MEMORIES OF TRAVEL

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MEMORIES OF TRAVEL

BY

SIR THOMAS GRAHAM JACKSON, Bart., R.A.

When a Travailer returneth, let him not leave the Countries, where he hath Travailed, altogether behind him. BACON

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PREFACE

THESE stories of bygone travel have no connexion with one another, and were rather chosen from among many more for their variety.

Some of them go back to the middle of the last century, when, though the distance of time is not very great, the world was yet a different world; when there were no automobiles, and the motor-car had not yet searched out country lanes, and violated the seclusion of the English country village; when there were no chars-à-bancs to scour across and desecrate half a province in a forenoon; when Rome was still a grave quiet city, before her narrow streets were choked with huge tram-cars filling the air with the deafening clang of their gongs; when aviation was still an experiment, and the air had not yet become a general thoroughfare, exposing humble dwellers on earth to perils and annoyance from which there is no escape; and when the telephone and wireless telegraphy had not yet come to annihilate time and space.

To this quieter world one may look back with regret, while not undervaluing the present.

The following slight sketches do not pretend to be more than a selection from memories that recur in old age, recalling incidents of travel in happy days of youth and

middle life,—memories chequered with shadows of companions that have passed away.

Such as they are I venture to hope they will not be uninteresting as presenting scenes, possibly already known to the reader, from a different point of view.

T. G. J.

EAGLE HOUSE
WIMBLEDON
11 *November* 1923

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I

TRAVEL

BACON in his essay "Of Travaile" says "in the younger Sort it is a Part of Education: in the Elder, a Part of Experience": and considering the difficulties and risks of foreign travel in his day no doubt elderly people did wisely to stay at home and digest what they had learned abroad in their youth. Young men of good birth then travelled to enlarge their ideas by converse with foreign society. "That Young Men travaile under some Tutor, or grave Servant, I allow well," says Bacon, "So that he be such a one, that hath the Language, and hath been in the Country before; whereby he may be able to tell them, what Things are worthy to be seene in the Country where they goe; what Acquaintances they are to seeke; what Exercises or Discipline the place yieldeth." He goes on to give a long list of what should be observed, such as Courts of Princes, monuments, public buildings, antiquities and ruins, colleges and disputations and lectures, treasuries of jewels, cabinets and rarities, and whatever is memorable in the places they visit. "As for Triumphs; Masques; Feasts; Weddings; Funeralls; Capital Executions; and such Shewes; Men need not to be put in mind of them; Yet are they not to be neglected." Books about the country he visits should be taken by the traveller, and finally "Let him also keep a Diary." Many valuable suggestions follow: the need of knowing the language of the country visited; of making useful acquaintances there, and of keeping up a correspondence with them afterwards. But he warns the traveller against "changing his Country manners, for those of Forraigne Parts; But onely, (*let him*) prick in some Flowers, of that he hath Learned abroad, into

the Costomes of his owne Country." So Castiglione warns his travelled countrymen to avoid imitating the vivacity of the French, which is natural to them, but would be affectation in the Italian. Fynes Moryson, preaching similar caution to the English traveller, pushes his views to an extreme. After describing and apparently admiring the neatness of Italian manners at home and in their Inns, where "from morning to night the Tables are spread with white cloathes, strewed with flowers and fig-leaves," he says "at the Table they touch no meate with the hand, but with a forke of silver or other metall, each Man being served with his forke and spoone, and glasse to drinke." But he nevertheless recommends the English traveller returning home to "lay aside the spoone and forke of Italy, the affected gestures of France, and all strange apparel...for we are not all borne reformers of the World."

The caution against bringing foreign manners home is now superfluous, for educated people are pretty much alike at the present day in all civilized countries; but Bacon's other suggestions are still as useful as ever. To travel without knowing their language is to cut yourself off from real contact with the people you visit, of whom you would know no more when you came back than you did when you started. His list of things to be seen is tolerably complete, though public executions probably appeal less to the traveller's attention now than they seem to have done in his time. But travel on the lines he traces was real travel, pursued with an object, and as he says part of education. To go and play tennis or golf on the Riviera instead of in England, staying in smart hôtels with English habits and the comforts usual at home; where you never need speak any but your own language; hôtels which no native of the country would think of entering, or where if he did enter he would find himself all abroad,—this is not really to travel, but only to amuse yourself in the same way in one place rather than another—*Coelum non animum mutant.* We need not grudge this amusement to those who care for it, but let them not think

that while taking their homes and their amusements with them they have really been abroad.

It is the happy lot of the student of Art to have an object in his travels beyond that of mere amusement. He is or ought to be a traveller in earnest, and this is especially the case with the student of architecture. The monuments of architecture which concern him lie far and wide, often in remote country towns or villages, unknown to ordinary tourists, or scouted by them as impossible. For purpose of study time is necessary, often involving a stay of several days in rustic quarters. I have the pleasantest recollections of modest inns in remote country towns of France or Italy, of more primitive quarters in the Alps of Dauphiné, in Dalmatia or on the islands of the Adriatic, where I lived with the natives, as one of them, faring as they fared, and faring really better than one sometimes did in more pretentious hôtels with a show of conforming to English habits. The wise traveller will live as the people of the place live: they naturally know best how to live there.

At the end of a long and busy life I have put together in the following pages, memories of many travels in foreign parts, some serious, some that may be thought trivial, some in well-known places, others in places little known or quite unknown to ordinary tourists. I travelled mainly in the pursuit of architecture to study good examples and learn their lesson. What they have taught me I have already given to the Public, and have therefore avoided in what follows more than casual references to architecture. I propose to tell only the lighter incidents of travel, and such as arise from intercourse with the people of the places and countries visited. I have had no stirring adventures by land or sea and no serious difficulties to encounter. As Bacon advises I made many friends abroad, with whom I afterwards kept up correspondence; most of them, I say it with sadness, have since passed away. Also as Bacon suggests I generally kept a Diary, without which these pages could not have been written.

At the present day, when with more facile modes of getting about, men run to and fro on the earth, to an extent undreamed of by our forefathers, and vastly increased within living memory, it is not easy to realize the feeling of real travel which our fathers must have enjoyed. To leave Paris in the evening and awake at Basle is a very different thing from rolling like Ruskin in his youth slowly from stage to stage in the luxury of a private travelling carriage, or rattling along paved roads day and night from one great town to another in the coupé of a Diligence. Modern convenience of transport has half annihilated distance, as modern telegraphy and telephony have quite annihilated space. Travelling in the old deliberate way must have given a keen sense of distance from home, of dragging a lengthening chain, of being really in a foreign land and among a strange people, and this is a sensation that the modern traveller, whirled in a few hours from one end of a continent to the other, can never feel in the same way, and to the same extent.

I have heard old gentlemen of a generation older than mine, when railways were few, if any, describe their experience of travel by stage-coach. I remember Dr Lightfoot, Rector of Exeter College, Oxford, telling me how he used to come to the University from Devonshire by coach, wrapped in a box-coat, with his feet in straw to prevent their freezing. But travel in England in the middle of the last century, which is as far as my early recollections go back, was much the same as now, so far as communication by railway is concerned, though we had fewer comforts than are to be found in the modern railway carriage. Abroad, however, the difference between now and then is much greater. There are now, I imagine, few places in France that you cannot get to by rail, but in the sixties and seventies of the last century, if you left the main lines of railway there was nothing for it but the hired carriage or the lumbering Diligence. Of the latter I have suffered much and had large experience, for my visits to the continent, being for the

purpose of my profession, to study architecture, often took me far from the main lines of communication. Well do I remember those dusty, shabby, ponderous vehicles on which one had to depend, in my youthful days, with their intérieur, coupé, and banquette, their great leathern curtains, their piles of luggage on the top, and their punchy squealing grey horses with great cushions of indigo blue wool on their collars. Many a journey have I made by day and night in them, the bells on the horses' collars chiming merrily, and the Conducteur "youping," and cracking his whip right and left to give due éclat to his passage through the villages. One saw a good deal of country life, many pretty places, and when the coach stopped to change horses or for a hasty meal, our youthful ardour carried us with a rush to the church of town or village where we even snatched a sketch or two of window, tower, or perhaps only the ancient iron-work on a door. It was uncomfortable enough even in the coupé, which was the first-class part of the concern, for it was surmounted by the banquette, which came down so low that you could hardly sit upright. One grumbled at the time, and complained of what I remember an old lady on taking her seat pronounced to be *un drôle de voiture*, and yet at this distance of time one cherishes the recollection;

et haec olim meminisse juvabit.

Now the Diligence may survive in some remote corners of France, but for the ordinary tourist it is non-existent, as extinct as the Dodo or the Great Auk.

Paris is not France, nor is the luxurious hôtel prepared for foreigners, to which you bring as it were your country with you, the place to learn anything of the country and people you are visiting. It is in remote rural places, in the unfrequented town, in the rustic inn, that you really come into contact with the people, and if you do not get to know them, and make friends with them, it will be your own fault. But this takes time and leisure, and is

not to be done by the scampering tourist, who rushes through a country in his motor-car, and who might as well have stayed at home and seen it all in a cinema. It is the good fortune of an artist to have to stay at each place of interest to study and sketch what he finds there, and to me the people one mixed with were as interesting and attractive as their architecture.

Rapid locomotion when there is some real need for it is no doubt one of the blessings of modern life: but when there is no such need of hurry it would seem to be a disease, under which the victims who have caught it are not always happy. I remember some Americans coming up when I was sitting at a sketch in Loches, and saying how delightful it must be to be able to sit quietly and enjoy a place as I was doing. Apparently there was nothing to prevent them from doing the same; but I knew they possessed, or rather were possessed by, a motor-car, which like an evil incubus insisted on their keeping it in perpetual motion, and forbad them ever to rest.

During the sixty years, and more, that I have known France she has gone through two great wars, one disastrous, the other victorious, and has changed her government from an empire to a republic, and these stupendous events have had an effect on the national character that is unmistakeable. The changes that have befallen Italy are not less important. When I first visited that country Lombardy had been freed from the foreigner by the French and Sardinian victories of Magenta and Solferino, and the treaty of Villafranca; but the Austrians were still in Venetia and the quadrilateral. Since then Austria has become the mere shadow of a great name; Italy has achieved her unity, and has lately advanced her frontier beyond the Trentino and the Italian Tyrol. The effect of these changes on the character of the people, however, is not so observable in Italy as in France. In the latter country the people strike one who has known them of old as having grown

graver, and more serious, and they seem to have lost their national gaiety. They were certainly more cheerful and lively under the second empire. One cannot help noticing the difference in the company at the inns of the country towns. Formerly the *table d'hôte* was a scene of merriment: the long table was filled every day by *commis-voyageurs*, or bagmen, who came and went but all knew one another from going the same round, and by clerks from the banks, or what the Italians would call *impiegati* from the public offices, who were *abonnés*, or diners on a regular subscription. They all knew one another, and there was a buzz of talk and laughter, and if you stayed a day or two in the hôtel you did not fail to make acquaintance with some of them. In later years I have dined at the same inns where I remember these jolly gatherings, and I found everything changed: the diners sat some of them at separate tables, some at the long table but at distances apart from one another: nobody spoke to his neighbour, they sat and ate in silence as we do in England. I noticed too a great change in the cafés, not in Paris or the great provincial cities so much as in the smaller country towns. Formerly they would be filled till late in the evening with half the male population of the place, friend meeting friend over a social cup or glass, or playing dominoes or billiards. Last year I was at Dreux, a town with a fine old church, and a delightfully picturesque Hôtel de Ville, standing like a great tower in the middle of the street. After dinner we agreed to go to the café where we should find some people, which would be amusing. But when we got there it was a desert. Two waiters stood idle, and when we asked what had become of the company they said nobody came now in the evening, nor much after five o'clock, and it was of little use keeping the place open. It had been so, they said, since the war; life had become hard, and the people had no spirit left for what they called "effervescence." It was the same thing at Blois, where at eight in the evening, formerly the busiest time, all the cafés were closed. It would seem that the same thing has

been happening even in Paris, for to-day's *Times*[1] reports the closing of many famous cafés on the boulevards during the last quarter of a century, the place of some being taken by banks, of one by a tailor's shop, and of another by a cinema.

A few years ago, but before the late war, I revisited a place in Burgundy that I had known forty years earlier, and the change in French temperament that had taken place during the interval was very noticeable.

In 1867 I was one of a party consisting of three architects and a glass-painter, bent on visiting Vezelay in Burgundy with its famous abbey, a daughter of Cluny, founded in 1089, where according to Viollet-le-Duc pointed architecture began, and where the first attempt was made to cover a vast nave with a stone roof. Vezelay then lay, and I daresay still lies, at some distance from a railway. We arrived at the nearest station, which, if I remember rightly, was Nuit sous Ravières, late one evening, and set out for the village hostelry where we were told a conveyance might be obtained to take us to our destination. We were shown into an untidy room, half sitting-room and half bedroom, where it was rather disconcerting to find the mistress of the establishment in bed. Worse still, when we had with some diffidence explained the purpose of our intrusion, Madame to our dismay, in order to give effect to our wishes, threw back the bed-clothes, and began to get up. The situation was delicate, but our blushes were spared, and proprieties saved, when it appeared that Madame had all her day-time clothes on, even down to her boots. In due time a carriage was provided and we set out. By the time we reached Vezelay, and began to climb the mighty hill on which the great church and the little town stand, it was night; but the moon shone brilliantly, and after establishing ourselves in the inn at the entrance of the town, it was impossible to resist the temptation to follow the little street to

[1] June 13, 1923.

the crest of the hill, and to see the object of our visit by moonlight.

Our quarters were primitive: on entry you had to avoid knocking your head against the hams that hung in the passage; but the fare was good as it always is in an unsophisticated French establishment, not corrupted by foreign visitors. I remember at breakfast the hot milk was brought in a tureen, and we helped ourselves to our coffee with a ladle. In the evening the inn was frequented as a café by residents in the town which gave it an air of society. Brandy was dispensed by the *maître d'hôtel* from some curious flat-sided bottles formed like a ring with a neck and foot, and a hole from side to side through the middle. One of these, now in my possession, is prettily decorated with ribs of blue glass. The landlord said they were very old, and that he once had fifteen of them, but only two then remained.

Vezelay even exceeded our expectations, and occupied us several days; and below the hill was another church, S. Père sous Vezelay, with an unfinished narthex, and a beautiful tower and spire which demanded a sketch.

My companions went on to Avallon, our next point of interest, while I had to wait for a remittance from Paris, for no one at Vezelay would look at a letter of credit, and very likely they regarded me with suspicion for trying to pass it. Having exhausted Vezelay, and being left with nothing to do, I walked over one day to see how my friends were faring at Avallon, accompanied by Rigaloup the hôtel dog who had attached himself to me. I found my friends at *déjeuner*, where I joined them. The table was full of the usual company, very merry and noisy. A stalwart maid with an armful of plates was dealing them out like a pack of cards as she walked round the table, exchanging badinage with the company. Returning presently with a smoking dish, which she announced to be *du lapin*, it was welcomed with derisive shouts of *chat, chat*. They all knew Rigaloup, and showed us his trick of jumping up

and fetching a penny off the window-sill. It was all very good-humoured and amusing, and Rigaloup and I had a pleasant walk back in the cool of the evening.

Some forty years elapsed before I saw Avallon again, and stayed at the same hostelry where this festive scene, which I well remembered, had been enacted. But everything was changed. What had become of the gaiety of the *table d'hôte*? Everything was dull and quiet. Nobody spoke, and it was hard to believe that the jovial crew of yore was represented by the silent party of to-day.

Many instances of French gaiety in those now far-off days recur to the memory. Before Vezelay and Avallon we had been at Auxerre. We arrived late and I well remember the cathedral tower seen by the light of a fitful moon, obscured every minute by clouds that raced across her "upon the night's starr'd face." During our visit there was a wedding, and the hôtel was the scene of the wedding festivities. The bridegroom was an employé or official in some public office in the town, and the friends of the happy couple mustered in force. The civil marriage was duly performed, and was followed by the more splendid ceremony in the cathedral, after which the whole party came to the hôtel for the *déjeuner*, which was given in the salle à manger, we visitors being accommodated elsewhere. The company was mixed; among guests in full evening dress, were men in blouses and women in frilled white caps. The feasting was high and prolonged, for when we came back in the evening after our work the merry-making was still in full swing. We dined and went up to our rooms, but Marie the maid came rushing up to say we must certainly come down and see the fun:

Est-ce qu'on s'amuse, Marie?
Mais oui, Monsieur, on s'amuse beaucoup.

So we went down, and found the table cleared, the younger folk dancing on the brick floor, and the elders sitting round the wall. The bride was going about handing sweetmeats, of which we

partook, wishing her all health and happiness in her married life. Screams of laughter reached us from the kitchen, where the servants were making merry too. The cook, an old man in his white costume and cap, and an old woman were playing at cock-fighting, sitting on the floor *vis-à-vis* clasping their knees, with a stick across under their hams, trying to tip each other backwards with their toes. Everybody was in fits of laughter, when a door at the end of the room at the top of some steps opened, and there, framed against the outer darkness, stood the solemn figure of the *maître d'hôtel*, like the commendatore in *Don Giovanni*. The laughing crowd fled in confusion, while the two old performers on the floor scrambled to their feet and made their escape as best they could.

Auxerre proved full of interest, both to the architects of the party and to the glass-painter, James Powell of Whitefriars, who revelled in the fine painted glass in which the cathedral abounds. There were other churches of scarcely less interest, and we paid a visit to Pontigny, a severe Cistercian Abbey, with memories of Becket in his exile, where the student can learn the lesson that ornament is not necessary to fine architecture, but that beauty of a very high order may be reached by simple proportion, graceful outline, and chaste restraint.

These memories, of things trifling, but not without significance, go back to the time of Napoleon III, before the Franco-German war of 1870. The change in French temperament, I think, began after that disastrous event, which gave a more serious colour to French life. The Agadir incident also is said to have had a great effect in stiffening the French temper. My observation of the change, founded on the casual experiences of travel, is confirmed by residents with whom I have conversed, and by men who know the country better than I can pretend to do. The Germans in the late war expected to march into Paris with no more trouble than they had encountered in 1870, and were astonished to find the difference. "These are not the same people we had to do with last

time," they are reported to have said, a truth which was confirmed by the *ne passeront pas* of Verdun and the final event of the war.

The changes that Italy has undergone since I have known the country are not less remarkable than those that France has experienced; but it is more difficult to trace their effect on the national character. Italian life is more retired, and the people are less demonstrative, and a stranger has less opportunity of observation. But the political changes that have taken place are momentous. At my first visit to Italy in 1864 she was still in the throes of political convulsions. Victor Emmanuel had been king for four years, but Bourbon intrigues and outbreaks were constant; the Pope, supported by France, still ruled in Rome; Austria was still in Venetia; and the old kingdom of Naples was rife with brigandage fomented by the Bourbon ex-king Francis II. In that very year an Englishman, Mr Moens, was captured by brigands at Paestum, and held to a ransom of £5000 from May till August. Letters I received from home contained cuttings from *The Times* with reports of acts of brigandage, and warnings to be cautious. Since then the country has become tolerably safe at all events from organized brigandage on a large scale, but in 1880 I was warned against going about alone in the Roman Campagna. "If you were seen going several times to the same place alone, you would be watched, the shepherds are very poor, and some of them might band together and rob you." In 1896 my wife and I had a charming walk in the woods at Albano, where we were met by two mounted carabinieri. Further on, to our surprise, we met two more; and before we came down to Ariccia we encountered two others on foot. Asking the meaning of these precautions at the hôtel we were told a *forestiere* had been stopped and robbed. They tried to pass it off as a joke,—*fatto in burla*,—but on our return to Rome we were told that we had been very imprudent. In that same year Tiburzi, a famous brigand in Tuscany near Orbetello, was shot by carabinieri after a successful

career of twenty-two years of brigandage and blackmailing, during which he boasted of having shot seventeen men and of having several times visited Rome and other towns with impunity. It would appear that to an Italian this insecurity of country life seems a natural and inevitable state of things, if I may judge from the remark of an Italian gentleman who had lived the greater part of his life in England. When I lamented the impossibility of being able to walk about alone in some of the most attractive parts of Italy, he replied, "But surely you would never think of doing so in country places in England, for instance in Wiltshire!"

Whether the south of Italy is now as safe or as dangerous as Wiltshire I will not venture to say, but in North Italy one would never dream of danger, and may move about with the security of England.

Now Italy is happily united with Rome as her capital, and the districts of the Trentino and the Italian Tyrol, and lastly Istria and Trieste, always "più Italiano degli Italiani," are added to the kingdom: she has nothing left to wish for from outside, and has only the serious task of consolidating into a compact nation the various elements of which it is composed.

II

DAUPHINÉ

1876

II

Dauphiné

1876

I had been reading Mr Gilly's *Narrative of an excursion to the mountains of Piedmont, with an account of the Vaudois or Waldenses*, and also Mr Hugh Dyke Acland's book on the Vaudois, with the story of their *glorieuse rentrée* in 1689, the splendid recovery of their native valleys, from which they had been expelled by atrocious persecution; and I thought it would be interesting to visit that little known district, and to see the Protestant valleys and the descendants of the gallant people who enlisted the sympathy and aid of Cromwell, and inspired one of Milton's finest sonnets.

I left Lyons in September, 1876, intending to visit on my way the Grande Chartreuse, to see something of the higher Alps of Dauphiné, and to cross by Briançon and the pass of Mont Genêvre to Susa in Italy, whence there were easy passes over the mountains to the Vaudois valleys. A short stage from Lyons brought the Alps into view and the sun from a cloudless sky lit up brilliantly several snow-clad peaks. At Voreppe I left the railway for the Diligence that ran to S. Laurent-des-Ponts within five or six miles of the Grande Chartreuse. We had to climb a low mountain pass, and besides three horses abreast we required a leader. The splinter-bar had to be tied on with cordage to the poles, for want of a ring and a hook, and before we had got very far the rope harness gave way. The language of the worthy old fellow who drove us was frightful. While busy mending the fracture with string and a pocket-knife he rolled out his R's with prodigious effect.

"*Sacré-é-é-é nom de Dieu!*" he exclaimed till he was tired, when he substituted "*Sacré-é-é-é nom de Diable!*" An old gentleman in the coupé reproved him.

"The name," said he, "should be respected."

"The name, Monsieur?"

"The name of God."

"Ah! yes. *Sacré-é-é-é nom d'un polisson d'une boucle*," said he with much satisfaction, at having hit off the proper object of his maledictions.

The scenery was fine, bare white crags above, rich velvety pastures below, and woods of chestnut and walnut clothing the hillsides. Arrived at the top of the pass we lost sight of the valley of the Isère, and reached S. Laurent-des-Ponts in the next valley after dark. An old gentleman, an engineer engaged on the repair of the roads, with whom I had a *tête-à-tête* dinner, told me the monks at the Chartreuse are very rich, and that the profit of the liqueur "Chartreuse," which they make, amounts to a million francs yearly; but that I found it hard to believe. Most of the monks, he said, were men of property and amongst them was a Russian prince and a general.

Knapsack on back, early next morning in brilliant weather I started for the climb up to the convent. At Fourvoirie where are some iron-works, which I reached after passing M. Biron my friend of the night before, engaged in superintending the building of some limekilns, the valley contracts into a narrow gorge leaving barely room for the stream and the road. The latter in fact passes through some tunnels. From this point upwards the scenery is beautiful; there are white crags above but below it is soft and delicious, not grand and frightful as the "desert of S. Bruno" has been described. At one point an immense needle of rock starts up and nearly blocks the way, and here till some seventeen years before had been a gate beyond which no woman was allowed to pass.

The convent is an immense rambling mass of rather picturesque

buildings with enormously high slated roofs grouped together not unpleasingly. It stands where the valley slightly widens out, forming not exactly a plain, but a less steep incline. Here in 1084 S. Bruno founded the Carthusian Order and this convent, the mother of all the Carthusian monasteries, or Charter-houses, throughout the world. The rule of life is severe. The monks never leave their cells but for the church services, or when once a week they are allowed to walk on the mountains. At the Certosa of Pavia I remember their weekly walk was in the great cloister. On Sundays and fête-days they meet to dine together in Hall but without speaking. Except in church, and at the weekly relaxation, their life passes in silence. The cells are placed round the great cloister. Those I had seen at the Certosa, which these resemble, are little four-roomed houses, each with its little garden, and the inmate receives his meals through a hatch next the entrance door. The General of the Order lives at the Grande Chartreuse, and though the establishment had been plundered at the Revolution there were still at the time of my visit forty monks in white, called Pères, twenty servitors called Frères in brown and sixty servants.

A knock at the gate brought a monk in white, with beard and shaven head, who told me I could lodge in the convent for the night, and passed me on to another monk across the courtyard from whom I learned that there would be dinner for visitors at six o'clock. My cell was a little more than nine feet long, and a little less in width, and besides the bed and bedding, which looked clean, contained a rather dirty deal table on which was the washing apparatus, consisting of an ewer of the size of a beer-jug, and a pudding-basin. There was a crucifix on the wall, and a cheap print of the Virgin Mary, with the invocation "O immaculate Virgin cover us with thy protection and we shall triumph over our enemy." Beside it was a little vessel intended for holy water, but full of dust. A simple *prie-Dieu* below the crucifix was plentifully

inscribed, as indeed were the walls, with the names of visitors, my predecessors.

My window commanded a view of the church, an ugly building in an imitation Gothic style. The Frère, my conductor, who is dispensed from the rule of silence, took me to a gallery, from which I looked down on the brethren at their service, dimly seen behind a rood-screen.

I went round the building with a party consisting chiefly of priests and theological students. From one dreary chapel we went to another, all gloomy and whitewashed, with vile ornament, and statuary that would have disgraced a waxwork show. We passed down corridors of prodigious length, sloping with the natural incline of the hill. All was grim and cold and whitewashed like a prison. In one corridor were some rude paintings of various Charter-houses, the Certosa of Pavia among them; but the pictures were too late to include that of London. The great chapter-house of the order is meanly panelled, and on the inclined border of the ceiling are portraits of Generals of the Order, which are continued in an adjoining chamber. A vast cloister surrounds the cemetery, where clumsy stone crosses mark the graves of the Generals of the Order, replacing others destroyed at the Revolution. A simple cross of thin wood which soon perishes marks the resting-place of the monk. Adjoining is the Chapel of the Dead, gloomily hung with black and decorated with death's-heads and crossbones, and over the door is a ghastly figure of Death, with fleshless skull, joining his bony fingers in the attitude of prayer, a cheerful object presented by a certain Count, whose munificence is recorded on a grateful tablet below. The cloister, which seemed of the fifteenth century, is the only surviving part of the mediaeval convent; the rest of the buildings being of the seventeenth century or even later.

The most comfortable place in the building was the library which, though its principal treasures have been taken to Grenoble, has still shelves well filled with books above and below a gallery

which runs round the room. Here sat the Father Librarian clad in white with his cowl over his head sticking up in a grotesque peak, busily engaged in dusting a ponderous folio. The monks do not come here to read, but take the books to their cells.

At six o'clock a bell summoned us to dinner in one of the numerous halls which the building possesses, called the Hall of France, the Hall of Provence, the Hall of Aquitaine, the Hall of Germany and so on. We laymen dined in the Hall of France, the clerical visitors dining elsewhere. Whether they fared better than we did I do not know, but our repast was to say the least of it frugal. There were eleven of us, ten Frenchmen and myself: no woman of course ever sets foot in the convent. The room was very bare of furniture, looked dingy and dirty, and was floored with stone: a petroleum lamp hanging from the ceiling dimly lit up the table, and we waited on ourselves with the occasional help of a stout and stupid lad in a blouse and apron. We began with a rather good soup of vegetables floating in a kind of white gruel: then came a dish of tench rather nasty and muddy-flavoured, which was followed by an omelette, and then some fried potatoes and salad were put on the table. We sat looking at them for some time till the potatoes got cold, before we realized that nothing more was coming. However, the fare was good of its kind and I dined well enough, but the company began to make fun of the whole proceeding, not in the best taste, for after all we had been treated to the regular Carthusian fare, no meat ever being eaten within those walls. To finish up with, Chartreuse liqueur, green and yellow, was handed round.

Returning to my cell I wandered down the vast corridor to see how a convent looked by night. At each end of the passage swung a petroleum lamp, looking like a star in the distance. My footsteps alone broke the silence. I turned into another corridor which led to the gallery of the church and here there was no light at all. The gallery door opened and a ghostly black figure glided silently out.

Groping along the wall I found the door and entered the gallery. The church was dark but for a single lamp, that threw into relief the rood and the figures of St John and the Virgin on the screen. In another chapel to which the lights attracted me I found the sixty workmen of the convent on their knees while a monk in brown, with a candle at his elbow, read out the catalogue of saints, the congregation repeating "Ora pro nobis" after each name. Creeping back in the dark to my cell, I began to write up notes of my travel, but was surprised by a knock on the door, and outside I found a lad making strange signs with his fingers and holding my boots in his hand. He touched me on the breast and then touched the boots pretending to be brushing them, and then held up two fingers in the form of a V, finally touching himself on the breast. By this I understood that he would clean my boots for two sous. I took for granted that he was like his masters under a vow of silence, but he undeceived me by putting out his tongue and touching his ear, by which I perceived that he was a Carthusian of nature's making, deaf and dumb. I agreed to his moderate terms, and he soon reappeared with the boots blacked and his fingers in the form of a Y, and went away happy with two sous in his pocket.

At eleven the convent bell—how poetical and romantic does that sound!—clanged out a few notes, startling in the general silence, to summon the fraternity to the last service of the day, and I found my way again to the gallery. But there was little to see or hear: the church was dimly lit by a few lamps and when I came in two monks were walking up and down with tapers in their hands. I soon went back to bed.

A visit to the Grande Chartreuse in the hope of being touched with a feeling of poetry and romance will end in disappointment. On the whole this monastery, with its constant flow of visitors from mere curiosity, its public table, its lodging for tourists, and its bill next morning, not to speak of its liqueur factory with enor-

mous profits, is after all a rather commonplace affair. It has none of the charm of its *filia pulchrior*, the Certosa of Pavia. The interior is dull and forbidding, the architectural ornament disgusting. For the brethren shut up in their cloister the life must be a severe reality, but as for the monks in white and brown who are dispensed from the vow of silence, and receive and conduct the tourists, they seem part of the show, got up to give the proper local colour to the scene.

Next morning after paying my modest score, which including a tip to the servant only amounted to six francs, I caught the six o'clock Diligence for Grenoble.

From Grenoble I started for the Alps of Dauphiné, and the route to Italy by Briançon and the pass of Mont Genêvre. The weather was splendid, and the sun almost intolerably hot as I waited on the pavement while the huge shabby rickety Diligence which was to take me to Bourg d'Oisans, my first halting-place, was being packed with luggage. At Vizille we reached the hills, and penetrated the valley of the Romanche, which is narrow and liable to be swept by avalanches, at the end of which was the great mass of the Grandes Rousses, seamed with glaciers, and crowned with perpetual snow. The main road had been carried away by the Romanche which in wet weather becomes a dangerous torrent, and we had to cross to the other bank where was a fair country road, and then after a few miles to come back again. We entered Bourg d'Oisans after dark. The rope harness had broken as usual on the way, and led to the usual bad language.

At Bourg d'Oisans I stayed a few days to sketch in the neighbourhood. My quarters at the Hôtel de Milan were rustic, but none the less pleasant for that. M. Martin, the landlord, in white cap, apron and shirt-sleeves presided at a large flat cooking apparatus in a kitchen open to the street like a blacksmith's shop; Madame helped him, and Mademoiselle waited on the company. I dined well on dishes artfully prepared by my host, who was the

best of cooks, and served up trout fresh from the stream to perfection. In the careless ordered garden flowers and vegetables grew together in wild profusion. On one side was a low wall washed by the swift glassy stream, to which presently Mademoiselle would come, and tripping down the steps fill the caraffe for my breakfast table with water pure and cold from its native glacier.

Leaving my portmanteau to be forwarded by Diligence to Briançon I started to explore the Val S. Christophe which leads up to the highest mountains of France, and indeed some of the highest in the Alps. A stiff climb brought me to the Lac de Lovitel which lies of a deep greenish indigo blue high up in a hollow of the mountain near the foot of the glaciers. The pastures were gay with meadow saffron, and Alpine rhododendron, then turning to the crimson with which the whole mountain would shortly be ablaze. Grasshoppers sprang up in clouds before my feet, flying five or six yards, some with splendid crimson wings, others ashen blue with a beautiful black stripe. The village of La Dauchette which I passed through on my way up was a good example of a mountain hamlet. There was a miserable little church, a mere room with a bell-cot; within which a few women and children were kneeling, listening to the monotonous chant of a priest, and one of them still kneeling pulled the door open to see who was passing. The châlets were niched into the steep hillside in steps one above another, the upper part of the roof filled with hay and straw, the front festooned with haricot beans to dry. Sometimes you had to scale a rock to reach the door, at others the eaves were almost level with the roadway. Through them ran the steep mule-track deep in filth indescribable. At the door of a simple *auberge* all the male population was met for gossip, to whom I talked sitting on a stone to eat my roll, dipping it into a basin of goat's milk with which they provided me. I found several of them had travelled: one of them had a brother who had been in England as a purveyor of plants from France.

Regaining the valley I made for the village of Venosc, where I was to pass the night. A road was being made up the Val S. Christophe which was finished as far as the village of Bourgderade below Venosc; probably it has long ago been carried to the end of the valley. Venosc lies high up on the mountain side above the road and is reached by a winding mule-track paved with rude boulders of rock over which I floundered in the dusk. The village when I reached it was not much better than La Dauchette. A lad whom I met offered to guide me to the inn kept by Pacquet. He said, to my surprise, there were two other inns in Venosc, and recommended La Balme because they kept chickens. As for Pacquet he thought there might be a piece of mutton there but was not sanguine about it. But the company at La Balme was noisy, and I turned in to Pacquet's hostelry opposite.

From a dirty dining-room, where three or four men were finishing their meal, I was shown to my bedroom which contained three huge wooden beds, box-shaped, four feet high, with patchwork quilts. On the table were glasses and an empty wine-bottle, relics of a past carouse. The floor was filthy, and there was no washing apparatus, a deficiency which, when I explained my wants, was supplied by a large copper basin from the kitchen. Pacquet and his wife were very nice civil people, and I dined at one end of the table, with the washing apparatus at the other, and had even the bit of mutton about which my guide had been incredulous. The bedding was clean and comfortable, though the linen was as coarse as canvas, and the mattress and pillow were stuffed with straw.

Next morning while waiting for breakfast I strolled about the little village street. Up and down the road, which is practically a staircase, having steps across to break the steep incline, passed mules with pretty head-dresses of knotted cords and tassels, red, blue and tawny white, carrying pack-saddles loaded with hay from the meadows above, where the peasants were getting in a second crop. Every one, man, woman and child, wanted to know whence

I came and whither I was going. A little urchin not much higher than my knee, and nearly as broad as he was long, stood in the middle of the path, and challenged me, *M'sieur, d'où venez vous?* after which he trudged by my side to the churchyard where I left him caressing with his hand a smooth polished gravestone. As an Englishman I was asked to examine the mouth of a mule, and felt that I sank in public estimation when I confessed I did not know the marks of the teeth. I ventured however to criticize the animal's hocks, and my remarks were received with deference. For fear of being detected as an impostor, I did not pursue the subject. One man told me he was in the habit of going to America as a gardener with plants and seeds which he bought at Paris and Angers, and sold in America. He was to sail again next month.

The church at Venosc, though simple, has some interesting features with a twelfth-century tower.

Descending rapidly to Bourgderade where the road ended, I crossed the foaming Veneon, which drains the Val S. Christophe, falling into the turbulent Romanche near Bourg d'Oisans, and found the rude mule-track which leads up the valley to La Berarde at the head of it. The glen was wild and broken, and the sides were strewn with huge rocks covered gloriously with lichens; above were frowning precipices, and below was the roaring torrent chafing itself into foam over its rocky bed. Climbing steeply upwards the track enters a dismal desert, between immense mountains with shelving bases of moraine many hundred feet high that meet in the middle of the valley where the torrent eats its way through them. Two hours' stiff walking upwards brings you to the village of S. Christophe high up on the left hand where the valley widens out, and the sides and bottom are covered with vegetation. Numerous little hamlets are dotted about on the sides of the valley, some at a great height. From S. Christophe, where I found a very decent inn, it is a walk of about three hours to La Berarde. An immense mountain, marked on the map as Tête de la Fêtoule,

with its glaciers seems to close the valley. At Champhorent you descend once more to the bottom of the valley and enter a glen more desolate and savage than any part of the road, and here you come in view of Les Ecrins, the highest mountain in France, reaching to 4103 metres, or 13,462 feet. The latter part of the way is less barren: bushes grow scantily along the river among huge boulders of rock, and the path winds among them on pleasant green sward. There was an indescribable sweetness in these little bits of straggling copse, with the river on one side, the hoary rocks scattered among the trees, and the frowning mountains and ice-fields above, all increasing the loveliness of the path by contrast with the gloom and terror around. The setting sun at my back shone full on the enormous mountains at the head of the valley up the sides of which the shadows stole slowly as the sun declined.

At La Berarde I understood quarters for the night were to be found, which were sometimes occupied by members of the Alpine Club. The place is a mere cluster of nine squalid huts, situated on a hill of moraine at the end of the Val S. Christophe, which here splits into two short valleys, that run up till the glaciers fill them. One of the châlets which was a little tidier than the rest I rightly conjectured to belong to Rodier, with whom I was to lodge, and I saw Rodier himself just going in. The general living-room of the family into which I followed him had walls and ceiling black with the smoke of many generations, and the floor, half of rough stone, and half laid with filthy boards, was littered with cooking pots and pans. A small window lit the interior dismally when the door was shut, and a miserable spark of fire smouldered in an immense hearth, over which cowered a decrepit old man, who received me with true French politeness. Rodier himself, a strong active man, had long been known as the only guide to these mountains, but he was no longer in his prime, and had now a younger rival, one Gaspard of S. Christophe. The huts are built against and into the moraine of stone and earth so that the upper floor opens backwards

on a level with the hill behind. My bedroom on the upper floor was reached by an outside stair; it was a little cabin of a place, accessible through a loft filled with hay and fodder for the winter consumption of the cattle. There were two iron beds, evidently prepared for a superior class of visitors, and four more stood in an adjoining apartment.

There was no meat to be had; no fish; only potatoes, milk, eggs, and ham. The latter was raw and disgusting; but with bread and eggs, boiled milk, and very fair ordinary wine I managed to satisfy nature during my stay. The room where I ate was parted off from the kitchen by boards, and just held a long table with a bench on each side. Rodier's wife came to eat her supper with me, and I got her to give me an account of their life in this strange place.

La Berarde stands 5702 feet above the sea, and is surrounded by great mountains rising from 6000 to 8000 feet higher, and its climate can be imagined. The winter lasts from six to seven months, from November to April or even into May. The snow lies from five to six feet deep and for three weeks or a month the village is quite cut off from the world. Even if the snow permitted, it would be unsafe to go beyond the hamlet on account of the avalanches, which sweep the valley from side to side. During this dreary time Madame said the women knitted stockings, and the men tended the cattle and sheep which were housed in rude thatched stables adjoining the houses. The granaries were stored in the autumn with hay, corn, and straw, and the foliage of birches, which when I was there the peasants were stripping from the trees, sickle in hand, leaving them mere naked stumps. Should anyone die during this dreadful season, no grave could be dug in the frozen soil, and the body had to lie in the little chapel till spring thawed the ground, and a priest could be brought from S. Christophe.

Only twice or thrice in the year did the priest come to visit La Berarde and to say mass in their little chapel. There was no school and in winter one of the men undertook to teach the children.

Many of the grown-up people could neither read nor write, nor could Madame Rodier herself do so. The children looked hale and hearty, but the hardship of the life in such a place aged them prematurely; and those who were really old looked broken and pinched with privation.

They did not seem, however, to be badly off. Here as elsewhere in France every man had his bit of land, and the communal land, in this case the whole of the mountains, was free to them to run their flocks and herds upon. Formerly they had a hard time, but "now," said Madame Rodier, "with the run of the mountains they do very well." Fruits of course will not ripen here, but they get their corn harvested in June, and sow the land again soon after. The blade at the time of my visit was three or four inches out of the ground.

Leaving my dining-room to go to bed, I had to pass through the kitchen. Here was Rodier with his father and his sons at supper, sitting at a sort of dresser by the window, covered with pots and pans, and scraps of uninviting looking food, chiefly potatoes. The only light was given by a little oil lamp, precisely one of the little clay things that are found in Roman tombs, giving about as much illumination as a bad night-light. It is certainly a hard life they lead at La Berarde.

"Ah! Monsieur," said one of the villagers to me that afternoon, "it is a miserable country you have come to see."

"And yet," said I, "it is a magnificent and beautiful country."

"Ah! indeed.—I find it ugly enough."

I went next day farther up the valley, which was rather gay with flowers, and on to the glacier at the head of it to make a sketch. The sight was wonderful: mountains of ice, waves of ice, precipices of ice, broken, tossed, and upheaved in all directions mounting thousands of feet upwards, and stretching miles upon miles away up the glen. The awful solitude of the place was very impressive; there was no sight or sound of life; nothing was to be heard but

the distant rush of a waterfall, the trickling of a thousand little rills that ran off the melting surface of the ice, and now and then the splash of a stone that fell into some half-frozen pool. But it was so cold especially when a wind blew that I could not sit at my sketch very long.

On my return I found a French gentleman with two guides whom he had brought from Chamounix. They had been trying for two days to ascend Les Ecrins. Last night they had slept under a rock somewhere at the foot of the glaciers, for the ascent takes two days from La Berarde, but they were unable to go farther on account of mist and snow.

I had imagined that these valleys of Dauphiné were full of Protestants, but I found the Protestant communities were farther south, principally in the Val Queyras, which was the scene of Felix Neff's pastorate. Rodier's wife says "Ah! they are fine folk those Protestants. Here we are all Catholics, but what of that? They are fine folk. Catholic or Protestant, what does it signify? Everyone to his own religion, I say, *Chacun à sa religion*."

These tolerant opinions, I suppose, come from living three hours' walk away from the priest.

"There were five English gentlemen once staying here," she went on to say, "and they were all Protestants. Ah! they were good. They prayed. At every meal they said their prayer first. What does it matter? Catholic or Protestant? *Chacun à sa religion*."

Next day I was up at half-past five and started off down the valley after a hasty breakfast of bread, hot milk and coffee, turning my back on La Berarde with regret. A more interesting place, in its humble way, than this hamlet of rude stone walls and thatched roofs it would be hard to find. It is now forty-seven years since I saw the Val S. Christophe, and I wonder whether in the meanwhile it has been converted into an Andermatt or a Hospenthal, with gigantic hôtels and a summer pension at so much a head per week. For Dauphiné has all the attractions of Switzerland, and

only wants roads and good hôtels to bring visitors. However, I am glad to have seen it in its primitive simplicity.

I lunched at S. Christophe and stayed three hours for a sketch. At half-past three I reached Venosc, and found I had just time before dark to cross the Col de Mont Lans, an easy pass leading into the valley of the Romanche and the high road to Briançon. Halfway up the pass I fell in with a lad who carried my knapsack the rest of the way to the top. Here was a hamlet where I got a delicious draught of fresh milk, for which, as usual, the people would take no payment. The top of the pass was a level plain of delightful elastic turf. Is there elsewhere such pleasant springy walking as that afforded by these Alpine pastures? Mont de Lans, on the other side, halfway down the descent, is a picturesque village with a church that has a twelfth-century tower and spire of the local type; but it was getting dark, and I dared not stay to examine it. Afraid that the daylight would fail me, I raced down the remainder of the way, and night had set in before I reached the bottom of the valley and gained the inn at Le Dauphin on the road to Briançon, comfortably tired out, having made the descent from the top of the pass in an hour and a half.

From here to Le Monestier I walked next day, a distance of twenty-three miles along the high road which was dull enough after the mountains. It would have been better to have taken a carriage, for I arrived at Le Monestier, after crossing the Col du Lauteret, dead lame with an inflamed heel, the result of the too hurried scramble down the Mont de Lans pass the day before. The scenery on the way was superb. At La Grave, where I lunched, there is an interesting church which has a twelfth-century tower with spire and pinnacles and a polygonal apse with arcaded cornice and slender colonnettes at the exterior angles. Le Monestier also has an early church with a fine tower and a spire; and at the angles the same peculiar pinnacles as those at the Abbey of Ainay in Lyons, resembling the ears at the corners of a sarcophagus.

Next morning my landlord drove me the ten miles into Briançon, which lies at the bottom of a valley among lofty mountains, with many forts on surrounding heights. He had lived in Australia for nine years where he had a partnership in a brewery, which he sold in order to return to his beloved France, and he could talk English. He told me the mountainous country of this part of France, and right away to Valence and the Rhone, forms the great sheep pasture-land of France. The waste lands belong to the Communes, and each inhabitant pays something per head for the right to run his cattle or sheep on the mountains from May till October, when they are brought down, that the pasturage may rest till the next spring. Then the stock is allowed to range over the cultivated land in the valley, regardless of private ownership, the cows having the first fortnight to themselves as they do not eat so close as the sheep, after which the sheep eat what the cows have left.

From Briançon I took a carriage over the pass of Mont Genêvre to Oulx on the Italian side, whence the rail took me to Susa. Opposite my windows in the hôtel rose tantalizingly the violet tinted mountains behind which lay the Vaudois valleys that I had come to see, but which an envious fate forbad me to visit; and my walking powers being over for the time, I spent the rest of my holiday on Lago Maggiore.

III

MAGGIORE AND THE BORROMEAN ISLANDS 1876–1878

III

Maggiore and the Borromean Islands 1876–1878

Of all the Italian lakes, Maggiore is to my taste the most fascinating. Virgil does not mention it: and while apostrophizing

...te, Lari maxime, teque
Fluctibus et fremitu assurgens, Benace, marino,

he has not a word of praise for Verbanus their great neighbour. Without, however, undervaluing the beauty of Como, or the grandeur of Garda, with the charm of Sermione, and the associations of Catullus's villa at one end, and Riva gloriously set amid mountains at the other, I maintain that Maggiore is not less beautiful than its neighbours, and excels them in variety. The head of the lake, which runs into Switzerland, is equal or superior to that of Como, and there are no more lovely valleys than the Val Maggia and others accessible from Locarno; while the arm that bends away towards the Simplon, and contains the Borromean islands, meets you as an enchanting surprise when you round the headland of Pallanza.

I reached Stresa on the Piedmontese side of the lake, not for the first time, in the autumn of 1876 after the visit to Dauphiné which I have already described. Although the season was late the fine summer weather continued, and the country was in the full perfection of autumnal beauty. The chestnut woods that clothed the mountain sides were laden with pale golden fruit, that came

bouncing down every minute through the rustling leaves, and fell with a thud on the ground. The chestnut harvest was in full swing: the woods were alive with men women and children busy gathering the fruit, for a good crop is a matter of serious consequence, and to judge by their laughter and chattering the chestnut harvest, like hop-picking with us, has all the fun and enjoyment of a picnic. Down the mountain paths the chestnuts are carried in paniers, slung on the back, to the lake shore where great barges may be seen, heavily laden with the fruit for conveyance to the railway.

For a great height up, the mountain sides are dotted with little villages whose white houses and modest campaniles seem to sparkle in the sun, through the rich green vegetation in which they are embedded. They are so sequestered and hidden in woods that when you have found one you despair of ever finding it again. Each has its little church with a tiny piazza terraced up in front where the people sit in the evening; the cottages are picturesque with outside galleries, pent roofs, trellised forecourts and balconies hung with baskets, rakes, and vegetables, and clothes of many colours, irresistibly provoking a sketch; and there are heaps of pretty children only too eager to be drawn.

The hôtel at Stresa was full of visitors, mostly English with a sprinkling of Germans. The modern fashion is for each party to dine unsociably and by itself at a small table. In those days the *table d'hôte* was a long table where the newly arrived visitor began at the bottom, and as the older guests dropped off, gradually, as in "Sir Roger de Coverley," worked his way up to the top. In this way you often made pleasant acquaintances with your neighbours. At the head of the table when I began at the bottom, was a coterie of artists and amateurs, with the English chaplain who also dabbled in water-colour. After dinner we strolled in the garden under a brilliant moon till bed-time, enlivened occasionally by a bass singer, who sang "Largo al factotum," and "La Calunnia," very fairly but just a little too often. Among the painters I found Mr Paul Naftel,

of the old Water-colour Society, with a friend; they shortly afterwards moved to the hôtel on the Isola Bella, where I joined them, and where I spent the rest of my time.

In the preceding year when I was staying with a party of friends at Stresa, we had paid several visits to the Borromean islands opposite, and I had found the village communities of fisher-folk who inhabit them very interesting. The Isola Madre has only a garden, but the other two, the Isola Bella, and the Isola dei Pescatori have each a village upon them. These, grouped with a few villages on the slopes of the Monterone opposite, form independent and regularly constituted Communes. The Fisherman's island is the larger of the two, and has a population of about two hundred souls. It is a long island with a little street some six feet wide between houses on the central ridge, with narrow alleys leading to the shores. At the far end of the island there is room for an open space with a double row of pollarded trees, the *allea*, where the men dry their nets and the people sit in the evening. There is a wide beach on the side towards Stresa, and here the flat-bottomed boats with hooped awnings are drawn up in front of a long range of irregularly built houses of all widths and heights, some with terraces, some with arches, festooned with creepers, and gay with flowering shrubs. At the east end of the island is the little church with the picturesque campanile which with its reflexion in the water comes into all the pictures of this part of the lake. The church is a poor dirty building with broken pavement, decorated in the usual way of Italian village churches, with sham marble, grained and varnished. Behind is the little cemetery, overgrown with fuchsias and flowering plants, the simple epitaphs being stamped on lead or tin and hung on the wall. The island belongs to the islanders and has been theirs from time immemorial. They form a Commune and have their own syndic or mayor, the office being held at that time by my friend Ruffoni, who kept the little inn, the Albergo Verbano, at the east end of the island, where in the previous year we lunched

on fish from the lake in a trellised arbour looking towards Pallanza and the Sasso di Ferro.

The village on the Isola Bella is somewhat cramped for space, the greater part of the island being occupied by Count Borromeo's palace and his famous gardens. There is room, however, for a piazza with an avenue of trees and a low parapet wall overhanging the lake, and for a small church with a somewhat imposing façade and a grand flight of steps, bearing outside the Borromean motto HUMILITAS, and containing some splendid marble monuments of the family, brought from the church of S. Pietro in Gessati at Milan. The finest of them, which I take to be by Amadeo, has a curious mixture of Gothic tracery with Renaissance ornament, and fine figure sculpture. Next to the church is the Hôtel Delfino, belonging to the family of Omarini, who own the hôtel at Stresa.

The Palace is a great rambling building, only half finished. The gardens have been praised or abused according to the varying taste of each observer. They are of course quite artificial, raised pyramidally to a great height by receding terraces, diminishing gradually to a platform at the top, paved with stone, and containing an enormous water-tank in vaults below. The soil had all to be brought from the mainland, and has to be constantly renewed at a great expense. At the angles of the terraces and along their parapets are obelisks, statues, vases, in lavish profusion, and above all towers a colossal horse, ridden by a spirited Cupid, adorned like all the obelisks with the Borromean "feathers" in light ironwork. The statues are rough but spirited, and elaborated quite enough for a rustic design, and their effect at the end of the quaint formal terraces, standing out sharp and dark against the delicate distance of lake and mountain, is very picturesque and striking. An Italian garden cannot be judged by the rules of an English garden. To my eye the stiff regularity of the balustrades and staircases on the Isola Bella is useful not only as contrasting with the wild exuberance of the semi-tropical vegetation in which they are embowered, but by as

it were supporting it and introducing something of system and order into what might otherwise be only a fragrant wilderness.

On the rather narrow space left between the garden and the south shore facing Stresa is the village of fishermen, which is much like that on the other island, but even more picturesque, with outside balconies, vines and creepers, great pent roofs, nets and boats with hooped awnings of canvas, rich red brown, golden yellow, and white. Some of the houses are very old and seem to go back to the Middle Ages, and many of them are decorated with painting. There is a fresco of the Annunciation apparently of the fifteenth century, which is tolerably well preserved, though the angel is damaged, and on the other island is a painting on one house by a master-hand. The subjects for sketching are endless, though the people were rather surprised at our enthusiasm over what they call their old, shabby houses. The inmates seemed generally to own the house they lived in, and most of them had a little property on the hill opposite as well, where they grew vines, vegetables and fruit, to help out the precarious profits of fishing which is the islanders' main occupation.

In the middle of the village is the *fornello*, where chestnuts are boiled in a great vat, in which the nets are steeped once a month, the juice preserving them from rotting, and dyeing them of a beautiful brown colour, dear to the artist eye. High overhead on dyeing days you will see half a dozen stalwart fishermen trampling the nets in the chestnut juice, enveloped in clouds of fragrant steam which pours out from under the open roof of the *fornello*.

The village is an independent Commune, dating at least from the eleventh or twelfth century, while the Borromean palace and garden are comparatively things of yesterday, dating only from 1671. The Commune even disputes with Count Borromeo the ownership of the little islet Malghera, which lies between the Isola Bella and the Isola dei Pescatori. The two islands are in fact connected by a subaqueous ridge of rock, rising nearly to the surface, and distinctly

visible to a bird's-eye view from the mountains. In one place, halfway between the islands, it emerges, and this is Malghera, on which there is room for a clump of little trees, and when the lake is low there is a beach on one side. For this rock it is said Rothschild offered Count Borromeo £50,000, that he might build a house on it, but the Count would not sell. Moreover, the Commune claimed it, in spite of the inscription PROPRIETÀ BORROMEO, which the Count has engraved on the rock. They argued that they had exercised rights of ownership, and that their parish priest had planted the trees on the islet, to replace others which he had cut down and used in the repair of his parish church, and the presumption on the score of antiquity was certainly in favour of the Commune. I had a long and dispassionate statement of the case from Omarini and a group of inhabitants one morning as I was idling in the Piazza. But the Commune is too poor to engage in litigation with so wealthy and powerful a family, and the mainland villages of Carciano, Levo, and Someraro which form part of the Commune have no interest in the matter.

I was told, however, an amusing story, showing that Count Borromeo's rights are not always indisputable. He claims nearly all the fishery in the lake up to the Swiss frontier, and the fisherman pays him a yearly rent of twenty or thirty lire for leave to ply his craft. Now there was, as a boatman at Stresa told me, an English gentleman, whose name he mentioned, living at Belgirate, who had ideas of sport novel in those parts. He it was, as my informant said, who first introduced the art of catching fish with a rod and a fly, an artifice unheard of before then on Lago Maggiore. The innocent trout—speckled enthusiasts I think Thomson calls them—ignorant of these human wiles, and accustomed only to real flies, fell easy victims to the English gentleman's skill, and he caught fine fish without number. To this Count Borromeo objected.

But the Signore Inglese did worse than this. He provided himself with a fowling-piece of extravagant dimensions which he fixed

in the bows of his boat: it was in fact what we know as a duck gun, a piece of artillery unknown before on Lago Maggiore. Thus equipped the Englishman and his friends would set out in their boat in winter, when large flocks of wild ducks come down to the lake from the mountains, and in his boat he would steal gently—gently—up towards the ducks, and then suddenly there would be *una grande trombonata*, and many ducks would lie dead on the water.

Count Borromeo now thought it high time to take action, and sent his minions to seize the English gentleman's boat and gun, as instruments of poaching. But the Englishman said "This boat is my boat, this gun is my gun, these ducks are my ducks, and you or your master will touch them at your peril."

So Count Borromeo went to law, and the case went from one court to another, decision being given sometimes for one party, and sometimes for the other, till at last it was decided against Count Borromeo, and the right of fly-fishing, and of slaughtering ducks even by a *grande trombonata* was declared free and open to the world. Worst of all, my informant said, the litigation had cost Count Borromeo many thousand lire.

I found the tone of the people was liberal and anti-clerical, a reaction from the clerical domination of past times, when Piedmont seems to have been as thoroughly priest-ridden as Austria. Omarini told me that under the old Sardinian régime, before the Italian constitution was granted, an hôtel could not be opened without a certificate of good conduct from the parish priest, whose withdrawal of it at any time would involve forfeiture of the licence. Now the tables were turned with a vengeance. There had been recently a congress at Bologna of clergy, and clerically minded laymen, which gave great offence by a statement made in the opening debate that Bologna where they met, which had formerly been a principal city of the Papal state, was "a Catholic-minded town." The Bolognese took this as a challenge, and rose and mobbed the delegates, and interrupted the congress. Some of the principal

inhabitants went to the Prefect and represented that a riot was imminent, and asked him to suppress the congress; on which the Prefect without more ado told the delegates that their meetings provoked the disturbance of public order and must be discontinued.

I remember a boat full of black-robed priests coming to visit the island. The day happened to be cloudy; "It is the bad weather that brings them," said a bystander to me. The ex-Empress Eugenie came to visit the Countess Borromeo one Sunday afternoon while I was there, and again on the Monday following. She was hated in Italy as the main obstacle to Italian unity, by her support of the French occupation of Rome; and the people received her in silence and accorded scarcely any recognition.

Meanwhile life on our enchanted island passed like a pleasant dream. We rose soon after six, and G. and I went out to bathe in the lake. By clinging with finger and toe to crevices in the garden wall of the palace, at the risk of a premature plunge into the water if finger or toe should slip, we were able to get past the end of the beach, and reach the foot of a flight of steps that led down from the palace garden to the water. There on a smooth broad rock we undressed. The sun had risen but we did not see him, for he was hidden behind a corner of the garden and he does not shine on this side of the island till noon: but the opposite hills were lit up with fiery rose-colour, and the snows on the distant Simplon gleamed like burnished gold in the clear blue sky. We dived head foremost into twenty feet of deep green water, tepid and delicious, and rising to the surface at the end of our shoot found ourselves *vis-à-vis* with the sun, just risen from the orient wave, and shrouded with the glory of the morning haze, orange and rosy pink.

The fishermen sitting in their boats, arranging their nets, wish us good morning as we pass, evidently thinking us a pair of lunatics with a craze for cold water; but one young fellow has caught the infection, and swims to the mainland and back.

At half-past seven we are dressed, and find Mr Naftel ready for breakfast, in the terraced garden of the inn, overlooking the Piazza; and by the time we have finished, little Teresa has set up her fruit stall below, and we make havoc of her figs. By eight we are all three at our sketches, Naftel catching at his first effort effects after which I grope blunderingly with imperfect success. The natives gather round admiringly first at one easel, then at another, but never failing to recognize the master hand. Should you want a figure, you find a model at your elbow, delighted to go and stand, and falling naturally into the best possible posture. One and all had a passion for being drawn. Middle-aged fishermen would come and put a finger on the drawing where there is room for a figure, and offer to go and stand for you. The children, of whom some chosen half-dozen were always with us, for it was holiday time and the schools were shut, were keen beyond anything to figure in the sketches. They implored us to put them in, and went about boasting, "I have been drawn six times," or "I have been drawn eight times," or "I have been in all the pictures that have been taken." Those who had not been drawn at all were jealous of those who had. Joannina the maid at the inn, entreated me to draw her every time we met.

"Why do you want to be drawn?" said I.

"For the pleasure of seeing the drawing," said she. "I am ugly, but the drawing will be pretty."

At half-past one we adjourn to the terraced garden again for luncheon on fish from the lake, and are often joined by friends from Stresa. At half-past four the sun sinks behind the Monterone, and sketching is at an end for the day. The children who have been hanging about us all day carry off our stools, umbrellas, and sketching apparatus. Little Romeo Omarini, our landlord's son, who has been coming up to me every half-hour to ask in a whisper whether he should "Cambiar l'acqua," change the water I was painting with, marches off with my water-bottle, while little Matilde, my

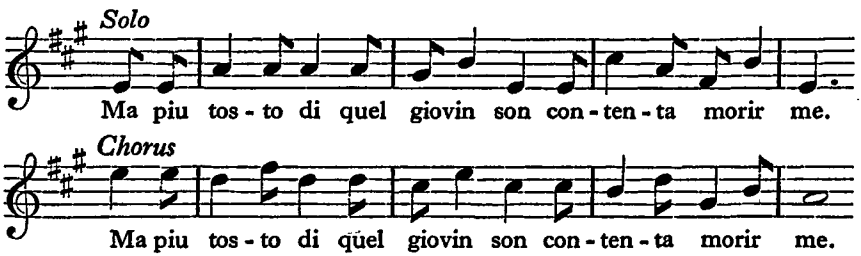
especial pet, takes my paintbox down to the lake and washes the palettes with a sponge.

There are still nearly two hours before dinner, and we spend them paddling about the lake, watching the fading light on hills and sky and the deepening shadows on the lake, while softly across the water would come the sound of some distant church bell, the

"Squilla da lontano
Che paia il giorno pianger che si muore."

We visited Signor Zanetti on the Isola dei Pescatori, head of the *famiglia Inglese* as the people called it, though I know not why, except that Signor Zanetti had lived in England, where, if I remember, he had been a partner with Colnaghi. He was the possessor of an excellent picture by Poussin, the pride of his heart, which he delighted to display to every visitor.

After dinner everyone went to the Piazza, to sit in the dusk under the trees, the boys singing to us strange songs which they improvised as they went along, sometimes more remarkable for humour than for delicacy. But the girls and women often sang very nicely as they sat picking *canape* or flax for spinning: for the women spin all the cord for the nets, with spindle and distaff, which are seldom out of their hands during the day. There they sat talking and laughing, stripping the bark from the stalks, which they snapped and threw on a heap, and then set alight to burn with a crackling blaze. One favourite song was the lament of a lovesick maid: the stanzas were sung alone by a girl with a really good voice, and the others echoed the refrain of each verse in chorus:



There was another of which I forget the words and the tune, about a "Sorella, che per nome si chiama Rachella," who learned "cosa vuol dire l'amor" from a bold Bersagliere at her side.

Italy has compulsory education, which, by the way, seemed not very strictly enforced. The children, however, had been well taught; they could all read and write, and as for Chiarina, one of our little friends, we were told with pride that she could do *any* sum. The management of the schools is in lay hands, and the clergy have no voice in it. We saw some of the children's prizes, and the *Storia Patria* from which they learn the history of Italy, beginning gravely with the arrival of Aeneas, the story of Alba Longa, and the foundation of Rome. The girls are better educated than the boys, who escape schooling early to go fishing with their fathers, where a lad can earn as much as a man. As for housing, though the houses are small, and the rooms few there was not so far as I observed any overcrowding. The people live mostly out-of-doors, and in summer the lads do not even go indoors to sleep, but lie curled up at the bottom of their boats.

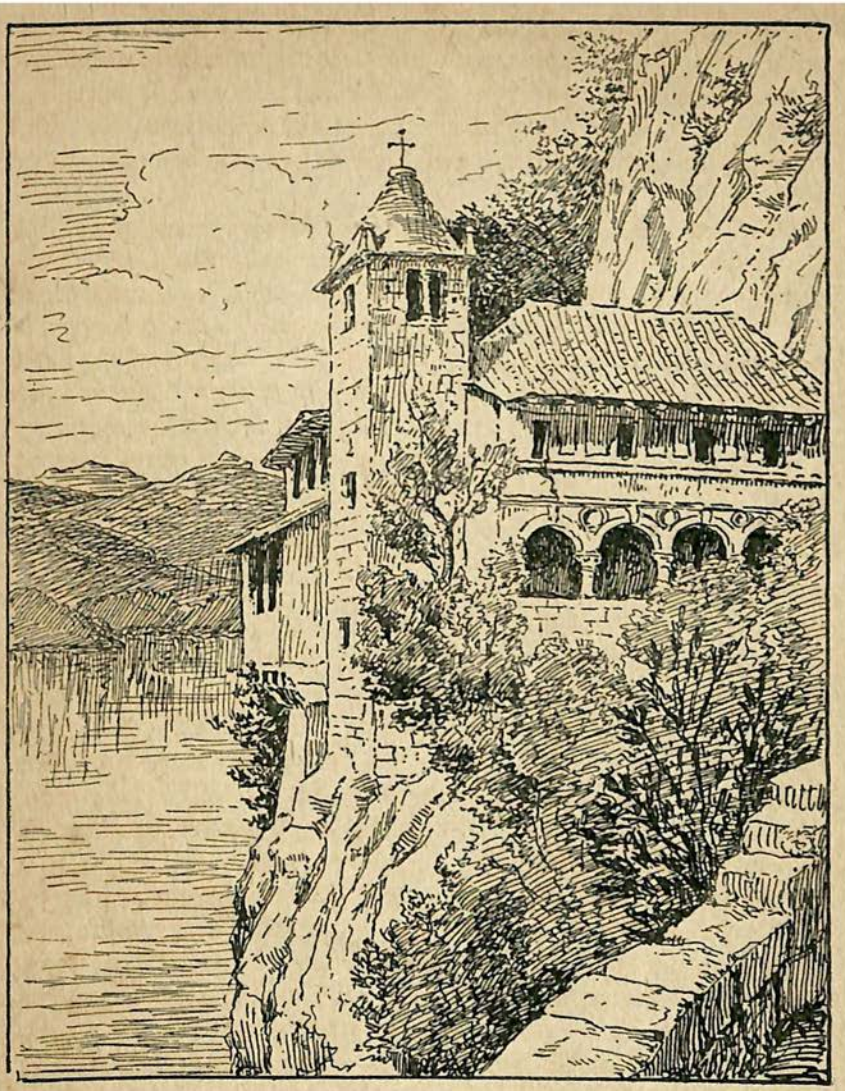
Tain says that in England to be poor is to be miserable. Here in Italy it seemed you could be poor and happy. Our islanders were certainly poor, but they were as cheery and bright as their climate. After all, the greatest pleasures of life are to be had for nothing; and with such a climate and such a sun and such a sky, and no lack of such simple food as their spare diet and temperate habits required our island friends had all that we had come a thousand miles to find.

Two years later, with a friend, I revisited the island and took possession of my old room, No. 15—Figaro's *numero quindici*—at the Hôtel Delfino, with its French windows that stood open day and night. I was warmly greeted as an old acquaintance. The memory of Naftel and his companion was still fresh, and I found they had remained on the island some length of time after my departure.

G. had fallen in love with the olive-green satiny cloth that the natives wear, and had a suit made of it by the country tailor; and the chaplain at Stresa, who used to come sketching with us, had one made like it. But, said Omarini, the ladies were shocked and cried "Come? un prete, e vestito così!" and he had to give it away to an islander.

The fishermen, as of old, complained of very poor takes. If I asked Carlo or Ippolito "what sport," the reply was always "Ah! poco poco," with an expressive shrug of the shoulders, and a turning of the palms to the front. The great salmon-trout are taken principally at the head of the bay where the Toscia enters from the Simplon. The men go off in the evening in their large hooped boats, and do not get back till six or eight o'clock in the morning. The nets are very large, enclosing a great sweep of water, buoyed up with logs of wood and large corks, and they have a floating light at each end to prevent boats from running over them.

We rowed some five or six miles across the lake one morning to S. Caterina on the Milanese shore, in Giovanni Contini's new boat the "Parigi," the pride of his heart. S. Caterina is an old deserted convent, with a church perched most picturesquely on a shelf of rock halfway up the cliff, which goes down sheer into the water without any foreshore. Leaving our boat within the protection of a little pier, we reached the building by steps cut in the rock, and were guided to the church by the wife of the fisherman, who inhabits the empty home of the departed ecclesiastics. A cloistered walk, protected by a low parapet over which is a drop of perhaps a hundred feet into the water, leads to the church, which has a pretty campanile, and is irregular in plan, being fitted to the cavities of the cliffs. It has several points of interest, and some second-rate frescoes in bad condition. A recess is shown in the rock where the Beato Alberto passed twenty-five years of his uncomfortable life, and in a glass case is preserved his mortal frame, robed in crimson satin and other worldly splendour, with a silken



STA CATERINA

pillow on which his ghastly head reposes, dried to a dark brown colour, and seemingly varnished. But the most wonderful thing in the church is where over the shrine you look up through the broken vault, and see pendant above your head three enormous masses of rock, weighing hundreds of tons, which have fallen from the cliff above, crashed through the roof, burst the vault, and now hang in such perilous guise that it seems as if the merest trifle would bring the whole mass down on your head. Of course it is believed that the Blessed Albert and the sanctity of the spot keeps it from falling[1].

We had not been long settled at our sketches when we were surprised by one of the sudden storms to which Maggiore is liable, and in a few minutes the placid lake became a raging sea with white horses careering along the surface, and dashing into foam on the cliff below. Divided by five miles of tempestuous water from our home, our boat swamped and damaged by being beaten against the rock, we were in a nice predicament. We managed, however, to get four men from Reno, not far off, who raised the boat and emptied it and beached it at their village, and then ferried us over in a large boat with four oarsmen. We could not make our island, for the storm drove us some way down the lake, and it was dark before we stood on the shore opposite the Isola Bella, shouting for a boat to come and fetch us, and for some time shouting in vain. It was Signora Omarini who at last heard us. She said "saranno i pittori," and sent a boat for us. "Had it not been so stormy," she said, "the maid and I would have come ourselves for you."

Old Giovanni whom we charged to get the boat mended at our expense, had not been able to sleep all night for thinking of "La Parigi": but with true Italian courtesy he said he was more sorry for us than for himself, and that had he not been a poor man he would have said *niente*. He doubted, however, the honesty of the people on the other side, and feared they would steal some of the

[1] There is a report that it has since fallen through, in 1911.

superior equipment of the "Parigi." This was but natural. Were they not *rivales*, rivals, living on the opposite side of a *rivus*, in this case a lake, and therefore objects of suspicion? So have I heard Oxfordshire people speak of Berkshire. So also once when walking round the Pembrokeshire coast, and sleeping at farmhouses for want of inns, I had to cross an arm of Milford Haven in order to reach St David's, I remember my host cautioned me against the people on the other side. He said I should "find them queer folk, not like us." However, the "Parigi" was brought across with all her appurtenances complete. A skilful boat-builder from Pallanza agreed to put her to rights for seventy lire, and after repair we re-christened her "La Fenice," for she rose as if from her ashes as good as new.

One sweltering hot day we climbed the Monterone, refreshed on the way by some peaches of which a dear old woman gave us a handful as we passed her orchard. The view from the summit was superb. All Maggiore lay mapped at our feet: in the distance the lakes of Varese and Comabbio glittered in the sunshine; far below lay the little lake of Orta, while to the north rose the range of the Alps, with the great mass of Monte Rosa towering above the rest. Coming down we found the villages in *festa*. At Carciano were some of our islanders, whom we regaled with country wine at the *osteria*, and clinked glasses with them. Another time we walked across the mountains to Orta, where is an island village, with a church dedicated to S. Giulio, who, like another S. Patrick, had cleared the island of serpents. We rowed one evening to Baveno to dine with friends, returning in such pitchy darkness that we should hardly have found our islands but for the fitful flashes of summer lightning, in which for an instant they seemed to blaze with a vivid white light on a background of intense black.

The term of our holiday was reached only too soon, and it was with regret that at last we said goodbye to our happy island and its friendly people.

IV

VENICE AND THE EUGANEAN HILLS

1875

IV

Venice and the Euganean Hills

1875

Venice—who can think or write dispassionately either of her wondrous history or her not less wondrous art. Founded in 400 A.D. by refugees flying before Attila's destroying hordes, who in the picturesque words of Cassiodorus settled like sea-fowl on the mud islands of the lagoon, Venice preserved her independence through all the catastrophes of the Dark and Middle Ages, till Napoleon, the great liberator, declared that "the Republic had ceased to exist," and to his everlasting disgrace ceded her to the Emperor of Austria.

When Venice was founded Britain was still a province of the Roman Empire and ruled by a Roman governor; during the fourteen centuries of the existence of the Republic England was once repeopled and twice conquered; in France dynasty succeeded dynasty; the Empire fell and rose again in a new form; the Roman church grew from a simple bishopric to a world-power; new worlds were discovered; fresh nations came into being and disturbed the politics of Europe; and through all these changes the Serene Republic lived unchanged and unchanging. When she fell, she was the oldest state in Europe.

In Italy, during the Middle Ages, the other communes, torn by intestine feud, vexed by faction, Guelf or Ghibelline, Bianchi or Neri, looked with envy and admiration on the stable and orderly government of Venice. When Florence had expelled the Medici, and sought for a pattern on which to model a new constitution,

Savonarola naturally turned to Venice for guidance, though it soon appeared that her aristocratic rule was impossible in that turbulent democracy. And when the other Communes one by one, and at last Florence herself, fell under the rule of a tyrant, Venice alone never submitted to the government *d'un solo*, but preserved the style of a Republic to the last.

For long she kept aloof from Italian politics, and could hardly be reckoned as an Italian state. Secure within the shelter of her lagoons she defied both Lombard and Frank, and replied to their challenge that she chose to be the "subject of the king of the Romans" at Constantinople. Her interests were in the East, in the Morea, in Candia, in Cyprus, and above all in Dalmatia, a country which was necessary to her command of the Adriatic, and for which she struggled during three centuries with the king of Hungary; till Turkish conquest laid her rival prostrate, and left her in undisputed possession. Europe owes it to Venice and her fleet that the Moslems failed to reach the Adriatic, and never but for a moment at Otranto set foot in Italy.

This Eastern connexion is the secret of Venetian art. As in politics she stood aloof from the rest of Italy, so in her art Venice developed a style entirely her own. For long her architecture was Byzantine; palaces in that style still remain on her canals, and the great basilica of S. Mark, copied from the church of the Apostles at Constantinople, might have been built on the shores of the Bosporus. And when she developed her own peculiar form of Gothic, unlike the Gothic of other Italian states, it inherited the flowing line, the luxurious foliage, the charms of colour, and all the sensuous graces of Oriental taste. Like Rome of old Venice carried her art with her wherever she held sway, and the old Roman coast cities of Dalmatia abound in buildings with Venetian doors, windows, and balconies, that might have been on the island of the Rialto, while the Lion of S. Mark faces you on every public building. Above all, at home on the oozy mud banks of her islands,

such islands as may still be seen in the lagoons from Chiozza to Grado, arose like a vision stately churches, and marble palaces, a veritable dream-city, unrivalled in loveliness, and unlike anything else in Christendom.

In 1875 I was with a party of friends at Venice for the first time since she had been free. When I had been there before the Austrians were in possession, and you met the white uniform at every turn. The Austrian band used to play in the Piazza in the evening, and the first blast of music was the signal for every Italian in the place to get up and walk away. There were nightly disturbances in the streets, and in the morning reports of men having been arrested and spirited away to the island of S. Giorgio Maggiore, and lost to their friends who never knew what became of them. The palaces on the canals were many of them empty, or occupied by Austrian soldiers, and those of which the government did not take possession seemed falling into decay, and derelict. If you called attention to any sign of ruin or neglect the gondolier's reply was always "perchè così vuole il nostro Governo," and to the same maleficent power he was ready to attribute every misfortune that happened, if not even the bad weather. On the other hand, the Austrians, with some of whom I was familiar, spoke of the Italians as a turbulent and ungrateful set of people, unable to appreciate the blessings of the good government they ought to be enjoying, who had to be kept down with a strong hand.

Now, happily, the foreign ruler was gone, and the signs of neglect were disappearing. Some of the noble families who had given Doges to the Republic still lived in their old stately homes; other palaces were occupied by dealers in *bric-à-brac*, curiosities, and old furniture, and though turned to such base uses were at all events kept in repair; and some had become hôtels. In one of these, the ancient home of a Venetian noble, we were lodged, and it was a pleasure to sit under a ceiling with painted and decorated joists

and look out on the Grand Canal through marble traceries of the fifteenth century. The historical character of the house appealed to other visitors besides ourselves, sometimes with amusing confusion of chronology. One morning an English gentleman came down to a late breakfast and in rather shaky Italian asked the most urbane of waiters, who was always ready to fall in with any whim of a visitor, whether this hôtel had not been a palace of the Giustiniani family.

"Si, Signore," replied the waiter promptly.

"I understand," said the gentleman, "there is more than one Giustiniani palace in Venice."

"Si, Signore, there are four."

"Can you tell me in which of the Giustiniani palaces it was that the eminent jurist lived?"

"Era appunto in questo; it was in this very one," said the waiter with admirable readiness. And perhaps the English gentleman still believes that Justinian was born and lived in the Europa Hôtel at Venice.

Rogers tells us:

As between day and night we floated by
A Gondolier lay singing; and he sang
As in the time when VENICE *was herself*
Of TANCRED, *and* ERMINIA,

and he quotes Goldoni, who says his gondolier, as he rowed him homewards, sang the twenty-sixth strophe of the sixteenth canto of the Jerusalem Delivered. But Byron says:

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,

and in my experience the only singing one hears in Venice is the everlasting "Sta Lucia," which the gondoliers scream out under hôtel windows for the benefit of the *forestieri*, who take it for a genuine touch of native romance. Yet even this rather Cockney performance has an agreeable effect when one party stops singing

and you hear another a long way off echoing it; and this was one of the charms of the old chanting of Tasso, when the gondolier sang for his own pure pleasure, and not for the pence of the *forestiere*. In the stillness of Venice, where nothing breaks the silence but the church bell or the gentle splash of the oar, the voice travels far over the water, and the gondolier, we read, as he ceased singing "at a distance hears another, perhaps utterly unknown to him. Melody and verse immediately attach the two strangers; each becomes the responsive echo to the other....By a tacit convention they alternate verse for verse; though the song should last the whole night through they entertain themselves without fatigue; the hearers who are passing between the two take part in the amusement[1]." Even then, we are told the singing at close quarters was harsh and screaming, and only became musical if heard at a distance, when it acquired a pathos, and as an Italian gentleman said *è singolare come quel canto intenerisce*[1].

But though Tasso's echoes are silent, and have been replaced by a vulgar substitute, I was fortunate enough to happen upon a genuine bit of Venetian recitation. It was in the Giardino Pubblico, at the far end of the main island, the only considerable open space in the city except the Piazza. Here was a real horse, a wonder in Venice, which you could hire, and could ride him up and down the alleys of the garden like the elephants and camels in the Zoological Gardens. He was a wonder to the boys, who evidently regarded him as an interesting zoological specimen, and were never tired of following him about. Seated on a bank, in the middle of a group of listeners, was a story-teller, a survival from olden days, a toothless old man, with his knees drawn up nearly to his chin, pouring forth his tale, with his eyes shut, in a sort of dreamy ecstasy. We stopped to listen, and I found to my delight he was actually rehearsing to his audience the old lay of Charlemagne and his Paladins. At that moment he was in the middle of the last

[1] *Curiosities of Literature*, II. 168, ed. 1824.

battle in Orlando Furioso between the three great champions of either side; and when he had dispatched Agramante, boring him through and through the body with his forefinger, he suddenly sprang up and appealed to me to say whether what he had been reciting was not a "veracious history."

"Undoubtedly," said I, "for I have read it all in a book by Ariosto."

This delighted the old gentleman, and, I think, gratified him even more than the coin to secure which he had curtailed his story, for fear we should escape him.

From Venice, when I had finished the studies on which I had been engaged, I went alone to Padua to study the architecture there, and visited the Arena chapel, where sketching was forbidden, and the various churches, where I was more fortunate. In the Great Palazzo Communale with its astounding roof and surrounding cloisters, which have not the beauty of Palladio's graceful arcades round the similar building at Vicenza, are treasured the bones which were found in 1413, and were supposed from an inscription to be those of Livy the historian. The inscription, however, says nothing of the kind, but states that the tomb was made for himself and his family by Titus Livius Halys, priest of the Temple of Concord, and freedman of Livia, fourth daughter of Titus. But the discovery was made when the fervour of the Early Renaissance was at its height, and the inscription was not too critically censured. Alfonso king of Naples implored the Paduans to spare him a bone, and the relics of no mediaeval saint were ever revered more piously than these apocryphal remains of a pagan historian.

I found only two other guests at the hôtel; one a German who spoke to nobody, the other an English geologist of fame, who was studying volcanoes, and had come to Padua to visit the Euganean Hills, a specially interesting example of an old volcano which had become extinct ages before many others, now extinct, such as

those of the Auvergne, were in activity at all. He had been at Etna and Vesuvius, and had spent some weeks on the Lipari Islands, observing Stromboli, a volcano in constant eruption which even serves as a lighthouse for mariners. I had never met anybody who had visited the Lipari Islands, and I was anxious for an account of the people and the place, and what there was to be seen there. But to the specialist all these matters were idle and foreign to his purpose: he had not thought them worthy of any notice, and could tell me nothing about them

I spent an interesting day with Mr Judd on the Euganean Hills, which rise an insulated mass from the level plain of Venetia. A short stage by rail takes you from Padua to Battaglia at the foot of the mountain. Here the volcanic nature of the place is shown by steam rising from the hot springs; and the warm baths and other attractions make Battaglia a favourite Sunday resort of the citizens of Padua. The Euganean group consists mainly of one large star-shaped mountain, Monte Venda, which is at the summit about two thousand feet high, whence radiate some seven or eight or more ridges, with deep valleys between them, descending from the centre to the plain, where they are lost; though farther still a few strange masses crop up, evidently once in continuation of the ridge, but interrupted by denudation, or worn away by the atmosphere.

Passing through a village, with a villa standing in extensive well-kept gardens laid out in the formal Italian style, with terraces and clipped avenues, statues, and fountains with spouting Tritons and river gods, we took to the hills, and climbed upwards through vineyards and chestnut scrub. The great plain, as we rose, widened out into a vast and apparently boundless expanse. We gained the ridge of one of the radiating spurs and travelled along it towards the summit of Monte Venda, which we saw some miles ahead, crowned with a few buildings, either village, castle, or monastery. The day was so hot, and the sun so powerful that we were not destined to reach the top, but from a secondary peak it was possible

to understand the structure of the mountain, as Mr Judd explained it.

First at an incalculable distance of time we were to imagine a district of undulating chalk. Secondly there was an upheaval from below, not necessarily very great but enough to bulge the chalk up and break an opening through it, which would naturally cause cracks in the surrounding chalk radiating from the centre star-fashion. Through the central opening the eruption would take place, and through all the cracks lava would well up, fill them, and overflow them, pouring down the chalky hillside in liquid streams. From the centre would be thrown up rocks and ashes which, falling down, would gradually create a huge mountain, through which the eruption would force its way, surrounded by its own ejected *débris*, which would form a crater. Then the eruption would cease, the lava would cool into rock, that which had welled up through the cracks forming upright walls, the geologist's "trap-dykes." Fresh eruptions would follow, with fresh periods of repose, and the mountain would grow and become in time an Etna, perhaps ten thousand feet high.

Finally the volcano would become extinct. Then would follow immense periods of time. The Etna would be gradually worn and washed away by frost, rain, watercourses, and glaciers. The lava currents that had overflowed and run over the surface would be denuded and worn away, and the Etna of ten thousand feet would be reduced to the Monte Venda of two thousand. The original chalk surface would be reached at last, and lie exposed to the air, and through it we can still see, radiating from the centre the top edge of the trachyte or hardened lava, standing up like walls above the surface. Here, as Mr Judd pointed out, we have the roots of a very old volcano. The present Euganean Hills, blooming with vine, fig and olive, once formed the core of a mighty mountain piled thousands of feet upon them and spreading out for miles around. The star-shaped plan of the mountain is explained by its

history; the ridges mark the direction of the original dykes, which were too hard to be washed away like the softer material between them, which has been denuded to form the deep valleys that separate them. And so all along the ridges you may find the dykes, sometimes standing above ground as irregular walls, sometimes covered with soil and only exposed accidentally. The chalk that had touched the dyke in its molten state is red and very hard.

Half melted with heat, we turned into a cottage on the hilltop to ask for a draught of water, which a woman with a dark handsome face and showy earrings ladled for us with a copper ladle out of a bucket. They had no water but such as they caught when it rained. The cottage was roomy, but so full of wood-smoke that it brought tears to our eyes, as it seemed to do chronically to those of the little girl that came to sit on my knee and play with the halfpence I gave her. We followed a footpath that ran along the spur on which we were, with glorious views into the deep valleys that parted us from other spurs on either hand. Out beyond, seeming to simmer in the blazing sunshine, lay the great plain, of which the poet sings:

Beneath is spread like a green sea
The waveless plain of Lombardy;
Bounded by the vapourous air,
Islanded by cities fair.

Sweet aromatic herbs covered the ground at our feet, mixed, if I remember aright, with heather. There were bunches of lavender in full bloom, and many plants of erigo, glaucous-leaved, edged with smalt-blue. A farmer with his black hair in ringlets and earrings in his ears, smoking a long thin cigar wrapped round a straw, put us in the way to Arqua, a place consecrated by memories of Petrarch. Descending the long line of the hill we saw the village not very far below, and here we came on classic ground. It was to Arqua that Petrarch retired in his old age, and it was here that he

died, and here he is buried. He died in 1374. In the preceding year he had gone to Venice with a propitiatory message from his patron Francesco da Carrara Lord of Padua. On his return to his villa here he fell into a state of languor in which the remaining months of his life were passed. On the night of July 18th he was seized by an apoplectic fit, and was found dead next morning in his library with his head resting on a book.

Arqua is a rude remote mountain village, with, at the upper end by which we entered, a broken tower and a shabby chapel, the remains of a demolished castle. Through this the road descends sharply to a group of houses below, where is another church, in front of which stands a red marble sarcophagus on stumpy marble pillars, in which reposes the body of Petrarch. Nothing can be more unpretending than the great poet's resting-place. The church is a mean whitewashed building, and the houses of the village are plain and simple, except one opposite the village inn which is a villa of rather more architectural character with an arcaded loggia, and ogee-trefoiled Venetian windows of the fourteenth or fifteenth century above. This we concluded must be the house in which Petrarch ended his days, for I had heard that his house still existed. Here, thought I, as we entered the arcaded loggia, roughly and unevenly paved with the natural rock, the poet would walk and sit in the evening to see the sun set behind the hill: the room above with a restored Gothic window would be that in which he wrote and studied. But, alas! my sentiment was all wasted, for it was the wrong house, as we found out from the proprietor whom we astonished by applying for admission. He offered to send his servant with us to the right house, but we had not time to avail ourselves of his courteous offer.

In the village inn we lunched on bread and grapes, washed down with a kind of rough cyder, which was the only fare the place afforded. Two or three of the villagers came to talk with us about the country and the vintage, and we bargained with a queer old

fellow to drive us to the railway at Monselice where we were to take the train back to Padua. His chaise was so rickety that it was a wonder that it survived the three-mile drive. I dined at the famous Café Pédrocchi, bid adieu to my companion, and went on by the night train to rejoin my party at Verona.

From Verona we went to Desenzano at the lower end of the Lago di Garda. The inn was on the shore, and as the weather had been windy Benacus, rising, as Virgil says, with waves like the sea, shook the walls as the great rollers dashed upon them, and sent up clouds of spray against the upper windows. We took a carriage and drove to Sirmione, with lovely views northwards up the lake as we skirted the shore. Sirmione is a rocky peninsula, connected with the mainland by a flat isthmus, which is cut through by a ditch crossed by a drawbridge leading to a mediaeval castle. Beyond is the classic Sirmio, "Eye of islands and peninsulas in lake or sea," to which Catullus addresses his twenty-ninth sonnet, and to which he turned with affection after foreign travels, dismissing all his cares, and glad to sleep again in his longed-for bed. The ruins at the far end of the peninsula are the remains of a very palatial structure, standing on a steep slope that rises from the edge of the lake, and is levelled up by immense arcaded sub-structures at a lavish expense. The walls are of rubble coursed with large bricks, cemented together with an excellent mortar as hard as the stone itself. Nothing is left of the marble linings or columns of the palace itself, and the plan of the villa is not very intelligible. The front towards the lake seems to have been symmetrical, with a centre and two wings projecting to enclose a court open on the fourth side. Through the wings were descending passages with steps down to the beach, which was probably reached by a succession of terraces, but there is little to tell one how it was managed, and there seems to have been further building behind on the upper ground.

Tradition says this was Catullus's villa, and there seems no room on the peninsula for another. His family was wealthy, for

his father was able to entertain Julius Caesar when chance brought him to Verona, and Catullus himself had another villa at Tibur, and a home in Verona to which, in his thirty-third ode, he invites Caecilius to come and pay him a visit from New Como and the Larian shore:

Veronam veniat, Novi relinquens
Comi moenia, Lariumque litus.

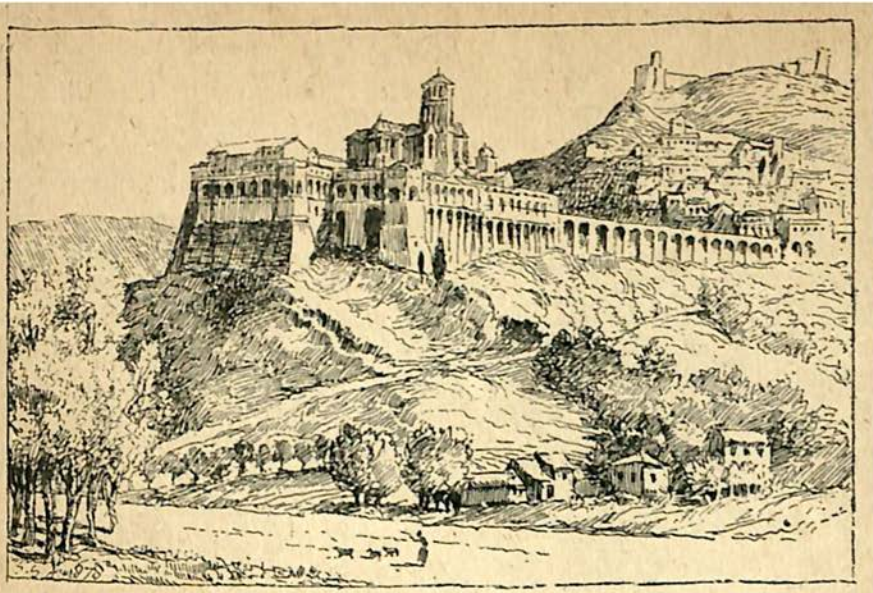
The beauty of the situation, commanding a view of the great lake stretching northwards till it is lost in the mountains, is extreme, and it well deserves Catullus's affectionate apostrophe:

Peninsularum, Sirmio, insularumque
Ocelle, quascunque in liquentibus stagnis
Marique vasto fert uterque Neptunus;
Quam te libenter, quamque laetus inviso,
Vix mi ipse credens Thyniam atque Bithynos
Liquisse campos, et videre te in tuto.

V

ASSISI

1878



V

Assisi

1878

The climate of Florence, situated among great hills almost deserving to be called mountains, is variable and uncertain. It is liable at one time to unseasonable cold, and at another to excessive heat, and of the latter we had a full taste in the autumn of 1878 when I was staying there with two companions. A *scirocco*, or south-east wind, was blowing from the Libyan desert, and seemed to take all the bones out of you. Only a few days before we had been walking and climbing on the mountains, fit for anything in the brisk invigorating air, and now we shrank from the moderate ascent to Fiesole, and hired a carriage. The wondrous view from the hill, of the Val d'Arno, and of fair Florence at our

feet, seemed coloured and dulled by the hot African blast, the sky turned to a coppery green, the sun went down in a brick-red haze, and by the time I got back to the hôtel I was good for nothing. Next day we spent in churches and picture galleries, an exhausting employment at any time, but in that sultry weather a veritable penance. The prospect of another day of the same kind was intolerable; the idea of a picture gallery or of sightseeing was hateful, and leaving my companions who could not tear themselves away from the Spanish chapel in Sta Maria Novella, I turned tail and fled to the mountains.

I resolved to go to Assisi, a place I had never seen, which lies high up in the Apennines, and promised coolness, in which it would be possible to enjoy all the place had to show. There was also the opportunity of being present at the Festa of S. Francis, the patron saint whose name is inseparably connected with Assisi, which was to take place on Oct. 4th and promised to be interesting.

The route lies along the plain, scored by mountain torrents, at the foot of the Apennines; and on the last spurs of the hills before they descend into the plain are perched ancient towns, once Etruscan strongholds, homes of the arts and social order when Rome was not, or was one of themselves. The ground was classical. After passing Cortona, one of Virgil's

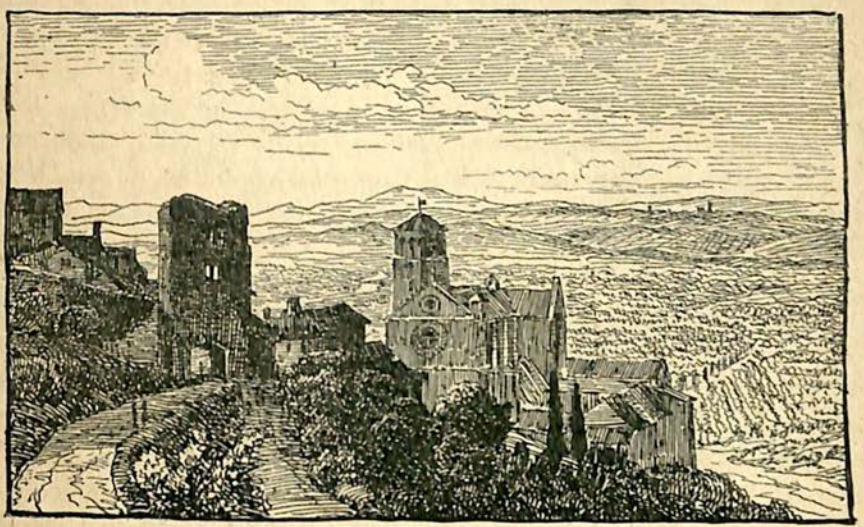
congesta manu praeruptis oppida saxis,

the lake of Thrasymene bursts on the view; the line passes below the defile, "fatal to Roman rashness," and skirting the lake crosses the field of battle. Farther on, between Perugia and Assisi, you pass a turbid yellow stream between high banks, none other than

...fluvio Tiberinus amoeno,
verticibus rapidis, et multa flavus arena.

Assisi stands high up on the mountain side about a mile and a half from the station; and the view from below is impressive. The

great Franciscan convent juts boldly forward, with the double church—one church piled on the top of another—rising in the midst. Backward run the long walls with tier on tier of arches by which the hill was terraced up to afford a level site for the buildings. Higher still the ancient city with its walls and gates climbs the mountain, finishing with two castles on the summit.



ASSISI

My companions in the omnibus which zigzagged slowly up the hill were two German gentlemen, father and son, and two Franciscan Friars of the convent. They wore a gown and tippet of black serge, the dress, I believe, of the *conventuali* branch of the Order. One of them was a round jovial brother, quite the friar of olden time; he had under each arm a bottle of wine which he laid down affectionately on the seat by my side, with his great red pocket-handkerchief between them to prevent their knocking together. The weather was hot, and the sealing-wax used by foreign

wine merchants remains sticky to the last, and I soon found one bottle of Vin di Tevere glued by the neck to the leg of my trousers. This served as an introduction to my reverend companion, who beguiled the rest of the way with praises of his convent and ridicule of the town, till we reached the convent gate, where we parted. Assisi, he said, was a "poor wretched place, not worth a centesimo, but for the convent of S. Francis: the noble families were falling into ruin: one of the young notables of the city especially had gambled away one fortune after another, and was now reaching his last penny." All this he told with the greatest bonhomie imaginable, but not without a spice of malice, from which I gathered that the Commune and the convent did not pull well together. "Just look there," said he, pointing out of the window to a group of women washing at a public fountain. "Did you ever see such *porcheria*! washing in the public street! The Commune ought to put it down."

I objected that to an artist's eye such groups were beyond everything charming and delightful.

"Ma, la porcheria, Signore!"

I said it was none the worse for that. "Signor Frate, l' Arte richiede un po di porcheria."

"Oh! Signore," said he, shaking his fat sides with laughter.

He was very anxious I should do full justice to the great Festa of his patron saint next Friday. There was to be a grand musical service at the Vespers on the preceding day, and a grand mass on the morning of the Festa, with another musical service in the evening. He told me where to go to ensure hearing the music well, and promised if necessary to get me a good place. There was to be no orchestra, that being against the rule of their Order, but only the organ and violoncellos; and the choir was to be made up of singers from the papal choir at Rome, and that of Loreto.

I asked what music was to be performed, and learned that it was composed by one of the friars, Fra B—. "Ah!" said my com-

panion, "he is a wonderful composer. He is able to adapt his music exactly to the words. With what expression does he render the devotional character of the Psalms, or the divine sentiments of the sacred offices! Ah! he is a great man! If it had not been for this"—plucking the sleeve of his friar's gown—"he would have written for the opera, and have been a great maestro. But we poor friars—ecco!" and he finished with a laugh and a shrug of the shoulders. If I would but wait till the Festa was over he promised to take me all about the town, and show me the finest points of view in the neighbourhood, and I have no doubt he would have been an amusing companion, though I fancy he was rather a scamp. However, I left Assisi too soon to renew my acquaintance, and indeed only saw him again once, robed in mystic garb, and officiating in close attendance on the bishop, when he gave me a knowing glance of recognition out of the corner of his eye.

His companion was a poor hectic monk from Malta, who had been sent to recover his health in the pure bracing air of the mother convent. Finding I was an Englishman he began to talk a little English. "And how is our good Queen, and have you seen her lately?" He seemed proud of being a British subject; and interested to meet a compatriot.

At Assisi one naturally thinks first of S. Francis. It is his history that gives the place its interest, and it is the splendid building raised to his memory that gives the place its character. And yet the beautiful building is in fact a cruel satire on the principles of the founder of the Franciscan Order, and an exposure of the futility of his teaching.

S. Francis, perhaps the most attractive saint of the Roman hagiology, has the great advantage of being a real historical figure; and not like most of the others more or less of a myth. We know him well, and his gentle nature appeals to every lover of humanity. In his early history his inward torments, his doubts, his self-accusations, his wrestling with temptation and appetite, remind

one of Luther and Bunyan. His zeal for the cause of Christendom, and his indignation against the corruption and luxurious sloth of the Church were not surpassed by the most ardent reformer. His love went out to man and beast; all creatures whether animate or inanimate were his brothers and sisters. He preached to birds, beasts, and fishes: "Sing, my sister grasshopper, and praise God for your song"; and on his death-bed, "Come to me, Death, my sister." He cast behind him the things of this world. The text he heard in church, "Provide neither gold not silver nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes nor yet staves, for the workman is worthy of his hire," inspired him with the resolution to embrace absolute poverty, and that in its lowest form of mendicancy. He flung his wealth on the altar of S. Peter, and stripped himself naked before his father and the notables of Assisi to show his repudiation of worldly goods. In that age of enthusiasm, unsuspicious of extravagance, he had no lack of followers. Placing the Gospel on the altar he opened it thrice in honour of the Trinity, to find by a sort of *Sors Virgiliana* three rules for his new Order, and the book, as Dean Milman suggests, naturally opened at the familiar texts:

Take nothing for your journey, etc.

If thou wilt be perfect sell all thou hast and give to the poor.

If any man would come after me let him take up his cross and follow me.

The humility of the founder named his brethren fraterculi, fraticelli, fratres minores. The Order spread rapidly in Spain, Provence, England, France and Germany, and in 1219 five thousand brethren met at the second Chapter of the Order. By his rigid rule the brethren were to own nothing, either personally or corporately, nor even to have a home. They were to be hedge preachers, and were even limited to one daily mass[1]. But the severity of the rule

[1] Milman, *Lat. Christ.* iv. 184.

was such that it would not work; human nature was too strong for it, and no sooner was their founder dead than the Friars Minor infringed it, and popes granted bulls allowing them to possess houses, goods, chattels and books and to make use of them, although by S. Francis's rule human learning had been forbidden. S. Francis had been barely two years in his grave when Elias, the first General of the Order which was to have had no home, began to build the great church and convent at Assisi, and the poor mendicants who were to have no place or habitation, nor even a rag of clothing that they could call their own, housed themselves on a scale of imposing magnificence, and could boast that they worshipped in one of the most sumptuous fanes of Italy, if not of the world.

Among the multitude of backsliders, however, were some who remained faithful to the old rule. They rejected the licence allowed by papal bulls; they denounced the splendour of the services as savouring of this world, and they forsook their spacious convents to dwell in huts and caves in the deserts of the Apennines. This "spiritual party" was even strong enough in 1247, twenty-one years after the death of S. Francis, to carry the election of one of themselves as General of the Order. But John of Parma, who tried to restore the ancient discipline, tried in vain; pope and friar were both against him, and he had to make way for the more moderate Bonaventura. Matthew Paris in 1249 complains that in 300 years the older Orders had not degenerated like the Fraternities in the forty years of their existence.

Though, except the churches, Assisi has few buildings of any great antiquity, I found it had all the air of a mediaeval town. The ancient walls still enclosed it with rampart and bastion, and you still entered and left it by its ancient gates. Within was a network of narrow tortuous alleys between grim stone walls, rising to an enormous height with few external windows, and those guarded by iron grills like a prison. Through these dark and winding passages

you reach the piazza, the forum of the Roman city, and perhaps of the Etruscan town, and beyond the public fountain stands the façade of the Roman temple of Minerva, still perfect though serving as the portico of a Christian church, and dominated by a lofty mediaeval campanile. Compared with this gray relic of the old world, Francis and his friars seem things of yesterday.

A gradual descent from the piazza leads to the front of the upper church, painted inside as all the world knows by Cimabue and Giotto, whose work, alas! at the time of my visit was in process of restoration. A further descent brings you to a lower piazza in front of the convent, with a fine Renaissance porch covering the Gothic doorway of the lower church. Here were lounging two or three burly friars, and as many uncovenanted beggars, mendicants of the ordinary kind. They plied their craft like any honest tradesman, speaking of it quite shamelessly. I overheard one of them, a very respectable well-dressed person, telling his adventures of the day to a friar. He said he had been moved by an impulse, which he considered providential, to go and beg of a carriage full of very unpromising people, and had been rewarded beyond his expectations by sundry soldi.

"Ah! Fra Giovanni," he continued, in a fervour of pious gratitude, "what a blessed providence it is: I am sure I thank it over and over again every day of my life."

Fra Giovanni only replied by a grunt. To a mendicant friar this sort of particular providence would seem a matter of course, calling for no remark.

Like all holy places Assisi attracts beggars of all sorts who seem licensed by the guardians of the shrine to pester visitors with their vociferations, though they were not so numerous at Assisi, nor so importunate as I afterwards found them at Loreto. Nor does the sanctity of a holy place seem to tell favourably on its morality, if I may judge by the numerous scandalous stories of the people which I was told during my stay. Some of them reminded me of

the tales in the *Decameron*. Even the convent afforded matter for scandal. Fra B... the great maestro had been employed by a lady in the town to teach her two young daughters music, and he abused his opportunity. The brother swore to have his life, to avenge the dishonour of his sisters, and Fra B... was in deadly fear. Finally the affair was compromised for a considerable sum of money, which the friar paid; but he called shortly afterwards and asked for his cheque in order, as he said, to correct an informality, and made off with it in his pocket.

As a centre of art, no less than a place of pilgrimage, Assisi draws visitors from all parts of the world with various motives. In the visitors' book I was shown Ruskin's autograph with a few lines of thanks to the landlady and her daughters for their care in nursing him during his stay, "a more than usually troublesome visitor." They said "era sempre ammalato." One of the daughters had since been carried off by a painter from Wurtemburg who wanted an Italian wife, and had settled in Germany, and the other was half engaged to a Dane from Copenhagen, who was coming in a few days to see her, but she said she could not reconcile herself to exchanging Italy for the chilly north.

As the Festa approached, pilgrims of all nationalites began to fill the hôtel. The Germans with whom I arrived had departed, and my companions at dinner were two French priests. The Babel of languages was amusing; hardly any one spoke in his mother tongue. Three men at the other end of the table were conversing in broken English which was puzzling, and seemed like insanity, till I found out that they were strangers to one another, one being a German, another a Spaniard, and the third a French Canadian, and the only tongue they had in common was a smattering of English. The French Canadian, being a British subject, assumed the air of a master of the language, though he spoke it no better than the rest.

The coming Festa had of course been the main topic of the pre-

ceding week. Busy friars had been arranging the church, and carpenters had been knocking up scaffolding for the choir, and everyone was talking of the music in the church, and the fireworks that were to be shown in the piazza at night. The festival began with Vespers in the afternoon of October 3rd, at which, however, there was no very large attendance, for the grand occasion was on the morrow. About three o'clock as I was busy with a sketch in the lower piazza the bishop arrived with his suite and entered by the great doorway into the lower church, and with that the Festa began. From within I heard the chorus, the thrumming of violoncellos, and the pealing organ, inviting me to pack up and to go inside with the rest.

The scene on entering was most impressive. Unlike the upper church, which is cheerful and brilliant, the lower church is depressed and crypt-like, with vast cylindrical piers like towers, dividing it into a nave and aisles, and with groined ceilings of which the arches seem to spring almost from the ground. Through the great doorway the afternoon sun poured a flood of light on the floor, kindling the traceries of marble monuments, and lighting the dim frescoed vaults with reflected brilliancy. But beyond this streak of radiance the church melted into a perspective of gloom and darkness. From the small stained glass windows of the chapels that lie beyond the aisles the light barely reaches the great cavernous nave, which is further darkened by the paintings, in fresco, with which the whole church is covered on wall, pier, and roof, investing it with the richest tone of colour. The pavement falls gradually as you advance, and the gloom grows thicker; a screen crosses the church, behind which you catch glimpses of marble, mosaic, and rich tabernacle work, lighted candles, the smoke of incense and mysterious figures flitting about in rich vestments. Beyond is the semi-dome of the apse, whence came rolling the music of singers and instruments, the musicians themselves being invisible in the darkness.

The ancient walls were ringing with the full power of the chorus when suddenly the mood changed, the choir was silent, the instruments were hushed to a soft sobbing accompaniment, and out of the distant gloom rose a single soprano voice, low at first but rising into a grand passionate wail that filled the building. I had never heard anything like it; so full, so rich and musical, and yet so plaintive as almost to bring tears. The effect was indescribable, the mysterious voice, though exquisitely beautiful, seemed unearthly, almost dreadful. It was not a boy's voice; it was too powerful, too artistically managed; and it differed from a woman's voice as cream differs from milk. The truth flashed on me: no wonder it seemed unnatural. It was a piece of that devilish art by which the Grand Signor at Constantinople, and the Vicar of Christ at Rome recruit their establishments. I had never heard a "Musico" before.

"Pare sempre che piange," said a gentleman who was standing by me.

Early next morning the town began to fill with holiday folk from the country in full gala dress. Carriages with well-dressed people toiled painfully up the mountain side, and the trains brought their contributions to the crowd, but the gathering was chiefly of peasants. Long before ten o'clock, when the service was to begin, the church was packed with an expectant crowd that made it difficult for the officiating clergy to reach their places. Such splendid masses of colour as the crowd of peasant women formed I never saw before. They wore white loose sleeves and shirts, with a bodice or stays of blue or green, laced at the back, skirts and aprons of home-spun stuff, and handkerchiefs over the head of the most brilliant colours, all of course fresh and clean for the occasion. The beauty of the women was remarkable, though their faces and bare arms were tanned to a rich apricot colour.

Perched on a ledge that ran round the apse were the musicians, with the organ, and violoncellos in the area of the semicircle. On high, among the tuneful choir, like old Timotheus, was the saintly

Fra B... in his friar's gown and tippet, beating time vigorously, and marking the accent with a sounding thwack on his desk. This, I have observed, is the usual practice of a conductor in Italy, and rather mars the even flow of the music.

The Festa concluded with *Fuochi artificiali*, fireworks in the piazza at nine o'clock. There were showers of Catharine wheels, flights of rockets, and grand compositions that blazed and whizzed and spluttered, every now and then discharging a volley of explosions, and changing into something different, with red and blue lights and fountains of golden rain. The piazza was full of people, among whom were groups of friars in black and brown, enjoying the fun like children.

During the Festa the Teatro Metastasio was open for three nights for the performance of opera. Metastasio was born at Assisi, and his grateful fellow-townsmen have paid him the doubtful compliment of naming their rather shabby and musty little playhouse after him. The opera was "Il matrimonio segreto" of Cimarosa; a rare piece of good luck, for it is seldom performed nowadays. But in country places in Italy and France you do sometimes have the opportunity of hearing operas that are never performed in the great capitals. I remember once hearing Paer's "Maître de chapelle" in the theatre at Amiens; and at another time at Genoa "Il Barbiere di Siviglia" with music not by Rossini but by Paesiello. The libretto appeared to be the same as that used by Rossini, and it was very funny to hear the well-known numbers sung to the old-fashioned music which Rossini makes Don Bartolo deride and imitate satirically, probably having Paesiello in his mind. I enjoyed Cimarosa's sweet old courtly music that suited so well the powder and pigtail of Il Conte Robinson and his deaf father-in-law. There was a pleasant absence of formality about the performance. The orchestra, consisting of dilettanti from the town, sat in front of the pit, with no regular barrier between them and the audience, and in the interval of the acts you walked about among

the performers, and talked to them, examined their instruments and criticized the music. The *primo violino* remarked that in Cimarosa you may detect many motives which were afterwards borrowed by other composers. The conductor, a professor in the town, was a stern man, who thwacked his desk and shouted *dunque*! "now then!" when things went wrong. Before him stood a very worn-out old piano, if not a veritable harpsichord, on which he accompanied the recitatives, exactly as it was done, if I am not mistaken, in the time of Cimarosa. The very instrument seemed old enough to have served the composer himself, so sadly did it rattle and tinkle under the maestro's heavy hand. The singers were good: the disappointed suitor complained

La sposa non mi piace, non mi piace, non mi piace.
Preferisco la sorella, la sorella, la sorella.

The prima donna was pretty; Il Conte Robinson was an agreeable fop, the deaf father was admirably acted; and the informal, impromptu air of the whole performance added to one's enjoyment.

But the walk home to the hôtel was much more theatrical than the theatre itself. The dark ghostly alleys between frowning walls, the glimmering lamp at the corner, the cavernous arches you had to pass under, and the mysterious corners, fit lurking places for the assassin stiletto in hand, as you stumbled along over the rough paving, with nothing but the echo of your steps to break the dead stillness of the night—all this was more weird and romantic than any scene in melodrama.

I left Assisi by the midnight train on the night of the Festa. The guests in the hôtel had all gone to bed, and I descended by invitation to the quarters of the family, and sat and talked to the daughter of the house who was eating her supper, till it was time to start for the train. She confided to me all about her Dane. The affair at present appeared to be in a platonic state. She wanted rest and quiet, for all the management of the hôtel fell upon her

hands, and foreigners, she thought, made the best husbands. Italians make bad ones, they marry young, and then after a year —*cosa vuole?* She did not give the wives a better character than their husbands, and then said with the greatest simplicity, "credo che io sarei una buona moglie, ma chi lo sa?" I encouraged her to take her Danish suitor, and brave the severity of the northern climate, and I heard afterwards that the match came off.

At Perugia I found Ruskin's name familiar. The landlord of the hôtel where he used to stay, seeing I was an Englishman, asked for news of him. Ruskin was always, he said, "pazzo d' Assisi."

On my way back to Florence to rejoin my friends I spent a morning at Passignano to try and understand the battle of Lake Trasimeno. It was a glorious morning, the sky cloudless, and the sun not too hot. Running the gauntlet of half-a-dozen boatmen, who insisted that I wanted to visit the islands, I skirted the walls of the little town and mounted to the high ground behind it to get a general view of the lake. Passignano is built on a hill that runs to the shore halfway down the lake, between two level plains, each enclosed at some distance by a semicircle of hills. The northern plain is traditionally the scene of the battle; the hills that enclose it coming down to the water at Passignano to the south, and the hill of Gualandro to the north. Here are generally supposed to be Livy's "loca insidiis nata." Flaminius passed through the defile at Gualandro, which was at once closed behind him by Hannibal, whose main body, having the Romans in a trap, rushed down upon them from the enclosing hills. But the hills seem miles away from the lake, leaving a very wide plain, not the least like Livy's description "inde paullo latior patescit campus." The account of the battle and its scene by Polybius, differs much from Livy's, and Arnold transfers the battle boldly to the other plain, south of Passignano, making the narrow defile, through which Flaminius marched to his doom, at Passignano and not at Gualandro. Against this is the whole weight of tradition which places the battle in the

northern plain, where the peasants show you the tower of Hannibal near Borghetto, and the rivulet Sanguinetto near Casa del piano, which

hath ta'en,
A little rill of scanty stream and bed,
A name of blood from that day's sanguine rain
And Sanguinetto tells ye where the dead
Made the earth wet, and turned the unwilling waters red.

And so I left Trasimeno with no clearer understanding of the battle than I had before; and almost disposed to wonder whether either Livy or Polybius had ever seen the place they were writing about.

VI

THE DOLOMITES

1882

VI

The Dolomites

1882

This heading is misleading, if it promises an account of the strange mountains that form the Dolomite group, for though we passed ten or twelve days among them we never, but for a parting glimpse as we went away, really saw them.

In the autumn of 1882 after a tour in Germany ending at Nuremburg, my wife and I turned southwards to explore Dalmatia, a land till then almost unknown to western Europeans. On our way we took the opportunity of seeing something of the Dolomites, intending to spend a few days among the mountains, and to find our way downwards to the railway at Conegliano in the Venetian plain, and thence to reach Trieste.

We passed the Austrian customs at Kufstein, where a German gentleman from Berlin saw his sixty choice cigars ruthlessly torn up and trampled on before his eyes, because he refused to pay a duty equal to their full value, tobacco being a strict governmental monopoly in Austria. We reached the Tiroler Hof at Innsbruck in lovely sunny weather, and spent a day in the country, rambling along the Inn, which runs through meadows then gay with gentians, campanulas, salvias and autumn crocuses, and finishing with an al-fresco concert in a *Bier-garten*, where some really good part-singing atoned for the ear-splitting strains of a brass band that nearly deafened us.

By rail over the Brenner we reached Toblach, high up in the mountains, and thence by a drive of 20 miles in the hôtel omnibus

arrived at Cortina d'Ampezzo. The scenery was magnificent, but at Landro halfway, where we stopped to change horses, the clouds settled down and blotted out the landscape. We all got out and stamped about the stone-flagged hall to warm our feet, while two sturdy mountain lasses in Tyrolese costume supplied the driver and some of the passengers with such creature-comforts as they desired. Our companions were a French abbé from Marseilles with two young compatriots, and a German gentleman who spoke to nobody and seemed to dislike his company. The French priest had been in London, and had seen the Crystal Palace, and Madame Tussaud's Exhibition, which latter had impressed him much, and no doubt coloured his view of English taste. "But," said he, "in England there is absolutely no cuisine."

At Cortina our mountain experiences should have begun, but a steady downpour of rain kept us indoors. Had we but foreseen what fate had in store for us, there was still time to fly. But I must not anticipate.

The weather was already beginning to cause uneasiness at Cortina. They had had no summer, and though it was now September the corn was only partly cut, none of it was carried, and some was still quite green. Strolling into the church we found it crammed with the villagers, men women and children, engaged in a service of intercession for fine weather. Our French friend, the abbé, was enthusiastic over the spectacle. "Had it been in France," he said, "you might have had four or five persons, while here was the whole Commune." "But we shall have fine weather now," said Rosalina our waiting-maid, "because everybody is praying for it."

Unable to go far abroad we visited two industrial schools which the Austrian government had established here. One was for teaching *intarsia* and *intaglio* work, in which no very high standard had been reached, and I thought better designs might have been put before the students. The other was for *filigrana*, that work in silver

wire which the Genoese have made their own, and which we afterwards found practised as a native art in Dalmatia and up as far as Cettigne in Montenegro. Girls were largely employed in this school. They are apprenticed for six years, neither paying or earning anything for the first three, after which they begin to receive wages. I was told that many other technical schools of the kind had been founded in the empire but they had not all been successful, and some had been given up.

The weather became worse and worse. Processions of priests and people with much clanging of bells began the day, and through a pitiless downfall they marched to the neighbouring church at Campo, chanting as they went. Night and morning, services and processions took place with prayer for better weather. Things began to look very serious and great loss was apprehended.

Defying the weather, in our waterproofs, we managed one day to reach Lago Misurina, eight miles off, walking all the time under a canopy of black cloud, through which now and then a rift suddenly revealed a mighty snowy peak right above us where we did not know there was a mountain at all. We lunched on milk and bread at a châlet on the way, where we were invited to join the family upstairs, and drank out of prettily painted rustic pottery. The châlet was of the rudest: cow-hovel below, floor above of unwrought trunks of trees, fire on a raised hearth of stone, no chimney but a hole in the roof to let the smoke out, and admit sleet and rain. On a similar occasion on the Belvedere the woman of the cottage came in crying, to tell her husband their only cow had just died from eating wet grass. The price of a good cow at Cortina was more than £10, and, if I remember, we got up a subscription in the hôtel to help her. Another wet excursion took us to the top of the Peutelstein ascent on the way to Schluderbach, whence we looked down on the dark Val d'Ampezzo with wreathing masses of cloud through which shone now and then half-revealed mysterious pinnacles and precipices of rock, tipped and edged with new-fallen snow.

After this it was obviously desirable to give up the Dolomites and effect a retreat, but, alas! it was now too late. Ah! fatal walk; in what misfortune had it plunged us! Coming down in the morning resolved to fly, we were met by the news that the rain of the day before had washed away the road between us and Toblach and that nothing could get through. A little later we learned that the roads downwards towards Italy, by Pieve di Cadore, were also broken up and impassable. We were cut off from the rest of the world in complete isolation.

We went down to see the streams which during the two preceding days had swollen from trifling brooks to raging torrents carrying away trees and stones and endangering houses. The Boite, which drains the Val d' Ampezzo, was a frightful sight, thick with mud, leaping and tossing its waves high in air over submerged rocks. A small stream, the Bigontina, which runs through Cortina, was almost more furious still, and had carried away half of a timber bridge that spanned it. From the cottages near the brook the inmates had removed all their furniture which was lying about on the grass, covered with matting. Even the window frames were taken out. The mill had been entirely swept away, and one house was in imminent danger. The Capo-Comune, Sindaco, or Mayor of the town, was there in great trouble, to whom, as being a bit of an engineer, I offered my services. "Ah! Signore," said he, turning to me with clasped hands, "Salvi quella casa." I promised to do my best, and with another Englishman who was a fellow-prisoner with us, set to work with the villagers to protect the banks as well as we could. They cut down small trees, chaining them to the stumps and letting them hang in the stream along the banks to relieve them from the force of the current. This answered the purpose of protecting the house in question, but a man came from the other side to complain that we were directing the stream against his building, so we had to make a breakwater on that side too, and to clear away the obstruction of the old mill head to make a freer

way for the torrent. Even then the stream was almost too much for us, and during the night broke through our defences. Fortunately after that the rain became less violent, and the torrent began to abate, and we had less trouble.

The Mayor came to our hôtel to thank us for our sympathy and help, and we heard afterwards from friends who had been imprisoned in the next valley that a full account of our efforts appeared in the local paper. Reminded of luncheon, I was reported to have replied "there is no time to think of that!" an heroic sentiment of which I have no recollection, and which I take to be an embellishment of the editor.

For more than a week we remained prisoners at Cortina: no letters reached us, and the telegraph was broken. It was a curious state of isolation, during which news filtered through in a fragmentary way of the English victory at Tell-el-Kebir, and the end of the Egyptian campaign. The rain continued with little intermission. We went out now and then and got wet, and our clothes and boots were dried by the good motherly soul who waited on us; the same whose confidence that the prayers of the people would bring fine weather had touched us on our arrival. My wife gave her little girl a ribbon for her neck, which the mother folded up and gave the child to take and show it to her saint, telling him she had received a present. The losses of the peasants were very serious; uncut crops were laid flat and spoilt; and though up here they only grow a poor bearded wheat it is their all. Corn in sheaf was swept away, or left rotting on the ground. Worse still, the soil itself was carried off and the valley was covered deeply with stones and sand and ruined for a long time. The road to Toblach was destroyed and nothing was being done to repair it; houses in that place had been swept away, some lives were lost, and the railway was broken. I walked with a friend to S. Vito, the first Italian village southwards, where we found some attempt was being made to mend the broken road. The hôtel Antelao had been in danger from a torrent of

loose rock and scree, which completely filled a deep water-course overhung by the hôtel, and threatened to carry the house away, as it actually did one farther down, together with the greater part of a stone bridge. This avalanche of rock had all gone down to the river below, a mile away, before our visit.

Our captivity in wet and cold, for there were no stoves in our rooms, and we went to bed early to keep warm, lasted eight days; there were nine of us in the inn, all Britons, our French friends having escaped in time, and provisions began to run short. At last there were signs of better weather; we were awakened at five in the morning by the clashing of bells to announce a thanksgiving service, and we ventured to start on our sixty-mile drive down into Italy in an *Ein-spanner* with a fine powerful horse and a good driver. At S. Vito, the first Italian village, we passed the frontier, which is marked by a monument, with an inscription almost legible from the Austrian side recording the repulse of the Austrian invader in 1848. Other monuments told how "here the breasts of the men of Cadore opposed an impassable barrier to the invader." Now in 1923 Cortina, which was Italian in language and manners under Austria, has at last become Italian in reality.

About Venas to our joy the weather cleared, and the sun came out brightly, and for the first and last time we had a view of the marvellous pinnacles and precipices of the Dolomite giants. Monte Cristallo was all uncovered, a huge craggy barrier, notched, indented and jagged, closing the end of the valley. The Tofana had but a few rags of vapour clinging to its summit, and the Rochetta stood all exposed to view. Monte Pelmo, too, perhaps the finest of all, was quite bare of clouds, a magnificent pile of crags some 10,000 or 11,000 feet high. Certainly I never saw mountains so strangely shaped, or with such astounding precipices, but they have not the beauty of the Alps of Switzerland or Dauphiné.

At Tau we stayed to rest our horse, and to lunch, and walked about a mile to Pieve di Cadore. Here in the heart of these wild

mountains, in 1480, Vasari tells us, was born Titian, as we familiarly call him in English, of the family of Vecelli, nobles of that place: and here it appears he lived till he was ten years old, when he was sent to Venice to the home of an uncle, "an honourable citizen," who observing his talent for art apprenticed him to Giovanni Bellini. The village of Pieve stands perched high up, with a ruined castle on a still higher peak, overlooking two deep valleys at an enormous distance below, and surrounded by mountain peaks, now covered with snow. It is quite a little place, but can boast a piazza, and a communal palace with traces of Venetian architecture. The house of the Vecelli, which one cannot call a *palazzo*, though Vasari says they were "in quel luogo dei più nobili," is a modest building of no pretensions, and bears an inscription to say the great painter was born and nurtured in it. There is a small second-rate picture by him in the church containing portraits of himself and some of his family.

From Tau we descended rapidly to Perarolo, a town with a busy trade in timber, where the Piave is joined by our boisterous friend the Boite from the Val d' Ampezzo. The two together formed a most formidable torrent, which was tearing and surging along in a frightful way. Fortunately we found the bridge over the Boite safe, though the Piave just above Perarolo had swept away a timber bridge, and nearly demolished a weir. Between Perarolo and Longarone, where we were to pass the night, the road was damaged, and at intervals covered from one to two feet deep with scree washed down from above. Every little rivulet on the mountain side set the scree in motion and spread it out in a great fan down to the bottom of the valley.

The scenery, though fine on this side of Pieve di Cadore, is not comparable to that at Cortina and Toblach.

The inn at Longarone was a palatial building, but dirty, the landlady was in her cups, and the company was disagreeable. One man who dined in the public room was disposed to be insolent

about Tell-el-Kebir, which for some reason had made the Italians very angry with the English. I could not catch what he said about it in a loud aside to the waiter, but I heard the waiter trying to quiet him by telling him we were not English but French.

A lovely sunny afternoon was followed next morning by pitiless rain. We were off at half-past seven, and now our troubles began in earnest. The bridge on the main road over the torrent that entered from the Zoldo valley had been carried away, and we had to take to the mediaeval mountain track which crossed higher up by an old bridge that had survived. For two or three miles we followed the old road on the mountain-side, so rough and rocky that the driver and I had to walk, and we had to get the help for some distance of a peasant from a gang at work on the road, to hold the carriage up and prevent a capsize. After rejoining the main road we were brought almost to a standstill by an enormous fan of scree which covered the way for more than half a mile with *débris* one to two feet deep, as loose as shingle on the seashore, through which our gallant steed managed at last to drag the carriage while we all three walked. The river filled nearly the whole width of the valley which here widens out, and the meadows and pastures were silted over with sand and stones and fragments from the ruin effected higher up.

At Capo di Ponte we left the valley of the Piave which here turns off to the right into the valley of Belluno. The iron-lattice bridge across it had fortunately escaped, but we found the road beyond destroyed, and for the next three miles we had to take again to the old mountain track, which luckily for us was in better condition. The sun came out and the banks were full of cyclamens which scented the air. We lunched in a nice little inn at Fadalto, a place standing on the natural dam which holds up the lovely Lago di S. Croce, a considerable expanse of water in beautiful scenery. After this our troubles ended and all was smooth sailing to Vittorio, our journey's end, which we reached at half-past two in the afternoon. It cost us a pang to leave behind really unseen

the glories of the Dolomitic Alps, particularly after having endured so much discomfort in the endeavour to make their acquaintance. Still it was something of an adventure, and without seeing I could not have believed what water, at its worst, can do in the mountains in the short space of a few hours. But the climate at the head of the Adriatic is bad even in good seasons. The rainfall there is the heaviest in Europe; the clouds brought up with a south-west wind meeting with these lofty mountains are precipitated in rain, sleet, or snow, discharging themselves so completely that all the while we were imprisoned at Cortina there had been fine sunny weather at Innsbruck just north of us. But this year the autumn had been unusually wet, succeeding an unusually mild winter, as often happens. Since 1843 no season had been so bad, nor had so much damage been done by floods.

We dismissed our driver with a *buon-a-mano* and double fare on account of the perils and troubles of the way; but the £2. 10*s*. it cost us seemed very well earned.

Vittorio is the new name for the old town of Serravalle or Ceneda. Serravalle exactly describes the situation of the place, which completely blocks the end of the valley down which we had come, and which, beginning at Toblach in the Pusterthal, ends here in a ravine so narrow, and with a turn so sudden towards the east, that from outside it is difficult to believe there is any breach in the great mountain wall that bounds the plain of Friuli. Ceneda is charmingly picturesque; antique walls and towers climb the hill on each side, and the streets are full of bits of pure Venetian architecture. The arcades have capitals with foliage like that in the ducal palace and there are windows and balconies like those in the ruling city. There is a very pretty little Palazzo del Comune, with tower and clock, and a triple-arched loggia, and here as elsewhere in his old dominion the lion of S. Mark has left his stamp unmistakably. The branch line from Vittorio took us in twenty minutes to the main line at Conegliano. We heard with relief that the line to

Trieste was undamaged, though that westwards was broken by the Brenta between Venice and Verona, and passengers and luggage had to be ferried across that turbulent stream to take a fresh train on the other side.

A national Exhibition was going on at Trieste, and the town was full to overflowing. Fortunately a M. Panofka, for whom a room had been secured at the Hôtel de la Ville, failed to appear, and we took possession of it, or we should have been in difficulty. After so painful an experience of rain and dismal scenes of ruin and disaster, it was a joy to come down in the morning to a bright room looking on the sunlit quay, where opposite the hôtel lay fantastically painted barks, hailing from Spalato, and other places on the Dalmatian coast, that seemed to marshal us the way we were going.

We spent a few days at Trieste, which were rendered agreeable by friends to whom we had introductions. The Exhibition was interesting mainly for the work shown by Hungary and Croatia, much of which was new to us. There was some excellent pottery, and a good deal of simple work of the peasantry from the other side of the Adriatic, whither we were bound; and we admired the decoration of some dried gourds, engraved and coloured with various devices by the countrymen in their cottages. Professor Eitelberger afterwards showed me some in his museum at Vienna, and let me have a few examples.

We went one evening to the Exhibition to find the gardens illuminated and a roaring trade being done by the cafés, which, as in all such Exhibitions, formed the main attraction to visitors. The gardens ran by the edge of the sea, which lay tame and placid like a lake, and one might have imagined oneself on Maggiore or Como. It was pleasant enough sauntering along the alleys while the water plashed gently against the quay, and listening to the distant sounds of the Austrian military band. There was a bright moon, and the gardens were lit by electric light, then a novelty which still filled the Triestini with wonder and surprise. We found a real Hungarian

café—Café Chardà or T'zardà—so named, I was told, from the wine-shops which form the halting-places in the dreary routes along the great Hungarian plains. Here we sipped real Tokay out of small glasses, and listened to a Hungarian string band. They played without any written music, and apparently impromptu. The leader stood up and gave the subject on his violin, a wild fantastic measure full of turns and twists, to which the rest played an accompaniment. If he were really improvising, and the orchestra were following him almost instinctively, it was wonderful, though I can remember in England hearing a blind musician of my acquaintance accompanying on the harmonium a pianist who was improvising on his own instrument. The Hungarian began with a slow measure, an *adagio* which gradually became *allegro*, and then a *scherzo*, faster and faster, finally furious, and the whole band seemed to work themselves up into a frenzied passion, while as for the leader one might almost have expected sparks to come out of him; and then suddenly the movement dropped once more into the original *adagio*. It was a most exciting and extraordinary performance. The only thing I have known like it was that of the howling dervishes whom I saw and heard at Serajevo.

I spent some time studying the Duomo of Trieste, S. Giusto, and we went across to Capo d' Istria, and then, furnished with introductions, finally set off for the untravelled shores of Dalmatia for the first time. But of Dalmatia I have written elsewhere.

VII

DALMATIA, HERZEGOVINA AND BOSNIA

1893

VII

Dalmatia, Herzegovinà and Bosnia

1893

At the time of my first visit to Dalmatia in 1882 it was the only corner of Europe with serious claims to attention on the score both of history and of art that had not been thoroughly explored. It had been visited, curiously enough, principally by Englishmen, but their accounts of it were very partial and imperfect. Sandys in 1610 passed down the Dalmatian coast, but he only gives us a paragraph about the people, and dismisses the republic of Ragusa in a sentence. Sir George Wheler in 1675 is a little more particular, and even gives us some funny little sketches of ancient buildings, but his interest is confined to Greek and Roman remains. In 1750 we have Stuart's account of the Roman buildings at Pola, and in 1757 Robert Adam's famous monograph on Diocletian's palace at Spalato. Till then nothing was thought worthy of a traveller's attention but antique buildings; the work of the Middle Ages had not been considered deserving of the slightest notice from a serious student of Art; and it is interesting to observe how very gradually it began to attract attention. Sir Gardner Wilkinson's invaluable book of 1844 though chiefly historical, does mention some of the churches briefly, and with a few uncritical remarks on their architecture. Mr Neale, however, in 1861, when the Gothic furore was at its height, ignores the classic antiquities; at Spalato strange to say his first thought is not of Diocletian but of "poor Antonio de'

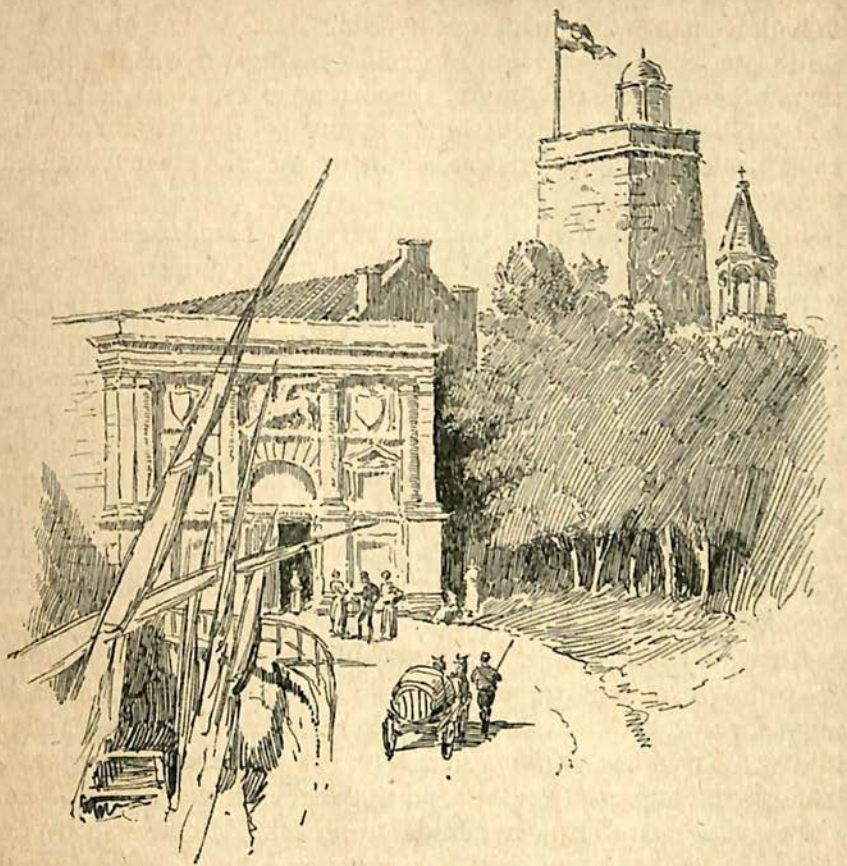
Dominis." He gives some account of the Romanesque and Gothic buildings, though mainly from the ecclesiological and liturgical point of view. Later, Professor Freeman in 1875–1881 does justice to both Roman and Romanesque buildings, but has no eyes for anything later than the eleventh or twelfth century. I was fortunate, therefore, in having the country to a certain extent to myself, only half explored, with no guide-books to forestall the delights of discovery, and I was quite unaware of the treasures of art that awaited me.

But of Dalmatia I have said my say elsewhere, at full length, and have little to add to what has already been published[1].

In the autumn of 1893 I was at Ragusa, revisiting it after an interval of eight years. We had been at Zara to see the campanile of the cathedral which was just being finished from my design. My wife and I had been received with some ceremony; we were met by a deputation; flags were displayed, and "God save the Queen!" was played with as near an approach to the air as the compass of the five church bells allowed. We were not long in Zara, but had time to go with a Dalmatian friend to Karin, the Roman Corinium—our Cirencester—where it was reported there were Roman remains to be seen, and even traces of an amphitheatre. A drive of twenty-two miles over high ground, mostly a stony desert, with some pasturage for sheep which have to be folded at night for fear of wolves, brought us to the verge of the deep valley in which Karin lies, at the head of a branch of the sea of Novigrad. The place was pretty, embosomed in trees, with the blue sea-lake, and the modest tower and pyramidal spire of the Franciscan convent. Village there is none, and the only building besides the convent is a rude *osteria*, which subsists by the traffic on the road from Zara to Obbravazzo, some twelve miles farther on. The convent which was inhabited by two friars was uninteresting, and as for Roman remains nobody at Karin knew anything of them. We could find

[1] *Dalmatia, the Quarnero and Istria*, 3 vols. Clarendon Press, 1887.

nothing to speak of vanished Corinium but some monumental stones with Latin inscriptions built into the wall of the simple Franciscan cloister.



ZARA
Porta di Terra Firma

There was little provision to be had at the inn, but fortunately we had brought two skinny fowls, with bread and *salame*, and the landlord produced some excellent wine, and offered us roast tunny

in oil, which our companion Francesco consumed with relish, but which after one courageous attempt we could not manage. Wild cats screeched and fought and scrambled for scraps under the table till a soft round pointer puppy came and routed them, and took affectionate possession of us till our departure.

There was, however, one very remarkable thing to be seen at Karin. After luncheon our host led us up the valley by the side of a dry torrent-bed, and past three silent mills, to a great cave under an overhanging rock at the end of the ravine, from which after wet weather a considerable river bursts forth, and sets the mills a-going, before losing itself in the sea after a brief course of two miles. I went with the landlord and the miller some way into the cave which was dry but for a few pools in the rocky floor. Its windings have been followed, they said, for over two *kilometri*. A week's rain is enough to bring the water: rumblings are heard from the interior, and then suddenly out comes the river, filling the whole cave, and bursting forth with an immense volume that not only supplies the mill-races, but overflows and fills the whole width of the ravine with a roaring torrent. It is probably due to syphonage of some vast underground reservoir. The miller from experience is able to foretell the coming of the water, and said it would then be due in about a fortnight.

From Ragusa it was our object to go up into Herzegovina and Bosnia, and to see something of the Slavonic interior of the Balkan country. It was only fifteen years since those countries had practically been annexed by Austria, though the suzerainty of the Sultan was nominally respected, and the whole new district was still under martial law. I was assured at Ragusa that nobody would be allowed to enter those provinces without a special passport, and that even when furnished with that I should certainly not be allowed to sketch. This difficulty was removed by the kind offices of the British Ambassador at Vienna to whom I telegraphed, and of the Minister Count Kallay; and after a short delay instructions were received

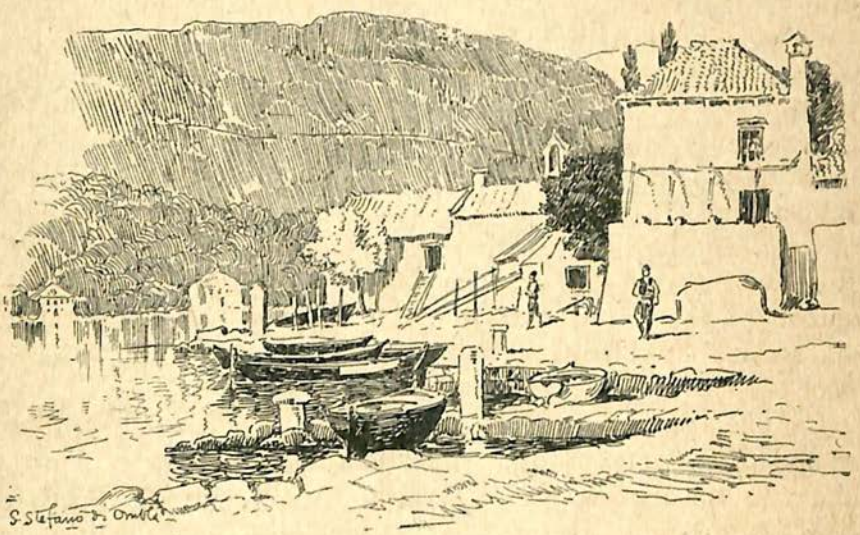
by the *capitano distrettuale* at Ragusa to give me full leave to enter, and to sketch what I pleased.

While we were waiting for this permission I was ill, and we were kept to the house, suffering much from the heat, and more from the mosquitoes, for in Dalmatia mosquito-nets are unknown. We had, however, plenty of society; Professor Gelcich, the antiquary and historian of Ragusa and Cattaro, was untiring in his kind attentions, and Don Alibranti, whom we remembered at Curzola, and who was now Parroco of Ragusa, and Canon of the cathedral, used to come often and sit with us. The bishopric of Ragusa was vacant; Professor Buliç of Spalato was talked of, and Dr De' Trojanis, both of them friends of ours; but we said "there is the Parroco of Ragusa; why should they look any further?" at which he would hold up his hands and say, "Oh! Dio me ne guardi."

When I could get about again we made a delightful visit with Professor Gelcich to the Val d' Ombla, which we had not seen on our former visits to Ragusa. Here is another example, of which this limestone country affords several, of a river bursting forth, full-grown, from the bare rock; and this is even more wonderful than that at Karin, for it is not occasional but perpetual. At Gravosa we turned sharply into the Val d' Ombla, and leaving our carriage at the first village, we took a boat with two stout Slav women to row us up the river, which is here like an arm of the sea filling the whole width of the valley, though only two miles from its source. The valley is a *cul-de-sac* ending abruptly in a precipitous mountain face, at the foot of which this great flood wells up from an immense depth in a dark green pool, apparently placid but with a suspicious oily swirl on the surface from time to time. It then rushes madly over a stone weir, constructed four hundred years ago by a Ragusan architect, Pasquale, and turns a large mill not fifty yards from its source. The roar of the water is deafening, and we were told that in winter the whole face of the impending cliff streams with water bursting from every pore, and forming

something like a general cascade. My ailments had left me with a raging and insatiable thirst, and the sight of this lovely clear glass-green water inspired me with a kind of hydrophilia.

On our way back we stopped to land and ramble about a decayed old villa, with fading frescoes of no great merit, and a large careless-ordered garden, which had belonged to the old Ragusan family of Sorgo, now like many more *decaduta*. The present count after,



S. STEFANO D' OMBLA

like a madman, assuming the title of Duke of Ragusa, had come to grief altogether, and the villa had been bought by a prosperous sea-captain who kept up the old formal garden fairly well, but the villa served only to house the gardener.

After breakfast in the Piazza I met the Baron Ghetaldi-Gondola, Podestà of Ragusa, to whom I presented an introduction which the Archbishop of Zara had given me. He is really a Ghetaldi, descended from the famous Dalmatian mathematician and philo-

sopher, whose cave, where he conducted his experiments in the seventeenth century, is still shown. A Ghetaldi married the heiress of the Gondolas, so that the present Baron can also claim descent from the patriot-poet, author of the *Osmanide*, the one great literary production of the Slavonic muse. Neither Baron Gondola nor Gelcich would allow that the old Republic of Ragusa might have survived but for the whim of Napoleon. Gondola said the day for little states was past; and Gelcich that Ragusa depended on being an outlet by treaty for Turkish trade, and that with the decay of Turkey Ragusa would have decayed also. He says, moreover, that the rule of the Ragusan aristocracy was anything but a blessing to their territory, and that had Napoleon spared the republic it would have been destroyed by its subjects outside in the Canali and Breno, whom the nobles of Ragusa had reduced to the condition of serfs. During the attack on Ragusa by Montenegrins when the Russians drove out the French in 1805 it was the Canalesi who aided and directed the excesses committed by the mountaineers, burning and sacking the villas of the nobility, and sparing the houses of the poor people.

But one must not forget the bright side of Ragusan history; the refusal of the Ragusans to surrender political refugees to the Turks, and their humane laws against slavery. "While your Queen Elizabeth," said Baron Gondola, "was making laws for regulating the slave-trade, the Republic of Ragusa made traffic in human flesh illegal. Every Ragusan who had sold a man into slavery was allowed a certain time to find and redeem him. If he succeeded he was still punished with the loss of an eye. If he failed he was hanged." This certainly was enforcing humanity at the sword-point: but it showed an enlightened view of the evils of slavery, at which other nations had not yet arrived. We bade farewell to our kind friends, who sat with us till late on the eve of our departure, and at four o'clock the next morning found our carriage in the Piazza, to take us to the steamer at Gravosa. There was just light enough for us

to see the arcade of the Rector's palace with its grandly sculptured capitals, and all the buildings of the old Republic, the Stradone, and the two convents with their graceful steeples. I looked on it all for the last time with affection, awakened partly by the beauty of the place and its architecture, partly by recollections of its remarkable history, which has a romance and even a pathetic grandeur of its own, and partly from the accident of my literary connexion with both its history and its art. Each of the old Latin coast cities of Dalmatia, rich in fine architecture, and set in romantic scenery, has its own particular charm, but Ragusa is undoubtedly the most lovely of them all. Standing partly on a rocky peninsula and partly on the foot of majestic mountains, with the valley of the Stradone, or great street, in the middle, like the Roman forum, and with the fine public buildings arranged somewhat in the manner of Venice herself, Ragusa presents within her walls the aspect of a free and independent commonwealth, while without she is surrounded by lovely scenery, and embowered in semi-tropical vegetation.

The dawn began to break soon after we embarked at Gravosa: we touched at Mezzo, Cannosa, and Giuppana, an island where they have jackals, as well as Curzola, and we had a glimpse of Meleda, according to Constantine Porphyrogenitus the real Melita of St Paul's shipwreck; where, as at Malta, they show a St Paul's Bay. Meleda had always eluded us. It is rarely visited by steamers, there is no accommodation to be had, and we should have had to take not only food, but provision for sleeping. One curious circumstance is adduced in favour of the Pauline theory; Meleda abounds in vipers which are unknown in any of the other islands. Gelcich said the people dare not go about barefoot after dusk, and are careful to keep their doors shut between sunset and sunrise to prevent snakes getting into their houses.

We landed at Stagno Grande on the south side of the flat isthmus which joins the long narrow mountainous ridge of Sabbion-

cello to the mainland, and separates the southern sea from the Canale della Narenta on the north. We were met by Signor Bandur, of a famous old Ragusan family, who had been written to about us, and had been good enough to provide a lodging in case we should wish to stay there; but there seemed little of interest in the town and we decided to push on to Mostar at once. There were two churches, one rebuilt, the other full of hay, and the whole place was squalid and half ruinous. The only sign of prosperity was the oyster fishery, which was supervised by Signor Bandur, and had attained celebrity throughout Austria and in Italy. The oysters attach themselves to branches of trees which are cut down and laid in the water. We had some for luncheon and found them excellent. Stagno has a bad reputation for malaria, and as for mosquitoes we were told we should find them as big as horse-flies.

The isthmus is not more than a mile wide, and a good but dusty road took us across it to Stagno Piccolo at the end of the Canale della Narenta. The peninsula of Sabbioncello was a cherished possession of the Ragusan Republic, and the isthmus was defended by formidable walls that climb the mountain and end at Stagno with the town walls and a castle. At the little quay under the walls of Stagno Piccolo, and opposite the town-gate which is surmounted by a statue of St Biagio—St Blaise—the patron of Ragusa, we found the little steamer which was to take us up the *canale* and the river Narenta to Metcovich, the terminus of the railway to Mostar and Serajevo.

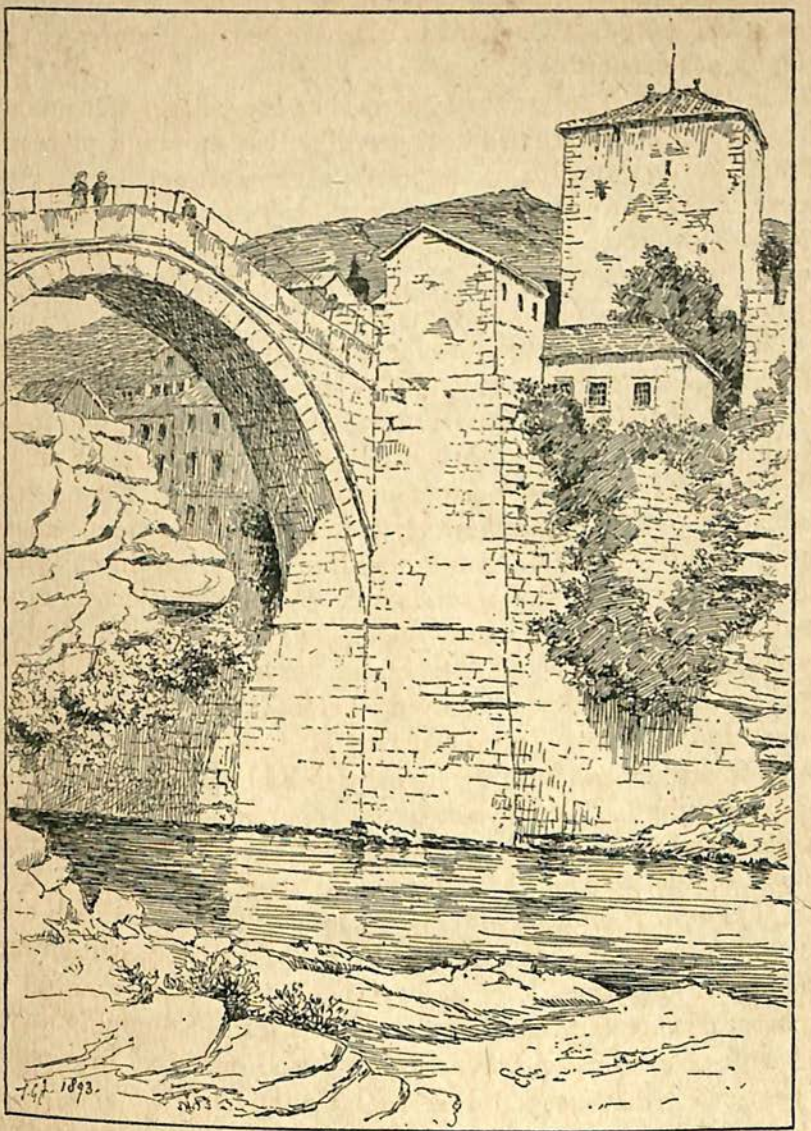
The long narrow channel between Sabbioncello and the mainland into which the river Narenta discharges itself, is a magnificent natural harbour, safe from every wind. Here dwelt the Narentines, a strong seafaring Serb race, who contested the command of the Adriatic with Venice, for some time successfully. They were suppressed by Pietro Orseolo II in 998 as pirates; but they probably only took toll of shipping as the Venetians did, and had things

gone differently the Venetians would have been the pirates and the Narentines masters of the sea.

We touched at several little ports, but the villages were mostly a collection of half-ruined cottages. The last stopping place was Trappano, on the Sabbioncello shore, where a strange jagged ridge of rock runs down and encloses a small bay in its embrace, a true δρέπανον or sickle, from which probably the place was named by some early Greek settlers from the neighbouring island of Φαρία, or Lesina, which lies opposite the end of the canal.

The steamer then crossed to the eastern side of the channel, and entered the river Narenta which winds between high artificial banks through a fertile alluvial plain bounded by lofty mountains. Near Fort Opus, a busy little water-side town, where is an old Venetian fort on a crag, once stood the populous and flourishing Roman city of Narona, of which I believe nothing now remains above ground, though the neighbourhood abounds in inscribed stones and fragments of architecture. From Metcovich, a small town on the hillside, a narrow-gauge railway runs into the interior, by which we reached Mostar, the capital of Herzegovina, after dark; and here in a town that fifteen years before afforded no accommodation for travellers but a Turkish Han we were surprised to find a smart hôtel with all the luxuries of Vienna. It is needless to say Mostar by itself could not have supported such an establishment. It was maintained by a subsidy from the government, for the benefit of the garrison, and the official staff. There was a large café, and a great dining-room or *Speise-saal* with a verandah outside, where you could dine if you liked, looking on a garden and listening to the strains of a military band. The place was full of Austrian officers and their families, and instead of plunging as we had expected into semi-barbarism we found ourselves in a whirl of gay society that recalled Trieste or Vienna itself.

Mostar takes its name from the "old bridge"—*Stari Most*—which here crosses the Narenta from rock to rock at its narrowest



MOSTAR
The Bridge

part. It is a magnificent work, generally attributed to Trajan or Hadrian, though some say it was built by Italo-Dalmatian architects for Sultan Suleiman two years after the Turkish conquest. But though it has been refaced with Turkish masonry the body of the work is probably Roman. The name Mostar proves that there was a bridge which was ancient before the Turks came, for Mostar existed long before the Turkish conquest, and the scale of the work is not unworthy of Rome. Sir Gardner Wilkinson gives the span 95 feet 3 inches, and the height above the summer level of the water 70 feet without the parapet. The roadway rises with a steep gradient from either end to the middle, and this gives the arch a deceptive look of being slightly pointed, of which it is difficult to disabuse oneself. Massive towers defend it at each end, the work principally of Herzog or Pasha in later times, though they contain traces of Roman building; whoever may have been their author they add greatly to the picturesque effect of the structure. When through the arch you caught the view of mosque and minaret, the picture formed an epitome of history, from the Moesian conquest by Rome, to the rule of Christian kings of Bosnia, and dukes of Herzegovina, and to that of Turkish pashas; while the series was completed by the Austrian buildings which had begun to rise among the older houses of the town.

Mostar, however, was not yet Europeanized: it was still an oriental town, and two-thirds of its 15,000 inhabitants still professed the faith of Islam. There were thirty mosques, and many minarets, from which five times a day the muezzin proclaimed the unity of God, and the mission of the prophet, and called the faithful to prayer. To both of us the East was new untravelled ground, and it was delightful to wander between the low wooden sheds that lined the street, with their open shops full of gay cloths, and fabrics in rich colours, that lined the walls and hung outside, while within sat grave turbaned figures, cross-legged, on oriental carpets, smoking long pipes, or drinking Turkish coffee out of tiny cups.

There were tailors working gay embroidered garments, brass and coppersmiths hammering out their pots and pans, and the *česva* or *ibrik* for making Turkish coffee, which the natives seemed to be drinking all day long. There were silversmiths making peasants' finery in silver or base metal, barbers shaving their customers, and butchers' shops whence the buyers came away with unappetizing pieces of meat, held by a corner between finger and thumb. The Turkish gentlemen who passed through the crowd were neatly dressed and scrupulously clean, with shaven heads and well-trimmed beards, looking with their shapely hands and faces as if fresh from a careful toilet. The contrast between the Mahometan and the Christian was all in favour of the former. Many generations of servitude and oppression had left their stamp on the Christian peasant, who seemed several grades lower than the Moslem. About the Turk there was an engaging frankness and independence, and a superior air of cleanliness and self-respect, and it was remarkable that in dealing with a Christian tradesman you had to haggle and beat the price down, while with a Turk it was useless to attempt it: he named his price, and you had to give it, or go without. Of course when in these parts one speaks of Turks, one means simply Mahometans. The people of Herzegovina and Bosnia are not Turks at all, but whether Christian or Moslem they are all alike Serbian Slavs, and all speak the Slavonic language. But the Mahometans call themselves Turks, and to oblige them the names of the streets were written up in Turkish as well as in Slav and German. Formerly in no part of the Sultan's domain did the Mahometans show such religious bigotry and such fanatical fury as in these once Christian countries and in Albania. At first, after the Austrians came, the Bosnian Begs, too proud to submit to the Christians, emigrated in considerable numbers to Asia Minor, where the Sultan gave them lands. On former visits to Dalmatia we had seen them departing with their families by the Austrian Lloyd steamers, and were amused by their difficulty in properly

secreting their womenkind. But this had ceased by the time of our present visit: the Moslems were not disturbed in their property nor in their religion; many of them were rich, and some had built themselves new houses in the Viennese style; they had said "Kismet," and settled to live on good terms with their new rulers.

We called on Baron Benko, the civil governor of Herzegovina, to whom Baron Gondola had given me an introduction. He received us very kindly and gave me the permission to sketch which had come from Vienna. He said "We are not like France and Germany, where every one who sketches is suspected of being a spy." All the same I think I should have fared badly without this formal licence. Baron Benko returned our call in the afternoon, and introduced us to one of his secretaries, the Ritter von Zambauer, who had a Ragusan wife and sister-in-law of the family de' Reglia, now living in Zara, and to them we were much indebted for the pleasure of our visit.

The mosques at Mostar are simple buildings without much architectural pretension, though some of their minarets are pretty. The principal mosque is the Karadjeus Begova Djamia, or the mosque of the Beg with black eyes. The true Turk has no patronymic and has to be distinguished by some epithet after his proper name, Selim, or Mustapha or whatever it may be. The mosques are all on the Byzantine plan, square with a dome on pendentives, and with a porch or narthex, which in the better mosques is covered with three small domes.

The Mahometan women seemed to go about freely and alone, though the ladies were accompanied by a servant. At Mostar they are more severely veiled than in most places, or rather in addition to being veiled they wear a kind of hood, or poke, over the eyes, which obliges them to throw the head backward in order to see their way. This has the oddest effect. Their gowns are often green, and their boots which reach some way up the leg are bright yellow.

The Christian women of the better class come out on Sundays in the most resplendent fashion, with purple and red velvet jackets short to the waist, and loose sleeves embroidered heavily with gold. The women wear baggy trousers that look almost like a skirt, and one girl was a symphony in yellow, her trousers being dark orange in colour, her bodice of a lighter yellow, and her jacket of a dark maroon velvet covered with gold embroidery. The girls have their hair in a single plait down their backs, and wear a little biretta with a tassel. On Sundays they put on all their ornaments, blazing with silver coins, buttons, and pendent balls of the same metal.

CHRISTIAN WOMAN
HERZEGOVINA

We went with the Zambauers to Blagaj, a decayed village, once more important than Mostar, where the princes of Herzegovina had a castle. Here at the end of a ravine which is closed by a tremendous precipice a river like that at Ombla issues, and turns a mill immediately. Adjoining the mill is a ruined mosque, with the Imaum's house, now occupied by the miller, who is also custodian of the tombs of two Mahometan saints, who are much revered. Their coffins lie side by side, one covered with green cloth and the other with blue, and with posts at the head carved with a turban like the tombstones in a Turkish cemetery. Beside them were hanging embroidered towels, and there was a jug of water, for the use of the saints, who they believe come out of their graves by night to wash and pray. The miller's wife fled at our approach to the inner recesses of the house, but sent the Christian maid to invite my wife and Signorina de' Reglia to visit her, and showed them the building.

The river Narenta runs through the town in a deep channel with sides of white stone like marble, and the water is of a deep almost incredible ultra-marine blue, almost black when passing under the bridge, and as clear as glass. At our visit the water was low, but after rain it sometimes rises as much as twenty-four feet, up to the springing of the arch. The deep blue river between its cliffs of white marble hung with vegetation, and the splendid sweep of the graceful bridge with its groups of flanking towers, combine to make a picture of almost unrivalled beauty and romance. (*v.* Frontispiece.)

We left Mostar in the early morning for Serajevo. The line followed the windings of the Narenta, in a gorge which was extremely fine, the mountains being very wild and stern, often narrowing the valley to a mere ravine. At midday we stopped to dine at Konjica, a small Turkish town on the Narenta, with three or four minarets. Here the line leaves the river and climbs the Ivan Planina, a high tableland, the watershed of the district, and the boundary between Bosnia and Herzegovina. The hills now became fairly well wooded, pastures were more frequent, and the scenery resembled the lower slopes of the Alps, though with something of the stern and sterile character that marks the mountains of Dalmatia. At Ivan which we reached after a long and slow ascent, travelling at little more than a man's walking pace, we arrived at the summit, and then descended through scenery that might be called soft and verdant to the great plain, at the far end of which appeared the white houses and sparkling minarets of Serajevo, filling the width of the valley and climbing the hills on either side and behind.

Serajevo, formerly Bosna Serai, is about 1700 or 1800 feet above the sea, and about 1200 above Mostar, and at the time of our visit contained, according to the Austrian census, 30,000 souls. It was not originally a place of much importance, the Bosnian capital being elsewhere, at Jaicze or Travnik, but in 1465, the year after

it came into Turkish possession, the town was enlarged, the Serai or fortress was built on the hill, and Bosna Serai, "the Damascus of the North," as the people proudly call it, became the principal city of the conquered province.

The station is two miles from the town, of which we saw little as we drove in, except a good deal of new Austrian building, principally barracks, and we began to fear that we had come too late, and should find Serajevo already Europeanized. The new buildings were large and lofty, and seemed to aspire to rival the Ring at Vienna. But after taking our room at the Hôtel Europe, a very good hôtel in every way, we sallied forth, and soon found ourselves *in pieno Oriente*; for the central part of the city had not been touched by European fashion. It consists of a number of narrow streets laid out at right angles, paved with the roughest cobbles, and lined on both sides with little one-storey shops or booths like those that we saw at Mostar, though here they are much more numerous, and contain better wares. The square spaces or islands formed by four streets crossing one another are often occupied by Khans, or Hans, large courtyards surrounded by two-storeyed buildings, which before the Austrian occupation afforded the only accommodation for travellers, and were nasty enough. The yards were filled with peasants in turbans and various varieties of garb, busy lading their strings of pack-horses for return to their villages, and the scene was very picturesque. A little farther was the market, or Čarsia—a corruption of a Turkish word—which was perhaps the most picturesque and interesting part of Serajevo. The little shops clustered round the mosques, and there was a fountain on rising ground, and there were booths climbing the steep hill beyond. Nothing more oriental could be conceived. As Baron Benko had said, "if you were brought there blindfold you might imagine when your eyes were uncovered that you were in Constantinople." Each trade has its own part of the bazaar. There is the haberdashers' row; the shoemakers' row, where they were busy making red shoes for

SERAJEVO

The Carsia

men, and yellow boots for women, and embroidered slippers of all kinds; the coppersmiths' row, where they were busy hammering out coffee-pots, *ibriks* and *česvas*, besides larger pots and pans; the makers of baskets, of girdles, and of carved and painted trunks, and the silversmiths, all had their respective rows or streets in the market, just as in the cities of England, France and Italy during the Middle Ages. Some of the tradesmen had a stock of considerable value. One Turk with whom we had pleasant dealings valued the contents of his shop at about 40,000 florins, equal to 3200 English pounds. Here as at Mostar we found it of no use trying to abate the prices asked, as one had to do in Dalmatia, and indeed in some of the smartest shops in Milan or Vienna. Once or twice we got a trifling abatement, but as a rule it was useless to try after the Turk had once shaken his head.

But besides the Čarsia and the street shops Serajevo boasts a covered bazaar, no doubt a shabby one in comparison with those of Stamboul or Cairo, but quite enough to delight novices in Eastern travel. It runs behind the shops, and has an entrance at each end, and a transept on each side with other entrances, one of which leads to a Han. The roof is vaulted, but much out of repair, and the walls are strutted with beams which a native love of colour has happily induced them to paint blue and red. You enter by an arch that only reaches your shoulder, and descend by three or four very high steps, and the effect of the interior with its subdued light, the gay colour of the wares, and the costume of the buyers and sellers was charming.

The mosques at Serajevo are better than those at Mostar, and the principal one, the Begova Djamia, or "Mosque of the Beg," is really a fine building. The forecourt was on a larger scale, and contained a fine canopy of painted wood over the cistern where the faithful come for a ceremonial wash before entering the mosque. The good taste of the oriental always plants the forecourts of his mosque with trees, one or more according to the space available,

very frequently with cypresses which group harmoniously with the minaret.

No objection was made to our entering the mosques, and large slippers to go over our shoes were provided as they are at Constantinople, European shoes not being so easily slipped off as the oriental slipper. I remember a lady at Constantinople objecting to this rule, and asking the custodian at S. Sophia why she might not go in with her shoes; to which the man replied "Do you not remember how it was said to Moses, 'put off thy shoes, for this place is holy ground.'"

We went to see the school for Serbian girls which had been founded in Serajevo thirty years before our visit by Miss Irby. Her object was to raise the standard of education among Christian Bosnian women, who had little or no opportunity of getting any at all, by training native girls to qualify themselves as school-mistresses. The difficulties she had to encounter may be imagined, and at one time she had to leave Serajevo, and transfer her school to Prague, whence, however, she was able to bring it back again. We had met Miss Irby some years before in Oxford, and so needed no introduction. We found her in a large bare house, built in Turkish times, but on more than a Turkish scale in point of height, enclosed in grounds forming a sort of garden and playground in one. At present she had about twenty-one Slav orphan girls in the school, some of whom we found at their lessons, with a bright young woman whom she had trained, and who had just passed creditably as a school-mistress, and will be appointed to one of the state schools. Another had already been appointed at Mostar. The Austrians, when they first came, did their best to upset the school, believing it to be a Protestant proselytizing institution. Miss Irby managed to clear herself of that charge; the pupils, whether of the Greek or Roman Church, being left to the religious instruction of their own pastors. But she said the Roman Catholics, especially the Jesuits whom the Austrians have introduced, were

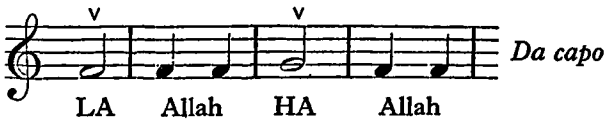
doing all they could to get hold of the children. The vast majority of the Bosnian Christians belong of course to the Orthodox Greek Communion, but their ecclesiastical system is a sleepy one, and no match for the Jesuit propaganda.

Miss Irby introduced us to her neighbour Herr Kutchera, brother of the civil governor of Serajevo who was then absent. The brother to whom we were introduced was commander of the Bosnian fleet, an office which, remembering the inland position of the country, reminded me of Corporal Trim, and the unfortunate king of Bohemia with the seven castles, whose desire to possess a fleet was defeated by the facts of physical geography. But we found there really was a Bosnian fleet of steamers on the rivers Drin and Drave, which was beginning to develop a carrying trade. Herr Kutchera showed us how to make Turkish coffee, and was very kind in taking us about the town and helping us as interpreter to buy what we wanted.

One evening we went to hear the howling Dervishes in a mosque in the outskirts of the town. They are real Turks who come from time to time on a sort of mission, and it is said no better example of their performance is to be found even in Constantinople. They have a convent of their own and a school of novices whom they train. We started in the dusk, six Austrian officers and ourselves, preceded by a guide with a lantern. We walked a long way up a steep path cruelly paved with large cobbles, and at last reached a door at which our guide knocked. On entering we found ourselves in a shabby court with wooden galleries, and mounting a steep stair gained a rather rickety gallery surrounding three sides of the mosque, which was a plain square room with a flat ceiling. The Kiblah, or niche on the side towards Mecca, was its only feature, and some placards with texts in Arabic its only decoration. Everything was of the meanest kind, and even the floor was bare, without the usual handsome carpets. Six sheepskin mats shaped to a point at one end were arranged in front of the Kiblah, and some

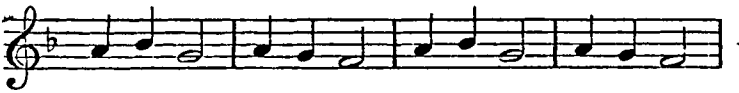
more were placed round the room against the walls. There was a hanging petroleum lamp at one side, and right and left of the Kiblah were four dip-candles in tin candlesticks, which required repeatedly to be snuffed either with snuffers or with the fingers.

Five Dervishes presently entered, and were afterwards joined by a sixth, and by ten lads who seated themselves round the room. The Dervishes took their places on the sheepskin mats, facing the Kiblah and went through the ordinary prayers, bowing and prostrating themselves as is usual in the service of the mosque. Both Dervishes and novices wore ordinary attire, except that the dervishes had white turbans. After some time the six dervishes turned round, reversing their mats and sat crosslegged facing the novices. First they sang some hymns of great length, and then the chief dervish, sitting in front of the Kiblah took up a rosary and the others did the same. A little girl brought an empty wine-bottle and put it on the floor in front of the chief dervish. Then the sixth dervish appeared with a burning censer which he put on the floor just behind the bottle, after which they began to tell their beads, the chief dervish acting as fugleman. For every bead they chanted



for I daresay a hundred times, now and then raising the pitch a note, and gradually quickening the pace till at last it became nothing but two shouts as fast as possible "La La, Ha la," swaying the body to right and left at each half of the sentence and turning the head the reverse way of the body. As the pace increased the effect of these white turbans, as we looked down on them from our gallery, turning rapidly from side to side was most curious. The novices kept time with the leader, and wagged their heads with equal vigour. At last when they all seemed mad with an uncontrollable frenzy the leader stopped, and after a few words recited in a

nasal chant, started another sentence. I could not catch the words, but the chant was this:



This went on like the first, rising in pitch and increasing to a furious pace in the same way. Then succeeded a calm and a new theme was introduced; this time only "Allah! Allah!" with a bowing backwards and forwards. After that there was a sort of groaning, and then for a whole rosary what sounded like "Oho! Oho!" and last of all nothing but a violent monosyllable with an Arabic guttural sounding like "Hrah! Hrah! Hrah!" At each repetition the head was thrown violently forward. The effect of this as the pitch was raised, and the pace quickened till sixteen heads could wag, and sixteen voices shout no faster was indescribable. It was actually frightful.

They then calmed down; the bottle was carried round and every one blew into it; then they sang a sort of hymn and recited something standing, and all was over.

The leader looked a grave sensible man of forty years, with well-cut features, and neatly trimmed beard. I longed to be able to talk to him about it all, and to find out what had been in his mind. It was not a pleasant exhibition, and the picture of the white turbans rolling and twisting in the dim light haunted one afterwards.

Before leaving we were asked to put something into a collecting-box that hung on the wall.

The walks round about the town in the outskirts are very pretty. Across the river a steep flight of rudely formed steps leads up the hill to the old Turkish cemetery, where are two rather imposing canopied tombs besides the usual turban-headed stones for the men, and the plain headstones with pointed tops for the women.

Numbers of peasants passed us with strings of four or five *konj* or ponies laden with paniers, on their way home from market.

Both at Serajevo and Mostar I looked in vain for any traces of old Serbian or pre-Mussulman art. But just before leaving, when

SERAJEVO. CEMETERY

too late to see it, I heard that besides the ugly flaring new Greek cathedral, which overtops a new and uninteresting Roman Catholic one, there does exist an old Serb church, still in use, where the priests have some ancient manuscripts and other things of interest. Miss Irby, however, told me that it has no architectural character, and, as I have said, Serajevo, before the Turkish conquest, was a place of little importance.

Neither here nor at Mostar or elsewhere had I any trouble from the Turks when I was sketching. Baron Benko had warned me against being seen drawing a Mahometan woman, which would have given offence, but otherwise I drew what I pleased without interruption. Nobody shouted "Shaitan—Shaitan," or threw stones at me as they would have done twenty years before. In fact nobody took the least interest in my performance; now and then a shy boy would stand a little way off, but nobody came to look over the sketch, a strange contrast to the annoyance artists are subject to in Italy, France, Holland and Belgium.

We paid a farewell visit to Miss Irby, to whose kindness we were much indebted during our stay, and to whose hospitable house we used to repair for the only five-o'clock tea in Bosnia. Since our visit, she has passed away, in 1911, and I have not heard what has become of her school. I can only hope that the splendid enterprise which she began for the benefit of Bosnian womenkind has not come to an end with the death of its self-sacrificing foundress.

We made a short stay at Mostar on our way down to the coast to see our friends, and I got a second sketch of the bridge, and bought some Turkish jugs and boxes and apparatus for making Turkish coffee. At Fort Opus, where the steamer stayed two hours to take in wine, a man seeing me studying some ancient Roman stones asked whether I had seen an "idol" which had been found at Narona, and guided me to the town-hall, where on a large reversed Roman capital was an excellent female statue, perhaps of a Vestal, unfortunately headless, of which I made a sketch. It is a really fine work. We took in casks

STATUE AT FORT OPUS

of wine at every place till I wondered there was room for any more. At Gelsa where the ship lay to a little way from the shore we were surprised to see a long row of black objects in a string bobbing over the waves and gradually approaching from the shore, looking like the backs of a shoal of porpoises. They turned out to be barrels full of wine, which floated, because wine is lighter than sea-water, and were brought on board in this simple fashion.

At Spalato we arrived late and had gone to bed, when there was a knock at the cabin door, and the steward said a gentleman from Traü had come on board asking for us. It was our friend Count Giovanni Fanfogna Garagnin, who had given up his night's rest to come and have a glimpse of us in passing. Though rather sleepy, I was very glad to welcome him. We had an hour or two at Zara to see our friends there, and I made another survey of the work at the cathedral, and in due course we arrived safely at Trieste. The mosquitoes from the harbour there are dreadful, worse than in most places; and when dining with our friends the Greenhams, though their house is high up on the hill, we had to keep all the windows shut and endure the heat.

From Trieste we crossed to Venice by sea, the proper way of approaching her, and I shall never forget the sight of her fairy domes and steeples gleaming white and rose colour through a morning mist as we lay off the entrance at Malamocco; it might have been an unsubstantial vision, such a city as one sees in a dream.

VIII
SALONICA
1910

VIII

SALONICA

1910

THE journey by rail from Constantinople to Salonica takes twenty-four hours. You start in the evening and there is a sleeping-car which is detached at Dedeagatch in the morning, and you continue the journey in an ordinary train. At Dedeagatch, where the line from Nisch falls in, there is a port to which importance is attached in the international settlement of frontiers, which, however, are not settled yet, four or five years after the end of the war. The sea is out of sight, and there is nothing to be seen but the station; not another house was visible near it, and there was no sign of a town in the distance. There was, however, some coffee to be had with bread and butter, of which we were glad. The rest of the journey was rather tedious. We read, and ate the food we had brought with us, and walked in the corridor and made friends with an Italian officer of the International Gendarmerie, a Florentine.

The country was a desert most of the way: with here and there a patch of Indian corn. The soil seemed chiefly sand, over rock at no great depth below the surface. About midday we cut through a fine wild range, the Rhodope mountains, where the Bacchanals tore Orpheus to pieces,

> *When by the rout that made the hideous roar*
> *His gory visage down the stream was sent,*
> *Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore.*

But the great river we crossed perhaps was not the Hebrus after all.

Emerging from these savage glens we looked out between mountains across the vast plain where was fought the battle of Philippi.

Far away, out of sight, would lie the humble village, which we were told represented the great Roman colony where Paul and Silas were beaten, and where they founded the church which Paul loved best.

It was dark before we reached Salonica, and we were kept a long time at the last station, while the sanitary officers came to see whether any of us were suffering from cholera, of which a few cases had occurred at Constantinople and had caused a scare. All the remains of food were taken from the passengers and crammed into a large sack, and then a sort of garden engine was brought with which a disinfecting fluid was squirted over the interior of every compartment. My son and I retired to the corridor and shut the door, but the inmates of the third class as well as their carriage and the luggage had to suffer the full discharge of this healing or prophylactic shower. Consequently we reached Salonica at a quarter past eleven, instead of half past eight, and the Dragoman of the "Splendid Palace Hôtel" who met us brought a note from Mr Crawford Price who had kindly been to the station to meet us, to say, finding we were so late, he had gone home.

We had been prepared to find Salonica a good deal more modernized than Stamboul, and almost European. And so it was to some extent, though it was not so far modernized as to have a real road between the town and the station, for there was only a track over waste ground. Along the sea-board however civilization has set in, with a splendid quay and electric tramways, and European houses facing the sea. But behind, climbing the hill, is the old town, thoroughly Turkish, though not so squalid as Stamboul, the houses being as a rule built of more solid materials.

The population of Salonica is strangely mixed. Since the war Salonica has become Christian and now belongs to Greece; at the time of our visit it was Turkish, but though the Turk was master and made his mastership felt unmistakably, he was in a minority. Half the population was Jewish, possibly the wealthiest part of

the community. It is said the Young Turk movement was engineered and financed mainly by the Jews of Salonica. They made no great show of their numbers or consequence, but seemed to keep somewhat in the background. The men, so far as I observed, wore no distinctive dress; one man who was pointed out to me as a Jew certainly wore a fez. The Jewesses, however, had a handsome costume, and as they generally were fine women they carried it well, and it gave them an air of distinction. They wore their hair in a tail down the back, but, as no one must see the end of a Jewess's hair, it was enclosed in a green silk case which hung down behind them like a flat ribbon, four or five inches wide, and was embroidered at the end with gold. I saw no great synagogue, and a Jewish service into the middle of which I once strayed by accident was being conducted in a mere open shed, not even enclosed from the weather.

There was a very large Greek population, which has probably become still larger since the Greek occupation, but various other nationalities were represented. All the old churches were turned into mosques, but the Moslem cult seemed to me very indifferently observed. There was certainly none of the fervour or seriousness noticeable in the mosques at Constantinople or Serajevo; and the restrictions on foreigners were much less rigid. With a recommendation from Sir Harry Lamb our Consul-General, I had no trouble in getting from the Vali, on whom I called with a gentleman from the Consulate, a permit authorizing me to sketch, and directing that everyone should give me any assistance I desired. The *hodjas*, or priests in charge of the mosques were very civil and obliging. One old priest used to come while I was sketching in S. Demetrius, and sit in a pulpit, but I never saw him do anything but read the newspaper.

In Salonica again the Moslem objection to pictorial representations of life is quite disregarded. At Constantinople the mosaics at S. Sophia are covered with yellow colour wash: only the great

Seraphim on the pendentives are left uncovered, and they have had their faces picked out. At S. Irene the great cross on the gold ground of the apse is exposed, but a curtain is drawn in front; you are told it is not safe to let it be seen. The only mosaics that are left uncovered are those in the Kahriyeh Djami, the church of the *chora*, possibly spared because they are in the narthex, outside the place of worship. But at Salonica none of the mosaics had been covered, and the Turks were even trying to find more. The great circular church of S. George has mosaics all round the dome, and in the arched ceilings of the lateral chapels. S. Sophia, the old cathedral, has a magnificent apse with a Madonna on a gold ground, and in the dome one of the loveliest mosaics I have ever seen, of the Apostles looking up at their ascended Lord. On the walls of S. Demetrius were mosaics of several periods, imperfect but of great interest as bearing on the date of that magnificent church.

We made friends with the *hodja* of S. Demetrius, Hassan Tahsin, who gave me his card, and showed us cards from various English visitors in past years. We went to his house for a cup of coffee and to play with his little boy and girl. He was a Dervish and a dancing Dervish, and with the help of Mr Chafy of the Consulate, who kindly came with us as interpreter, we had some interesting conversation with him. He said "We dance. Why do we only dance? Jews, Greeks, Protestants, Roman Catholics, Armenians —none of them dance. Only we. Ah! this is something to make one think." In a side chapel of S. Demetrius Hassan Tahsin showed us the tomb of the saint, a flat slab rather roughly carved with a cross, and resting on small stones at the corners. The ground is rather scooped out, possibly by pilgrims who carry it away as a charm or amulet. My friend the Rev. George Horner writes that when he was here in 1873 the Turkish custode "took earth from the tomb of the Christian saint, and asked my mother's name, which was fortunately Sophia, and tied a knot over the flame of his candle, which, I believe, is quite an orthodox magical action.

What he muttered besides I cannot remember, perhaps a Gnostic invocation." Hassan did not work any such charm for us, but he described how the *Ortodossi* came and laid their cheek upon the stone, in a manner which he imitated, first putting a piece of paper on it because of the dust; and he showed us how the *Russ* wrung their hands, and cried, and cried, "Ai! Ai!"

Of this beautiful Basilican church of S. Demetrius one must now speak in the past. The interior was as lovely as anything I have ever seen: the effect of the first view as you entered from the side was overwhelming. The splendour of its marble columns, and the marble encasing of the walls, the mystery of its five aisles, the intricacy of the galleries, and the exquisite sculpture of the capitals, which were original works, not pilfered from ancient buildings, all combined to raise this building to the first rank of Christian churches. Now all this is gone. The church was destroyed by a fire that swept through the city during the late war, an accidental conflagration, not the act of an enemy, and the loss to art is irremediable.

The fire has had the effect of disclosing a crypt with decorations either in fresco or mosaic, I could not learn which, and other interesting features that had been hidden or obscured. I was promised particulars of these discoveries, but they have never reached me, nor do I know whether they have ever been published.

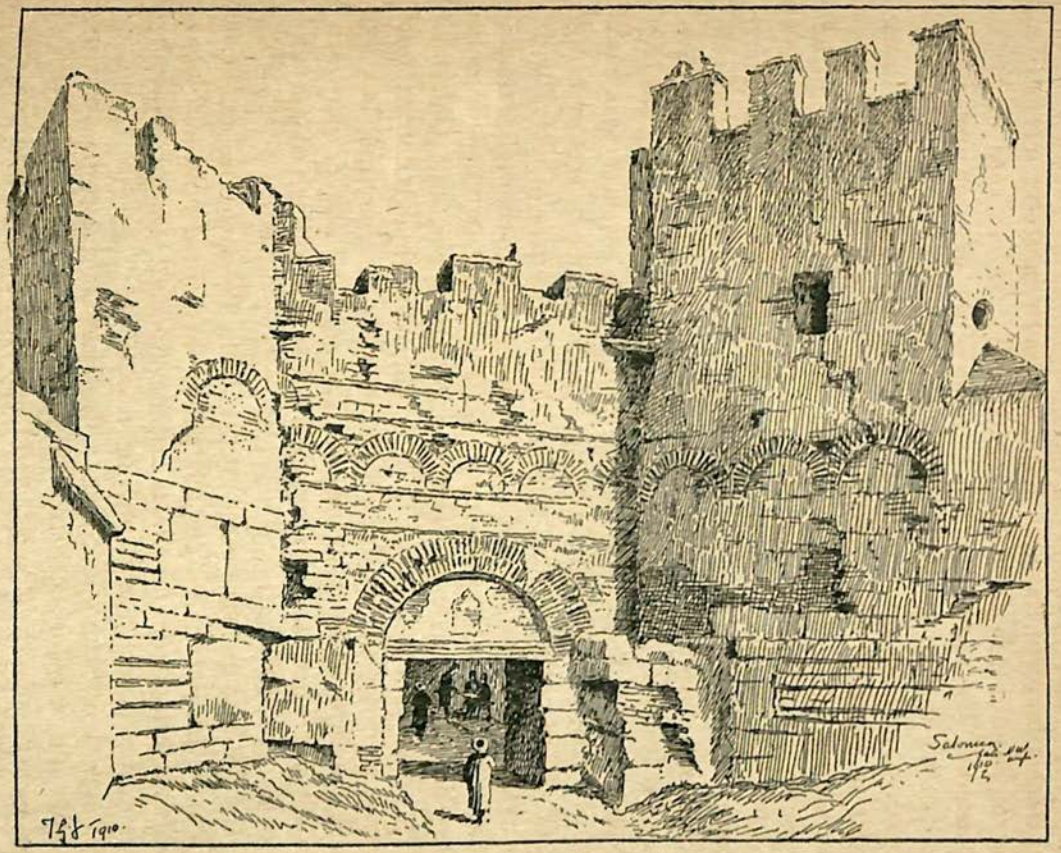
There are remains of mosaic in the soffits of the arches of the Eski Djuma, a sadly dilapidated church, which was disused and under repair during my visit. But, as I sat there sketching, a gentle patter on the floor from falling tesserae told a sad tale of neglect and ruin. This church was of extreme interest and great beauty.

Scarcely anything remains of ancient Thessalonica, and there is certainly nothing that could have met the eye of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. It is even doubtful whether the modern city covers the same ground as the ancient one. The only piece of classic architecture to be seen is what remains of a Roman triumphal arch that crosses one of the main streets. The two piers alone are left of the

ancient structure; the arch itself had been removed recently as unsafe, and a new arch was turned from pier to pier in brick plastered. The restoration and securing of the old arch apparently surpassed the limits of Turkish ingenuity. The piers are very massive, and are covered on three sides with sculpture in three tiers of subjects. The base of the inner front has shallow arches with shell heads, but it cannot be well seen, being sunk in the ground, which has risen considerably. On the east side are Persians with caps something like the biretta of the Venetian doge. They probably represent prisoners. The tiers are divided by bold roll mouldings, covered with ornament. The subjects of the upper tiers are battle pieces, and on the inner face of the south pier are two emperors seated side by side, with their feet on two arches, in each of which there is a head. Two little figures of fame or victory bring a crown to each emperor, and emblematic figures of rivers with urns finish this composition at each corner, that to the right female, that to the left male, and bearded like Father Tiber. The emperors may be Diocletian and Maximian, or Diocletian and Galerius. The whole work is very late Roman, and coarse though not without spirit, showing the decline of art not only in technique but by being smothered with ornament. The folds of the drapery are mostly expressed by mere incised lines, and every inch of the surface is decorated.

On the east face, the same side with the Persians, are sacrificial groups with oxen; also elephants, and an animal now mutilated which is being led, and which may have been a leopard. This appears to represent a triumphal procession.

I have never seen an account or illustration of this curious monument: and at Salonica there was no library nor was there even a bookseller's shop to which I could refer. We found Salonica still surrounded by walls, though they do not seem very old, and it is said they were mostly built by the Venetians. They are quite unlike the Byzantine walls of Constantinople, and are built of brick and stone



SALONICA

Gateway (since destroyed)

with spur bastions. On the outside are many relieving arches in brickwork which seem partly intended to deceive an assailant, for in places where the wall is broken they are seen to be mere face work with a solid mass of brick behind. The structure is full of fragments of old buildings, ends of columns, lengths of marble architraves and other relics of churches or temples. Only in one place, by the side of an old gate that had been walled up, did I find an inscription in Greek, of which half had been wilfully defaced, and the other half was almost illegible; the few words I had time to decipher told me nothing. The main street ended in a fine double towered gateway of which I made a sketch. Like the rest of the walls it was full of fragments of old buildings, classic architraves and cornices; but the archway with its massive jambs of great stones and the work above between the towers looked to me very like Roman work. But now all this is gone: the gateway and its towers were pulled down within a few weeks after my visit to make way for a tramway; one effect of the passion of the "Young Turk" for modern up-to-date improvements. On the tympanum of the archway I observed traces of fresco painting, a survival from the Christian period.

The walls run to a great height up the hills behind Salonica before they descend on the east side of the town to the White Castle which was built by the Venetians on the seashore. Outside the walls lies an open country, a wild treeless and houseless desert of rolling hills and savage ravines as far as the eye could reach. In the upper part of the town is the old church of S. Elias, a saint who, like St Michael with us and in France, is generally honoured with a site on the hilltop. It has brickwork externally arranged in patterns, a mode of decoration applied more lavishly on the Suk-su-Djamia, or church of the Twelve Apostles with its five cupolas, near the west gate; a similar mode of decoration occurs in the later churches of Serbia, at Lesnovo and elsewhere. High up in this hilly quarter of the town we also saw a Christian church, which

had never been turned into a mosque, and I believe it is not the only one in Salonica which has been spared in the same way. The Moslem conquest here was later and less complete for some time than at Constantinople.

On our way down, with a companion who spoke Turkish, we passed a marble post standing out of the ground which seemed to have been part of a parapet, for it had a channel in the side as if for a slab or pluteus. A friendly Turk who was near told us it marked the grave of a bad man, who still lies buried there. His ghost haunts the place, and nobody likes to pass it at night; even animals, such as horses and mules, will not go by it. Attempts, he said, had been made to draw the post up, but in vain; for the workmen's arms and hands stiffened so that they were powerless. Our informant could not tell us of what enormous crime this bad man had been guilty.

From the heights above we had watched the sun set, and in the west we saw the whole outline of the Thessalian Olympus, the other home of the Hellenic deities; though the Bithynian Olympus of which we had never been able to get a view while we were at Constantinople, is the real seat of Zeus and Hera, whence they watched and guided the wars of Greek and Trojan.

The colony of Europeans at Salonica lives outside the town eastwards, and extends beyond the end of the tram-line. We made many acquaintances among them, and paid many pleasant visits. I had the pleasure of dining with M. Lazzari, director of the Banque d'Orient, where among the party of twelve or fourteen there was not one speaking his native tongue, and the conversation was in French. The dinner was in honour of the American Consul-General, who was on a mission to Salonica, and with whom I had travelled from Vienna as far as Nisch. Besides English and Americans the guests were Greek, Italian, and Russian. We were waited upon by three maids dressed as in England in black with

white apron and shoulder-straps: one of them was a negress, a great stalwart girl.

The road out to this suburb runs along the sea, leaving room between it and the shore for large villas with grounds of considerable extent. It was quite European, and one might have been driving along the outskirts of Surbiton or the border of Wimbledon Common. But appearances are deceptive: one of these villas two years before our visit had been invaded by brigands from the mountains, who captured the son of the owner Mr Abbott, carried him off to the hills, and held him to ransom. The boy was caught as he was walking in the garden and was gagged and forced into a carriage. I was told the ransom demanded was £15,000, but whatever the amount was I believe it was paid by the British government; part of it, however, was afterwards recovered. It is said the whole thing was planned by the gardeners who were in league with the brigands, and that the robbers were discovered through a conversation overheard between the gardeners' wives about the unequal division of the spoil. The Turkish police made arrests, and by the help of thumbscrews and other methods known to them of arriving at the truth they convicted the criminals, and, as I said, succeeded in recovering part of the money.

Beyond this district we saw the wall of a great villa with a park where we were told the ex-sultan, Abdul Hamid, lived as a prisoner, though some people said he was not there at all. But at all events the place was guarded by soldiers, and no one was allowed access. In the old days the bow-string would have done the business, for it was a maxim that a deposed sultan never lived.

Except for S. Sophia, which is unrivalled, Constantinople has not so much to show in the highest grade of Byzantine architecture as Salonica. None of the churches in the capital could ever have equalled the interior splendour of S. Demetrius, and except S. Irene none of the old churches at Constantinople compares favourably with those of Salonica. Their interior decoration by mosaic also

has survived the Turkish conquest to an extent unknown in the capital, where it has either been destroyed or is concealed. But at Salonica we missed the full sensation of the Orient: the European had gained ground on the Turk; and by this time, when Salonica has passed under Christian rule, and the old churches have been restored to their original rite, the revolution must be complete.

IX

CONSTANTINOPLE

1910

IX

CONSTANTINOPLE

1910

ON the evening of September 10, 1910, I left Paris by the Orient express for Constantinople. The train was quite full, but I had a good berth in a compartment for two. My companion was an Italian travelling in the carpet trade for a London firm, and, as far as I could make out, everyone in the train but myself was bent on the same errand. He had just come from Buenos Ayres, Canada, and New York; and from Constantinople he would go up into the country to the villages, where the carpets are made by the peasants, and then proceed to Smyrna, Cairo, and perhaps India. He knew all about the famous carpet given to the Girdlers' Company in 1634 by Robert Bell, the builder of my house at Wimbledon, and when I said the Company had insured it for £5000, he said they might have doubled the amount[1].

At Vienna, which we reached in the evening of the 11th, I was persuaded to break my journey by my friend Herr Kupka, engineer of the Northern Austrian Railway. He took me to Schönbrunn, the Austrian Versailles, a great yellow-washed palace of no architectural pretensions a little way out of Vienna, where there is in the grounds a small menagerie. While we were standing in front of the palace we were asked to move a little way aside, and the emperor drove up in a carriage and pair from Vienna; the coachman and footman on the box had gorgeous cocked hats, but there

[1] This carpet was reproduced in colour by the Science and Art Department at South Kensington, who were good enough to send me a copy of the reproduction.

were no outriders nor was there any ceremony. My friend said "There are only two sovereigns in Europe who could go about in this simple way, yours and ours." The carriage was shut, and so I failed to see the most pathetic figure among European monarchs. Little could we then anticipate the further tragedy that awaited him; the murder of his heir, his own death amid the universal crash of empires, and the downfall of the Hapsburg dynasty.

The country we passed through was mostly quite uninteresting. All Bavaria and Hungary seemed to be a vast plain; near Vienna it is better, and in Serbia you go through a fine wild mountain desert range for a short time, but in Bulgaria it is flat again. Sofia, the capital, looks like a large village. There seemed to be a great domed church with three apses and a tower at the west end of the nave, which might be worth seeing, but it was a long way off.

For some hours before reaching Constantinople the line runs through an undulating sandy plain, with scanty vegetation, very little culture, and no fences even to the railway. In Serbia and Hungary I saw no costume; even the white Hungarian trousers, that look like an apron, had disappeared. In Bulgaria the national costume was fairly general; a white coat, tight leggings, and something like a fur busby. But when we got into Turkey and were invaded by officials in the red fez which has superseded the turban, the figures in picturesque rags of all colours, with handkerchiefs wrapped round head and face were beyond belief. There was more squalor than I ever saw in Dalmatia, though in vintage time people are pretty dirty there.

At last we began to touch the head of inlets from the sea of Marmara, and soon were skirting the sea itself, and saw the Prince's Islands rising with rocky summits in a faint horizon. Passing two suburban villages you get your first glimpse of the great city with its domes and minarets, and enter close to the seashore through a breach in the great wall of Theodosius II. Between mean houses of woodwork and planking, with the old city wall on the shore to the

right, much broken and ruinous, the train runs unfenced, as if it were a mere omnibus; and after rounding Seraglio point you land at the modest terminus, which is about equal to the railway station of a third-rate English country town.

In the latter part of the way travelling had been very slow and tedious. The train crawled and stopped constantly, and we arrived four and a half hours after our proper time. The line is a single one, and so badly laid within the Turkish frontier that it is dangerous to go fast. It was at this time under repair, and was to be doubled.

My companions for two days and two nights from Vienna had been two Turkish lads, travelling like the rest of the convoy in the carpet and cotton trade. One of them could speak Italian, so we were able to converse. The American Consul-General, with whom I dined and walked about when we stayed only too frequently at stations, told me they were not real Turks, but Jews, descendants of those who fled from Spain, to escape the inquisition, in the days of Ferdinand and Isabella; and who settled in Turkey, where their descendants still speak the old Castilian tongue of the fifteenth century.

On leaving the station, where my friends the Poynters had sent the hôtel Dragoman to meet me, you plunge at once into Orientalism. The drive up to the hôtel at Pera, on the other side of the Golden Horn, was amazing; and the passage over the bridge with its rough planked floor, thronged with crowds in every variety of costume, and of every race, creed, and colour, defies description. There are but two bridges over the Golden Horn, both on pontoons, the water being too deep for a solid structure. Sometimes they break down, and then all the world has to cross in *caiques*, and the scene is wonderful, as are the charges of the boatmen also.

The Turkish women in Constantinople are generally dressed in black, with a simple tippet of the same colour, not in the fanciful costumes of Mostar and Bosnia. When young all are veiled, but as they grow old, and their charms fade, they allow half of what

remains to be seen, and only cover the lower part of the face. Very often the veil is so thin that you may see the beauty it is supposed to conceal, which perhaps gains something by the mystery of a partial eclipse.

Nothing could have been more fortunate for the purpose of my visit, to study the architecture of Constantinople, than the time I had chosen for coming. The bloodstained regime of Abdul Hamid was over, and that egregious despot was safely confined at Salonica. The Young Turk movement was in its first stage, full of feverish excitement, breathing nothing but the spirit of liberty and progress. Foreigners were welcomed, every facility was accorded them, and Turkey was to become one of the brotherhood of European nations. Articles appeared in the *Jeune Turc* lamenting the fact that all the commerce of the East was in the hands of foreigners, and seriously asking whether the Turk was naturally incapable of engaging like other nations in industrial enterprise. I remember many very interesting articles on that subject, written with the most candid and liberal spirit, and the friends of Turkey were sanguine about her development on European lines.

A queer blunt Armenian from Smyrna with whom I travelled, and who could talk a little English, on the other hand, was not very hopeful of the Young Turk movement. According to him the Turks as a body did not like it, though the army was in favour of it. He said that the Turkish ministers under the Hamidian regime thought of nothing but enriching themselves; the Young Turks were poor, and would soon begin to do the same. The governing class in Turkey, he said, were selfish, and had no patriotism. I think it was Sir Edwin Pears who told me he once challenged a Turk on that ground, and the reply was "it is true we have no patriotism, but we have our religion." It was that which kept them together, and if that bond went, what was to take its place? And now Ahmed Riza, the head of the Turkish Parliament, to whom I was introduced by my friend Mr Frederic Harrison, was a Positivist, and

could not take the oath to the Deity, which was taken by the other Deputies.

This passion for liberal reform did not last long: experience has shown that the Young Turk is only the old Turk over again; but while it lasted it made things much easier for foreigners. It suited me, among others, admirably; I used to go about with sketch-book and camp-stool, and sit down where I pleased and sketch anything I wanted without interruption. Only once did stones come flying, fortunately not from a good marksman, and when I reported this and complained, I was assured it could not have been a Turk that threw them, but must have been a Greek. I much doubt whether, except at the particular time when I happened to be there, an artist could ever have been able to do as I did in safety.

Of Constantinople what can I say: who can describe it? It is a city of the strangest contrasts, of the most romantic surprises, of the most perplexing inconsistencies. Here East and West meet but do not mix. The whole busy stirring life of the place is Western, but over all hangs the shadow of Orientalism. The wharves are lined with great magazines, full of carpets and other merchandise, mostly belonging to an Anglo-French company, not one of them to a Turk. The port at the mouth of the Golden Horn is thronged with merchant shipping flying the flags of every nation in Europe but that of the sovereign of the country. All the commercial business is in the hands of Greeks and Armenians; the very management of the Public Debt had to be administered by a foreign committee, presided over by an Englishman or a Frenchman or a German: and yet over all is the sway of an Eastern power, stagnant, and incapable of progress. Its only engine of government, when left to itself, is the sword: its only idea of repressing the resistance of subject races to its despotic rule is by extermination. Not long before my visit two thousand Armenians had been massacred in an outbreak that began at the Ottoman bank in Galata, which I passed every day. The contrast between the two elements of the

city is strongly expressed by the place itself: at Pera and Galata, the European quarters, you are in a dull commonplace modern town; cross the bridge into Stamboul and you are transported to a different world, the region of the Arabian nights.

It is the same with the arts as with the commerce. The seven hills on which Stamboul is seated, like the older Rome which it superseded, are crowned with splendid mosques, whose swelling domes and fairy minarets proclaim the faith of Islam, and give Constantinople above all others the character of an Oriental city. But not one of these majestic buildings was built by a Turk. There has never been a Turkish architect: every one is the work of a Christian, following more or less closely the type of the great church of Justinian. The very idea of a dome, which we are apt to think characteristic of the Mahometan place of worship, is a Christian idea. The original mosque, like that at Mecca, was a mere cloister without any central feature, and the domed mosque is copied from the Byzantine church of the vanquished Christian.

I found Mr Eyres, the British Consul-General, had little or no hope of the Young Turk movement. He said the race is incapable of rising from the semi-nomad Asiatic temperament with which they came over. The Turk is brave, temperate, patient, and in a fashion honest, and his fighting power has been proved often enough; for some centuries he terrorized Europe; but, said both Mr Eyres and Sir Edwin Pears, the Turks have never produced a man of genius. I instanced Mahomet II, who surely was one: but they said he was only half a Turk, his mother, if I remember, being a Circassian. One may, however, say the same of most of the upper class of Turks, whose mothers are of all sorts of races: but yet the Turkish blood is the stronger; it comes through and colours the character of the Turkish nation.

I asked whether the Young Turk movement included the admission of other races, Greeks, Armenians and Jews, to a share in the administration; but that, it was thought, would never be allowed.

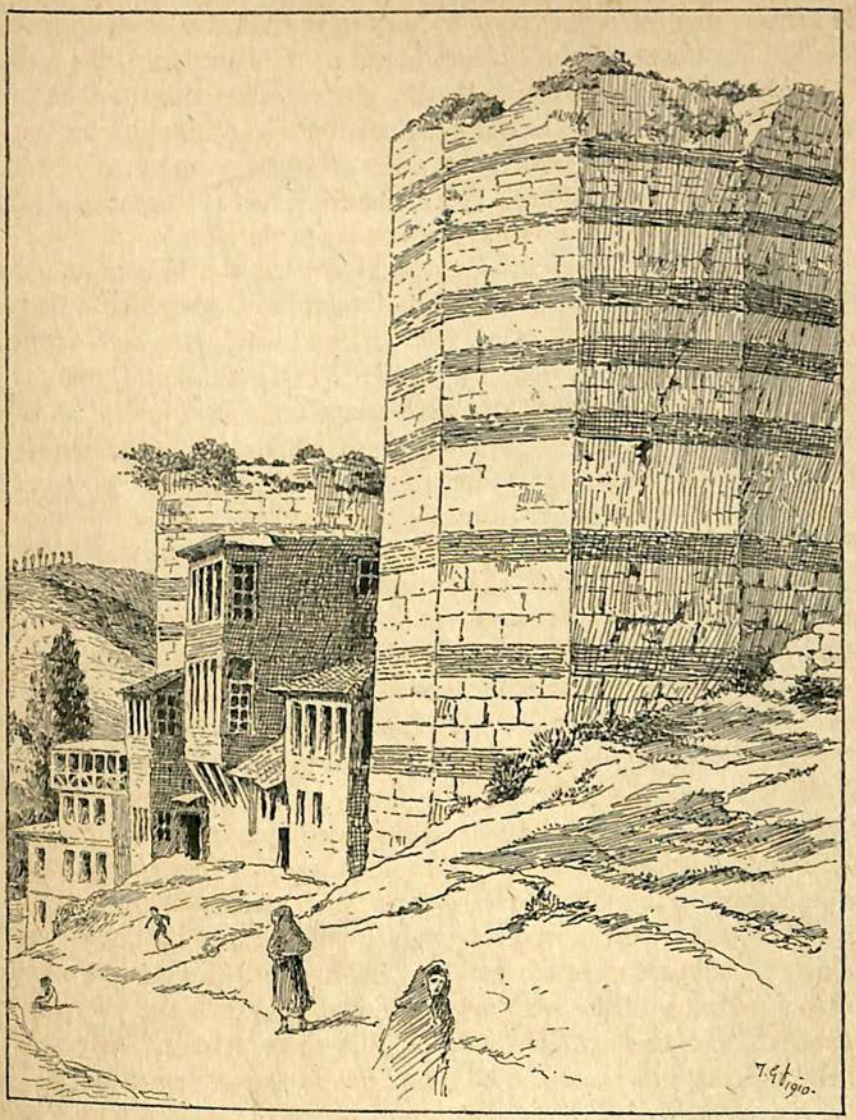
Were they admitted the Turk would become a nonentity, and practically disappear, for the others would be too clever for him, and that the Turk knows very well. Meanwhile no one gives either Greek or Jew a good word: they say they are sly, scheming and unscrupulous, and everyone I have spoken with likes the Turk ten times better.

Time has shown the justice of these doubts of the Young Turk movement. It was warmly welcomed in England; we had an Eastern Association, where I remember two members of the Turk parliament speaking hopefully of the future in excellent English, and Sir Edwin Pears saying he had never known things so promising for the enlightenment and progress of Turkey. All that has come to an end; the movement has expired, and the Turk remains as of old, an alien in Europe, governing races superior to himself in the arts of civilized life, holding his own partly by good fortune, but partly, no doubt, by his natural force of character. He has survived the Russian peril, and indeed Russia herself; driven by the Bulgars almost to the walls of Constantinople he was saved by the quarrels of his enemies, and quietly marched back and re-occupied Adrianople; he has driven the Greeks out of Asia Minor, and at this moment has got the better of the Allies, diplomatically, in the matter of Karagatch and the capitulations. He is still firmly fixed at Constantinople, and likely to remain there, for no two nations can agree whom to put in his place were he ejected. Constantinople is so thoroughly Orientalized that it is difficult to realize that the Turk is the intruder, and that the Christians really represent the native population. The Turk has made the place his own, and it is almost unthinkable that Stamboul with the swelling domes of its hundred mosques should ever become Europeanized, or that the great cupola of Aya Sofia should ever again re-echo the hymns of Christian worship.

The famous walls of Theodosius II, with which the city was girded between 413 and 447 A.D., though partially broken down in places, still surround Constantinople, and form a monument to

Byzantine greatness scarcely less important than the great church itself. Towards the Sea of Marmora, and the Golden Horn, the wall is single, and in its present state the gateways are mere arches in the wall, with some of the old gates, plated with iron still hanging in them. There may have been other defensive works attached, but there is no trace of any. The Byzantines had the command of the sea, and so stronger walls on the water side were not wanted; and though it was from the Golden Horn that the Venetians got in during the Latin siege it must be remembered they had a fleet to help them. But the great triple wall and ditch that runs from sea to sea on the land side is a wonder. For a thousand years it saved the city from attack: the barbarians came and looked at it, and went away; and it only yielded to the cannon of Mahomet II. I had the pleasure of examining the walls with Sir Edwin Pears, the historian of the great siege, defence, and capture of the city in 1453. We took a boat from the inner bridge to Aivan Serai Kapussi, and walked round the outside of the walls to the so-called prison of Anemas, which we entered through a hole from a nursery garden and examined by the help of a lantern with the gardener. It looked to me like a substructure to level up a platform for the great palace of Blachernae which stood hereabouts at this end of the city. This palace is described in glowing colours by Odo de Deuil who accompanied Louis Le Jeune on the crusade in 1146. He says "its exterior beauty is almost incomparable, and that of the inside surpassed anything I could say of it. In all parts one sees nothing but gildings and paintings of various colours. The court is paved with marble of exquisite design, and I know not which contributes most to its value, whether it be the great beauty of this palace, and the marvellous art it displays, or the precious materials one finds in it[1]." Of all this there remains only the Tekfur Serai, which used to be called the Palace of Belisarius, and

[1] *Odonis de Deogilo, de Ludovici VII Francorum regis, cognomento Junioris, profectione in orientem, cui ipse interfuit, opus.*



THE COMNENIAN WALLS

seems to have been a pavilion attached to the palace. The rest of the site is occupied by a colony of Jews, descendants of those expelled from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella, who pester the traveller with their shameless beggary. A visit I made one day to the Tekfur Serai brought out a swarm of this fry, demanding *backshish*. Four of them attached themselves to me while I was sketching, each of them jealous of the other. The presence of these creatures was so odious that I shortened my sketch and forcing my way through a sheaf of outstretched hands I dropped a five piastre piece into two of them and made my escape. As far as my experience went they were the only beggars in Stamboul, for I never encountered any others during my stay. They wear a peculiar Oriental costume and talk old Castilian Spanish to this day. There was an article in the *Jeune Turc* saying "we Moslems are accused of intolerance of other religions. Who was it that gave an asylum to the Jews whom the Christians drove out from Spain?" This is no doubt a just retort; but I think the Jews in question were a *mauvaise acquisition* for the Turks.

We followed the wall to the Edirne Kapu, or Adrianople Gate, and beyond there to the valley of the Lycus, a little runlet that passes through the city, but barely sufficed at this time to make a puddle in the bottom of its bed. Here on the very spot it was interesting to listen to Sir Edwin Pears's story of the capture. The great middle wall had been breached by Mahomet's 33-foot long cannon which threw a stone ball 2 feet 8 inches in diameter, and could only be fired seven or eight times a day, having to be built up after each discharge with stones and faggots. Some stone balls are still lying about the town which may be relics of the siege, for the Turks generally leave things where they happen to fall. Perhaps the finest part of the walls is that built by the Comneni on the slope of the ground down to the Golden Horn. The Golden Gate, the emperor's triumphal entrance, is at the other end next the Sea of Marmara.

At the far end of the city along the Golden Horn lies the district of Phanar the Greek quarter, where is the modest establishment of the Oecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Greek Church. The cathedral of the successors of S. Chrysostom, once the Great Church of the Holy Wisdom, is now a small unpretending building of the seventeenth century, much encumbered after the fashion of Greek churches with hanging lamps and furniture. Here I was greeted in English by the patriarch's archivist, the Rev. Χριστοφωρος Κνητης, who had been at Oxford as a non-collegiate student and taken a Lit.Bacc. degree, and who was good enough to show me the church and its contents. The patriarchal throne is prettily inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl, and they tell you it is the one used by S. Chrysostom himself. I ventured to dispute this and to attribute it to the seventeenth century, and with the help of a ladder we reached and read an inscription on the cornice with the date 1690. In the courtyard is a gateway with three doors, of which the principal one in the middle is closed, and has never been used since the Turks hanged a patriarch in it at the time of the Greek war of independence in 1829. At this moment, in 1923, the present Patriarch Meletios is in fear of his life, and he has been taken in a British man-of-war to Mount Athos, thus severing the historic patriarchate from Constantinople.

The Greek patriarch was not without rivals among his fellow-Christians even in his own patriarchal see of Constantinople. The Bulgarian Christians of Stamboul obey an Exarch, whose position always puzzled me till it was explained by my friend the Rev. Mr Knetes. He told me there is absolutely no difference between the Bulgar and the Greek Christian in creed or ritual: the grievance is that the Exarch will have his *cathedra* in Constantinople. The Oecumenical Patriarch lays no claim to an universal supremacy like the Roman Pope, but he maintains that there cannot be two bishops of the Christian church in one see, and that the Bulgarian bishop ought to be in Bulgaria. Each church has its own patriarch

—Jerusalem, Alexandria, Constantinople and, I suppose, Antioch, if it has survived—so that by rights the Bulgarian Exarch should leave Constantinople to preside over his own flock in Bulgaria. This difference is fomented by the Turks, who welcome the opportunity of maintaining it as a perpetual sore in the side of the orthodox community.

Repeated enquiries at the British Embassy failed to find the permit to make sketches in S. Sophia and other mosques which I was waiting for. But it was the Fast of Ramazan[1], when the Turks, deprived of food and tobacco during the daytime, are naturally rather cross, and it is difficult to get anything from them. Meanwhile I was furnished with a "poussla" which I believe was a direction to the police to take care of me, but gave no permission to sketch in the mosques. However, it answered my purpose. Nobody took the trouble to read it, indeed I doubt whether they were capable of doing so, and when I produced it I was allowed to do all I wanted[2]. The *hodja* or priest at S. Theodore Tirone, even refused *backshish*: the paper, he said, was sufficient; so I gave what I had intended for him to his little boy instead. This seemed to me an unheard of piece of self-denial in an Oriental. As for S. Sophia it was constantly crowded with worshippers, and sketching was out of the question; and I waited till the Fast was over. The old Christian churches turned into mosques are extremely interesting, but I found the great mosques, those of Achmet, Mahomet, Bayazet, Suleiman and the others of the same kind monotonous. They are, however, often lined with lovely faience, the tiles being shaped to the mouldings and colonnettes and carried round them. The mosque of Rustem Pasha, near the Bazaar, is especially remarkable

[1] *Ramazan* is the Turkish form of the Arabic *Ramadan*.

[2] Mr Edward Lear tells us how in Albania when his credentials were demanded he pulled out by mistake an old hôtel bill, which answered every purpose. Afterwards from curiosity he tried the same thing with the back of an old letter which served equally well. *Travels in Albania*.

for the beauty of its faience. The effect of these large expanses of delicate colour is extremely refined and beautiful, and the forecourts with fountains and trees are often pretty.

Except the great church of S. Sophia and the several old Christian churches now turned into mosques, there is little within the ancient walls that goes back to the Roman empire which fell in 1453. A few houses of brick and stone with arched upper storeys resting on corbels remain here and there, which may be older than the Turkish conquest, but I could not feel sure of it. Nothing remains of Constantine's time but the "Burnt Column," a dilapidated shaft of porphyry, once surmounted by a statue of the founder of Constantinople in the character of Apollo. Under the pedestal, now encased in rude masonry, it is said there lies the palladium of ancient Rome, which Constantine brought to hallow the foundation of new Rome. His city was built in a great hurry, and it is recorded that many of his buildings soon became ruinous. The great palaces of Byzantine nobles that once filled the streets have all disappeared; nothing is left of the Augusteum and Blachernae; and the narrow hilly streets of Stamboul are lined with Turkish houses of some pretension in the better quarters, and with small houses and open shops in the humbler districts like those at Mostar and Serajevo. They are often grouped with trees with a pleasant effect. The buildings do not nearly fill the area enclosed by the old walls, leaving room especially in the southern part, and the valley of the Lycus, for large market gardens[1]. Here and there I came upon great clearances, strewn with *débris*, the effect of the frequent fires to which Stamboul is liable, for most of the buildings are of wood and very inflammable. I remember encountering the primitive Turkish fire-brigade, half-dressed men carrying on their shoulders their portable fire-engines, mere toys of little use, and

[1] This was so as far back as the twelfth century. "Infra muros terra vacua est, quae aratra patitur et ligones, habens hortos omne genus olerum civibus exhibentes." Odo de Deuil, *op. cit.*

shouting *yang en var* as they ran to clear the way. As soon as these spaces are rid of rubbish the Turks set to work to rebuild their houses as before in wood of the flimsiest construction. Except the modern buildings of the Seraskerat, and the Public Debt, and those in the Seraglio enclosure, there are no public buildings but the mosques that make any show. Constantinople has nothing of the air of a great capital; it is more like a large village that has grown up within the ancient precincts of the imperial city, with many vacant spaces, and little orderly arrangement of the streets. But over it all hangs the mystery of Oriental life of which we know nothing, and which goes on side by side with the European element without mixing with it, one may almost say without taking any notice of it. All this, combined with the memories of a great and tragic history, invests Constantinople with an indescribable and romantic charm, unlike that of any other place, and makes it, in spite of much that is sordid and mean, a place of extraordinary fascination.

The great Bazaar in Stamboul, which covers acres of ground with narrow vaulted alleys, very close and airless, and lined with shabby shops filled with priceless goods, is a real bit of the Arabian nights. I was accompanied very kindly by Mrs Hugh Poynter, whose knowledge of the Turkish language was indispensable, for in none of the ordinary shops was any other of the least use. The dim lit vaulted alleys are lined with little open shops, where the dealers sit cross-legged, and from these unpretending little dens bring out treasures rich and rare. We were shown pearls in ropes and by handfuls, which I was afraid to touch for fear some might be missed, though the dealer never counted those in his open palm; there were jewelled daggers and curiosities of all kinds; fine embroideries, and beautiful carpets, all mixed up with a good deal of old rubbish and doubtful antiques. The crowd and the colour of the costumes were amazing, the universal red fez giving the main brilliancy, caught now and then by a ray of sun from the little skylights in the roof. We had tea in the rooms of a famous dealer in

carpets, stuffs and treasures of all sorts. His rooms are fine, I suppose rebuilt with a view to European custom. He showed us some lovely bits of Brûsa silk fabrics, which were kept under glass in frames; but though called of Brûsa he said these fabrics were really made at Venice. They were magnificent, and I imagine as beautiful as anything ever done. We were shown some caskets to hold the Koran of gold and jewelry, which I thought barbarous and ugly; but in a cavity of one was a marvel of calligraphy; the whole Koran written microscopically in a little hexagonal volume that you might cover with a five-shilling piece.

My friends the Poynters took me one afternoon across to Scutari, and for the first time in my life I set foot in Asia. An ill-made road full of holes, through streets of picturesque wooden houses brought us up a steep ascent to the American girls' school, where Mrs Poynter, daughter of the late American Consul, was intimate. We were welcomed by the head-mistress and a bevy of lady tutors, all but one American. After tea I saw some of the girls, who are of all creeds and races, Turk, Greek, Armenian, Bulgar, American, Albanian, and here and there a stray English Miss. They are trained some for private life, some to get their living by teaching. Americans are great people for lectures, and the head-mistress engaged me to come over some day and tell the girls all about the history of the University of Oxford. I promised to do my best though without lantern and slides I feared it would be difficult to make it interesting.

The Americans are entitled to the credit of being the only people who are doing anything towards introducing European education into Turkey. This girls' school at Scutari, which was shortly to be removed to new quarters on the other side of the Bosporus, and Robert College at Roumeli Hissar are doing excellent work. Robert College, a school for boys, began with a Mr Hamlin, an American missionary settled here at the time of the Crimean war. He taught the lads various trades, and among others that of baking

bread. Miss Nightingale heard of this and got him to supply her hospital at Scutari with good bread, much better than what she had been having. A Mr Robert, a rich American, happened to hear of Mr Hamlin's adventure, and founded the college which bears his name, and which was built by Mr Hamlin's son, an architect whom I have had the pleasure of entertaining in England, and whose sister is married to Mr Anderson, one of the professors. The college, already a very extensive affair, was going to be enlarged with the aid of a bequest of about £300,000 from an American millionaire. We had tea with Mr and Mrs Anderson, and I was introduced to the principal, Mr Gates, who promptly engaged me for a lecture to the boys on my return from Salonica. One of the professors was Mr Van Millingen, author of two invaluable archaeological works on the walls and the old Christian churches of Constantinople. He was unfortunately absent at the time of my visit, but I had the pleasure of making his acquaintance afterwards in England. Roumeli Hissar, near where Robert College stands, is at the narrowest part of the Bosporus, not more than half a mile wide at that point, with the castles of Europe and Asia *vis-à-vis* on opposite sides of the strait. Here Darius crossed for the invasion of Greece, and Mahomet II for the destruction of the last remains of the Roman Empire. From the heights above, the view is splendid; below lies the Bosporus of an intense dark blue, beyond are the hills of Asia that reach to Homer's Olympus, and in the foreground are the towers and walls of Mahomet's fortifications stretching down the hillside.

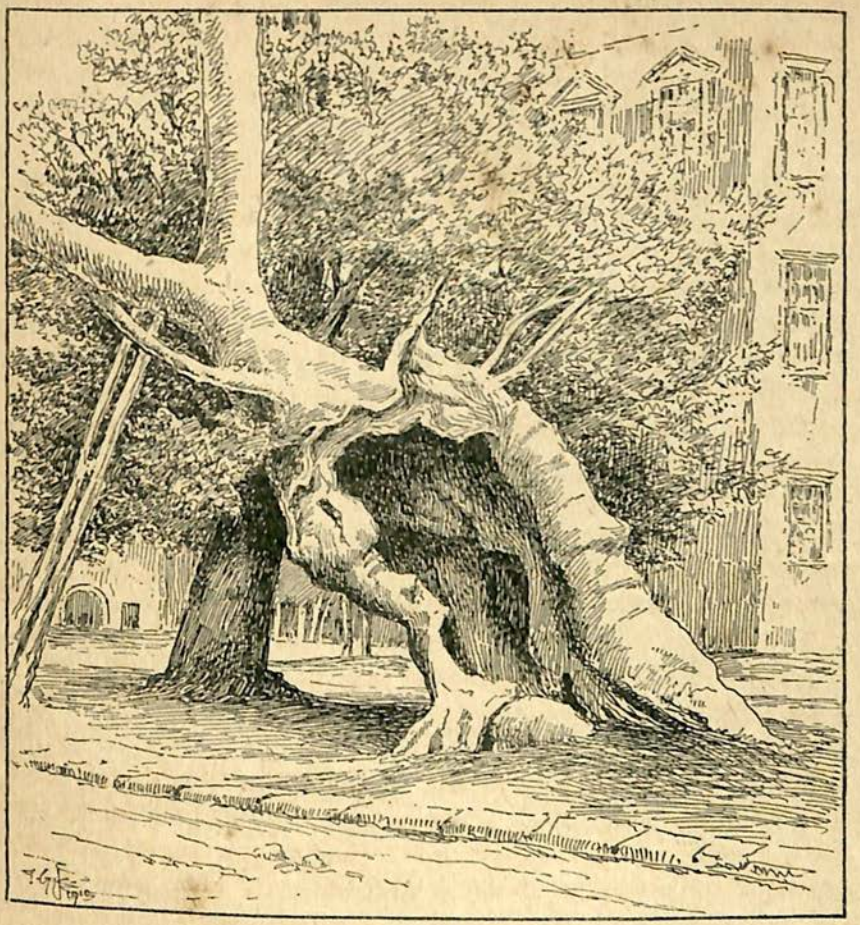
They had advertised my lecture to the Scutari girls' school in the *Levant Herald*, and a score or more of American ladies and gentlemen came over to hear it, which was very flattering; but I think Americans love a lecture. Some of the girls came afterwards to tea, and all of them spoke English excellently. Those with whom I talked were mostly Bulgars. I asked the principal, next whom I sat at luncheon, where she had spent her holiday, expecting her

to say Italy or Switzerland; but no; she had spent it in working out the connexion of Pyrrhonism with, if I remember, the Greek Empire. Her great relaxation of late has been to write an article on the philosophy of Anaxagoras. But the Americans are wonderful; they seem always at full stretch.

All the dogs, or nearly all, for which Constantinople was famous, had been done away with recently. The Koran was understood to forbid their slaughter, so they were captured, often I understand with great brutality, and transported to an island in the Sea of Marmara, where there was no water, and where they were left to die of starvation. This was the Turkish way of reconciling conscience with inhumanity. It was said that sixty thousand of them were then lying there dead. The few survivors in Constantinople were quite nice friendly dogs, responsive to kindness, with whom it was easy to establish an acquaintance. I was sorely tempted to bring away a little fat yellow puppy that lay on its back inviting attention. Meanwhile the town was threatened with a plague of cats; the streets were full of kittens, but one rarely saw a grown cat, which roused suspicion when *lapin* was on the bill of fare. The impending plague of cats may lead to a fresh establishment of the dogs to keep the numbers of the cats down as heretofore.

The point of the triangular site of the city, where it rises to a considerable height, and where once stood the acropolis of the Greek city of Byzantium, is now occupied by the Seraglio and its gardens, a name of sinister associations. It was, however, at the time of my visit, no longer inhabited by royalty. The sultan dwelt in the modern palace of Dolmabagtche at the mouth of the Bosporus, and Abdul Hamid had always hidden himself in the Yildiz Kiosk rather further up that strait. The only residents were some old ladies, retired from the imperial harem.

There are many gates of the Seraglio, which is separated by a



THE JANISSARIES' TREE

mighty wall from the town. The state entrance, the Bâb-i-Humayûn, is near the east end of S. Sophia. It is a lofty structure, not of great antiquity, which has taken the place of that erected by the Conqueror. Right and left of the archway are niches in which you are told the crop of heads from the preceding evening's business was exposed in the morning. Within the first court is the fine church of S. Irene, Holy Peace, one of the two churches which the historian Socrates tells us were founded by Constantine in his new city. It was rebuilt by Justinian and partly rebuilt again by later emperors, and at the conquest it was not turned into a mosque but has always served as a Turkish armoury, to which admission must be obtained from the military authorities. This first court of the Seraglio is the Court of the Janissaries, and here stands the famous plane tree, under which those Praetorians hatched their conspiracies, and organized revolutions, and on which it is said they were hanged. But a sceptical gentleman who spoke English, and passed as my son and I were sketching it, said he did not believe the latter statement, and indeed till Mahmoud II, who massacred the whole corps at the beginning of the nineteenth century, I think a sultan would have been rather shy of hanging a Janissary anywhere. It has been a magnificent tree, and is still green and flourishing though quite hollow, and supported in its inclination by sturdy props.

This first court seems to be accessible to everybody; but to penetrate further into the Seraglio, a special introduction from the British Embassy was necessary. With the permit thus obtained you pass from the first court to the second, the Court of the Palace, by the fatal Orta Kapu, or middle gate; this is a double gate, one within the other, enclosing between them a little court, the scene of many a tragedy. How many a man must have felt his heart sink as he passed this deadly portal, uncertain whether he would ever come out again alive. For between these two gates the vizier or other functionary leaving the sultan's presence in disgrace found the dreadful mutes with the bowstring. As Signor Mongeri, my

companion, said, "*Se potessero parlare questi muri!*" Could these walls but speak!

This interior court is a little less untidy than the outer Court of the Janissaries. A long range of kitchens with little domes lines the edge of the rocky plateau to the right, to which you look up from the railway that skirts the shore below. There are several kiosks about, and trees and arcaded buildings low and not imposing. The treasury which we had special permission to visit, is full of an odd jumble of things, some fine, some barbarous, among others in better taste. There were jewels enough one would think to buy up all Europe if they were genuine, as I daresay they were, for the Grand Turk had only to take what he pleased. One thought of Aladdin's mother, and the bowl of precious stones that she presented to the sultan, whose admiration for them "struck him absolutely motionless." There is a throne taken from the Shah of Persia by Selim I in 1514, a sort of large armchair in which to sit cross-legged; it is smothered in jewels on a ground of crimson foil; vulgar and barbarous. The seat and canopy of Sultan Ahmed is beautiful; a sort of open sedan, inlaid with tortoiseshell and ivory. There are dummy figures of all the sultans with their respective robes of damask silk, some of which are marvellously beautiful in design and colour, and were probably made at Venice for Brûsa. The other exhibits were chiefly swords and military equipments, thickly studded with jewels, and some of them exquisitely wrought.

In a separate building are kept the mantle, banner, and staff of the Prophet, the regalia of the Caliphate, with which the new sultan is invested. We were not shown these, nor did we see the Kafess or "cage," where imperial children, possible aspirants to the throne, were confined. As a rule, however, their young lives were nipped in the bud by the bowstring. I remember in one of the sultan's *turbehs*, or mausoleums, a row of fourteen tiny graves of these little victims, each with its little turbaned headstone. Busbequius, envoy from the Emperor Ferdinand to Suleiman the

Magnificent, tells an affecting story of one little princeling of whom Suleiman thought it well to be rid. He sent an eunuch to put the child to death. The eunuch, too tender-hearted to do the deed himself, sent one of the porters into the room for the purpose. As the man was putting the string round the child's neck, the little lad raised himself laughing, and holding out his arms tried to embrace and kiss him. The man's heart failed him, and he sank on the floor in a faint. The eunuch, wondering why the man was so long about the business, looked in and saw him lying on the floor, and then, not to fail in his duty, he *suis manibus insontis pueri animulam elisit*[1], with his own hands quenched the innocent little life.

From the treasury we were taken to the garden which is really prettily kept, for the pleasure, I suppose, of the old ladies of the royal harem, now the only inhabitants of this ancient seat of despotism. There is a daintily decorated pavilion, the kiosk of Sultan Abdul Mejid (Mejidieh Kiosk), with half a dozen rooms in a French style, standing detached from the palace. It commands exquisite views over the Sea of Marmara, the Bosporus, Galata, and the hills of Asia. A little beyond is the famous Baghdad Kiosk prettily lined with tiles and marbles, a sort of garden pavilion, where apparently the sultan sometimes slept, for there is a sort of dressing-room with other conveniences. In the garden below is the simple memorial column of the Emperor Claudius Gothicus, supposed to have been erected in 269 A.D. when he conquered the Goths at Nissa. It is a rude work, but of special interest as one of the few survivals of Roman times and indeed of times older than Constantine. The inscription is:

FORTVNAE
REDVCI OB
DEVICTOS GOTHOS

[1] *Augerii Gislenii Busbequii Legationis Turcicae Epistolae.* Epist. IV.

On the side towards the Sea of Marmara the ground falls rather steeply from the plateau to the shore. But on this side the gardens are destroyed, and all is shabby, dusty, and neglected. At the foot of the slope is the railway running close inside the old city wall which is washed by the sea; a vulgar intrusion of commonplace modern life into what was once the secluded haunt of sultana and odalisque.

To say the truth these monuments of Turkish splendour do not leave on the mind a very exalted impression of any real magnificence. They have not the beauty of the Alhambra, or of Agra, and their artistic quality is poor enough. Like all semi-barbarous people the Turks had a childish passion for precious stones, and valued the material rather than the art bestowed upon it. What was good in it was the work of foreigners, what was their own was coarse and vulgar. The Sublime Porte itself, in spite of its high-sounding title and its political importance, is architecturally no great matter, and I imagine that the Turkish court at the time of its greatest splendour would have presented a mixture of gaudy magnificence and shabby meanness, as far inferior in point of art and taste to the courts of Europe, as it excelled them in value of jewelry.

Within the precincts of the Seraglio is built a fine museum of which the director was Halil Bey, brother of the late Hamdi Bey, the only Turk, I imagine, who ever distinguished himself as an artist, for he had a picture in our Royal Academy exhibition of remarkable merit. Halil Bey gave me leave to draw, but did not show any disposition to help me further. None of the attendants speaks any language but Turkish, and there is no catalogue, so that one has to shift for oneself. But the collection is extraordinarily valuable. The Greek sarcophagi of marble from Sidon, with their original coloured decoration are exquisite beyond everything; and there is the head broken from the Delphic column which still stands in the Hippodrome. What wonders await us if ever the Hippodrome were excavated!

At last the Fast of Ramazan was over, and the Feast of Bairam followed, the Grand Shereef at Mecca having fortunately been looking out at the right time for the new moon. Dancing and singing was going on everywhere; all the little girls had their hair tied up with bows of coloured ribbon, and there were carts full of children on their way to see the fun of the fair. There were swings in the court of Mahomet's mosque, and all sorts of amusements chiefly for children, though now and then a turban might be seen in a boat swinging madly to and fro. It was now possible to sketch in S. Sophia, but we had to defer this till our return from a visit to Salonica which occupied us from October 8th to the 18th.

After my return I was asked by the Efkaf, or ecclesiastical commission of Turkey, through the Cav^e^ Giulio Mongeri, to examine the settlements that had taken place in S. Sophia, and to make a report to them. As they had had a report on this matter from Signor Marangoni, the architect employed on S. Mark's at Venice, I said I did not wish in any way to interfere with him. It appeared, however, that they were collecting opinions, and as I happened to be there they would be glad to have mine. Mongeri said that though these examinations were directed by the government, every possible obstacle was put in their way by the fanatical staff of the mosque. I told them it would be useless for me to offer any opinion unless I had full leave to go everywhere, up and down about the building, without hindrance, and this it was promised I should have. Of the result of my examination I have given an account elsewhere, and need not repeat it here[1]. No difficulties were put in my way by the staff of the mosque, whom I found quite civil, and apparently interested. My task gave me the rare opportunity of going over the roof and into galleries and chambers generally inaccessible to the "infidel," and of ascertaining with certainty all the facts of the construction of Anthemius of Tralles and Isidore

[1] *V.* Appendix to Chap. VI. vol. I. of my *Byzantine and Romanesque Architecture.* (Camb. Univ. Press.)

of Miletus, and also, alas! of verifying the suspicions that had been aroused of the mischief that threatened the fabric.

Of S. Sophia it is difficult to speak with moderation. It is unique. None of the other great domes of the world has challenged the difficulties which it has overcome successfully. The great dome of the Pantheon rests on a circular wall. Those of St Peter's at Rome, of Florence, and of St Paul's in London rest on imperfect octagons. That of S. Sophia alone has a dome of 108 feet diameter standing *on a square*, a feat which has never been attempted again. In no other building is there such a magnificent unbroken floor space as that under the dome with the addition of the two great semi-domes east and west. To stand in this vast area between ranks of stately columns of porphyry and verd' antico, with the vast sweep of the semi-domes and the exedrae with their columns arranged, as Procopius says, like dancers in a chorus, and then to look up at the mighty dome 180 feet above, creates a sensation that no other building in the world can rival. The impression made by the beauty of the building is heightened by the recollection of the events of which it has been the scene. The life of the Eastern Empire was centred in this mighty fane. One thinks of Justinian and Theodora; of the emperor dressed in white linen, with a staff in his hand and a kerchief round his head watching the building rise; of the dedication on Dec. 26, 537, when, arrayed in purple and gold as we see him in the mosaic at Ravenna, he advanced alone to the splendid ambo, and cried, "Glory be to God who has thought me worthy to finish this work: I have surpassed thee, O Solomon." One recalls the memory of the many dynasties that rose and fell during the following nine centuries; of the struggles between Church and State, emperor and patriarch; of the outrage of the Latin invasion; and lastly of the fatal 29th of May, 1453, when the Great Church, which had been deserted because polluted by the Latin rite, which the last emperor had conceded in the vain hope of bringing Western Europe to the rescue, was once more

filled by a frantic crowd of worshippers, vainly praying for a saving miracle, till the barbarian broke in, and bound them in batches to be carried off into slavery. There is no place in the whole world round which historical memories cluster more thickly.

The position of Constantinople at the moment when I write, in 1923, is dubious: the real seat of Turkish power is at Angora in Asia Minor, and it is even uncertain which of the two places is to be the capital in future. Recent events must have shaken the prestige of Stamboul. Hitherto the Sultan of Constantinople was also the Caliph, the religious head of the Moslem world. Now the sultan is deposed, and lives an exile and a refugee; the caliphate is separated from the royalty, and held by a religious official with no political power. Yet Constantinople is one of the holy cities of Islam, and its claims will probably prevail over those of the Galatian village.

The Asiatic side of the Propontis invites many interesting excursions. There is Isnik, the ancient Nicaea, scene of church councils, where Theodore Lascaris held together the remains of the Roman Empire after the Latins took Constantinople. There is Ismid, the ancient Nicomedia, the Eastern capital of Diocletian; and Brûsa where the Moslem ruled while awaiting the final achievement of the conquest of Constantinople. All these places, interesting historically, and rich in ancient monuments, I should have liked to see, and my friends even urged me to go as far as Konia, the ancient Iconium; but the time at my disposal was exhausted, and I had regretfully to leave them unvisited, and to turn my face homeward.

Revolution in Turkey is not yet over. To-day[1] brings news of further political changes, compared with which the "Young Turk"

[1] Nov. 2, 1923.

movement seems trivial. That, at all events, preserved the shadow of a Sultan-Caliph, a sacred monarch, at once a temporal sovereign, and the religious head of the Moslem world. Now Turkey is declared a Republic. "Sovereignty," it is proclaimed, "belongs absolutely to the Turkish people," an abstraction which one may think will reach Turkish apprehension with difficulty; especially as with the same breath Mustapha Kemal Pasha is declared "President," with powers practically absolute. Though not in theory, he seems to be in reality Sultan, like Mahomet II, Suleiman the Magnificent, Mahmoud II the destroyer of the Janissaries, or Abdul Hamid himself. But they were also Caliphs, "shadows of God," and no divinity hedges round the person of Kemal Pasha. The present Caliph is an official with no share in the government, "whose sole function," as the writer in *The Times* says, "is to read the Friday prayers." What will the Turkish peasant think of a Caliph with no temporal power, and of a quasi-Sultan who is not the Caliph, nor even of the House of Othman?

Still more important is the effect of this change on the wide Mahometan world beyond Turkey. "The results of the destruction of the Sultanate-Caliphate are incalculable, but they promise to affect the sentiments, and it may be the beliefs of many hundred millions of men[1]."

[1] *The Times*, Nov. 2, 1923, leading article.

FINIS

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