she used for breaking stones, she discovered that this man was walking behind her stealthily. Turning to look in his face, she found herself at the same moment grasped round the waist – the hatchet was snatched from her hand – and blow after blow was rained on her head until she fell to the ground in a swoon. When she recovered consciousness, the assassin had disappeared. How she reached home with her skull fractured she never could explain. For months her life was in

[8] See Carlyle's "Biographical Essays, § Diamond Necklace;" also, H. Vizetelly's "True Story of the Diamond Necklace."

peril, and her reason trembled in the balance. At the time of Madame de Hell's visit she still suffered acutely from some fragments of a comb that remained in her head.

Remote from the ordinary track as was Mademoiselle Jacquemart's lonely dwelling, many persons were drawn to it by the attraction of her singular story. Not long before, a young and handsome lady, incognita, but evidently of high birth, had spent a whole day there. Her curiosity greatly excited, Mademoiselle Jacquemart said to her on her departure, smilingly, "Queen or shepherdess, leave me your name, that it may always recall to me one of the most delightful souvenirs of my hermit-life."

"Well," replied the unknown, in the same spirit, "pass me your album, and you shall know me as a very sincere admirer of your merit."

She immediately wrote a few lines in the album and departed in haste, while Mademoiselle Jacquemart was reading the following quatrain, improvised in her honour by the Princess Radzivil: —

"Reine ou bergère je voudrais
Dans ce doux lieu passer ma vie,
Partageant avec vous, amie,
Ou ma cabane ou mon palais."

[Queen or shepherdess, I fain
In this sweet spot my life would spend,
Sharing with thee, gentle friend,
Or palace grand or cottage plain.]

Before quitting the Crimea, Madame de Hell visited another distinguished woman, also a solitary, who, in a terribly tragic scene, had nearly lost her life. The Baroness Axinia lived at Oulou-Ouzon, and this was her story:

She was married at a very early age to a man much older than herself. The ill-assorted union was as unhappy as such unions generally are. The Baroness Axinia was beautiful, and drew around her a crowd of admirers, whose flatteries she did not reject, though it does not appear that she listened to professions of love which could have dishonoured her. In a jealous frenzy, not unnatural in the circumstances, her husband struck her with his dagger, and at the same time killed a young man whom for a long time he had regarded as a friend. The result was an immediate separation. The Baron settled upon her a considerable estate, and, in addition, a handsome income. She had the consolation, moreover, of being allowed to retain by her side the youngest of her daughters, and thenceforth she resigned herself to a life of solitude, keeping hid within her bosom the secret of her sorrow, her regret, and, perhaps, her remorse.

Ten years passed, and the baroness never crossed the borders of her estate. This self-imposed penance, so rigidly observed, may be accepted, we think, as a sufficient acknowledgment of the errors of her thoughtless youth.

"At our first interview," says Madame de Hell, "she seemed to me a little timid, nay, even wild (*sauvage*) – a circumstance amply justified by her exceptional position. But, in the course of a few days, this constraint passed away, and a warm intimacy sprang up between us.

"From the first days of my visit, I remarked with lively surprise that our hostess was incessantly assailed by a crowd of pretty tomtits, who pecked at her hair and hands with truly extraordinary familiarity. The baroness, after enjoying my astonishment, told me that two years before she had brought up a couple of tomtits, and given them their liberty; and that, in the following year, the couple returned with their brood, who were easily taught to take their food from the hands of their charming protectress. Other birds soon imitated their example, and thus the beautiful solitary came to represent, undesignedly, one of the most charming creations of Georges Sand, the bird-charmer, in her novel of 'Tévérino.'"

In one of her walks with Madame de Hell, the baroness conducted her new friend to the scene of the tragic drama which had broken up her life. The house, entirely abandoned by the Baron, was inhabited only by a Tartar, its guardian – a man of wild and gloomy aspect, whom the sight of his mistress seemed to stupefy. While he was opening the doors and windows, which had been kept closed since the fatal catastrophe, a wretched half-starved looking dog, shivering in spite of the sunshine, crawled out of a corner, the wonderful instinct of these animals having made him conscious of the presence of his mistress. The latter, overwhelmed with emotion, burst into tears: "Poor Salghir! poor Salghir!" she cried, and was unable to utter another word.

When she had recovered herself, she turned to Madame de Hell, and bade her observe how the seal of sorrow and forgetfulness was set upon everything. Formerly the very stones of the court had breathed of life, and sunshine, and youth; formerly that poor dog had been bright and well-favoured, and as happy as are all things that are loved. "But now," she exclaimed, "look at these ruins, these crawling mosses; yonder shattered wall, the grass which has obliterated the traces of my footsteps, and agree with me that a kind of curse weighs upon the spot. One feels, one divines that life has been arrested here by one of those fatal crises which involve everything in ruin. Alas, this house is a striking proof of it! It had a youth, a freshness, a coquettishness of its own, when I was young, and fair, and a coquette; now it is gloomy, dank, degraded…"

"Because you are old and ugly?" said Madame de Hell, smiling, "is not that the logical consequence of your reasoning! But, you see, the first looking-glass would flatly contradict it. Come, in spite of the somewhat greenish hue of our surroundings, look at that soft, gentle, and still youthful countenance, those brilliant eyes, that flowing hair, and tell me if it be all in harmony with the unattractive aspect of the scene before you."

"Oh, undoubtedly I have not yet arrived physically," she answered with a faint smile, "at this degree of old age, but if you could read to the bottom of my heart, you would see it as gloomy and as desolate as these chambers with their want of light and air."

The baroness led her guest into every apartment, explaining the destination of each with feverish volubility. On entering her former bedchamber, she turned pale, and pointed with a gesture to her husband's portrait, separated from her own by an antique clock, the motionless hands of which added to the melancholy of the scene. Madame de Hell bestowed a long gaze on the haughty and sombre countenance of the baron. His rough, strongly-marked features were the very emblem of brutal strength, and she felt herself tremble all over in thinking of what his wife must have suffered in the first years of their union. Her unhappy past seemed almost justified by the hard ferocious countenance of such a husband. As for the baroness, there was about her portrait a significantly haggard air. "I carried her out," says Madame de Hell, "upon the balcony, where, overcome by her emotions, the influences of the place, and that yearning after sympathy which is so powerful in solitude, she opened her heart to me, and told me a simple but pathetic story of all that she had endured.

"The promise that I would hold sacred the confidences of that shattered heart compels me to leave my narrative imperfect. Two days later I embarked on board the steamer *St. Nicholas*, gazing with inexpressible regret at the shores of the Tauric peninsula as they gradually blended with the horizon, their broken outline melting finally into the mists of evening."

That Madame de Hell to a habit of close and profound observation, added very remarkable powers of description, will be apparent, we think, from the preceding summary, brief as it necessarily is, of her record of travel in the Caucasus and the Crimea.

MADAME HOMMAIRE DE HELL

III

Madame de Hell and her husband spent the winter of 1841 at Odessa. Thence, in the following year, they repaired to Moldavia – a country which was just beginning to revive from the barbarism and desolation in which the Turkish rule had so long condemned it to linger. Under the prudent and energetic management of the Aga Assaki, "The Moldavian Bee" and "The Gleaner" announced the resurrection of liberal thought and the patriotic sentiment in literary articles, nearly all signed by Moldavian names and written in the national language.

In the young Princess Morosi, the daughter of the Aga Assaki, afterwards married to Edgar Quinet, Madame de Hell learned to know and love a charming wit and a rare beautiful nature. She studied the French poets with assiduity, and her great ambition was to visit France, little thinking that she would one day become French by her marriage with the illustrious French writer.

In the Caucasian steppes our traveller's life had been singularly calm and serene; in Moldavia it was agitated and disturbed by mundane occupations, by official receptions, balls, concerts, dinners, the theatre, and the thousand and one responsibilities of social life. Worn and weary with the monotonous round of pretended pleasures, she frequently looked back with regret to the solitudes of the Caspian. Yet the event which delivered her from it was one that caused her a very keen anxiety. Her husband was attacked by one of the malarious fevers of the Danube, and in order to recover his health was compelled to throw up his engagement and return to France, after some years of almost constant travel and exploration.

On their arrival they were received with the welcome earned by their patience of investigation and strenuous pursuit of knowledge. While the young and already celebrated engineer was rewarded with the Cross of the Legion of Honour, his wife, who had shared his labours and his perils, and co-operated with him in the production of his fine work on the Steppes, was honoured with the special attention of M. Villemain, then Minister of State. Shortly after her return she gave to the world a volume of poetry, entitled "Reveries of a Traveller," a work strongly written, thoughtful, and emotional, which has never obtained the reputation it fully deserves.

In 1846 the two travellers departed on a second expedition to the East, which was cut short by the premature death of M. de Hell. His widow returned to Paris towards the close of 1848, so crushed beneath the calamity that had overthrown her household gods, that, as she has since acknowledged, she never slept without the hope that her sleep might know no waking in this world, but might prove the means of re-uniting her with her beloved husband. However, she was of too clear an intellect and too strong of heart not to recognize that the ties of duty bound her to this world; she had to bring up and educate her children, and to complete and publish the important works her husband had begun. While thus engaged, she contributed several articles on the East to the *Presse* and numerous other journals. In 1859 she published her own narrative of adventure and travel in the steppes of the Caucasus. Great political changes have occurred since Madame de Hell's visit to that region, which have profoundly affected the character of its people and their social polity; so that her account of it, as well as her account of the Crimea, must be read with the necessary allowances. These, however, will not detract from Madame de Hell's unquestioned merit as a close and exact observer, endowed with no ordinary faculty of polished and incisive expression, and a fine capacity for appreciating and describing the picturesque aspects of nature. She wields a skilful brush with force and freedom; her pictures are always accurate in composition and full of colour.

Her later years have shown no decay of her resolute and active spirit. She has accomplished a tour in Belgium, another in Italy, a visit to London, and several excursions into the South of France. In 1868 she proceeded to Martinique, where her eldest son had for some years been established. We believe she has published her West Indian experiences and impressions. But we have given up to Madame de Hell as much of our limited space as we can spare, and now take leave of her with the acknowledgment that among modern female travellers she deserves a high rank in virtue of her intelligence, her sympathies, and her keen sensibility to all that is beautiful and good.

MADAME LÉONIE D'AUNET

Among the crowd of lady travellers to whom this nineteenth century has given birth, the able and accomplished Frenchwoman, so widely known by her pseudonym of Madame Léonie d'Aunet, merits a passing allusion. Remove from her the mask she is pleased to assume before the public, and she stands revealed as Madame Biard, the wife of the great humoristic painter, whose "Sequel of a Masquerade," "Family Concert," "Combat with Polar Bears," and other pictures, are not less highly esteemed by English than by French connoisseurs. Born about 1820, she is twenty years younger than her husband, whom, in 1845, she accompanied in his excursion to Spitzbergen; an excursion which opened with, by way of prologue, a rapid tour through Belgium, Holland, Sweden, and Norway. Of the tour and the excursion she has published a brilliant narrative, which it is impossible to read without pleasure, so polished is the style, and so sharply defined are the descriptions. Her literary skill gives her an advantage over the great majority of female travellers, whose diaries and journals, from want of it, are often bald, colourless, and diffuse. On the other hand, she is deficient in sympathy; she judges rather with the intellect than with the heart, which is at least as necessary to the formation of a fair and intelligent opinion. Her mind, however, is so keen and so incisive, so prompt to seize the most curious facts, so apt in discovering characteristic details, that even when she speaks of places and peoples with whom we are all familiar, she compels us to listen, and irresistibly holds our attention. It has been said that in some respects her manner is that of the elder Dumas, but while she is more honest and less given to exaggeration she does not rise to the same literary standard. The famous author of "Anthony" is still first master in the art, more difficult than the world in general believes it to be, of recording the experiences of travel; he is a master in it, because he does not make the attempt, which must always be unsuccessful, of minutely recording every particular that comes under a traveller's notice, and because he is gifted beyond ordinary measure with the art and *verve*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.