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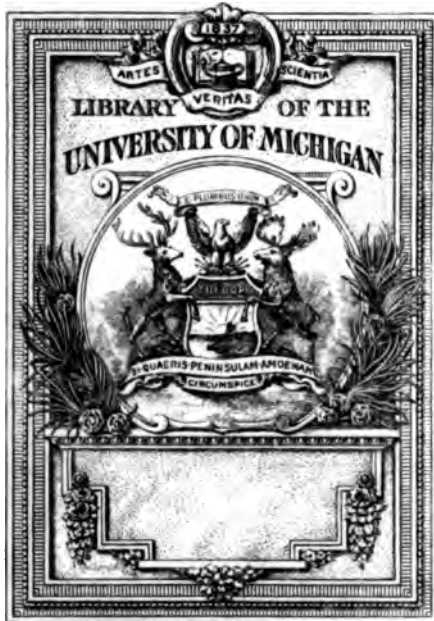
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VICTOR HUGO'S
LETTERS TO HIS WIFE





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VICTOR ^{HUGO} HUGO'S
LETTERS TO HIS WIFE
AND OTHERS
(THE ALPS AND THE PYRENEES)

TRANSLATED BY
NATHAN HASKELL DOLE



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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE Journey to the Alps, with which this volume opens, belongs to 1839, like the second Journey to the Rhine, of which it is the continuation. With the exception of the episode of "The Jugglers," extracted from a letter to Louis Boulanger, it is made up of letters written to Madame Victor Hugo, and postmarked at various cities.

The Journey to the Pyrenees (1843) is made up in a rather different way. It was written formally in the pages of a note book at the very places which are described. The two albums containing them are full of pen-and-ink sketches in the text, and have for book-marks flowers and leaves picked on the mountains or in the forest.

The Journey is continued uninterrupted and complete as far as Pampeluna. From there on we have only occasional chapters. The traveller took notes, intending later to finish his story; but he described on the spot only those places and things which more particularly struck him.

On his return to Paris after the catastrophe which made such a tragic interruption to his travels, Victor Hugo never had the courage to take up the story again and finish it.

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ALPS.

1839.

VICTOR HUGO'S LETTERS TO HIS WIFE.



I.

LUCERNE. — MOUNT PILATUS.

LUCERNE, September 10 [midnight].

I REACHED Lucerne at night. I have taken lodgings at the pension Lichman, an excellent hotel established in a fine old tower, machicolated, on my word! I have had tea, I have asked to be shown to my room, I have thrown my window open, and the probability is that I shall spend the night in writing to you, my dear Adèle, for a whole store of sights fills my mind, and a store of affection fills my heart.

Whenever the landscape, viewed from my open casement, justifies it, I shall make a sketch and send it to you. Just now it is admirable in spite of the night, and perhaps partly because it is night.

I have before me the Lake of the Four Cantons, the marvel of Switzerland. The waters of the lake come close to my window and gently ripple against the ancient stones of the tower. Now and then I hear fish leaping with a little splash. The darkness is intense; and yet I can distinguish at my right a worm-eaten wooden bridge,

its steep roof connecting with a large tower of superb outline. Flickering gleams dart over the water. A few tall poplar trees are reflected in the solemn lake opposite me, five hundred yards from my tower. Everything else is hidden from sight by a somewhat dense fog spread over the lake by the night. Still, it does not rise high enough to prevent me from seeing the ominous configuration of Mount Pilatus stretching out before my eyes in all its immensity.

Above the three prongs of his summit, a gigantic hour-glass is delineated on the sky by Saturn and the four beautiful golden stars in the midst of which he is placed. Behind Pilatus and along the borders of the lake, cluster in picturesque confusion a throng of ancient mountains, bald and shapeless: Titlis, Prosa, Crispalt, Badus, Galenstock, Frado, Furca, Mutthorn, Beckenviederberg, Urahorn, Hochstollen, Rathorn, Thierstock, and Brunig. I have a confused picture of all these humpbacked, goitred giants crouching around me in the darkness.

From time to time the breeze brings to me across the darkness a distant tinkling sound. It is the bells on the kine and goats wandering over the aërial pastures of Pilatus and the Rigi, and that sweet sound of music that comes to me floats down from a height of five or six thousand feet.

During my journey I have seen three lakes: the Lake of Zurich which I left behind me this morning, the Lake of Zug which graciously honoured me with an excellent eel for my breakfast, and Lake Lucerne which has just furnished my supper with its admirable salmon trout.

A bird's-eye view shows Lake Zurich in the form of a

crescent, resting one of its points at Zurich and the other at Uznach. Lake Zug has the shape of a slipper, the sole of which is formed by the road from Zug to Art; the Lake of the Four Cantons is roughly pictured by a broken foot of an eagle, the fractures of which are formed by the two gulfs of Brunnen and Buochs, and the four claws piercing deeply, one into Alpnach, the second into Winkel, the third into Lucerne, and the fourth into Kussnacht, where Tell killed Gessler. The culminating point of the lake is at Fluelen.

Before leaving Lake Zurich I became reconciled to it. It is indeed a beautiful object when seen from the summit of the Côte d'Albis. The white houses on the other side were gleaming like flints in the grass; several sail-boats were ploughing the sparkling waters, and the rising sun was little by little lifting off from the surface of the lake all the fog-wreaths of the night, and giving them to the wind, which was diligently carrying them away and adding them to a great heap of clouds massed together in the north. The Lake of Zurich was magnificent in that aspect.

When I tell you that I have seen three lakes during my day's journey I am quite within bounds, for I really saw four. Between Albis and Zug, amidst the most picturesque sierras in the world, in the depths of an extremely wild ravine densely wooded and very lonely, a little dark-green lake was to be seen. It is called Durlersee, and it is believed to be unfathomable. It seems that once a riverside village stood there, but the ground gave way and it was swallowed up. The colour of this sheet of water is disquieting. One would think it was a great vat filled with verdigris.

"Cursed lake!" said an old peasant as I passed by.

The farther one goes, the more extraordinary become the horizons. At Albis there seem to be in sight four chains of mountains, one rising above another: in the foreground, the green Ardennes; then, farther back, the dark Jura with its abrupt curves; then the bare steep Apennines; and in the background, towering above all the rest, the snowy Alps. You might imagine that you were looking at the first four steps of the ancient stairway of the Titans.

Then we descend into the valleys, we plunge into the depths of the forests; the boughs loaded with leaves form a reticulated arch over the road, and through the interstices falls a rain of light and warmth. Here and there an isolated cottage partially displays its yellowish wooden façade, gay and fascinating, with its casements set in round leads, making them look as though they were furnished with screens of coarse tulle.

A friendly peasant passes, with his wagon drawn by oxen. The ravines make wide rifts in the forest: the eye follows down these chasms, and if it happen to be noon, if the weather be fine, there may be seen in all directions a magnificent interchange in the way of lights and shadows between earth and sky; great curtains of mist hanging over the horizon are rent in this direction and that, and suddenly through the openings appear distant mountains as in a magic mirror in the depths of an abyss of light.

Zug, like Bruck, like Baden, is a charming feudal town, still surrounded by towers, with its robust crenel-

lated and emblazoned gates all scarred by assaults and escalades. Zug has not the Aar like Bruck, Zug has not the Limmat like Baden, but Zug has its lake, its little lake, which is one of the most beautiful in Switzerland.

A few steps from my inn I sat down on a narrow esplanade shaded by linden-trees. Before me were the Rigi and Pilatus, making four enormous pyramids; two of them rose high into the air, and two stood apex downward in the water.

Zug abounds with stone fountains, with painted and carved houses. The tavern of *Le Cerf* (The Stag) has some traces of the renaissance. At Zug the Italian fresco is already in possession of almost all the walls. In all places where Nature is very richly embellished, men's houses and costumes are influenced by it; the houses are tinted, the costumes are bright-coloured. It is a delightful law. Our villas of *La Cunette* and our suburban peasantry, clad in rags, would be monstrosities here.

I saw on a door at Zug a bas-relief representing a cave-dweller with his club. Underneath is carved the date 1482. On another door is inscribed this motto, which is more inviting than the troglodyte:—

PAX INTRANTIBUS, SALUS EXEUNTIBUS, 1607.

(My dear Charles, translate that Latin for your good mother!)

The church at Zug is furnished like a Flemish church. Altars with twisted columns, sepulchral tablets coloured and gilded are attached to all the walls. A beadle

showed me the church treasury, which is magnificent, overflowing with silver and gold utensils and fabrics, some of them extremely ornate, some extremely valuable.

For thirty sous I saw millions.

Fifteen years ago the road from Zug to Art was an almost impassable foot-path where the best of horses would stumble. It is now an excellent highway where not a jolt disturbs even the slow cart which travels over it laden with loads of travellers with knapsacks on their backs. At Zurich I hired a little four-wheeled cabriolet which took me in the most comfortable way over this beautiful route, with its escarpments of trees and crags on the left, and on the right the waters of the lake scarcely rippled by a breath.

The lake is graceful as you leave Zug; it becomes superb as you approach Art. Above Art, which is a good-sized village in the canton of Schwytz, rise the Rossberg, which the natives call the Sonnenberg, or Sun-mountain, and the Rigi, which they call Schattenberg, or Shadow-mountain.

The Rossberg is four thousand feet in height, the Rigi is five thousand. These two are the loftiest mountains of breccia to be found in the world. The Rossberg and Rigi have no geological relationship with the surrounding Alps. The Alps are granite. The Rigi and the Rossberg are made of pebbles embedded in a hardened mud which to-day is more solid than cement and makes the boulders lying near the roadside look like pieces of a Roman wall. These two huge mountains are two heaps of diluvian mud!

So it sometimes happens that this mud disintegrates

and crumbles. This happened notably in 1806, after two months of rain. On the second of September, at five o'clock in the evening, a portion of the summit of the Rossberg a thousand feet in front, a hundred feet high, and a mile long suddenly gave way, in three minutes slid down over a slope three miles long, and instantly overwhelmed a forest, a valley, three villages with their inhabitants, and half of a lake. Goldau, which was crushed out of existence in this way, is back of Art.

At three o'clock I was coming into the shadow of the Rigi, while behind me on the hills of Zug the sun still shone dazzlingly bright. I was approaching Art and thinking of Goldau; I knew that this pretty, smiling village hid from the sight of the passer-by the corpse of the buried village; I was looking down on this calm and peaceful lake in which the chalets and the meadows were reflected. This also hides terrible things from sight. Under the Rigi it is twelve hundred feet deep, and when it is swept by two violent winds called by the boatmen of Art and of Zug the Arbis and the Wetter-Foehn, this lovely bit of water becomes more horrible and more dangerous than the ocean.

Before me as far as the eye could reach stretched the Rigi, — a dark and monstrous perpendicular wall, to which clung the fir-trees in a confused mass like battalions emulously mounting to the assault.

From every landscape rises a smoke of ideas, some agreeable, others melancholy: this one suggested to me a triple thought of ruin, of tempest, and of war, and I was growing

pensive, when a young bare-footed girl who had been sitting by the roadside ran up and flung three plums into my cabriolet and then skipped away with a smile. By the time I had taken a few batz from my pocket, she was out of sight. A moment later when I looked back, she was in her place by the roadside, hiding in the grass ; and she gazed at me with her bright eyes across the willows like Galatea. Everything is possible for the good God, and here we find Vergil's eclogues under the shadow of the Rigi !

At five o'clock I was beginning to emerge from this shadow of the Rigi. I had traversed the elbow made by the extremity of the Lake of Zug, I had passed beyond Art, and was on the point of leaving behind me the shores of the lake to follow a road sunk between very high embankments and climbing by a rather steep grade up one of the low-lying ridges of the Rigi. On the right and left of this road several new houses in mediocre style were building. It seems that those pretty wooden fronts on buildings are going out of fashion here. Plaster of Paris tends to take the place of wood in façades. It is too bad. Switzerland ought to be informed that Paris itself is becoming ashamed of its plaster these days.

Suddenly the road becomes deserted ; a hovel emerges from a clump of trees on a small esplanade. My driver has drawn up his horses. I am in the famous sunken road of Küssnacht ! Five hundred and thirty-one years, nine months, and twenty-two days ago, at precisely this hour, at precisely this place, an arrow vigorously despatched across this very forest struck a man in the

heart. This man was Austrian tyranny ; that arrow was Swiss liberty !

The sun was setting, the road was growing gloomy, the shrubs on top of the slopes were sparkling in the brilliant light of the setting sun ; two old beggars, the man and his wife, who keep the neighbouring ruin, were stretching out their hands for my French sous ; a juggler leading a muzzled bear by a string was coming down the road toward Küssnacht, followed by the joyous shouts of four or five children delighted at the bear ; my driver was holding back the wheels of the carriage, and I heard the scraping noise made by his sabot ; two branches spreading apart opened for me a window across the plain, and I saw in the distance the hay-makers heaping up their ricks ; the birds were singing in the tree-tops ; the kine were lowing on the Rigi.

I dismounted from the carriage, I examined the pebbles of the pass, I gazed on this Nature which seemed as serene as a good clear conscience. In my mind the ghost of things past little by little began to take the place of present realities and efface them, like an ancient writing which shows on an imperfectly bleached page in the midst of a new text ; I dreamed that I saw the bailiff Gessler stretched out bleeding in the sunken road, on these primeval boulders that have slid down from the Rigi, and I heard his dog barking through the trees at the gigantic figure of Tell standing at his full height in the copse !

This tumble-down building, which is a chapel, marks the very spot where the sublime ambush took place. Except for the door, which is composed of an ogive panel, the

chapel has nothing worthy of note. A dilapidated interior, wretched frescos on the wall, a cheap altar decorated with Italian fripperies, painted wooden vases, and artificial flowers, two jabbering beggars who will sell to you for a few sous a souvenir of William Tell, — such is the monument on the hollow road of Küssnacht.

On the altar is a madonna ; before this madonna lies an open book wherein passers-by may register their names. The last traveller who entered the chapel wrote there two lines which touched me more than all the declarations of war against tyrants with which the book is filled : —

“ I humbly pray our holy Mother of God to deign by her intercession to cause my poor wife's sight to be in a measure restored.”

I wrote nothing in this book, not even my name. Below this sweet prayer the page was blank. I left it blank.

From the esplanade in front of the chapel a corner of the Lake of the Four Cantons is to be seen. As I turned around I saw, on a craggy eminence, at the foot of the Rigi, a fragment of a tower which has the appearance of a dismantled gable. It rises from the shrubbery like a tooth. This ruin was the fortress of Küssnacht, the keep inhabited by Gessler, the donjon prepared for William Tell. William Tell never went into it, Gessler never returned to it.

A quarter of an hour later I was at Küssnacht. The bear was dancing on the Square, the village matrons were gossiping and laughing around the fountain ; three English post-chaises were setting down their passengers before

the pretentious and comfortable-looking hotel, which puts out of countenance the gothic fronts of the fifteenth-century cottages. Two old women were caring for the tombs in the cemetery in front of the church. I stopped my carriage there. I visited the church, which as an edifice is insignificant, but very jaunty and very gayly ornamented.

At Zurich the churches are bare. Here, as at Art, and as at Zug, they are dressed up, — and dressed up exaggeratedly, violently, wildly. They show the reaction of Romanism against the Calvinistic churches; it is a war of flowers, of volutes, of pompons, and of garlands, in which the Catholic cantons are arrayed against the Protestant cantons.

The cemeteries are especially remarkable. Over every grave there is a stone, and in this stone is fixed a rococo wrought-iron cross, highly polished and richly gilded. All these crosses taken together give the cemetery the appearance of a great thicket with yellow flowers.

The road from Küssnacht to Lucerne, like that from Zug to Art, skirts the water. The Lake of the Four Cantons is still more beautiful than the Lake of Zug.

Instead of the Rigi, I had before me Mount Pilatus.

Mount Pilatus held me under its spell all day long. I rarely lost it from sight during my journey from Zurich hither. At this moment I can just make it out in the darkness before my window.

Mount Pilatus is a strange mountain. It is terrible in form. In the middle ages it was called the Broken

Mountain (*Fracmont*). Almost always a cloud hangs over the summit of Mount Pilatus; hence arises its name of *mons pileatus*,— the “capped mountain.” The peasants of Lucerne, who are greater adepts in the Scriptures than in Latin, make *pileatus* into Pilatus, and therefore have it that Pontius Pilate is buried under this mountain.

The cloud, if we may credit worthy women, behaves itself in a very extraordinary manner; if it is present it signifies fine weather; if it is absent it signifies that a storm is coming. Pilatus, singular giant that he is, puts on his cap when the weather is fair, and takes it off when it rains. So that this mountain barometer frees four Swiss cantons from the necessity of keeping at their windows those little cowed hermits which move on a piece of catgut.

The fact of the cloud is beyond dispute; I watched it all the morning; during four hours that cloud assumed a score of different shapes, but it did not leave the brow of the mountain. Now it resembled a great white swan couching in the angles of the mountain as if in a nest; now it divided itself into five or six little clouds and formed around the summit a floating crown of eagles.

You must realize that such a cloud on such a mountain would be likely to call forth many superstitions in a flat country. The mountain is sharp, the sides are steep and difficult, it is six thousand feet high, many terrors encompass the summit. Thus it daunted the boldest chamois-hunters.

What could be the cause of this strange cloud?

Two hundred years ago a bold fellow who had the sure

foot of a mountaineer,¹ undertook the risk and climbed to the top of Mount Pilatus. Then the cloud was explained.

At the very summit of the mountain there is a lake, a tiny lake, a cup of water a hundred and sixty feet long, eighty feet wide, and of depth unknown. When the weather is clear, the sun strikes this lake and calls forth a cloud; when the weather grows bad, there is no sun, — no cloud!

Though the phenomenon was explained, the superstitions did not disappear. On the contrary, they only increased and took on greater variety. In fact the mountain after it had been visited was not less frightful than the mountain unexplored.

Besides the lake prodigious things were found on Mount Pilatus. In the first place a fir-tree unique in all Switzerland, — a colossal fir-tree which has nine horizontal branches and which bears another big fir-tree on each of its branches. This must give it the appearance of a gigantic wild plum-tree. Then on the Alp of Bründlen, which is the neighbouring ridge with the seven peaks surmounting it, there is an echo which seems to be a voice rather than an echo, so perfect it is; it repeats words even to the last syllables, and songs even to the last notes. Then, finally, in a terrible precipice, in the midst of a perpendicular wall of black rock more than six hundred feet high there is the mouth of an inaccessible cavern, and at the entrance of this cavern a supernatural statue of white

¹ It was first ascended in 1518 by four scientific men; in 1555 it was climbed by Konrad Gessner, whose account is said to have dissipated most of the superstitious terrors connected with the mountain. — Tr.

stone about thirty feet high, sitting and leaning on a granite table with legs crossed, in the attitude of a frightful spectre guarding the threshold of the cave.

It seems beyond question that the cavern extends through the whole mountain and comes out on the other side in the Alp of Temlis, at an opening which is called *Le Trou de la Lune*, — the Cave of the Moon, because, according to Ebel, much *lait de lune* is found there.

As it was an impossibility to scale the six-hundred-foot wall, an attempt was made to outflank the statue and enter its lair by the Cave of the Moon. This hole is sixteen feet in one diameter by nine in the other. An icy wind and a torrent emerge from it. The dangers began at the very entrance. Nevertheless the risk was taken. The explorers groped their way through vaulted halls, they crawled on their bellies almost crushed by awful ceilings and half drowned by rushing streams. Wasted labour! There was no way of reaching to the statue. It is still there, intact in the strict signification of the word, with its eyes fixed on the abyss, keeping guard over the cavern, carrying out the orders imposed upon it, and dreaming of the mysterious sculptor who fashioned it. The people of the mountain call this figure *Saint Dominick*.

The middle ages and the sixteenth century were as much impressed by Mount Pilatus as by Mont-Blanc. To-day no one gives any heed to it. The Rigi is the fashionable mountain. The gloomy superstitions of Mount Pilatus have fallen into the exclusive possession of old women and have lost their vitality. The top is dreaded only because it is not easy to reach. General Pfyffer has

made barometrical observations on it and declares that with a telescope the cathedral of Strasburg can be seen from there.

A strange population of shepherds is cantoned on it; they live there. They are strong, simple active men, who live to be centenarians and thoroughly despise the human ants down in the plain.

Now there are still at Lucerne ancient laws forbidding the throwing of stones into the little lake on the top of the Pilatus, for this fantastic reason, — that a pebble evokes a water-spout, and that for every stone thus cast into it the lake gives out a storm that spreads over all Switzerland.

Terrible as it has seemed, Mount Pilatus has for a hundred years past been covered with pastures. Thus it is not only a fear-inspiring mountain, it is an enormous udder nourishing four thousand cows. This makes an orchestra of four thousand bells, and at this moment I am listening to it.

I will tell you the history of these Alpine kine. A cow costs four hundred francs, is rented for sixty or eighty francs a year, grazes six years on the mountains, calves six times; then, thin, wasted, mere skin and bones, having given all her substance in her milk, the herdsman turns her over to the butcher; she crosses the Saint-Gothard, passes down the Southern slopes of the Alps, and becomes "beef" in the questionable kitchens of Italian taverns.

Now if this process continues, the miraculous Mount Pilatus will grow as prosaic as a whitewashed cathedral. A French company has recently bought a forest of larch-trees half a mile from the top, and has built a carriage road

up to it, and at this time the company are shearing the giant!

Besides, my guide assured me at Küssnacht that in 1814 a chamois-hunter by the name of Ignatius Matt made his way into the cavern by means of ladders and ropes, and, at the risk of his life it is true, boldly climbed up to the gloomy stone sentinel.

I ought to add that one of the old women of the cemetery who had been listening to the guide's story uttered an energetic protest declaring that Ignatius Matt was only a conceited coxcomb, that he had boasted of an impossible piece of good luck and that the statue of *Dominick lock* was still a virgin!

In this matter I believe the old women.

It took me only an hour and a half to cover the three leagues from Küssnacht to Lucerne at a gallop. Nevertheless when I reached Lucerne the night had already fallen. But the ride along the gulf of Küssnacht at twilight is admirable.

As I left Küssnacht I was still gazing with all my eyes on the ruined domain of Gessler, when my attention was attracted by still another. It was the dungeon of Neu-Habsburg, — another eagle's eyrie half-way up, amid the heather. From the road I could see a great corner of wall, which, like a head bent back with hair hanging over behind, dipped the ends of its ivy-tresses in the waters of the gulf.

Facing me, the green slopes of la Zinne, with their complex network of trees and farms, were reflected in the already shadowed mirror of the lake, giving it the appear-

ance of an arborised agate. At the foot of the Rigi a peculiar light gave the water a pallid brilliancy. A little boat gliding along hard by in a dark cove became double by reflection and looked like a long sword ; the boat made the handle, the boatman the guard, and the sparkling wake the keen, long, bare blade.

September 11, four P. M.

With the exception of the arsenal and the city-hall, I have already seen everything at Lucerne.

The city is well-built, seated on two hills facing each other and separated by the Reuss, which enters the lake at Fluelen and escapes violently at Lucerne. It is surrounded by a fourteenth-century wall all the towers of which differ from one another just as they do at Bâle; this is a trick characteristic of German military architecture. The city is full of fountains, almost all curious, and of houses decorated with scrolls, turrets, and gables, all for the most part in a good state of preservation. The verdure on the outside of them projects beyond the battlements.

From all the front windows of the city houses, as they spread out like an amphitheatre on the slopes of the hills, the lake can be seen magnificently stretching away into the depths of the mountains.

There are three covered wooden bridges, belonging to the fifteenth century : two across the lake, one across the Reuss. The two lake bridges are exceedingly long, and zig-zag across the water with no other apparent purpose than to confer with several ancient towers on the way, for the amusement of the eyes. It is very odd and very pretty.

The steep roof of each bridge covers a gallery of paint-

ings. These paintings are triangular tablets set into the angle of the roof and painted on both sides. Each rafter has its painting. The three bridges make three series of paintings, each of which has a distinct intention, a topical subject to which they hold consistently, a well-marked purpose of working, through the eyes, on the minds of those who go and come. The series in the great bridge, which is fourteen hundred feet long, is devoted to Sacred History. The series in the Kapellbrücke which crosses the outlet of the lake and is a thousand feet long, contains two hundred paintings ornamented with armorial escutcheons relating to the history of Switzerland. The series in the bridge over the Reuss, which is the shortest of the three, is a *danse macabre*, — a Dance of Death.

Thus the three great sides of the thought of man are there, — religion, nationality, philosophy. Each of these bridges is a book. The passer-by lifts his eyes and reads. He goes out on business, and returns with an idea.

Almost all these paintings date from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹ Some are remarkable for their beautiful quality, others were spoiled in the last century by heavy, pasty restorations. The Death Dance on the bridge over the Reuss is throughout excellently painted and is full of life and feeling. Each one of the panels represents Death mingling with all human actions. He is dressed like a notary, and is registering the new-born infant on

¹ Hans Heinrich Wegmann of Zurich painted the panels of the Kapellbrücke, shortly after 1611. The Speuerbrücke was decorated by Kaspar Meglingen between 1626 and 1632. At the present time, according to W. D. McCrackan, there are one hundred and fifty-four in the first, and fifty-six in the second. — TR.

whom the mother smiles ; he is the coachman with gold-braided livery, and merrily drives the blazoned carriage of a beautiful woman ; a Don Juan is engaged in an orgy, Death plucks at his sleeve and fills his glass for him ; a physician is attending a patient, Death wears the apron of the assistant and supports the sick man's arm ; a soldier is fighting, Death is his opponent ; a fugitive is burying his spurs in his horse's sides, Death is astride of the animal behind. The most terrible of these paintings is that representing Paradise. All the animals are there promiscuously : lambs and lions, tigers and sheep, good, gentle, innocent ; the serpent is there also ; it can be seen but through a skeleton ; it crawls along dragging Death with it.

Mylinger, who painted this bridge at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was a great painter and a great man.

From the Kapellbrücke there is a charming view, almost a bird's-eye view, of Lucerne, as it was two hundred years ago. Fortunately for the city, there has been little change.

As yet I have seen only the exterior of the city hall. It is a rather handsome edifice though of a bastard style, with a belfry capped with a roof formed like a helmet and odd in appearance. From Bâle to Baden, the steeples are sharp, with coloured tiles ; from Baden to Zurich they are daubed in deep red ; from Zug to Lucerne, they are like helmets, with crests and visors tinned and gilded.

The canonical church which is outside the city limits and is called the cathedral, has two slated spires of beautiful shape ; but except for a Louis XIII. portal and an

external bass-relief of the fifteenth century representing Jesus on the Mount of Olives crowned with *fleurs de lys* and pushing away the cup, the church in itself is not worth visiting.

On the quay stands the church of the Jesuits, which is built in a loud, extravagant rococo style, and behind the Jesuits' church, on a little square, there is another church, which is more interesting than all the rest, although it is hidden. The nave is ornamented with painted banners. The pulpit, of the seventeenth century, is a beautiful piece of carpenter's work and so are the stalls of the choir. I noticed also, in a *rocaille* or rock-work chapel, a magnificent grating of the fifteenth century.

At Lucerne there is something of everything, great and small, things repulsive and things charming. In the midst of the quay a throng of water fowls, at once wild and tame, plays in the water of the lake under the shadow of Mount Pilatus. The city has taken these poor happy fowls under its protection. No one is allowed to kill them under penalty of a fine. They remind one of a bevy of little black swans with white bills. There is nothing more graceful than they are as you see them diving and fluttering round. They come at a whistle. I throw them bread-crumbs from my window.

In all these little cities the women are inquisitive, timid, and lackadaisical. From inquisitiveness and ennui arises their liking to see what is going on in the street ; from their timidity arises their fear of being seen. Hence on all the house-fronts an apparatus for espionage, more or less carefully hidden, more or less complicated. At Bâle as at

Flanders it is a simple little mirror fastened outside the window ; at Zurich as in Alsace it is a turret, oftentimes of graceful shape, with windows on all sides and partly attached to the façade of the dwelling.

At Lucerne, the espionage is carried on simply by means of a little cupboard provided with holes and placed outside the casements, on the window-sill, like a cake-box.

The women of Lucerne make a great mistake to hide themselves, for they are almost all pretty.

By the way, I have seen the "Lion" of August 10. It is declamatory !

September 15.

I am still at Lucerne, my dear Adèle. But I have just been making two delightful excursions, the circuit of the lake and the ascent of Mount Rigi.

I left for the Rigi on the morning of the twelfth, after having first got shaved by a terrible barber named Fraunezer, who cut my chin in three places and charged me sixteen French sous for this surgical operation.

I will tell you all about it. The Rigi is superb.

Here is a little design for my Didine. That which looks like a sort of saucer on the top of the tower is a swan's nest. Explain that to her.

And then kiss my Dédé, my Toto, and my Charles. I hope they are doing good work. I press Vaquerie's hand.

Good-bye, my dear Adèle ; I will write you soon. In a month I shall see you once more, and I shall kiss you, my dearly-beloved ones.

Your loving

VICTOR.

II.

BERNE. — THE RIGI.

BERNE, September 17, midnight.

WHENEVER I reach any place, my dear Adèle, my first thought is to write to you. Hardly am I shown to my room ere I have a table and an inkstand brought me, and I begin to chat with you, with all of you, my dearly-beloved children. All of you must take your share in my thoughts just as you have your share in my love.

I arrived at Berne at night, just as I did at Lucerne, just as I did at Zurich. I do not object to this way of coming into a town. In a place which one first approaches at night, there is a mixture of glooms and irradiations, of lights that show you things and shadows that hide them from you: consequently things present themselves to you under a peculiarly exaggerated and chimerical aspect, which has its charm. There is a combination of the known and the unknown, giving the mind a chance to indulge in such dreams as it may fancy. Many objects that are merely prose by day take on in the darkness a certain poesy. By night the profiles of things expand; by day they shrink.

It was eight o'clock in the evening; I had left Thun at five. The sun had been down for two hours and the moon,

which is in its first quarter, had risen behind me from among the lofty, ragged crests of the Stockhorn. My four-wheeled cabriolet rolled swiftly along over an excellent road.

I have the same cabriolet, which has merely changed drivers by some peculiar arrangement.

My driver at present is picturesque enough ; he is a tall Piedmontese with black whiskers and a wide glazed hat ; he is buttoned up in an immense box-coat or *carrick*, such as hack-drivers wear, made of fawn-coloured leather, lined with black sheepskin, and ornamented on the outside with patches of red, blue, and green leather sewed on the fawn-coloured background and making a design of fantastic flowers. When he opens his coat he displays an olive-velvet waistcoat, leather breeches, and gaiters ; the whole set off by a charm made out of a forty-sou piece with the effigy of the emperor ; in the edge of it a watch-key is fastened.

So I had before me the pale twilight sky, and behind me the gray moonlight sky. The landscape viewed under this double light was ravishingly beautiful. Now and again I could see at my left the Aar making silvery bends in the depths of a black ravine. The houses, which are often shaped like chalets and which are little wooden edifices carved to the last degree, displayed on both sides of the road their fronts faintly lighted by the moon, with their tall roofs pressing down on their ruddy windows.

Noted in passing that the roofs of cottages are immense in this land of showers and cloud-bursts. The roof de-

velops under the rain ; in Switzerland it almost swallows up the whole house ; in Italy it becomes insignificant ; in the East it disappears.

I resume.

I was gazing at the outlines of the trees, as it always amuses me to do, and had just been admiring the huge crest of a walnut-tree in a field a hundred paces from the road, when the coachman got down to block the wheel. It is a good sign when this operation is performed ; it is the stage-manager's whistle. The scenes are about to be changed.

In fact the road takes a sudden slope downward into a gulf, and at my left, through the line of trees bordering the way at the bottom of a valley, dimly seen through the moonlight, a city, an apparition, a dazzling picture suddenly came into sight !

It was Berne and her valley.

I could hardly believe that I was not looking at a Chinese city on the night of the Feast of Lanterns. Not that the roofs had particularly salient or fantastic pinnacles ; but there were so many brilliant lights in that living chaos of houses, so many candles, so many cressets, so many lamps, so many stars at all the casements ; a sort of wide whitish street traced such a milky way amid these constellations spread out on the ground ; two towers, the one square and squat, the other slender and sharp, marked so oddly the two ends of the city, this one on the crest, that on the hollow ; the Aar, bent like a horse-shoe at the foot of the walls, cut off so singularly from the

ground, like a sickle slicing a block, this mass of undefined edifices pierced with luminous holes; the crescent moon, set in the background of the sky just in front of me, like the torch for this spectacle, cast over the whole scene a light so gentle, so pale, so harmonious, so ineffable, — that it seemed no longer a city that I was looking down on, it was a shadow, the phantom of a city, an impossible island of the air, anchored in a valley of the earth and illuminated by spirits.

As we made our way down, the lovely outlines of the city were decomposed and recomposed several times, and the vision half faded away.

Then my carriage crossed a bridge and drew up under an ogive gate; an old mannikin, supported by two soldiers in green uniform, came out and asked me for my passport; by the light of the reflector I could see a rope-dancers' poster ornamented with an engraving and attached to the wall, and I fell from the height of my Chinese dream into Berne, capital of the largest of the twenty-two cantons, a metropolis of three hundred and ninety-nine thousand inhabitants, a residence of ambassadors, a city situated $46^{\circ} 7' 14''$ north latitude, and $25^{\circ} 7' 6''$ longitude, seventeen hundred and eight feet above the level of the sea.

When I had somewhat recovered from this fall, I continued on my way, and here I am now in the *Hôtel des Gentilshommes*. That is still another fall, for the *Hôtel des Gentilshommes* has the effect on me of a dilapidated tavern; the chambers smell musty, the white curtains have the yellow tinge of age, the brasses on the commodes are green with verdigris, the ink is a black mud. In short,

the *Hôtel des Gentilshommes* has its originality ; nothing could be more unexpected than this oasis of Breton dirt amid the general neatness of Switzerland.

Now I must tell you about my trip to the Rigi. It was not the Rigi that I cared for while I was staying at Lucerne, it was Pilatus. Pilatus is a steep, wild mountain, with a touch of the marvellous about it, difficult of approach, abandoned by tourists ; it strongly tempted me. The Rigi is fourteen hundred feet lower than Pilatus, can be mounted on horseback, has only such escarpments as appeal to the common herd, and is covered every day by a throng of visitors. The Rigi is the common boast of every one. So it inspired in me only a very mediocre desire. However, the weather was against climbing the Pilatus and continued so ; *Odry*, a flat-nosed guide, so named by French tourists, refused to take me there ; I had to content myself with the Rigi. In reality I do not complain of the Rigi, but I should have preferred Pilatus.

After getting my beard cut by that horrible knacker whose name was Fraunezer, I left Lucerne for the Rigi on the twelfth, at eight o'clock in the morning ; at nine o'clock the steamboat *Ville-de-Lucerne* disembarked me at Wiggis, a pretty little village on the shore of the lake, where I had a passable breakfast ; at ten o'clock I left the gasthof of Wiggis and began to climb the mountain ; I had a guide for form's sake, and my entire luggage consisted of my cane.

On the way I met two or three caravans with horses,

mules, asses, bags of provisions, iron-shod staves, guides for the animals, guides to explain the sites, etc. There are travellers who treat the Rigi as if it were a Mont-Blanc; species of mountain Don Quixotes who are determined to "make an ascent," and who climb a hill with all the paraphernalia of Cachat the Giant.

Now the Rigi is very fine, but one may go to the top and back again with cane in hand. You remember, my dear Adèle, our excursion to the Montanvert; the Rigi is only twice as high; the Montanvert is about twenty-five hundred feet, the Rigi about five thousand feet high.

It takes about three hours to climb the Rigi by way of Wiggis, and it may be divided into four zones.

At first a road under the trees, the low branches of which catch on the laces of the English women who make the excursion. Here pretty little barefoot girls offer you pears and peaches. These woods are intermingled with orchards; now and again the blue of the lake can be seen through the green of the trees, and between two plum-trees a sail-boat gleams.

The passage of the first two zones takes about an hour each; the passage of each of the last two takes half an hour.

Then comes a foot-path, very rough in places, climbing that steep slope which comes between the base and the summit of almost all mountains. Then a turfy incline over which the path runs easily between the house called *les bains froids* (the cold baths) and the house called *le péage* (the Toll-gate). Then from the Toll-gate to the top (the *Kulm*), a foot-path, rough enough here and there.

From this you can see Lucerne once more ; it is bordered by a precipice, at the foot of which lies Küssnacht.

The first zone is only an agreeable promenade ; the second is toilsome enough. It was a fine day, the sun's hot rays fell perpendicularly on the white mountain-walls along which crept the path, sustained here and there by scaffoldings and supports of masonry. The ancient diluvian wall has been shaken to pieces by the rains and torrents ; the boulders have rolled down and cover the road, and I made my way along slowly enough over the nail-heads of the breach. From time to time I came upon a wretched painting fastened to the rock wall and representing one of the stations of the *via dolorosa*.

Half-way up there is a chapel ornamented with a beggar, and two hundred steps higher, a great crag standing out from the mountain and called the *tower-rock*. The road passes under it. The pedestrian bathed in sweat finds in this vault an abundance of chilling shade, and a little cool water falling about him ; a treacherous bench has been placed there, and on it pleurisies are in wait.

The tower-rock is indeed a strange looking object. It is crowned with an inaccessible platform on which several tall fir-trees have found a peaceful lodgment. A few feet distant, over the precipice falls a lovely cascade, which in April roars and in summer is diminished to a few silver threads.

When I reached the summit of the cliff I was out of breath ; I sat down for a few moments on the grass ; great dark clouds had hidden the sun ; every human habitation had vanished from sight ; the pall shed from the sky gave

this immense desert landscape something peculiarly sinister ; the lake was at my feet with its mountains and capes, the haunches, ribs, and long necks of which I could clearly distinguish, and I could imagine that I was looking down on an enormous herd of shaggy monsters, clustering around that azure horse-pond, lying flat on their bellies and drinking, with their noses stretched out into the lake. After I had rested a little, I started again on my way up. . . .

I had surmounted the first two zones, I was just entering the third, when I perceived at a considerable height above me, half-way up, on a grass-covered slope, the wooden house called "*les bains froids*," — the cold baths. In five minutes I was there. There is nothing remarkable about the house : it is covered with little boards carved to imitate the scaly bark of the fir-tree. Note in passing that Nature gives scales to everything that has to resist water, to the ever-greens in the rain as well as to the fishes in the wave. Several English women were sitting before the house.

I wandered from the path and among some huge boulders piled together I found the little cold and joyous spring which at that height, two thousand feet above the ground, has caused first a chapel, and then a sanitarium to spring into existence. That is the usual process in this country, which has been rendered religious by its grand mountains : first the soul, then the body.

The spring issues from a cleft in the rock and falls in long crystal filaments ; I took down from the rusty nail the old iron cup hung there for the use of pilgrims and I

enjoyed a draught of excellent water ; then I entered the chapel which stands near the spring.

An altar loaded down with a sufficiently dilapidated papal ornamentation, a madonna, a quantity of faded flowers, a quantity of utensils with the gilt worn off, a collection of votive offerings containing all sorts of things, — wax legs, tin hands, rude pictures representing shipwrecks on the lake, effigies of children granted or saved, convicts' iron collars and chains, even bandages used in cases of hernia, — such was the interior of the chapel.

I was under no stress of haste ; I took a stroll around in the neighbourhood of the spring, while my guide was resting and drinking kirsch-wasser in the house.

The sun had come out again. An indistinct murmur of bells attracted me. So I made my way to the edge of a very deep and steep ravine. Goats were browsing on the cliff, hanging on the briers. I struggled down almost on all fours like the goats themselves.

At the bottom, everything was diminutive and delightful ; the turf was fine and soft ; beautiful long-waisted blue flowers were climbing up to the windows through the brambles and seemed to be gazing with admiration at a pretty black-and-yellow spider which was performing summersaults, like a clown, on an imperceptible thread hung from one brier to another.

The ravine seemed shut up like a room. After gazing at the spider just as the flowers were doing (and this seemed to flatter the spider, let me say in passing, for it displayed wonderful boldness and agility when it saw me there), I discovered a narrow passage at the end of the

ravine and when I had gone through this passage the scene abruptly changed.

I was on a narrow esplanade of rock and turf which clung like a balcony to the monstrous wall of the Rigi. I had before me, in all their extent, the Burgen, the Buochserhorn, and Pilatus. Below me at an immense depth lay the Lake of Lucerne, cut up by points and gulfs and reflecting these giant faces as if in a broken mirror. Above Pilatus, far down the horizon gleamed a score of snowy summits; shadow and verdure covered the mighty muscles of the hills; the sun brought out into strong relief the colossal osteology of the Alps; the wrinkled granite crags were creased in the distances like anxious brows; the rays raining down from the clouds gave a ravishingly beautiful aspect to these fair valleys, which are filled at certain hours with the frightful tumults of the mountains; two or three microscopic boats were flying over the surface of the lake, leaving behind them wide, open furrows like silver tails. I saw the roofs of villages with smoke arising from them, and rocks with their cascades like columns of smoke falling.

It was a prodigious ensemble of harmonious and magnificent things, full of the grandeur of God. I turned round and asked myself to what superior and chosen Being Nature was offering this marvellous festival of the mountains, the clouds, and the sun, and I felt the need of finding a sublime witness of this sublime landscape.

There was one witness in reality, only one; for in other respects the esplanade was wild, abrupt, and deserted. I shall never in my life forget it. In a cleft in the crag,

seated on a huge stone with his legs hanging down, was an idiot with a goître, his body slim and his face enormous, laughing with a stupid laugh ; the sun was shining full in his eyes, and he was staring blankly at the scene before him. Oh ! abysm ! The Alps were the spectacle, the spectator was an idiot !

I forgot myself in this frightful antithesis : man face to face with Nature ; Nature in her superbest aspect, man in his most miserable debasement. What could be the significance of this mysterious contrast. What was the sense of this irony in a solitude ? Have I the right to believe that the landscape was designed for him — the crétin, and the irony for me — the chance visitor ?

However, the goïtrous idiot paid no attention to me. He held in his hand a great slice of black bread, from which from time to time he bit off a morsel. He was one of the idiots who are taken care of by the capuchin hospital situated on the other side of the Rigi. The poor creature had come there in search of the mid-day sun.

A quarter of an hour later, I had started on my path again, and the Cold Baths and the chapel and the ravine and the goïtrous idiot had disappeared behind me in one of the "cups" made by the southern slope of the Rigi.

After passing the toll-gate, where travellers are required to pay six batz (about eighteen cents) a horse, I sat down on the edge of the precipice and, like the idiot, let my legs hang over ; there was a ruined dungeon buried in the brambles seven hundred fathoms below me.

A few paces behind me three very pretty and much beplumed English children were laughing and chattering as

they rolled on the grass and played with their white-aproned "bonne" just as if they were at the Luxembourg. They said "good-morning" to me in French.

The Rigi is very wild in this place ; the neighbourhood of the summit makes itself felt. A few chalets grouped in village fashion are sunken deep in a ravine that gashes the top, and toward Küssnacht I saw thronging up toward me those tall fir-trees which will some day become the masts of ships and will have had only two destinies,—the mountain and the ocean.

From the point where I was I could see the summit ; it seems quite near ; you would think you could reach it in three strides : it is really half a league distant.

At two o'clock, after a four-hours' climb, frequently interrupted by halts and *caprices* in the etymological sense of the word, I stood on the Rigi-Kulm.

On top of the Rigi there are only three things : an inn, an observatory built of a few planks placed on beams, and a cross. That is all that is needed ; the stomach, the eye, and the soul have a threefold demand ; it is satisfied.

The inn is called "L'hôtel du Rigi-Kulm" and seemed to me all that was needed. The cross is also satisfactory ; it is made of wood with the date, 1838.

The top of the Rigi is a broad, turfy ridge. When I got there, I was alone on the mountain. While I was thinking of you, my dear wife, and of you, my Didine, I picked on the edge of a precipice four thousand feet high this pretty little flower. I send it to you.

The Rigi is nine times as high as the spire at Strasburg ; Mont Blanc is three times as high as the Rigi.

On mountain-tops, like the Rigi-Kulm, one may look, but it is not permissible to paint. Is it beautiful, or is it horrible? I really do not know. It is horrible and beautiful at once. You no longer have a landscape before you, but monstrous aspects. The horizon is improbable, the perspective is impossible; it is a chaos of absurd exaggerations and terrifying diminutions.

Mountains eight hundred feet high are mere warts; forests of fir-trees are clumps of brambles; the Lake of Zug is a basin full of water; the valley of Goldau, that devastation of six square leagues, is a shovelful of mud; the Bergfall, that wall of seven hundred feet, along which glided the landslide which swallowed up Goldau, is the groove of a Russian ice hill; the roads whereon three diligences can ride abreast, are spider's-webs, the cities of Küssnacht and Art with their illuminated bell-towers are village-jewels to put in a box and give as new year's presents to little children; men, cattle, horses, are not even aphides, — they have disappeared!

At this height the convexity of the globe confuses to a certain extent all lines and deranges them. The mountains take extraordinary postures. The peak of the Rothorn floats over the Lake of Sarnen; the Lake of Constance rises over the top of the Rossberg; the landscape is crazy.

With this inexpressible spectacle before your eyes you begin to understand why Switzerland and Savoie swarm with stunted minds. The Alps make many idiots. It is not granted to all intelligences to cohabit with such marvels and to keep from morning till evening, without

intoxication and without stupor, turning a visual radius of fifty leagues across the earth around a circumference of three hundred.

After spending an hour on the Rigi-Kulm, one becomes a statue, one takes root on some one spot of the summit. The emotion is immense. The memory is not less occupied than the eyes, the thinking faculty is not less occupied than the memory. It is not only a segment of the globe that one has before one's eyes, it is also a segment of history. The tourist comes here to get a *point of view*; the thinker finds here an immense book in which each rock is a letter, each lake is a phrase, each village is an accent; from it arise, like a smoke, two thousand years of memories.

The geologists here can scrutinise the formation of a mountain chain; the philosopher can here study the formation of one of those chains of men, of races, or of ideas which are called nations, — a study far more profound perhaps than the other.

From the point where I was, I could see eleven lakes (those with keener eyes can see fourteen), and these eleven lakes sum up the whole history of Switzerland. There was Sarnen, which saw Landerberg fall; the Lake of Lucerne, which saw the fall of Gessler; Lungern, where Swiss beauty dwells among the populations of the Hasli; Sempach, where Winkelried gathered the spears to his heart, where the avoyer¹ of Gundoldingen allowed himself to be killed on the banner of his city; Heideck, which reflects a fragment of the castle of Waldeck, hurled from

¹ "Avoyer" is the title of the chief magistrate of a Swiss canton.

its crag in 1386 by the men of Lucerne ; Hallwyll, desolated by the civil wars of Berne and of the Catholic cantons and the two deplorable battles of Wilmorgen ; Egeri, radiant with the memory of Morgarten and dominated by the gigantic forms of its fifty peasants crushing a whole army with stones ; Constance, with its council, with the two thrones on which sat the Pope and the Emperor, with its cape still called "The Horn of the Romans," *Cornu Romanorum*, with its defile of Bregenz, blood-stained by the revenge taken by the Chevaliers of Suabia on the peasants of Appenzell ; Zurich, which saw Nicolas de Flac fighting at the battle of Winterthur, and Ulpian Zwingle at the battle of Cappel.

Under my feet, in the abyss, were Loweiz, where Goldau was swallowed up, and Zug, which has the shade of Pierre Colin and the memories of the battle of Bellinzone ; on its shores I saw as I passed by the evening before, suddenly standing out between two trees, a tomb-stone already covered by briars, but bearing this inscription :—

KARL-MARIA WEBER.

Then there was this wonderful lake, the shores of which are made by the four cantons that are, as it were, the very heart of Switzerland : by Schwytz, the patriarchal canton ; by Unterwald, the pastoral canton ; by Lucerne, the feudal canton ; by Uri, the heroic canton. To the north, as far as I could see, I had Suabia at my right and the Black Forest at my left ; toward the west, the Jura as far as Chasseral ; and with a spy-glass I might perhaps

have made out Bienne, the *Petenissa* of Antoninus, its forest of beeches and oaks, its lake, its deep spring which on the Lisbon earthquake day trembled and grew muddy, its charming island from which Jean Jacques was expelled by Berne in 1765.

Nearer I had a vast belt of cantons: Appenzell, where rise the calcareous Alps, and where the people are separated into two factions by two religions, — Catholicism makes shepherds, Calvinism makes merchants; Saint-Gall, which has put a landamman in the place of its abbot, and which served as the scene for the battle of Ragatz; Thurgovia, which beheld the battle of Diessenhofen: from here Conradin, the last of the Hohenstauffens departed to die at Naples, just as the Duc d'Enghien in our day died at Vincennes; les Grisons, the canton which was the ancient Rhetia, with its sixty valleys, one hundred and eighty castles, the three sources of the Rhine, Mont Julien with the Julian columns, and this beautiful valley of Enghiadina, where the earth trembles and the water stays solid, — the lakes were still frozen on the fourth of May, 1799, when they were crossed by the French artillery; Schaffhouse, which has the Falls of the Rhine, as Bellegarde has the Falls of the Rhône, with the sombre memories of Heinz, of Stern, and of the defeat of Paradies in 992; Argovie, which in 1415 saw the fall of the Austrian fortress of Aarburg, — here the peasants still vote, like the ancient Romans, in their *comitia* in the open air, with their arms raised and in separate bands; Soleure, called by the Italians Soletta, which has some paintings by Dominique Corvi, and which had a regiment worthy of that Spanish

infantry of the seventeenth century of which Bossuet spoke.

Mount Pilatus concealed Neuchâtel and the battle-fields of Granson and Morat; but the twin shades of Nicolas of Scharnachtal, and of Charles the Rash arose in my mind to a more commanding height than Mount Pilatus, and filled up this horizon of mighty mountains and mighty events.

I had still under my eyes Frutigen, from which the bailiff of Tellenburg was driven; Entlebuch, where the Alpine rhododendron is gathered, where the peasants have their Grecian games and sing every year their secret chronique scandaleuse of Hirs Montag; to the east, Berne, which saw the first battle of the oppressed Swiss, Donnerbües, in 1291; to the north, Bâle, which saw the last victory of the free Swiss, Dornach, in 1499.

From the east to the north I saw the whole procession of calcareous Alps, from the Sentis to the Jung-Frau; to the south rose in wild confusion, in terrible fashion, the mighty granitic Alps.

I was alone; I gave myself up to dreams — who would not have indulged in dreaming? — and the four giants of European history came of their own accord before the eye of my mind, and seemed to take their stand on the four cardinal points of this colossal landscape: Hannibal in the Allobrogian Alps, Charlemagne in the Lombard Alps, Cæsar in the Engadine, Napoleon in the Saint-Bernard.

Below me in the valley, at the foot of the precipice, I had Küssnacht and William Tell.

Methought I saw Rome, Carthage, Germany, and France,

incarnate in their loftiest figures, looking down on Switzerland personified in her great hero; they captains and despots, he a shepherd and liberator!

The hour is solemn and conducive to meditation when before your eyes lies Switzerland, that mighty conglomeration of powerful men and lofty mountains inextricably knotted together in the very centre of Europe, whereby the hatchet of Austria was dulled and the fear-inspiring sword of Charles the Rash was broken. Providence made the mountains, William Tell made the men.

How did I spend all that day on the top of the Rigi?

I do not know. I wandered round, I gazed, I mused; I lay down flat on my stomach on the very edge of the precipice and thrust my head over to explore the abyss with my eyes; I made a bird-flight visit to Goldau; I threw some stones down into the hole called *Kessisbodenloch*, but I must confess that I did not see them come out again at the foot of the mountain; I bought a carved wooden castle of a mountaineer; I climbed to the top of the observatory and from that vantage-ground could just make out Mythen, that prodigious granite cone, on the top of which there is a reddish stone which makes it seem as if the Mythen had been mended with Roman cement like the pyramidion of Luxor. From the Rigi, the Mythen has the exact form of an Egyptian pyramid; only, Cheops would disappear in its shadow, as the tent of the Bedowin disappears in the shadow of Cheops, as Rhamses disappears in the shadow of Jehovah.

While I was sketching, the Rigi-Kulm became populous. The first visitors climbed the mountain by the

road from Art, which is steeper but shadier than the road from Wiggis, where I had been obliged to struggle against the sun and the sirocco.

There were some young German students, knapsack on back, painted Delft pipes in their mouths, cane in hand, and they came and sat down beside me with their pensive and at the same time unsophisticated faces. Then a pretty English blonde came up on the observatory. She had come from Lombardy and had reached Lucerne by way of the Saint-Gothard. The students, who had come down on Switzerland by Zurich and Schwytz, were talking about Rapperschwyl, of Herrliberg, and of Affholtern; the English girl expressed her delight at Giamaglio, Bucioletto, Rima, and Rimella, and her voice was delicate and melodious.

All this is Switzerland. Vowels and consonants divide up Switzerland, just as the flowers and the crags do. To the north, where the shades collect, where the winter wind blows, where the ice is, the consonants are crystallised and bristle confusedly in all the names of the cities and mountains. The sun's rays cause the vowels to open out; wherever the sun strikes, they germinate and bloom in swarms; thus they cover all the southern slopes of the Alps. They are gayly scattered over all these beautiful golden hillsides. The same summit, the same crag, have consonants on their shady side, vowels on their sunny side. The formation of languages is exposed to full scrutiny in the Alps, owing to the central position of the chain. There is only one mountain, Saint-Gothard, between Teufelsbrücke and Airolo.

Toward half-past five, visitors came climbing up from almost all directions, — on foot, on horseback, with asses, with mules, in sedan chairs: Englishmen concealed under box coats, Parisian women in velvet shawls, invalids passing the summer at the establishment of the Cold Baths, a Zurich senator expelled by the little revolution that took place there a week ago, a French travelling agent who said that he had visited Chillon and the prison where *Bolivar* died. And others. At two o'clock I had arrived alone; at six o'clock there were sixty of us.

This big throng, so disproportionate to the wretched inn, was disquieting to one of the young Germans, who told me solemnly that we were all going to be starved to death.

At this moment the abyss was growing magnificent. The sun was going down behind the notched crest of Pilatus. Its rays rested only on the highest summits of all the mountains, and its level rays lay across these monstrous pyramids like golden architraves.

All the mighty valleys of the Alps were filling with mists: it was the hour when eagles and lammergeyers seek their eyries.

I had stepped forward to the edge of the precipice above which rises the cross and from which Goldau is visible. The crowd had remained on the observatory; I was alone, with my back turned toward the sunset. I know not what the others were looking at, but what I saw was sublime enough for me.

The immense cone of shadow projected by the Rigi, clearly outlined by its edges and because of the distance free from visible penumbra, gradually mounted up, rock

by rock, tree by tree, the steep side of the Rossberg. The shadow mountain was devouring the sunlight mountain. This vast dark triangle, the base of which was lost under the Rigi, and the apex of which was each instant coming nearer and nearer the summit of the Rossberg, had already embraced Art, Goldau, ten valleys, ten villages, half of the Lake of Zug, and the whole Lake of Lowerz. Clouds of reddish copper colour floated across it and changed into pewter. In the depths of the ravine, Art floated in a twilight glow starred here and there by lighted windows. Already poor women were sewing down there by their lighted lamps. Art lives in the night; the sun sets for them at two o'clock.

A moment later the sun had disappeared, the wind blew cold, the mountains were gray, the visitors had gone into the hotel. Not a cloud in the sky. The Rigi had become solitary once more, with a boundless blue sky arching above.

I wrote you, my dear wife, in one of my earlier letters, and spoke of "these granite waves called Alps." I had no idea I had hit it so accurately. The image which came into my mind appeared to me in all its vividness on the summit of the Rigi after the sun had gone down. These mountains are in reality billows, but giant billows. They have all the forms of the sea; there are green, dark swells, which are the crests covered with evergreens; blond and earthy seas, which are the granite slopes gilded with lichens, and on the loftiest undulations the snow is torn off and falls in masses into black ravines as the foam does. You would think you saw a mighty ocean

solidified in the midst of a tempest by the breath of Jehovah.

A frightful dream, the thought of what would become of the horizon and the mind of man in case these enormous billows should suddenly be set in motion again !

III.

THE JUGGLERS.

BERNE.

THE dining-room of the new hotel where I am lodging is on the ground-floor. According to my habit, I had my table placed near the window, and while doing the honours of an excellent appetite to an excellent breakfast, I kept my eyes on the square.

You know, I call this "reading-eating." Every spectacle has a significance for dreamers. The eyes see, the mind burrows, comments, and translates. A public square is a book. One spells out the edifices and finds history in them; one deciphers the passers-by and finds life in them.

After some moments my attention was attracted by a small group of singular appearance, bivouacked, so to speak, a few steps from the window wherefrom I was gazing.

This group, scattered over the ground in a quite picturesque fashion, under the shadow of a big banner very insecurely erected in the street, was composed of four personages: a man, two women, and an animal. One of the women was asleep, the man was asleep, the animal was asleep.

I could not see the features of the sleeping woman, as her face was concealed by a full black head-dress pulled down over her face. The man's face, turned toward the street, was equally hidden from me ; I could see only his black hands, his devastated finger-nails, his thick head of filthy and dishevelled hair, the holey soles of his gray and dusty boots, and one of the toes of his left foot through one of the holes in the same.

He was oddly accoutred in a pair of heavy cavalry pantaloons and a suit of French cut. The trousers, composed of more leather than cloth, seemed quite new, but they were stained with coal and mud ; his coat was ragged. It was a kind of frock, which had once been very jaunty and stylish, of black velvet dotted with gold spangles. The velvet, in growing old, had taken on a reddish smoke-tint ; the spangles had almost entirely lost their glitter ; and this all gave the coat, as Trivelin says, a sort of three-o'clock-in-the-morning illumination.

While sleeping, the man clutched in his right hand an enormously large silver-headed cane, which with all its chasing had probably once been displayed on the Boulevard de Gand, as the coat had at the *Ceil-de-Bœuf*. Two epochs of French elegance were mingled in this wretch's rags. The cane, still rich and shiny in his hand, was burnt and blackened at the point. You couldn't help feeling that more than once it had been used to stir up and poke nocturnal fires. About the middle it was worn and crushed ; you would have said that it had been used for weighing things, and that it had found employment in prying up doors.

An old round hat, which had passed into the state of a polyhedron was lying partly on the ground and partly on the sleeper's head. A pewter plate, flung down at his feet, seemed to be begging for the small contributions of the passers-by.

The animal, which doubtless was the actual bread-winner for these people, was almost out of sight, half-buried in the sand, under the bars of a sort of cage where I could just make him out. Nevertheless, although he was asleep he moved occasionally, and I could see enough of him to discover that he was something horrible,—one of those animals not made to be seen by man, but merely to testify to the imagination of Nature; one of those creatures we call nightmares, a living thistle, a prickly lizard, something frightful, like the *Moloch horridus* of New Holland.

Five or six pretty children were examining this monster and gazing at him enthusiastically. Among them I admired two charming French boys, who doubtless belonged to some family from Paris staying at the hotel.

The cage was placed on a square box, in the outer panel of which some strange chance had inlaid a quite handsome *bas-relief* in oak of Saint François de Sales, with his hand laid on a skull. The little French children were staring at this panel. At the end of a few seconds' study the elder said to the younger:—

“Oh! it is the good God with his apple.”

The woman who was not asleep was sitting on an old piece of carpeting by the man's side. I wish I could tell you that she was repulsively ugly, for nothing is more

vulgar and more literally "played out" than the beauty of beggars and actresses who have been exposed to the open air; but I am regretfully obliged to confess that this woman, though tanned by the sun and freckled,—tan-spotted, *tachée de son*, as the excellent popular metaphors call it,—was truly a charming and dainty creature.

Her brow was intelligent; her mouth, adorned with fine teeth, was beautifully shaped and kind; her eyes were not very large, but were deep and pure; rich golden streaks sparkled in her thick chestnut tresses, which were very coquettishly and certainly very neatly arranged. There was high blood manifested in her graceful shape, in the curve of her hips, in the perfect symmetry of her brow, her nose, and her chin, in the delicacy of her feet and hands, in the transparency of her finger-nails, in the slenderness of her ankles, in the arch of her instep. Her whole person, her whole toilet was neat and jaunty, like the arrangement of her hair. You felt that she took advantage probably of every brook to which she came, first to bathe her face, and then to look at herself in it.

Her belt, set off with jewels of every kind, indicated her travels. She wore blue stockings with clocks like white arabesques such as the Suabian girls wear, a full petticoat of brown cloth which fell in a thousand folds like those worn by mountaineers' wives in the Black Forest, and a close-fitting silk vest like those of the peasant women of La Bresse. This vest, cut in a rather homely and awkward style, was almost hidden and, so to speak, corrected by a wide Flanders collarette, on which were embroidered many cathedral rose-windows enamelled and woven into one

another. Her jewels, all Italian and probably all bought each in the very place where they were made, finished and completed the history of her pilgrimages. By her filigree ear-rings, it was easy to judge that she had been at Genoa ; by her enamelled gold bracelet ornamented with miniatures, that she had wandered to Venice ; by her mosaic bracelet, that she had been to Florence ; by her cameo bracelet, that she had passed through Rome ; by her collar of corals and sea-shells, that she had seen Naples.

On the whole she was a fascinating and superb young girl. She had the jewels of an idol and the manner of a goddess.

It was evident that the adornment of this bejewelled woman was this ragged man's one occupation.

However, she was not ungrateful. She seemed to adore him ; yes, madam, to adore him, and that greatly surprised me. I was well aware that women often take pleasure in feeling that they make part of an antithesis ; I was not ignorant that the most beautiful, the youngest, and the most charming willingly lend themselves, by some strange and inexplicable sentiment, to playing their part in this figure of living rhetoric, idolizing their old husband because of his old age, and their hump-backed lover because of his hump ; but that neatness, in the form of a woman, should show a taste for filth in the form of a husband, is something which I should never have believed. There is a chasm between the human being who bathes and the human being who does not bathe, and I did not think that a bridge could be flung across this chasm.

Henceforth nothing of this sort could surprise me. I

have seen this day on this public square, a girl of sixteen, as clean and pretty as a pebble in a brook, kissing again and again, with a sort of passionate adoration, the unkempt hair and the dirty hands of a frightful man, who was so sound asleep that he was not even conscious of those sweet caresses; I have seen her dusting with her rosy fingers the mountebank's suit, her graceful touches causing little clouds of dust to rise from it; I have seen her drive away the flies that annoyed this unclean sluggard, leaning over him, listening to the sound of his breathing and tenderly contemplating his boots so sadly dilapidated, and now I am quite ready to applaud any writer whatever who shall write a romance entitled:—

THE MELANCHOLY HISTORY OF THE LOVES
OF A DOVE AND A HOG.

Decidedly, Nature embraces all combinations, and woman embraces all caprices. Everything is possible to woman as it is to God. While still brooding over her companion as he lay asleep by her side, she set to work once more and began with a piece of serge rag to polish a kind of old-fashioned spinet inlaid with little ivory keys, like the great Girgiganto's viol d'amore.

The banner which shaded the couple was indeed the most unintelligible piece of charlatanry that I have ever seen used as a placard; but that does not always unfavourably affect success.

Imagine a large piece of canvas painted blue, and in the

midst of this canvas peeled by the sun and streaked by the rain, nothing but this hieroglyphic painted black, —



If the little that I know of the recent interpretations of the late Mr. Champollion does not deceive me, this phrase, so perfectly Egyptian, means : TO-DAY AS ALWAYS AND FOREVER AND EVER.

But what was the signification that this clown attached to it? That is something that I cannot so easily explain, unless indeed it be a passionate declaration made by the hog to the dove and couched in the mysterious language of Horus, Epiphanes, and Amon-Ra.

To watch a woman who is watching a man, even when the woman is very pretty and when the man is very ugly, is after all a rather unsatisfactory pleasure; and when I had once completed all these various observations, I had taken up my knife and fork again, when suddenly a French word spoken in the clearest, sharpest voice under my very window recalled my attention to the square. You will excuse me from repeating the word. It is one of those words that are an insult, one of those words not pleasant to pronounce because of the indecency of the syllables, and in the interior of which there is very bad company.

I raised my eyes.

The sleeping woman had awakened. She was sitting up; her head-dress was thrown back and displayed an old woman's face as ugly as an ogre's.

She had just hissed out at the young girl the word which I had overheard and her eyes, full of rage, seemed still to be launching it at her.

The girl made no reply ; her pretty mouth assumed an ineffable expression of scorn, and she bent over the man and kissed him. The old hag, exasperated at this caress, repeated the insulting epithet.

I shall never forget what a brilliant and superb flash of her eyes the handsome girl replied to it, but she said not a word.

I drew two conclusions from this little comedy: the first was that the old hag had probably waked up while the younger girl was giving the sleeping juggler a caress ; the second, that these two women both were in love with this man, this hog !

A story, however, which is to a greater or less extent that of every one. Alas ! who of us is not in this life in a quandary between the young and the old, between the present and the past, between to-day and yesterday, between this dove and this fish-hawk ?

The haughty calmness of the Beauty exasperated the other. And then, without making a gesture, without raising her voice, for fear of gathering a mob around them, speaking in a half-whisper, but in a settled and terrible fashion, she for more than a quarter of an hour poured out in French all that the superseded mistress, wretched slave that she is, can say to the favourite sultana, that joyous queen. She told her, with that superfluity of fury which repeats a score of times the same things but with a different accent, the story of both of them and the story of the

man, and the story of all men, spicing the whole, I must confess, with the most degrading, the most hideous and obscene insults.

This occurs, however, to others beside those women who dance in public squares. Even among the classes who regard themselves as high-toned and polite, there are people who dip their wrath in billingsgate, like the carter who moistens his whip in the brook to render its blow more cutting.

Under this outburst of hatred the young girl evidently suffered keenly. She grew pale, her lips trembled, but she made no reply.

But she had placed her hand on the shoulder of the heavily sleeping man and shook him with a regular, slow, careful, and gentle motion while the old hag was talking. Nothing could have been more strange than this kind of silent tocsin, which was at once full of respect, alarm, anguish, and love.

At last the Beauty gained her point; the man awoke. He turned round with a yawn and said in Spanish:—
 “*Que demonio de ruido haceis, mugeres?*—What the devil are you making such a noise for, you women?” Then sitting up and looking at the old hag:—

“Hush up your old mouth!—*Calla te, vieja!*”

The hag relapsed into silence.

The mountebank then stood up, leaning on his cane and listening with an air of bored superiority to the young girl, who, without answering his question, spoke to him strange, affectionate, incoherent words.

During all this time I was studying him at my ease.

He might have been forty-five years old. His face was as brown as a sailor's. By his almost painfully contracted eyebrows, it was evident that he had often journeyed in the heat of the day, under the broiling sun. He had a coarse, energetic face, like one of those beggars whose strong, deep features compelled Callot to use for his etchings the hard varnish of musical-instrument makers.

When I had completed my examination, however, I found there was not so much degradation in the man's face as in his costume. Some remnants of power and generosity still radiated from it. He as well as the two women evidently belonged to that subterranean society which undermines visible and legal society and lives in its underground trenches.

Still, on the whole I should rather choose the wild physiognomy of this unconventional Titan, of this escaped gladiator, this thief with his lion's profile, clad in a marquis's coat and a soldier's trousers, than the polite and treacherous mien of the pamphleteer, the popular ranter, the public calumniator, the scribbling spy who warms himself in the shade under the gentle fire of a secret pension.

Nothing could do justice to the accent of tenderness with which the girl spoke to the juggler. She spoke in French, he replied in Spanish. This bilingual dialogue, whereof the Bernese passers-by understood not a word, seemed in no respect to incommode either of them.

Moreover, there was in the pretty dancer's speech something so oddly mixed that it rendered it impossible for me

to make out her origin. Her voice, gently modulated and caressing, was occasionally dull and hoarse. You can't imagine how painful it is for me to write this detail, which, I fear, points to the use of rum and brandy; but what can I do? Truth is inexorable, and my only desire is to be strictly truthful.

Her language, sometimes coarse, sometimes affectedly elegant, was composed of words picked up in the streets and of words gathered in the salons. Imagine a *précieuse* becoming for the time being a fish-wife, the Hôtel de Rambouillet modified by the shop, the guard-house, and the tavern.

This made the strangest style in the world; it was at once slang and jargon. She would perpetrate *un esbrouf* like the Gipsy women of the Saint-Germain fair, and a *farimara* like the duchesses of the little Marly.

Toward her rival she acted absolutely in the manner of a society woman. She did not honour her with the slightest notice, and in what she said to the man there was nothing that had the slightest reference to the old hag, — not a complaint, not a reproach.

Nevertheless, the personage who is always on the watch for his advantage, the devil, got in his work as usual. It was evident that the serene favourite had rage in her soul. From time to time she cast on the other side a side-glance, and this glance, though it proceeded from such fascinating eyes, was almost ferocious.

Now, my dear, here is an observation which I have made, and which I allow you to apply to all the lions and all the turtle-doves of the human race: nothing looks kinder than

a lion in repose, and nothing looks uglier than a turtle-dove in a rage.

I beg that you will not attribute here to the word *lion* the ridiculous signification which it has been made to bear in Paris for some years past, — a foolish, deplorable fashion, like most of the English fashions, a sense which deforms one of the finest words in the language and degrades one of the noblest animals in creation.

Meanwhile, under the man's peremptory command, the other woman had remained crushed and stupefied and motionless, her steady eye fixed steadily on the paving-stones, seeming not to listen, seeming not even to hear.

However, at last, when the hotel porter passed in front of the door a few steps from her, she beckoned to him to approach. The happy loving couple paid not the slightest heed to this action.

The porter came and bent down close to the Gipsy and she whispered a few words in his ear.

The waiter replied with a gesture signifying that he understood, and returned to the hotel.

The old woman, with an appearance of the profoundest indifference, began twisting and untwisting on her finger the folds of her petticoat, which, let me remark in passing, was like the favourite's; only, the young girl had a new petticoat, and the old woman had an old petticoat.

A clattering of dishes and silver was heard in the hotel.

The man beckoned to the young girl to stand up. He spoke in Spanish: "*Vamos. Ahora es menester entrar en la posada.*" — Come now, we must go into the tavern."

"Yes," she replied, "it's time. It's the hour for the *table d'hôte*." And she sprang to her feet as light as a bird.

"*Que cantaras?* — What will you sing?"

"That song of the valley of Luis; you know it?"

"*Muy bien*. — Very well."

She picked up the pewter plate. He took the spinet, the shoulder-belt of which he threw over his neck; then he said, half turning to the other:—

"You stay here, old woman."

And the two entered the hotel.

The old hag's eyes were fixed once more on the pavement, and mine on my plate; I was peaceably finishing my breakfast when a song rang out from the neighbouring room, — a long hall where the *table d'hôte* guests were noisily dining.

That sweet, melancholy song, rather hoarsely sung, and accompanied by the still hoarser spinet, was probably the young girl's.

Though the door was partially open, I could not understand the words, owing to the Pantagruelike accompaniment of spoons and forks that drowned it.

I will remark by the way that I have never seen without a sort of anguish these poor perambulating singers, these pariahs of the taverns and ale-houses, sneak trembling and humiliated into such a pandemonium of voracious and fear-inspiring beings busily engaged in gormandizing. Poor things! they have to submit their wretched baritone or their thin contralto to the mercy of a frightful orchestra of glasses, knives, plates, and bottles, its maestro that

huge pot-bellied devil, with his goggle eyes, his stuffed ears, and his terrific teeth, whom we call Appetite.

I was therefore under the spell of these rather melancholy reflections, when suddenly the merry noise of the *table d'hôte* was changed into an extraordinary tumult.

The song stopped, the clatter of glasses and plates abruptly ceased, and an indescribable noise succeeded.

Imagine a thousand cries, a roar of voices, steps, blows given and received, chairs overturned, tables joggled, dishes broken, a rushing throng, angry servants, the house turned topsy-turvy, a tempest, and finally that which the people of Milan call so cleverly in their picturesque dialect *barataclar per ca.* The cry in German, "A thief! a thief!" arose above the tumult.

In surprise I sprang to my feet and hastened toward the hall where the tumult was.

At that moment my eyes, wandering at random over the square, rested on the old hag.

I confess I did not go a step farther.

That woman was transformed. She had got up, she was standing, she was eagerly listening to the uproar, and she was gazing at the hotel with brilliant, terrible, almost beautiful eyes, full of anger, full of hatred, and full of joy.

Then suddenly the fire of passion that was glaring in her eyes became extinct. The expression of her face, which like those of all old people had little transparency, grew wan and icy.

A throng issuing from the house was just appearing at the front door.

I leaned out to watch.

It was a mob of all sorts of people : waiters, maid-servants, travellers napkin in hand, young lads, old women, who, with a whirlwind of gestures and screams, were closing in round a struggling man and woman.

The man was the mountebank ; the woman was the pretty girl.

The man, whose collar was in the clutch of seven or eight powerful hands, was keeping the crowd as far from him as possible, but with the calmest, boldest, most indifferent expression of face. He proceeded, but under protest.

The poor girl, pale, dishevelled, brutally handled and touselled by five or six hostlers, her jewels torn off, her laces rent, was weeping, was piteously entreating, and I dare say was defending herself with all the anguish of one unjustly charged.

In this hullabaloo a number of people who seemed to be policemen were already taking an active part. I don't know where they came from ; it is the characteristic of the police to rise abruptly out of the very street. A bungling thief strikes his heel on the ground ; out comes a gendarme.

I noticed that the waiter who had hold of the young girl's arm was the very one to whom the old hag had whispered.

The old woman herself did not stir. She silently watched them lead away her two companions. She had become a statue. The man as he passed by her spoke in Spanish : "*Vete mujer ! — Away with you, woman !*"

A moment later the whole tumultuous group, the two

prisoners, the hotel servants, the policemen, and the on-lookers had vanished behind the corner of the house.

"Where are they going?" I inquired of a waiter who had come near where I was.

He replied, "To jail."

And here is the explanation which the same waiter gave me: While the pretty girl was singing at the end of the dining-room, standing with her eyes lifted, one of the hotel servants — the same, said the waiter, who held her by the arm as she went out — had noticed behind her, in the shadow of a sideboard where the butlers placed the dessert, a quantity of pepper and salt spilt on the floor. From time to time the man who played her accompaniment on the spinet leaned against this sideboard as if he were tired. The servant spoke to the landlord about this pepper and salt. They took stock of the plate.

A large silver caster was missing. Instantly the servant had sprung at the pretty singer, crying, "Search this woman!"

In spite of her resistance and the man's, they had searched her, and in a pocket concealed under the broad folds of her petticoat they had found the caster.

Hence the tumult, the cries of "Thief! thief!" the sudden appearance of the police, and the jail for climax.

Will you laugh at me, dear? This scene touched me to the heart. I alone knew the secret.

For all the rest, for the two prisoners themselves, it was only a theft punished; for me it was a drama. This girl had stolen for love; it was jealousy that brought about

her punishment. It was clear to me that the old hag had denounced her rival beforehand to this same hotel servant, who a few moments later had noticed the salt spilt, had searched the singer, and had led her off to jail.

A sombre little story, trivial enough in its details, poetic in substance ; burlesque, if you please, in the vulgar condition of the actors ; tragic to my thinking, in the grandness of the passions. For some reason, in spite of the charitable advice of the man, her unwitting victim, to decamp, the old hag had stayed on the spot.

The intoxication of triumph had passed ; her glassy eye had become horror-stricken and deathly sad ; the dregs of vengeance leave an evil taste.

She was still in the same place when a little squad of soldiers under the command of a policeman and with an encompassing nebula of street urchins appeared and suddenly surrounded her. The soldiers seized the cage, uprooted the banner, and bade the old woman take up the line of march with them.

Her head fell on her breast, and she obeyed without uttering a word. Meantime the street urchins, full of life and mischief, pressed round her, deafening her with yells and jeers, and one of them, the biggest, knowing a few insulting French words, followed her up with the inexplicable zeal of the boyish nature, which is so sweet when it is sweet and so cruel when it is cruel.

The Gipsy at first endured this outrage with a scornful air ; but suddenly breaking away from the ranks of the astonished soldiers and taking three steps into the midst of the children, she screamed out in the shrillest tones of

her hawklike voice, stretching out her arms, "*Voilà ta potence !*— Here 's your gallows!"

She remained in this attitude for several moments. I had not till then noticed what a lofty stature this woman had. Thus, clothed in black, lean, pale, straight, and tall, among these children with her arms extended, she was indeed the image of a living gibbet.

The soldiers seized her again, the children redoubled their laughter and cries, and a moment later she, like the two others, had disappeared around the corner of the house.

IV.

ON THE ROAD TO AIX-LES-BAINS.

September 24, 7 A. M.

IN the distance, along the green and rugged crests of the Jura, the yellow beds of dried torrents in all directions made Y's.

Have you ever noticed what a picturesque letter Y is with its numberless significations ?

A tree is a Y ; the parting of two roads is a Y ; the confluence of two rivers is a Y ; an ass's or ox's head is a Y ; a glass as it stands on its foot is a Y ; a lily on its stem is a Y ; a suppliant raising his hands to heaven is a Y.

Moreover, this observation may be more broadly applied to whatever constitutes human writing in last analysis.

Whatever is found in the demotic language has been infused into it by the hieratic language. The hieroglyph is the compelling cause of the letter. All letters were signs at first, and all signs were images at first.

Human society, the world, man as a whole, is in the alphabet. Masonry, astronomy, philosophy, all the sciences have here their point of departure. It is imperceptible, but real ; and this is as it should be. The alphabet is a fountain.

A is the roof, the gable with its cross-beam, the arch, *arc*; or it is the embrace of two friends who kiss each other with hands clasped; D is the back; B is the D over the D, the back over the back, the relief, the boss; C is the crescent, it is the moon; E is the basement, the right foot, the console and the stem, the architrave; all ceiling architecture is here expressed in a single letter; F is the gibbet, the fork, *furca*; G is the horn; H is the façade of the edifice with its two towers; I is the engine of war shooting forth its projectile; J is the plough-share; it is also the horn of plenty; K is the angle of reflection, equal to the angle of incidence, — one of the keys of geometry; L is the leg and the foot; M is the mountain, or it is the camp, the tents standing in pairs; N is the door closed with its diagonal bar; O is the sun; P is the porter standing with his load on his back; Q is the hind-quarters with the tail; R is repose, — the porter resting on his staff; S is the serpent; T is the hammer; U is the urn; V is the vase (hence it comes that the two are frequently confounded); Y is what I have just told you; X is the crossed swords, it is combat; who will be the victor? no one knows; hence the hermetic philosophers took X for the sign of destiny, the algebraists for the sign of the unknown; Z is the lightning, it is God.

Thus we have, first, the house of man and its architecture; then the body of man, its structure and its deformities; then justice, music, the church; war, harvest, geometry; the mountain; the nomadic life, the cloistered life; astronomy; labor and repose; the horse and the serpent; the hammer and the urn; which when turned top-

side down and joined together make the bell ; trees, rivers, roads ; finally, destiny and God, — that is what the alphabet contains.

It may also be that for some of these mysterious contrivers of the languages that lie at the very base of the human memory and which the human memory forgets, the A, the E, the F, the H, the I, the K, the L, the M, the N, the T, the V, the Y, the X, and the Z, were nothing else than the various members of the framework of the temple.

V.

GENEVA.

AIX-LES-BAINS, September 24.

I AM at Aix-les-Bains. I am hastening on my way southward. It has been frightful weather in Switzerland. Many of the roads toward the north are interrupted.

I went to Lausanne day before yesterday, my dear Adèle, and I thought of you, I assure you. You and I just caught a glimpse of Lausanne, as you may remember, one beautiful moonlight night in 1825.

The church, though handsome, does not come up to the idea of it which my memory had retained. By an odd coincidence the evening happened to be exactly like that, and in the bright moonlight the church looked quite as beautiful as it did in 1825. The moon is the fault-concealer for architects. The cathedral at Lausanne has some little need of its moon.

Geneva has lost much, and thinks, alas! that it has gained much. The Rue des Dômes has been demolished. The old row of worm-eaten, dilapidated houses which gave the city such a picturesque lake front has disappeared.

It has been replaced by a white quay adorned by a quantity of great white barracks which these worthy Genevese take for palaces. Geneva for fifteen years has been undergoing a process of raking, scraping, levelling, twisting, and weeding out, so that, with the exception of the Butte Saint-Pierre and the bridges across the Rhône, there is not an ancient structure left.

Geneva is now a platitude surrounded by humps. But let them do what they will, let them make their vain efforts to beautify their city, so long as they can never scratch up the Salève, patch up Mont-Blanc, and white-wash Lake Leman, I don't care.

Nothing is more unattractive than these little imitation Parises which one finds now in the provinces, in France and out of France. In an ancient city, with its towers and its carved house-fronts, one expects to find historic streets, Gothic or Roman bell-towers, and one finds an imitation Rue de Rivoli, an imitation Madeleine resembling the façade of the Bobino theatre, an imitation Column Vendôme looking like an advertising-tower.

The provincial is anxious for the Parisian to admire this; the Parisian shrugs his shoulders; the provincial is vexed. That is the way I have already got myself into ill odour with all Brittany; that is the way I shall get myself disliked in Geneva.

Geneva, nevertheless, is admirably situated, and there are a multitude of pretty women here, a few minds of a high order, and a quantity of fascinating little children playing under the trees on the shore of the lake. With this in its favour one can forgive its little inefficient government, so

ridiculous and pettifogging, its mean, grotesque inquisition of passports, its shops filled with counterfeits, its brand-new quays, its Island of Jean-Jacques shod with a stone sabot, its Rue de Rivoli, and its yellow and its white and its plaster and its chalk.

Still, it would take only a little to make Geneva a tiresome city.

Yesterday was a fête-day, an *ensuissement* as they say. Cannon were discharged. Every one spoke Genevese. I had lost my watch-key; it was impossible to find a jeweller at work. All Geneva was beside itself. People went out on the lake in spite of the low water. Street urchins overran the banks, and the pedestrians trampled down the turfy slopes.

I laughed, and yet I was not in a laughing mood. I wandered lonely through this city where I had walked with you fourteen years ago. I was sad and full of sweet and tender thoughts, which perhaps would have made you happy, my dear Adèle.

From Bâle beyond Lausanne I travelled with an excellent and charming Swiss family. Six individuals. The father is an old man of some distinction, well-educated, likeable, overflowing with useful information, reminding me of your father. The oldest daughter is an agreeable young widow (somewhat like Madame François). She wanted to see Chillon; I offered her my arm; she took it. The oldest brother, a worthy young student full of enthusiasm, joined us, and we three made the expedition to the Château. At Coppet this Swiss family left me. I miss them very much.

But what I really miss is you yourself, is all of you, my dearly loved ones. Before a month is over I shall see you again. My journey is a labour; else would I cut it short.

My soul hungers to kiss you all. I love you all.

And of course I make no exception of my dear Vacquerie.

VI.

MARSEILLES.

MARSEILLES, September 30, 5 P. M.

I AM at Marseilles. I leaped ashore; I have already hastened to the Post-office on the Rue Saint-Anacharsis. How many days it is, my dear Adèle, since I have had a letter from you! I have two hours still to wait. What can I do? I was counting on spending them in reading your words; I am going to spend them in writing to you. I had consecrated them to you in my thoughts; I will not take them back.

After the mountains, I needed to see the sea, any sea, — the Mediterranean in default of the ocean. However, I make no complaint; the Mediterranean is beautiful in a different way from the ocean, but it is as beautiful. The ocean has its clouds, its fogs, its glaucous, glassy billows, its sand-dunes in Flanders, its cliffs in Normandy, its boulders in Brittany, its immense vaults, its magnificent tides. The Mediterranean lies wholly under the sun; you feel it by the inexpressible unity that lies at the foundation of its beauty. It has a tawny, stern coast, the hills and rocks of which seem rounded or sculptured by Phidias, so harmoniously is the austerity of the shore wedded to gracefulness.

The trees, where there are trees, dip their feet into the waves. The sky is of a light blue, the sea is purplish blue; sky and sea are deep blue.

I went from Lake Lucerne to Lake Lemman, from Lake Lemman to the Mediterranean. It is a crescendo. Now I need the ocean or Paris.

I reached the Mediterranean by the Rhône. I have seen the Rhône enter the Mediterranean two leagues wide, yellow, roily, muddy, magnificent, and filthy. Six days before, I had seen it rush out of Lake Lemman, under the old mill-bridge of Geneva, clear, transparent, limpid, blue as sapphire.

At Lake Lemman, the Rhône is like a young man; at the Mediterranean it is like an old man. Above, it has seen as yet only its mountains; here it has passed through cities. God gives it snow; men give it sewage.

This is what it means to have lived and run. After living, roaring, swallowing up torrents and rivers, shattering rocks, washing bridges, bearing burdens, nourishing cities, reflecting skies and clouds, the river which departed from the lake narrow and tumultuous, arrives, immense and calm, at the sea and buries itself. There it once more finds under the dazzling sun the deep, calm, splendid azure of the Lake of Geneva, with a boundless horizon. The tomb resembles the cradle, only it is larger.

I came down the river this morning at ten o'clock from Arles on the steam packet. After leaving Arles marine craft begin to appear on the stream; the shores draw apart and flatten down; then the enormous desert plain of La Camargue takes possession of the left bank; then the

horizon grows immense. Toward the south the sky seems to lift as if its vault were enlarging. All at once a blue line appears: it is the Mediterranean.

A land-breeze blew, the sailors had spread the sails of the packet, and we bore away swiftly. The low banks of the mouths of the Rhône whirled round behind the ship and widened out to right and left like the edges of the mouth of a shell. On land nothing else was to be seen but the high hills where the Phœcean colony came to find shelter, and Mount Cerdon, which makes a magnificent swell against the horizon of Marseilles; such is Mount Ventoux on the horizon of Avignon. The atmosphere was so clear that in spite of being twelve or fifteen miles away, I could distinctly make out all the ribs of the mountain, the green slopes of the pasture lands, and the capricious gashes of the torrents.

There was something of a sea on and the water was still muddy, but we could see before us, growing wider and darker and nearer, the blue line, which as we rapidly approached was flecked with dazzling flakes of foam. From time to time we passed what looked like crosses leaning over in the midst of the waves; they are the masts of wrecked vessels, and the spars lie across them at the top like the bar of a cross.

We were still in the outflowing current of the Rhône. It is a marvellous moment when you sweep out into the open sea. The sea-water is so distinctly and sharply divided from the river water that there is an appreciable instant when the bow of the ship is in the blue wave while the stern is still in the yellow. I do not under-

stand how the Rhône succeeds in mingling with this chaste sea.

As soon as you are fairly out on the blue deep, the Rhône in its turn becomes a pale line, which soon sinks out of sight behind the billows, and you have before your eyes a fascinating spectacle. The sea is a sapphire, as I was just saying; the sky is a turquoise.

This morning the wind blew a gale; the Mediterranean was gayly tossing; there was a "sea on," as the sailors say.

It was not the long billows of the ocean, rolling onward steadily and royally into immensity; there were abrupt, furious swells. The ocean has plenty of elbow room, it curves around the world; the Mediterranean is in a teapot and the wind shakes it, and that is what gives it that short, choppy, panting wave. The sea collects itself and struggles. There is just as much ire as in the ocean wave, but less room. Hence the frightful tempests of the Mediterranean.

We had no tempest, but there was some show of temper. A few low-lying clouds were crawling along the very edge of the horizon. It was an equinoctial gale with a summer sun. The sea in places was of a deep violet; in other directions it was of an emerald green. A fine spray blown from the waves kept flying in clouds across the packet.

I was standing at the very prow. Toward two o'clock the sun and the wind were at our backs, the one pouring out his rays toward the right, the other blowing to the left. This delicate net-work of rain, violently whirled

by the wind and passing under the bowsprit, came in contact with the sunlight, so that there was before my eyes, rushing ahead as though it were attached to the vessel itself, a lovely rainbow against the dark blue of the water.

A handsome felucca followed us at some distance, but she tossed about more than we did. The wind and the sun made also of her two lateen sails two exquisite objects, bellying them and gilding them. Now her hull vanished from sight as though it had gone down into a valley, then it rose gracefully on the crest of the waves. Around her spread an enormous, dazzling splurge of foam. When seen bow on, it gave it the appearance of a helmet reversed and dragging its white plume behind it and below it.

This felucca, better served by its sails than we by our paddle-wheels, which at times did not even revolve in the water, soon caught up with us and outstripped us. It came so near to us that I could read on the stem this inscription: *CONFIANCE EN DIEU*.

Then it flew on its way, leaping over the swells with a fascinating grace of movement.

At half-past four, after a trip of ten leagues by sea, we were landed at Marseilles.

I break off here abruptly, for word is brought that the mail is open, and I rush to the office.

7. P. M.

I am quite broken-hearted, my dearest Adèle. Not a letter, either from you or from Didine!

My dearest Didine, write me! Write me, all of you, my dear little ones — Charles, Toto, Dédé.

To-morrow I am going to Toulon; then I shall return to Marseilles post-haste, and I hope I shall find letters from you, my dear wife. I am really starving for them. Write me now and immediately to Châlons-sur-Saône, always *poste restante*, and always without my Christian name.

I have sent word to Cologne to get your letters; I am waiting for them. I have made inquiries for Méry; he is not at Marseilles just at present. Now, my dear Adèle, write me. Tell our excellent Vaquerie to write me. Good-bye; I kiss you all a thousand times.

TON VICTOR.

VII.

THE DEFILES OF OLLIOULES — TOULON.

EXCEPT for the beautiful *bas-reliefs* by David on the Aix gate, and two other *bas-reliefs*, the one Roman the other Byzantine, in la Majore, Marseilles has no monument worthy of mention. Marseilles is a collection of houses under a beautiful sky — that is all.

The ancient gate-fortress on which was this proud inscription, deleted by Louis XIV., SUB QUOCUMQUE IMPERIO SUMMA LIBERTAS,¹ the Boulevard des Dames which bore witness to the bravery of the women of Marseilles, the Sainte-Paule tower the culverine of which, twenty-four feet in length, once threw that famous cannon-ball which killed the priest at his altar as he was saying mass before the Connétable de Bourbon, and set the Marquis de Pescaire into a fit of laughter, — all this has disappeared.

Of the Greek city no vestige remains, of the Roman city no vestige remains, of the Gothic city no vestige remains.

Behold the way municipal councils of France treat famous cities: some merchant needs stone to build a

¹ The most absolute liberty under whatever government.

soap-factory, and they give him the tower Sainte-Paule. Thus at this moment, while I am writing this, a dozen ironmongers or stupid toymakers, duly authorized by law, are working their will in almost all the cities of France and wiping out history.

The road from Marseilles to Toulon leaves the city by the Roman gate, passes close by an insignificant obelisk, and stretches out into the distance, somewhat after the fashion of the roads that lead out of Paris — lined with more walls than trees. As far as Cuges, the country-houses scattered over the plain with their wells and their inevitable mulberry-orchard, the gardens planted with olive-trees and sheltered from the north wind by a screen of cypress-trees, tall reeds which give a false impression of being bamboos, a few Italian pines here and there, frousy-headed hills covered with little prickly oaks as low as heather and spiny as holly, the Aubagne, a mean, muddy river shaded by nettles, vines without trellises, bushes of a kind of *atriplix* which they call "white wood," — line the road.

I went down into a charming meadow, dotted with a thousand stars, as yellow and white in September as ours are in April. I expected to find only buttercups and daisies ; there were in reality upwards of twenty different varieties of flowers. In Provence the sunlight causes a dazzlingly brilliant vegetation to sparkle in the grass.

The horizon, which is very beautiful, is made up of the last articulations of the Cottian Alps.

Cuges is an exceedingly pretty borough lying in a sort of huge green basin formed by high hills, and without the slightest break in them. The only way to reach Cuges is by going down-hill; the only way to leave it is by going up-hill. The water, which runs down but does not run away, collects in winter in the bottom of the basin and makes a kind of lake.

They give you an excellent breakfast at Cuges; they furnish a shell-fish called "clovisse" instead of oysters, sheep-milk cheese instead of butter, and jujubes instead of prunes; but the table is laden with fig-eaters and red-breasts, with slices of broiled tunny, sword-fish, and mullet, with purple figs and red grapes,—the whole properly seasoned with garlic and oil.

While I was breakfasting they were holding market under the inn window, in a small square around a great tree, the trunk of which serves as the back for a circular stone bench. Men and women were noisily talking to one another, with all those Provence gestures which make the least important conversation emphatic. Figs and water-melons were in profusion. Magnificent fish piled up in pyramids filled the reed-baskets with all the colours of the rainbow. Several children near by me were gaily teasing a poor *pince-pigne* hanging in a cage on the wall. In one corner of the square murmured an old fountain, the basin of which was filled to the brim with *conferva rivularis*, the green shoots of it dripping drop by drop pearls of sparkling water. The whole scene was agreeable and sweet.

After leaving Cuges the road climbed up over heights that were quite steep. We have here a genuine Apennine

road, abrupt, wild, and with high banks. Forty years ago diligences used to stop here. From time to time you meet a peasant-woman with her huge black-felt hat, or a gendarme mounted, or a saddle mule loaded with merchandise, with bells on its head and decorated with tufts of red wool and muzzled up to its eyes in a large mat-weed muzzle. Above the hills of Cuges you can see the naked summits of La Sainte-Baume.

A few moments after leaving, on your right, a bare eminence which lavishes all its moisture on a magnificent pine-tree standing on its very top, you reach the culminating of the natural wall which surrounds Cuges on every side. The horizon opens out a splendid valley, hollowing out the landscape; the Mediterranean shines far away in the openings between the mountains.

Two or three miles farther the sea is no longer to be seen. You have passed by two ancient fortified villages situated face to face, each on its hill-top, looking at each other like two eagle eyries. You have crossed Le Bausset, a borough where I noticed several doors with carved keystones of the time of Henry IV. The road suddenly plunges into strange regions.

On the left the worn-out calcareous rocks, mangled and pointed by storms, stand up like the pinnacles of a cathedral; on the right the sandstone crags take singular forms and attitudes. They are like Titans half buried in the earth, and you can distinguish their shoulders, their shoulder-blades, their hips, and their spinal columns, their enormous skulls, whose eyes look as if they had been pecked out by gigantic vultures; there are monstrous tortoises

which at the motion of the carriage crawl into their shells eighty feet long under the bushes.

Then the road turns ; a Gothic fortress rises on the summit of a mountain ; immense slopes of bare and riven rocks fill the whole horizon ; the road grows narrower, the dry bed of a torrent follows along by its side : we are in the gorges of Ollioules !

There I dismounted from the carriage.

The Gorges of Ollioules lack only some great historical event to have given them the fame of the Caudine Forks or of Thermopylæ.

It is really an awe-inspiring place. The eyes see only a yellow, abrupt precipice, torn and perpendicular, on the right, on the left, before, behind, barring your advance, obstructing your retreat, paving the road and masking the sky. You are in the very bowels of the mountains, cut open as if by the blows of an axe and under the burning rays of the vertical sun. According as you press on, all vegetation disappears. Barely do you see here and there between two boulders the anise creeping out, or the savin, which was in times of yore used as a philter by witches. Nevertheless, I picked up behind a huge stone a little spray of mountain savory which rewarded me with its delicious odor. The flower is very pretty. Feeble ivy, dwarfed fig-trees, wild pistachios, a few Alpine pines twisted by the mistral cling miserably to the crevices of the higher rocks.

Cavern-mouths, for the most part inaccessible, yawn at

every altitude and on all sides. Some resemble galleries that have been opened up. You can make out entablatures, consoles, imposts, a complete supernatural and mysterious architecture. On the very mountain-top, here and there, rocks are bent in the form of arches and make aërial bridges over which no mortal foot may cross.

Not a bird, not an animal, not a rustling leaf. In winter the torrent only passes through here with its frightful clamor.

Formerly the Gorges of Ollioules had only a footpath for mules and pedestrians. Now, thanks to Napoleon, carriages find here, as over the Simplon, a beautiful road sustained by masonry almost Roman. My travelling-companions were in ecstasies on the builder of this road, but my thoughts were filled by Him who made these mountains!

What a work and what an edifice. What workmen, who, not at the beck and call of man, still work here without cessation and while time shall last! The rain crumbles the rocks, the torrent eats them away, the wind kneads them, the waterfall hollows out channels, the tree-root pierces breathing-holes, the sun gilds the whole.

Opposite to a bend which the road takes, at a spot where it passes under a half-arch fashioned out of the living rock, you see on the other side of the ravine, at a height easily reached, the entrance of a deep cave. It is an ogival portal, flanked on the right and on the left by several openings filled with rocks and surmounted by a sort of magnificent coping almost regularly cut out from the perpendicular wall of the mountain. This sombre

casemate, into which the eye plunges and sees rough pillars lost in the darkness, traverses the whole mountain like an intestine, and has in the wildest places many outlets known only to goatherds.

Forty years ago Gaspard Bès made this his fortress.

This Gaspard Bès was one of those condottieri characteristic of the middle ages and absurd in our century, since they try to make for themselves a small State in the big one, to be kings in a corner of the kingdom, to establish tolls for their own profit on all roads, having brigands for soldiers and smugglers for collectors. He had taken advantage of the Revolution to become a bandit. He entered into a desperate conflict with custom-officers and policemen, extended his frontiers as far as Antibes and as far as Barcelonette, and held forty miles of sea-coast. He had his fleet, manned by pirates, and his army of thieves. In other respects a child of good luck like Mandrin, and overflowing with sudden acts of generosity like Jean Sbogar. Cuges was his capital, and the cavern of Ollioules was his palace. He reigned from the death of Louis XVI. to the accession of Napoleon.

The First Consul made war on him and took him prisoner. Gaspard Bès was executed at Cuges, and many women wept at his death, — among others, it is said, an Italian princess whom he had pillaged gracefully, taking her rings and kissing her hands.

Gaspard Bès is not yet forgotten at Cuges, where his fame is preserved in popular song. Time blocks out these fierce figures and gives to them a peculiarly heroic aspect. Many princely families have begun with men like

Gaspard Bès. A thousand years ago such a man in a cave was the seed whence issued within a given time a castle like Habsbourg or Bourbon-l'Archambault.

After leaving the crypt of Gaspard Bès, the road makes still another turn. Here vegetation completely disappears. You penetrate into the very heart of the rent. A second gorge, smaller than the first but still more horrible, comes perpendicularly down on it and opens up to vision a horizontal abysm full of silence and yet full of disorder and fury. There are turmoils for the eye as well as for the ear. In every direction the dorsal spines of ravines issue from under the bed of the torrent and crawl in a twisting course toward the mountain-top. If you penetrate a little way into this secondary gorge, it seems as if the rocks ceased to exist; they are scales, shells, skeletons. One might believe it to be a gigantic heap of dead crocodiles, some lying on their bellies, others flat on their backs and turning skyward frightful stumps of paws and shattered jaws. The Alps have nothing more hideously fear-inspiring.

Once, and only ten years ago, when the chain-gang, on its way from Paris, after twenty-five days' march in sun and storm was on the point of reaching Toulon, bringing its three hundred limp, livid, horrible convicts on eight carts, it stopped there to rest. It was a veritable halt of damned souls in the vestibule of hell.

As soon as you have crossed this meeting of the two gorges, the scene suddenly changes. Like Dante, like

Shakespeare, like all great poets, the good God makes many antitheses and makes them admirably. In twenty steps, without gradations, without any transition, as if a wall had suddenly sprung open, one passes from the awful to the charming. The defile spreads out, the mountain widens, the dazzling roadstead of Toulon arises before you in the midst of a magnificent landscape, the gorges are swallowed up, a shimmering radiance takes their place. Here all is fecundating sun, golden verdure, splendid sea, houses, gardens, bellying sails, song, murmur, life, and joy.

I had scarcely troubled to notice an ancient crumbling castle of the twelfth century, lifting its three towers at the southern entrance of the gorges like a granite Cerberus. I had on my right a field full of orange-trees, jujube-trees, pomegranate trees, just opening out their ripe pomegranates, blooming lilacs, mingled with lemon-trees, vines running among the trees, on my left a white house shaded by two palms. Caper-bushes gayly capered out from the foot of the wall; an abundant swelling spring poured out from the rock in the full sunlight, as it were a flood of liquid jewels.

This is the way the whole plain is laid out: in the background bare and gray-haired mountains piled up behind Toulon like heaps of cinders took on a sort of stern and yet gentle beauty as they mingled with the ravishing beauty of the sea. The situation of the town was indicated in the midst of the green plains by a forest of masts.

After the Gorges of Ollioules the landscape of Toulon is one of Nature's revenges.

Ten or a dozen forts girdle Toulon. At the time of the

siege of the city in 1794 all these points were unsuccessfully invested one after another, with the exception of a small fort situated opposite the harbour and neglected as being of no consequence.

A young artillery officer, at that time unknown in the army, obtained from the representative of the people permission to attack this little fort. It was the key to Toulon. When once it was carried the English were driven out and the town was surrendered.

This bastion is at the present time called Fort Emperor. As you emerge from the gorges of Ollioules you see it sparkling in the roadstead like a star at the end of a cape. It was there that Providence placed the beginning of Bonaparte's career.

The horses were rushing swiftly down toward Toulon, and I kept my eye on that luminous speck from which Napoleon took his flight and a cloud of eagles with him.

At Toulon, after seeing at the city hall Puget's caryatides and the fountains of the Haymarket with their three admirable dolphins, you must go to the arsenal.

You go in through a rococo triumphal arch in the most highly spiced style. Just as I reached there three of the king's carriages were waiting at the rope-walk for Alger and the Duke of Orléans to take their places.

There is nothing more curious than the Arsenal Museum, a collection of the models of all kinds of vessels. There you find superb gilded *basso-relievos* by Puget. There are galleys built by Louis XIV. for the chevaliers of Malta.

Three cannons on the bow, two masts, great lateen sails. These galleys had two hundred oarsmen, four to an oar. The holds were open, they were vessels under a bell (*vaisseaux sous cloche*) says Méry. This enormous beam was the yard; this huge wooden column stretching as far as the eye can see along the ground was the great mast—three hundred and sixty feet high, three feet in diameter at the base; no cables, but chains. The heap of chains of a vessel of a hundred guns was four feet high, twenty feet wide, and eight feet deep.

In the ships now building I notice that we are copying the British model, while the English are copying ours. Our rail now slants forward, theirs slants back. We are trying to offer facilities for boarding, they are trying to do away with it, said the marine who acted as my guide.

The modern ship, with its black and white paint, is externally ugly. Where are the purple ships, with their castellated sterns? The advance made in the art of artillery has spoiled the ship as a fortress. They are stupid, these flat outlines of stem and stern.

I saw the "Ballone" which received one hundred and sixty cannon-shot in its hull at Saint-Jean-d'Ulloa. Not one crashed through. Bad cannon, or good frigate?

A ship of the line is one of the most magnificent meetings which man's genius has had with the grandeur of Nature.

A ship of the line is composed at once of what is

heaviest and what is lightest, because it has to do at one and the same time with three forms of matter, the solid, the liquid, and the gaseous, and must fight with all three at one and the same time.

It has eleven iron claws to seize withal the bottom of the sea, and more wings and more antennæ than a moth to catch the wind in the clouds. Its breath issues through its six-score cannon as though they were enormous clarions, and replies haughtily to the thunderbolt. The ocean tries to lead her astray in the frightful monotony of its waves, but it has its soul, the compass, which gives it wise advice and always points to the north. On dark nights its lanterns serve as stars.

Thus against the wind it has rope and canvas, against water it has wood, against the rock it has iron, copper, and lead; against darkness it has light, against immensity it has a needle.

There comes an hour, however, when the gale breaks like a straw this sixty-foot yard, when the cyclone bends like a reed this four-hundred-foot mast, when this anchor weighing ten thousand pounds is tossed in the maw of the billows like a fishhook in the teeth of a shark, when all this power and all this majesty are swallowed up in superior power and majesty.

THE PYRENEES.

1843.

I.

LA LOIRE. — BORDEAUX.

BORDEAUX, July 20.

YOU who never travel except in the spirit, going from book to book, from thought to thought, and never from land to land, — you who spend all your summers under the shade of the same trees and all your winters in the same chimney-corner, you desire me, the vagabond, to write you, the recluse, all that I have done and all that I have seen from the moment that I left Paris.

Very well. I obey.

What have I done since day before yesterday, the eighteenth ?

Five hundred miles in thirty-six hours.

What have I seen ?

I have seen Étampes, Orléans, Blois, Tours, Poitiers, and Angoulême.

Do you want to know anything more ? Would you like descriptions ? Do you care to know what these cities are, under what aspect they have presented themselves before my eyes, what prizes of history, art, and poetry I have picked up along the way, — in a word, all that I have seen ?

Étampes is a great tower visible on the right in the twilight above the roofs of a long street, and we hear the postilions saying :—

“ Another railway accident ! Two cars wrecked ; passengers killed. Through steam the train has broken down between Étampes and Étrechy. We at least don't break down.”

Orléans is a candle on a centre-table in a low hall, where a pallid girl serves you with vegetable soup.

Blois is a bridge at the left with a Pompadour obelisque. The traveller suspects that there may be dwelling-houses at the right, perhaps a city.

Tours is another bridge, a fine wide street and a dial indicating nine A. M.

Poitiers is a meat soup, a duck with turnips, an eel-matelot, a roast chicken, a fried sole, string beans, a salad and strawberries.

Angoulême is a gas-lamp and a wall bearing this inscription, —

CAFÉ DE LA MARINE,

and on the left another wall adorned with a placard in blue whereon you read, —

LA RUE DE LA LUNE, *Vaudeville.*

That is what France is when seen from a mail-coach.

What will it be when seen from an express-train ?

I have an idea that I have said somewhere else that the

Loire and Touraine have been altogether overpraised. It is time to be fair and just. The Seine is far more beautiful than the Loire; Normandie is a much more charming "garden" than Touraine.

A wide yellow sheet of water, low banks, poplars everywhere, that is the Loire. The poplar is the only tree which is stupid. It cuts off all the horizons along the Loire. By the river side, in the islands, on the edge of the embankment, wherever you look into the distance you see nothing but poplars. To my mind there is a strange relationship, a peculiar and inexpressible resemblance between a landscape abounding in poplars and a tragedy written in Alexandrines. The poplar like the Alexandrine is one of the classic forms of dulness.

It was raining, I had passed a sleepless night; that may or may not have put me into bad humour, but everything on the Loire seemed to me cold, melancholy, stiff, monotonous, formal, and depressing.

One meets, from time to time, processions of five or six barges going up or down the river. Each boat has one mast and one square sail. The one with the largest sail takes the lead and tows the rest. The procession is so arranged that the sails keep diminishing in size from the front to the rear with a sort of symmetrical diminuendo uninterrupted by any protuberance, undisturbed by any caprice. You are involuntarily reminded of the caricature of the English family, and you might think you saw a chromatic scale gliding before the wind with all sails spread.

I never have seen this effect anywhere except on the Loire, and I must confess I prefer Norman sloops and

fishing-smacks, with all their various shapes and sizes, flying like hawks and mingling their red and yellow sails in the squall, the rain, and the sun between Quillebœuf and Tancarville.

The Spaniards call the Manzanares the Viscount of rivers ; I propose to call the Loire the Dowager of rivers.

The Loire has not, like the Seine and the Rhine, a swarm of pretty cities and handsome villages built on the very edge of the stream and reflecting their gables, their bell-fries, and their house-fronts in the wave. The Loire flows through a vast aggregation of mud left by the deluge and called La Sologne : it brings down the sand in its hurrying tide, and its bed is often blocked and obstructed by the banks thus formed. Hence in these flat plains frequent freshets and floods which keep the villages at a distance.

On the right bank they take shelter behind the levees. But there they are almost lost to sight ; the passer-by does not see them.

Still, the Loire has its beautiful side. Madame de Staël, when exiled by Napoleon to fifty miles from Paris, learned that there was on the bank of the Loire, exactly fifty miles from Paris, a château called Chaumont, if I remember right. She went there, not wishing to make her exile worse even by a quarter of a mile. I do not pity her. Chaumont is a noble and lordly domain. The château, which must be of the sixteenth century, is in good style ; the towers are massive. The village at the foot of the hill, which is covered with trees, gives it an aspect perhaps unique on the Loire, the aspect of a

Rhine village, a long façade built on the edge of the water.

Amboise is a gay and pretty city, crowned with a magnificent edifice, half a league from Tours and face to face with the three priceless arches of the ancient bridge, which will disappear one of these days in some scheme for municipal decoration.

The ruin of the Abbey of Marmoutiers is a beautiful and magnificent object. Especially, a few steps from the road there is a fifteenth-century building which is the most original that I have ever seen, — a house, as far as size goes, a fortress by reason of its machicolations, a town-hall by its belfry, a church by its ogive portal. This building sums up and renders visible to the eye that form of hybrid and complex authority which in feudal times was attached to abbeys in general and to the abbey of Marmoutiers in particular.

But the most picturesque and imposing feature of the Loire is an immense calcareous wall mingled with sandstone, grindstone, and potter's clay, which forms the limit and frame of the right bank and spreads out before the eyes between Blois and Tours with inexpressible variety and gayety — sometimes wild crags, sometimes an English garden, covered with trees and flowers, crowned with ripening vines and smoking chimneys, as full of holes as a sponge and populous as an ant-hill.

There are deep caves here where in old times counterfeiters used to hide when they were manufacturing the E of the money of Tours and inundating the province with false sous. At the present time the rude openings of these

caverns are closed with pretty window-frames jauntily set into the rock, and once in a while you see through the panes the graceful profile of some young girl with her hair oddly arranged and engaged in boxing anise, ling-wort and coriander. Confectioners have supplanted counterfeiterers.

And since I am speaking of the charming side of the Loire, let me thank fortune for having naturally led me to tell you of the pretty girls working and singing in the midst of this fair Nature.

*Le terra molle, e lieta, e diletta,
Simili a se gli habitatori produce.*¹

BORDEAUX.

WHILE the Loire has been overpraised, Bordeaux has not had its fair share of praise, or rather it has been praised in the wrong way.

Bordeaux is admired on the same grounds that the Rue de Rivoli is admired, — for its regularity, for its symmetry, for its big splendid white façades all alike, etc. Now this for a man of taste means an insipid architecture and a tiresome city to see. But when this is applied to Bordeaux nothing could be less accurate.

Bordeaux is a curious city, original, perhaps unique. Take Versailles and mix up Anvers with it and you have Bordeaux.

¹ The tender, soft, and kindly soil brings forth inhabitants like to itself.

I must withdraw from the mixture, however, for we must be perfectly fair, the two greatest beauties of Versailles and of Anvers, — the château of the one, and the cathedral of the other.

There are two Bordeaux, — the new, and the old.

Everything in the modern Bordeaux breathes grandeur, as at Versailles; everything in ancient Bordeaux relates history, as at Anvers.

These fountains, these rostral columns, these wide alleys so well shaded with trees, this Place royale which is simply half of the Place Vendôme laid out on the edge of the water, this bridge an eighth of a mile long, this superb quay, these broad streets, this enormous and monumental theatre, — these are things which hold their own in comparison with any of the splendours of Versailles, and which in Versailles itself would form fitting surroundings for the grand château, the home of the grand century.

These inextricable crossways, these labyrinthine passages and buildings, this Rue des Loups, which recalls the days when wolves actually came down and devoured children in the very midst of the city, these fortress-like houses once so haunted by demons of such inconvenient behavior that a decree of Parliament in 1596 declared that the fact of a dwelling being frequented by the devil was sufficient cause for a lease to be legally annulled, these amadou-coloured house-fronts, sculptured by the keen chisel of the Renaissance, these doorways and staircases ornamented with balusters and twisted pillars painted blue in the Flemish manner, this charming and delicate Caillau gate built in memory of the battle of Fornoue, this other

fine door of the city-hall, which displays its belfry so proudly suspended under an openwork arcade, these formless remains of the lugubrious fort of Hâ, these ancient churches — Saint-André, with its two spires; Saint-Seurin, the canons of which, being high-livers, sold the city of Langon for a dozen lampreys a year; Sainte-Croix, burnt by the Normans; Saint-Michel, burnt by lightning — all this heap of old porches, of old gables, and of old roofs, these memories which are monuments, these edifices which are dates, would assuredly be worthy of being mirrored in the Escant as they are mirrored in the Gironde, and of clustering among the most fantastic of old Flemish buildings around the Cathedral of Anvers.

Add to this, my dear, the magnificent Gironde crowded with ships, a gentle horizon of green hills, a beautiful sky, a warm sun, and you will love Bordeaux even though you drink nothing but water and have no eyes for pretty girls.

They are fascinating here, with their orange or red Madras head-dresses, just as those of Marseilles are with their yellow stockings.

Women of all countries instinctively add coquetry to nature. Nature gives them hair, but that is not enough, they must dress it becomingly; nature gives them a white and graceful neck; that is too simple, they must needs put on a necklace; nature gives them a small, delicate foot; that is not enough, they must needs put on boots and shoes. God made them beautiful; that is not sufficient for them, they make themselves pretty.

And at the root of coquetry there is a thought, a sentiment if you please, which goes back to our mother Eve.

Allow me to indulge in a paradox, a blasphemy, which, I am afraid, contains a truth: God made woman beautiful, the demon made her pretty!

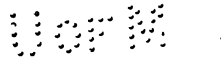
However, my dear friend, let us love womankind, even with that which the devil gives her as overplus.

Now it seems to me that I have just been preaching. That is not my strong point. Come, let us return to Bordeaux, please.

The double physiognomy of Bordeaux is curious; time and chance have made it as it is; there is no need of men spoiling it. Now there is no question that the mania for "running" wide streets, as we say, and building edifices in "fine style" is every day gaining ground, and is rapidly rasing from the very soil the old historic city. In other words, the Bordeaux-Versailles tends to swallow up the Bordeaux-Anvers.

Let the men of Bordeaux take care! Anvers, taken all in all, is more interesting for art, for history, and for what is past than Versailles is. Versailles represents only one man and one reign; Anvers represents a whole people and many centuries. Maintain, then, the equilibrium between the two cities: put an end to the quarrel between Anvers and Versailles; beautify the new city, preserve the ancient city! You have had a history, you have been a nation; remember it, be proud of it.

Nothing more tragic and more deadly than great demolitions. He who pulls down his house pulls down his family; he who uproots his city uproots his fatherland;



he who destroys his dwelling destroys his name. The ancient honour clings to these ancient stones.

And these depised ruins are famous ruins ; they speak, they have a voice ; they bear witness to what our fathers have done.

The amphitheatre of Gallienus says, —

“ I have seen Tetricus governor of the Gauls proclaimed emperor ; I have witnessed the birth of Ausonius, who was poet and Roman consul ; I saw Saint Martin presiding over the first council ; I have seen the passing of Abderam, I have seen the passing of the Black Prince.”

Saint-Croix says : —

“ I have witnessed the nuptials of Louis the Young and Eleonore of Guyenne, of Gaston de Foix and Madeleine of France, of Louis XIII. and Anne of Austria.”

The Peyberland says : —

“ I have seen Charles VIII. and Catherine de' Medici.”

The Belfry says : —

“ Under my arches sat Michel Montaigne, when he was mayor, and Montesquieu when he was president.”

The old wall says : —

“ It was through a breach in me that the Constable de Montmorency entered.”

Is not all this worth a street laid out by line and compass ? All this is the past, — the past, a thing grand, venerable, and rich in fruitful thought.



I have said somewhere: Let us respect buildings and books; in them alone the dead past lives, everywhere else it is dead. Now the past is a part of ourselves, perhaps the most essential. The wave which bears us along comes wholly from the past, the sap which gives us all our vital forces comes to us wholly from the past. What is a tree without a root? What is a river without its source? What is a people without its past?

Was M. de Tourny, the superintendent of 1743, who began the pulling down of old Bordeaux, and the building up of the new, useful or harmful to the city?

That is a question which I will not go into. A statue has been set up to his memory; there is Tourny Street, the Tourny Quai, the Tourny Races: it is all very well. But while we may admit that he served the city in a magnificent fashion is there any reason why Bordeaux should appear before the world as though no one else but M. de Tourny ever lived there?

Listen! Augustus built for you the temple of Tutellus, you have thrown it down; Gallienus erected for you the amphitheatre, you have dismantled it; Clovis gave you the palace of the Ombrière, you have ruined it.

The kings of England constructed for you a great wall from the Fosse des Tanneurs to the Fosse des Salinières, you have plucked it up from the very earth.

Charles VII. built for you the Château-Trompette, you destroyed it.

One after another you are tearing out all the pages of your ancient book, to preserve only the last; you are driving out of your city, and are effacing from your history

Charles VII., the English kings, the Dukes of Guyenne, Clovis, Gallienus, and Augustus, and do you set up a statue to M. de Tourny ?

It is like overturning something very great to erect in its place something very small.

July 21.

The bridge of Bordeaux is the pride of the city. There are always four men on the bridge engaged in resetting the pavement and polishing off the sidewalk.

On the other hand, the churches are sadly dilapidated. Yet is it not true that in a church everything, even to the stones, deserves to be kept sacred ?

This is the very thing that is forgotten by the priests, who are the chief demolishers.

The two principal churches of Bordeaux, Saint-André and Saint-Michel, have, instead of belfrys, campaniles standing separate from the main edifice, just as we find them at Venice and Pisa.

The campanile of Saint-André, which is the cathedral, is a rather handsome tower, the form of which reminds one of the tour de Beurre at Rouen, and is called the Peyberland, from the name of the archbishop Pierre Berland, who lived in 1430. The cathedral has also the two bold and open-work spires of which I have already told you. The church was begun in the eleventh century, as is proved by the Roman pillars of the nave; it was left unfinished for three centuries, to be started again in the reign of Charles VII. and completed by Charles VIII. The fascinating epoch of Louis XII. put the finishing

touches to it, and built, at the end opposite to the apse, an exquisite porch supporting the organs. The two great *bas-reliefs* attached to the wall under this porch are two stone paintings in the most beautiful style, and one might almost say of the most magnificent colouring, so powerful is the modelling. In the painting on the left the eagle and the lion are worshipping the Christ with deep and intelligent eyes, just as genies ought to worship God. The portal, though simply lateral, is of a high order of beauty.

But I am in a haste to speak to you of an old ruined cloister which abuts on the cathedral toward the south ; I came upon it by mere chance and went in.

Nothing could be more melancholy and more charming, more imposing and more abject. Imagine it:—

Gloomy galleries pierced by ogives with flamboyant windows ; a wooden trellis above these ogives ; the cloisters transformed into a stable, all the flagging torn up, dust and spider's-webs everywhere ; privies in a neighbouring court ; in the dark corners lustres of rusty copper, black crucifixes, silver hour-glasses, all the rubbish of properties connected with hearses and undertakers' mutes, and under these imitation cenotaphs of wood and printed cloth, genuine tombs visible, with their stern effigies too well couched ever to rise and too soundly sleeping ever to awaken again.

Is it not scandalous ? Should not the priest be called to account for allowing the degradation of the church and the profanation of the tombs ?

So far as I am concerned, if I had to prescribe the duty

for the priests I should do it in two words : *Pity for the living, piety for the dead.*

In the middle, between the four galleries of the cloister, all sorts of débris and rubbish fill up a little corner, formerly a cemetery, where tall weeds, wild jasmin, briers, and brambles are growing and commingling, one might almost say, with boundless joy. Vegetation has its clutch on the edifice ; it is the work of God gaining the victory over the work of man.

Nevertheless, this joy has nothing cruel or bitter in it. It is the innocence and royal gayety of Nature ; that is all. Amid ruins and verdure a thousand flowers are blooming : sweet and delightful flowers. I felt their perfume wafting to me, I saw them waving their pretty white, yellow, and blue heads, and it seemed to me that they were all doing their best to console the poor abandoned stones.

However, such is fate. The monks depart before the priests, and the cloisters crumble away before the churches.

From Saint-André I went to Saint-Michel . . .

But they are calling me, the carriage is about to start for Bayonne, and I will tell you next time what happened to me during my visit to Saint-Michel.

II.

FROM BORDEAUX TO BAYONNE.

BAYONNE, July 23.

ONE must be a case-hardened traveller to find any comfort on the imperial of the Dotézac diligence, running between Bordeaux and Bayonne. Never in my life have I found a seat padded so ferociously. Moreover, this divan might do service to literature and furnish a new metaphor to those who need one. We may give up the good old classic comparisons which for three thousand years have expressed the hardness of objects: we will leave in repose steel, bronze, the hearts of tyrants. Instead of saying —

“ O cruel one, the frowning Caucasus
Has made thy heart still harder than its crags ! ”

poets will say, *harder than the outside seat of the Dotézac diligence.*

Yet you do not mount up to this lofty and austere position without some trouble. In the first place, you must pay your fourteen francs, — that is a matter of course; and then you must give your name to the conductor.

I gave my name.

When I am asked regarding my name in the diligence-offices, I am perfectly willing to take off its first syllable, and I reply, *M. Go*, leaving the spelling of it to the questioner's fancy. When I am asked how the thing is written I reply, —

“ I don't know.”

This generally satisfies the office-register; he takes the syllable which I hand over to him, and on this simple theme he embroiders variations with more or less taste according as he is or is not a man of taste. This method of procedure has already in my various excursions procured for me the satisfaction of seeing my name written in the following diversified manner: *M. Go*; *M. Got*; *M. Gaut*; *M. Gault*; *M. Gaud*; *M. Gauld*; *M. Gaulx*; *M. Gaux*; *M. Gau*.

None of these scribes has as yet had the thought of writing it *M. Goth*. Up to the present time I have discovered this delicate variation only in *M. Viennet's* satires, and in the criticisms of *Le Constitutionnel*.

The clerk of the Dotézac office at first wrote ‘*M. Gau* ;’ then he hesitated an instant and gazed at the word which he had just put down, and doubtless finding it a trifle unfinished-looking, he added an “*x*”. It was therefore under the name of *M. Gaux* that I climbed up to the redoubtable seat on which the Dotézac Brothers carry their victims for fifty-five miles.

I have already noticed that humpbacks have a liking for the outside seats of diligences. I have no desire to penetrate into the inner harmonies, but it is a fact. I met one on the imperial of the Meaux diligence, and I met

two on the imperial of the Bayonne diligence. They were travelling together, and what rendered the partnership odd was the fact that one of them had the hump behind and the other had it in front. The first seemed to exert some strange control over the second, who had his waistcoat all unbuttoned and open, and just as I got there he said with authority : —

“ My dear friend, button up your deformity ! ”

The conductor of the coach looked at the two humpbacks with a humiliated air. This worthy man was a perfect likeness of M. de Rambuteau. In studying him I said to myself that possibly it would be sufficient to shave him to make him into a prefect of the Seine, and that it would also be sufficient for M. de Rambuteau not to shave any more to make an excellent conductor of diligences.

The comparison, or “ assimilation,” to use the political slang of the day, has nothing unpleasant or insulting, however. A diligence is very much more than a prefecture, it is the perfect image of a nation, with its constitution and its government. The diligence has three divisions, and so has the State ; the aristocracy is in the front seats, the middle class is in the inside, the common people are in the “ rotunda.” On the “ impériale,” above all the rest, are the dreamers, the artists, the declassed. The law is the conductor, regarded as a tyrant ; the minister is the postilion, changed at each relay. When the coach is too heavily loaded down with baggage, — that is to say, when society places its material interests at the top of all, — it runs the risk of tipping over.

Since we are bent on reviving ancient metaphors, I advise

the worthy men of letters who so often mire the "car of State" henceforth to say "the diligence of State." It would be less lofty, but more accurate.

However, the road was very beautiful, and we went very fast. The reason for that is to be found in the rivalry which exists at the present time between the Dotézac diligence and the other coach, which the Dotézac postillions disdainfully call "the rival," without applying to it any other designation. That coach seemed to me a good one; it is new, jaunty, and pretty. From time to time it passed us, and then for an hour or two it ran twenty paces in front of us, until we in turn did the same for it. It was very disagreeable. In the ancient classical combat a man made his enemy "bite the dust;" in such as these we are content to make him swallow it.

The "Landes" from Bazas to Mont-de-Marsan are nothing but an endless pine forest, sown here and there with great oaks, and cut by monstrous clearings covered as far as the eye can reach with green heaths, yellow broom, and violet brambles. The presence of man is betrayed in the most deserted regions of this forest by long thongs of bark stripped away from the trunks of the pine-trees for the collection of resin.

There are no villages; but from time to time you pass two or three wide-roofed houses, covered with hollowed tiles of Spanish fashion, and sheltered by clumps of oaks and chestnuts.

Occasionally the landscape becomes more rugged, the pines are lost on the horizon, all is bramble or sand; a few low hovels, buried under a sort of fur of dried ferns fastened

to the walls, appear here and there ; then nothing else is to be seen and nothing more is met with along the road than the earth hut of a stone-breaker, and occasionally a large circle of burnt turf and black cinders, indicating the place where a fire had taken place in the night.

All kinds of herds graze among the brambles : crowds of ducks and pigs watched by children, flocks of black or red sheep watched by women, herds of cattle with wide-spreading horns watched by men on horseback. Like herd, like herdsman.

Without any intention, and attempting to picture only a desert, I have just written a State maxim.

And in this connection would you believe that at the time I was crossing the "Landes" everything spoke a language of politics ? That is scarcely in keeping with such a landscape, is it ? A breath of revolution seemed to stir those old pines.

It was the very instant when Espartero was going to pieces in Spain. Nothing was as yet known, but the whole thing was felt in the air. The postilions, climbing to their places would say to the conductor, —

"He is at Cadix."

"No, he has embarked."

"Yes, for England."

"No, for France."

"He does not care for France or England either. He is going to a Spanish colony."

"Bah."

The two humpbacks mixed their politics with the postilion's politics, and the pigeon-breasted humpback said gracefully, —

“Espartero has taken Lafuite and Caillard.”

According as we approached Mont-de-Marsan, the roads became thick with Spaniards, on foot, on horseback, in carriages, travelling in bands or singly. On a cart loaded with ragged men, I saw a young peasant-woman, dressed in a graceful fashion, and wearing on her pretty head, gravely and sweetly, the most exquisite hat ever seen, — something black, trimmed with something red; it was charming. What kind of politics is that which raises a wind capable of driving into exile a poor girl so pretty and so well dressed as to her head?

While new refugees are arriving, the former refugees are on their way back. In two post-coaches, which must have passed each other, as they were going one way, the other the opposite, I recognised the Duchesse de Gor on her way to Madrid, and the Duchesse de San Fernando on her way to Paris. Two diligences full of Spaniards passed each other half-way between Captieux and Les Traverses, and according to the custom of postilions in such circumstances, exchanged their teams. The same horses which had just been bringing back to their native land the exiles of yesterday carried into banishment the exiles of to-day.

However, the new revolution which was accomplishing in our immediate vicinity might rage as it would, it only superficially disturbed this calm and stern Nature. The wind overturning dominions and uprooting thrones did not cause the pine cone, trembling on the very edge of the branch, to fall one instant before its time. Carts drawn by oxen passed, with their antique gravity, by these post-chaises and affrighted diligences hastening in flight.

There is nothing stranger, let me say in parenthesis, than these ox-carts. The cart is of wood, with four equal wheels, showing that it is meant to go straight-forward and never turn sharply round. The oxen are entirely covered with a white cloth that drags on the ground; between their horns they wear a kind of wig made of a piece of sheepskin, and over their noses a fringed white net which has a marvellous resemblance to a beard. Several oak branches twisted round their heads complete the accoutrement. The oxen thus fixed up have a fictitious semblance to the high priests of tragedy; they are wonderfully like the dummies of the Théâtre-Français disguised as flamens and druids.

When we dismounted at Bazas one of these oxen passed quite near me, with such a majestic and pontifical gait that I was tempted to say unto it:—

“The priests are not at all what a vain people think.”

I really believe that I did say so. I am bound to add that it did not bellow the slightest response.

Beyond Roquefort the “Landes” are diversified by potteries which are found here and there, some of them abandoned and very ancient, going back to the time of Louis XIII., as is proved by the key-stone of their archivolts; others in full activity and full production and smoking all over like a stick of green wood on a hot fire.

Thirty years ago, when I was a very young boy, I travelled through this region. I remember that the carriages went at a snail's pace, the wheels sinking up to the hubs in sand. Then there was no road laid out. From time to time we came to a short piece of road made of pine-tree

trunks laid close together and fastened like the planks of a rustic bridge. At the present time the stretches of sand between Bordeaux and Bayonne are crossed by a wide street bordered with poplars and almost as beautiful as a Roman road of stone.

Within a given time this boulevard, the work of industry and perseverance, will settle to the level of the sand, and then will disappear. The soil tends to undermine it and swallow it up, as it swallowed up the military road made by Brutus which ran from Cape Breton, *Caput Bruti*, to Boios, now Buch, and that other road, the work of Cæsar, which crossed Gamarde, Saint-Géours, and Saint-Michel de Jouarare.

I note by the way that these two words, *Jovis ara*, *ara Jovis*, have given rise to many names of cities, which, although they have the same origin, have scarcely any resemblance to one another at the present time, whether you take Jouarre in Champagne, or Jouarare in the "Landes," or Aranjuez in Spain.

Between Roquefort and Tartas the pines give place to a forest of various kinds of trees. A varied and vigorous vegetation has possession of the plains and of the hills, and the road runs through a ravishingly beautiful garden. Every instant you are crossing charming rivers on ancient bridges with ogive arches. First the Douze, then the Midou, then the Midouze, formed as the name shows from the union of la Douze and le Midou, then the Adour. The syllable *dour*, or *dou*, which is found in all these names evidently comes from the Keltic word *our* signifying a water-course.

All these rivers have high steep banks, and are transparent, green, and gay. Young girls are beating their linen at the edge of the stream; goldfinches are singing in the shrubbery; a joyous life breathes in this gentle nature.

Nevertheless, occasionally from between two branches which the wind gayly swings apart, you see far away against the horizon the briers and the piñadas under the rosy veil of the setting sun, and you remember that you are in the "Landes." You realise that beyond this smiling garden, dotted with all these pretty towns, Roquefort, Mont-de-Marsan, Tartas, traversed by all these sparkling rivers, the Adour, La Douze, Le Midou, only a few miles distant is the Forest, then beyond the Forest the heath, *la lande*, the desert, a sombre solitude where the cicada chirps, where birds are mute, where no human habitation is to be seen, and where at long intervals caravans of huge oxen clad in cerements of white cross in silence. You tell yourself that beyond these solitudes of sand are the ponds, solitudes of water, Sanguinet, Parentis, Mimizan, Léon, Biscarosse, with their tawny population of wolves, of polecats, of wild boars and squirrels, with their labyrinth of vegetation, cork-trees, laurel-bushes, acacias, sage-leaved cystus, enormous holly, gigantic hawthorns, gorse bushes twenty feet high, — virgin forests, where one cannot venture without an axe and a compass. Perhaps amid these immense woods may be found the great Cassou, that mysterious oak the hideous branches of which spread superstitions and terrors all over the country. You imagine that beyond the ponds there are the sand-dunes, wandering mountains of sand driving the ponds before them, swallow-

ing up the piñadas, the villages, and the bell-towers, and changing their forms under the stress of hurricanes; and you say to yourself that beyond the dunes there is the ocean. The dunes devour the ponds, the ocean devours the dunes.

Thus the Landes, the ponds, the dunes, the sea — such are the four zones which your thought traverses. You picture them to yourself — each one more ferocious than the others. You see vultures flying above the Landes, cranes flying above the ponds, and sea-gulls flying above the sea. You watch tortoises and snakes crawling over the dunes. The spectre of a dismal Nature appears before you. Revery fills your mind. Unknown and fantastic landscapes tremble and shine as in a mirage before your eyes. Men mounted on stilts and leaning on long staves pass by in the fog-lined horizon over the crests of the hills and look like huge spiders. In the undulations of the dunes you imagine that you see arising the enigmatical pyramids of Mimizan, and you strain your ear to hear the wild sweet song of the peasant-women of Parentis, and you gaze far away to see if you may not catch sight of the fair maidens of Biscarosse walking barefoot in the waves, and with their hair twined with anemones.

For thought has its mirages. The journeys now undertaken by the Dotézac diligence are made by the imagination.

Meantime we reach Tartas, the ancient capital of the Tarusates, and it is a pretty town on the Midouze. During the middle ages it was the seat of one of the four seneschals of the Duchy of Albret. The three others were

Nérac, Castel-Moron, and Castel-Jaloux. As we passed by I saluted on the left of the road a portion still standing of the venerable wall which in 1440 resisted the redoubtable Captal de Buch and gave Charles VII. time to come up. The people of Tartas build inns and shooting-boxes with this wall which made them a country.

As we were departing from Tartas an enormous hare sprang out from a neighbouring copse and darted across the road, then stopped in the field within pistol-shot and boldly stared at the diligence. This bravado on the part of a hare doubtless results from the fact that they know that they gave their name to the house of Albret. They are touched with pride and they behave, whenever they have the chance, like gentlemen-hares.

Meantime the night was coming on. The evening, which has furnished Vergil so many fine lines, all alike in idea, all different in form, was shedding its shades over the country and sleep over the eyes of the travellers. According as the shades increased and obliterated the indefinite silhouettes of the horizon, it seemed to me — was it one of the illusions of the night? — that the country was growing wilder and ruder, that the piñadas and the glades were reappearing, and that we were in reality retraversing in the deep darkness of night that region of Les Landes which I had gone over in my imagination a few hours before.

The sky was thick-sown with stars, the earth offered the eye only a kind of dusky plain over which wandered here and there strange reddish erratic gleams as if shepherds' fires had been lighted amid the briers; though nothing could be seen distinctly, you seemed to hear that delicate and

shrill tinkling of bells like a harmonious *tingling*; then everything fell back into silence and night; the coach seemed to roll on blindly in a gloomy solitude, where from time to time wide pools of light appeared amid the black trees, revealing the presence of ponds.

As for myself, I felt happy; time and again I caught the wandering breath of convolvulus, recalling the days of my youth; I thought of those who loved me, I forgot all those who hated me, and I gazed out into this impalpable darkness mingling with my reverie the vague figures of the night as they passed confusedly before my eyes.

The two humpbacks had quitted my company at Mont-de-Marsan; I was alone on my seat, it was growing cold; I wrapped myself up in my cloak and soon after fell asleep.

The sleep which you secure in a coach travelling at full speed is a transparent sleep, through which you have sensations and can hear. At one special moment the conductor got down, the diligence stopped. The conductor's voice was saying:—

“Gentlemen, here we are, at the Pont de Dax.”

Then the doors were opened and shut as though travellers were dismounting; then the coach gave a jerk and started off.

Some minutes after, the hoofs of the horses sounded as though they were walking on wood; the diligence, leaning sharply forward, gave a sudden and violent lurch; I opened one eye; the postilion, bending over, seemed to be looking forward with anxious solicitude. I opened my two eyes.

The heavy coach, loaded down, drawn by five horses hitched with chains, was slowly passing over a wooden

bridge, through a sort of narrow way guarded on the left by the parapet which was very low, on the right by a heap of beams and frame-work; under the bridge ran a quite wide river far enough below us to increase still more the uncertainty of the night. Every now and then the diligence would lean over, here and there the parapet seemed to be lacking. I sat upright. I was on the imperial, the conductor had not mounted to his place; the coach kept on its way. The postilion, still bending over his team, which was dimly lighted up by the lantern of the *coupé*, was muttering various energetic objurgations. At last the horses dashed up a short slope, a new lurch shook the coach, then it stopped. We were on the causeway.

The passengers, who had gone across the bridge on foot ahead of the diligence, resumed their places in the three compartments, and as the conductor opened and shut the doors I heard him say: "Devil of a bridge! — always being repaired! When will it ever be made solid? The police are very negligent at Dax. They let the carpenters leave their tools in the way so as to tip the coach over. I've seen the time when the diligence was in the river. You can imagine the danger. You'll see a bad accident there one of these days. Was n't I wise, gentlemen, in making you get out and walk?"

Having delivered himself of this, he climbed up again; but when he saw me he uttered a cry, —

"There, now, I forgot all about you, sir!"

III.

BAYONNE. — LE CHARNIER.

July 26.

I COULD not come to Bayonne without emotion. Bayonne is for me a boyhood's memory. I was brought to Bayonne when I was quite small, at the age of seven or eight, about 1811 or 1812, at the time of the great wars. My father was serving in Spain in the Emperor's army and had control of two provinces roused to insurrection by Empecinado, — Avila, Guadalajara, — and the whole course of the Tagus.

My mother, on her way to join him, stopped at Bayonne to wait for an escort; for at that time, in making the journey from Bayonne to Madrid, you had to be accompanied by three thousand men and preceded by four pieces of artillery. At some future time I am going to describe that journey, for it is interesting if only to serve as memorials for history. My mother had brought with her my two brothers, Abel and Eugène, and myself the youngest of the three.

I remember that on the morning after our arrival at Bayonne, a kind of pot-bellied signor, ornamented with exaggerated trinkets and jabbering Italian, presented him-

self at my mother's apartment. We children, gazing at him through a glazed door as he entered, had an idea that he was a professional clown. He was manager of the Bayonne theatre.

He came to ask my mother to take a box in his theatre. My mother engaged a box for a month; that was about the length of time that we expected to be in Bayonne.

The possession of that box made us leap for joy. To think of going to the theatre every evening for a whole month, we children who had hitherto been to see a play only once a year, and who treasured in our minds no other dramatic memory than "*la Comtesse d'Escarbagnas*"!

That same evening we gave our mother no peace; she had to obey us, as mothers always do, and took us to the theatre. The usher showed us into a magnificent front box, ornamented with draperies of red calico with saffron rosettes. The play was "The Ruins of Babylon," a famous melodrama which at that time was having immense success all over France.

It was magnificent, at Bayonne at least. Apricot chevaliers and Arabs clad from head to foot in cloth of iron, arose each instant, then were swallowed up again, amid a terrible prose, in pasteboard ruins full of traps and gins. We had the caliph Haroun and the eunuch Giafar. We were full of admiration.

When next evening came we again tormented our mother, and she again obeyed our behests. Behold us at the play in our rosetted box. What were they going to give us? We were a prey to anxiety. The curtain rose. Giafar appeared; "The Ruins of Babylon" was

repeated. That did not spoil our pleasure. We were glad to see that fine work a second time, and it amused us no less than at first.

The third day our mother was kind as usual and we went to the theatre once more. "The Ruins of Babylon" was given. We were pleased to see the piece, though we should have preferred some other ruins. The fourth evening, certainly the play would be changed; we went; my mother let us have our own way, and smilingly accompanied us. "The Ruins of Babylon" was given. This time we went to sleep.

The fifth day early in the morning we sent Bertrand, our mother's *valet de chambre* to see the poster. "The Ruins of Babylon" was announced. We besought our mother not to take us to the theatre. The sixth day "The Ruins of Babylon" still held the boards. That lasted the whole month through. One fine day a change of bill was announced. That day we left.

The memory of that led me somewhere to speak of "that teasing chance which cheats the child."

However, with the exception of "The Ruins of Babylon," I recall with pleasurable emotions that month spent at Bayonne. There was along the water underneath the trees a fine promenade, where we went every evening. As we passed by the theatre, to which we no longer thought of going, we made faces at it; it filled us with a sort of ennui mingled with horror. Then we would sit down on a bench, we would gaze at the ships and listen while our mother talked, — that noble and saintly woman, who is now only a figure in my memory, but

who will shed a bright light into my soul and over my life until life shall end.

The house where we stayed was fascinating. I remember my window where hung handsome ears of ripe corn. During all that long month we had not a dull moment; I must except "The Ruins of Babylon."

One day we went to see a vessel of the line anchored at the mouth of the Adour. An English squadron had given it chase; after a battle lasting several hours it had taken refuge there and the English had blockaded it. I still seem to see as if with my visual eyes that splendid ship lying a quarter of a mile off shore, gleaming in the bright sunlight, all her sails furled, proudly riding the water and seeming to me to assume a strangely threatening attitude; for had she not just emerged from a storm of shell, and might she not perhaps take part in the battle again?

Our house was close up against the ramparts. There, on the slopes of green turf, amid cannon embedded in the grass and mortars lying mouth downward on the ground, we went to play every morning.

In the evening, Abel, my poor Eugène, and myself, grouped around our mother, used to smear the saucers of a paint-box and to the best of our ability and in the most blood-curdling manner illuminate the engravings in an old copy of the Arabian Nights. The copy had been given to me by General Lahorie, my godfather, who died on the field of Grenelle a few months after the period of which I am speaking.

Eugène and I bought all the goldfinches and greenfinches which the small boys of the town brought to us.

We used to put these poor birds in osier cages. When a cage was filled we would buy another. We soon had five cages all full. When we had to go away we set free all these pretty birds. This was at once a delight and a keen pang for us.

A lady of the town, a widow I believe, rented the house to my mother. This widow herself lived in a pavilion near our lodgings. She had a daughter fourteen or fifteen years old. After thirty years none of the features of that angelic face has faded from my memory.

I still seem to see her. She was fair and slender and seemed to me very tall. She had sweet, mysterious eyes, with a Vergilian profile such as you associate with Amaryllis or Galatea flying away under the willows. Her neck was admirably modelled and adorable in its purity of outline; her hand was small, her arm white, the elbow a little too red, as is apt to be the case with a girl of her age; but this trifle I at my age overlooked. She habitually wore on her head a tea-colored madras trimmed with green, tightly drawn down from the top of her head to the nape of her neck, so as to leave the brow uncovered and conceal only a part of the hair. I don't remember what kind of a dress she wore.

This pretty little girl used to come to play with us. Occasionally Abel and Eugène, who were older and more serious than I, "acting like grown-up men," as my mother said, went to see the target practice on the ramparts or retired to their room to study Sobrino and turn the pages of Cormon. Then, being alone and feeling bored, I did not know what to do with myself, and she would call me and say:—

"Come, and I will read you something."

In the court-yard there was a door at the top of several steps and closed by a great rusty bolt which I can still see, — a round bolt with a handle like a pig's tail, such as are found sometimes in old cellars. She would go and sit down on these steps. I would stand behind her, leaning my back against the door.

She used to read to me from some book or other which lay open on her knees. Over our heads spread a dazzling blue sky, and the unclouded sun filled the lindens with light and changed the green leaves into leaves of gold. A warm breeze sucked through the crannies of the old door and caressed our faces. She would be bending over her book and reading aloud.

While she read I did not listen to get the sense of the words, I only listened to the sound of her voice. Now and again my eyes would fall upon her, my glance would be attracted by her lace opened at the neck, and I saw with a disquietude mingled with strange fascination her round white bosom gently rising and falling in the shadow, vaguely gilded by the warm reflection of the sun.

It sometimes happened at such moments that she would suddenly lift her great blue eyes and say to me :—

"There, Victor, you are not listening."

I was quite confused, I blushed and trembled and I pretended to be playing with the great bolt. I never used to kiss her of my own accord ; she used to call me and say, —

"Come, kiss me."

The day that we took our departure I had two great sorrows, — to leave her and to set my birds free.

What did that mean, my friend? What feeling could it have been that I, such a small boy, experienced when in the presence of this tall, pretty, innocent young girl? I did not know then. I have often pondered on it since.

Bayonne has remained in my memory as a rosy and smiling spot. The earliest remembrance of my heart is connected with it. An innocent period, and yet already beginning to be gently troubled. There I saw dawning in the most hidden recesses of my soul that first inexpressible gleam, the divine daybreak of the soul.

Do you not find, my friend, that such a memory is a tie, and a tie that nothing can destroy?

Strange that two beings can be fastened by this chain all their lives long, and yet not miss each other, and not seek each other, and be strangers to each other, and not even know each other! The chain attaching me to that sweet girl has never been broken, but the clew is gone.

I had hardly reached Bayonne before I made the circuit of the town by way of the ramparts in search of the house, in search of the gate, in search of the bolt. I found nothing at all, or at least recognised nothing.

Where is she? What is she doing? If she is alive she is doubtless married, and has children. She is a widow perhaps, and is growing old, as I am. How can it be that beauty passes away and the woman remains? Is the woman matured the same being as the young girl of long ago?

Who knows? — I may have just met her! Perhaps she is the very woman of whom I asked my way a little while

ago, and who as I walked off watched me wondering who the stranger was.

What bitter sadness there is in all this! So, then, we are only shadows. We pass out of sight one after the other, and vanish like puffs of smoke in the deep blue heaven of Eternity. Men are in space what hours are in time: when the clock strikes they are gone. Where goes our youth? Where goes our childhood? Alas!

Where is the fair young maiden of 1812? Where is the child that I then was? We came in contact with each other at that time, and now perchance we are still in contact with each other, and yet there is an abyss between us. The memory, that bridge into the past, is broken between her and me. She would not know my face, and I should not recognise the sound of her voice. She no longer knows my name, and I do not know hers.

July 27.

I have little to tell you of Bayonne. Nothing could be finer than the situation of the city, amid green hills, at the confluence of the Nive and the Adour, making a miniature Gironde. But of this pretty city and of this beautiful location a citadel had to be constructed.

Woe to those landscapes which it is deemed necessary to fortify! I have already said once and I cannot refrain from repeating it: what a melancholy ravine is a zig-zag fosse! what an ugly hillside is an escarpment with its counter-escarpment! 'Tis a masterpiece of Vauban, is it? Very well! But it is certain that Vauban's masterpieces spoil the good God's masterpieces!

The cathedral at Bayonne is a quite handsome fourteenth-century church, buff (*amadou*) in tone and much worn away by the sea-wind. I never anywhere saw richer and more capricious windows formed by the mullions in the inside of the ogives. In this lies all the solidity of the fourteenth century mingled without any loss of warmth, with all the fine fancy of the fifteenth.

Here and there are several beautiful examples of stained glass, almost all dating from the sixteenth century. At the right of what used to be the principal entrance, I admired a little bay the design of which is formed of flowers and leaves marvellously combined into rose-mullions. The doors are characterised by grandeur. They are great black crescents studded with big nails and relieved with gilded iron knockers. Only one of these knockers is left, and that is of beautiful Byzantine work.

The church is flanked on the south by a vast cloister of the same period. They are now restoring this with considerable good-sense. It formerly communicated with the choir by a magnificent entrance, now walled up and white-washed. The ornamentation and the statues remind one of Amiens, Reims, and Chartres by reason of their grand style.

There were in the church and in the cloister many tombs which have been torn up. A few mutilated sarcophaguses still cling to the walls. They are empty. What dust disgusting to see takes the place of human dust! The spider spins her web in these sombre lodgings of the dead.

I paused in a chapel where only the place of one of

these sepulchres now remains ; it is recognisable by the scars in the wall. Nevertheless the owner had taken his precautions to preserve his tomb. *This sepulchre belongs to him*, as is still claimed by an inscription on black marble fastened on the stone. "Le 22 Avril, 1664," if one may put any trust in the same inscription, which I quote word for word,—

"C. Reboul, the royal notary and the members of the chapter" had given to "Pierre de Baraduc, bourgeois and watchman (*homme d'armes*) at the old castle of this city, title and possession of this sepulchre, to be enjoyed by him and his."

In this connection my visit to Saint-Michel at Bordeaux, concerning which I promised to tell you, comes to mind.

I had just come out of the church, which belongs to the thirteenth century, and is very remarkable, especially by reason of its doors and an exquisite chapel of the Virgin, sculptured — I should say, wrought — by the admirable "figurists" of the time of Louis XII. I was gazing up at the campanile, which stands at the side of the church, and is surmounted by a semaphore. It used to be a superb spire three hundred feet high ; it is now a tower of the strangest and most original appearance.

For any one not knowing that this spire was struck by lightning in 1768, and was crumbled by the fire which at the same time burned up the frame-work of the church, there is a perfect problem in this enormous tower which seems at once military and ecclesiastical, as stern as a dungeon, and yet ornamented like a belfry. There are no longer any *abat-vents* in the upper bays ; the bells are

gone, there are no chimes, even the bell-tongues are lacking.

The tower, though still crowned by an octagonal block with eight gables, is broken and truncated on top. You feel that it is decapitated and dead. The wind and the daylight are free to sweep through its long windowless ogives, as if through a vast skeleton. It is no longer a belfry, it is the skeleton of a belfry.

So I was alone in the court-yard planted with a few trees amid which rose this isolated campanile. This court-yard was the ancient cemetery.

Although I was somewhat distressed by the heat of the sun, I was studying this melancholy and magnificent ruin, and endeavouring to read its history in its architecture and its tribulations in its wounds. You know that an edifice interests me almost in the same way that a human being does. It is for me to a certain degree a person whose adventures I strive to learn.

I was standing there quite lost in thought when I suddenly heard at a few steps' distance, the word, "Monsieur! Monsieur!"

I look. I listen. No one! The court-yard was deserted. A number of sparrows were chattering in the old cemetery trees. Nevertheless, a voice had called to me,— a feeble, gentle, broken voice, which still kept ringing in my ears.

I take a few steps forward and hear the voice again,— "Monsieur!"

This time I turn around swiftly and perceive at the angle of the court-yard, near the door, an old woman's face

peering from a window. This window, frightfully dilapidated, revealed the interior of a wretched chamber.

Near the old woman was an old man.

Never in my life did I ever see anything more completely broken down than that lair, unless it were that couple. The inside of their hovel was whitened with that chalky white which reminds one of a shroud, and I saw no other furniture than the two stools whereon sat those two specimens of humanity, with their little gray eyes fixed on me, with tanned, wrinkled, weather-beaten faces, seemingly coated with bistre and bitumen; they seemed enveloped, rather than clad, with old winding-sheets made over for them.

I am not like Salvator Rosa, who said: "Me figuro il sepolcro in ogni loco."

Yet even at mid-day, under this warm and brilliant sun, the apparition startled me for a moment, and methought I heard my name called from the depths of an antediluvian crypt by two spectres four thousand years old.

After a few seconds' reflection, I gave them fifteen sous. It was merely the gate-keeper of the cemetery and his wife, — Philemon and Baucis.

Philemon, dazzled by the fifteen-sou piece, made a frightful grimace of astonishment and delight, and put the coin in a kind of old leathern pocket nailed to the wall. "Another insult of time" (*autre injure des ans*), to use the words of La Fontaine; and Baucis said to me with an amiable smile:—

"Do you want to see the charnel-house?"

The word that she used — *le charnier* — brought up to

my mind some vague memory of something which indeed I felt that I ought to know about, and I replied : —

“ Gladly, madam.”

“ I thought so,” continued the old woman, and she added : —

“ Hold, here is the bell-ringer ; he will show it to you ; 't is well worth seeing.”

As she spoke she laid on my hand in a friendly way her red, diaphanous, trembling hand, hairy and cold as the wing of a bat.

The new-comer, who had doubtless smelt the odour of the fifteen-sou piece, was standing a few steps distant on the outer stairway of the tower, the door of which he had opened.

He was a lusty fellow of about thirty-six, stout, robust, fat, fresh, and rosy, with all the appearance of a gourmand, as is proper for a man who lives at the expense of the dead. My two spectres had a vampire to complete their number.

The old woman introduced me to the bell-ringer with considerable formality : —

“ Here is an English gentleman who wants to see the charnel-house.”

The vampire, without saying a word, climbed up the few steps which he had descended, pushed the tower-door wide open, and beckoned to me to follow him. I went in. Never saying a word, he closed the door behind me.

We found ourselves in deep darkness ; yet there was a taper in the corner of a step behind a great paving-stone. By the light of this taper, I saw the bell-ringer stoop over

and pick up a lamp. Having lighted the lamp he started down the steps of a narrow winding-stair; I followed his example.

At the end of a dozen steps, I believe I bent over to pass through a low door, and then ascended two or three steps, still under the ringer's guidance. These details are somewhat hazy in my mind; I was plunged into a sort of reverie which caused me to walk as if in a dream. Then at last the bell-ringer stretched out to me his great bony hand; I felt that our steps were echoing on a flooring; we were in a very gloomy place, a sort of dark vault.

I shall never forget what I then saw.

The bell-ringer, mute and immovable, stood upright in the middle of the vault, leaning against a post erected in the floor, and with his left hand lifted his lamp above his head. I looked around us. A misty, diffused glimmer vaguely lighted the vault, and I could make out the ogive roof.

Suddenly, as I fastened my eyes on the wall, I saw that we were not alone.

Strange figures, standing up and resting against the wall, surrounded us on all sides. By the lamp-light, I could see them confusedly through the mist that filled the low and dim places.

Imagine a circle of frightful faces, in the centre of which I was standing. The black and naked bodies were jumbled together and hidden by the darkness; but I could distinctly see, emerging from the night and leaning toward me in a huddled throng, forbidding, terrible faces, seeming

to call to me with wide-opened mouths but voiceless, and to gaze at me with eyeless sockets.

What were these figures? Statues doubtless. I took the lamp from the bell-ringer's hand and went toward them.

They were corpses!

In 1793, while they were violating the burial-place of the kings in Paris, they were violating the burial-place of the people at Bordeaux. Royalty and the people are two sovereignties; the populace insulted them both at once. This proves, if I may say so to those who are unacquainted with this grammar, that *people* and *populace* are not synonymous.

The cemetery of Saint-Michel at Bordeaux was devastated like the rest. The coffins were torn out of the ground and all that human dust was flung to the winds. When the pickaxe came close to the foundations of the tower, to the surprise of every one no more rotten coffins or dislocated vertebrae were met, but whole bodies, dessicated and preserved by the clay which had covered them so many years. This inspired the creation of a charnel museum. The idea was appropriate to the epoch.

The little children of the Rue Montfaucon and of the Bègles road used to play knuckle-bones with the fragments scattered from the cemetery. They were taken out of their possession; all that could be found was gathered together, and the bones were deposited in the lower vault of the Saint-Michel campanile. It made a heap seventeen feet deep; a flooring with a balustrade was fitted over it.

All this was crowned with the corpses so strangely

undecayed which had been disinterred. There were seventy of them. They were arranged against the wall in the circular space between it and the balustrade. My feet echoed over this flooring. I was walking over those bones; it was the corpses that were gazing at me.

The bell-ringer had produced his effect, — for this artist makes a melodrama out of the surprise; he approached me and deigned to address me. He gave me an explanation of his corpses. The vampire became a cicerone. It seemed as if a museum catalogue were chattering. At times it was such eloquence as a bear-trainer uses, —

“Look at this one, sir; 'tis No. 1. He has all his teeth. See how well-preserved No. 2 is; yet he's nigh four hundred years old. As for No. 3, you would think he was breathing and listening to us. That is not so strange, for he has been dead only about sixty years. He's one of the youngest here. I know folks here in the city who knew him.”

Thus he continued on his round, passing gracefully from one spectre to another, and rattling off his lesson with imperturbable memory. When I interrupted him with a question in the midst of one of his phrases, he would reply in his natural voice, then take up his phrase at the very spot where I had cut him short. Occasionally he would rap on the mummies with a switch which he held; it made the skin sound like an empty valise.

What indeed is a man's body after thought is no longer in it but an empty valise?

I can't imagine a more frightful spectacle. Dante and Orcagna never dreamed anything more lugubrious. The

death-dances at the Bridge, at Lucerne, and in the Campo-Santo at Pisa are only shadows of this reality.

There was a negress hanging on a nail by a cord passing under the armpits, and leering at me with a hideous grin. In one corner were grouped a whole family, who died, it is said, from eating toad-stools; there were four of them; the mother with bowed head seeming to be still trying to pacify her youngest child, who was undergoing the death-agony between her knees; the eldest son, preserving in his profile something of his youthful looks, was leaning his brow on his father's shoulder.

A woman, who had died of cancer in the breast, strangely bent back her arm as though to display the wound enlarged by the horrible work of death.

By her side stood a gigantic stevedore, who one day wagered that he would lug two thousand pounds from the Caillau gate to the Chartrons. He lugged them, won his wager, and died. The man killed by a wager was cheek by jowl with a man killed in a duel. The hole made by the sword, where death entered, was still visible on the right of that gory breast.

A few steps away struggled a poor boy of fifteen years, who, it was said, had been buried alive. There you find the very climax of the frightful. This spectre suffers. After six hundred years he still agonizes against the vanished coffin. He lifts the coffin-lid with skull and knee. He digs his heels and elbows into the oaken plank. He breaks his desperate nails against the wooden walls; his chest heaves, the muscles of the neck swell in a frightful manner; he shrieks. You do not hear that shriek, but you see it. It is horrible.

The last of the seventy is the most ancient. He dates from eight hundred years back. The bell-ringer, with some coquetry, called my attention to his teeth and hair. On one side is a small baby.

On turning back, I noticed one of these phantoms seated on the ground near the door. Its neck was stretched out, its head was raised; its mouth seemed as if it was uttering a lamentation, its hand was open; it wore a loin-cloth; one leg and one foot were bare, and from the other thigh protruded a fleshless tibia stretched out on a stone like a wooden leg. It seemed to be begging alms. Nothing stranger and more mysterious than such a beggar at such a door.

What should one give? What alms should one put into its hand? What coin do the dead demand? I stood long motionless before the apparition, and my reverie gradually grew into a prayer.

When you recall that all these masks, to-day enchained in this icy silence and in these ghastly attitudes, once lived, once palpitated, suffered, loved; when you recall that they once enjoyed the spectacle of Nature, the trees, the country, the flowers, the sun and the blue vault of the heavens instead of this livid vault; when you recall that they once had youth, life, beauty, joy, pleasure; when you recall that they, like us, took part in festal scenes and indulged in similar long outbursts of careless and forgetful laughter; when you recall that they were what we are, and that we shall be what they are; when you find yourself, alas! thus face to face with your future, a pitiful thought comes into your mind; you try in vain to

cling to the earthy things which you own ; one after another they crumble in your hands like sand, and you feel yourself falling into an abyss.

For one who looks on these human relics with the eye of the flesh, there is nothing more hideous. Ragged shrouds scarcely conceal them, the ribs appear bare across the torn wall of diaphragm, the teeth are yellow, the nails black, the hair thin and rumped. The skin is a tawny leather exuding a grayish dust ; the muscles are flabby, the viscera and the intestines resolve themselves into a sort of ruddy tow, from which hang horrible threads silently woven in the darkness by Death's invisible distaff. In the depths of the belly you see the spinal column.

"Monsieur," said the man, "how well-preserved they are!"

For those who look with the eyes of the spirit nothing is more formidable.

The bell-ringer, seeing my revery prolonged, softly slipped out and left me alone. When this man had disappeared, it seemed to me that something that weighed on me had disappeared. I felt myself, as it were, in direct and intimate communication with the sad inhabitants of this vault.

I looked with a sort of dizziness on this circle closing me in, at once motionless and convulsive. Some let their arms hang, others intertwined them, some clasped their hands. Certain it is that an expression of terror and anguish marks all these faces that have seen the interior of the tomb. However the grave treats them, corpses are terrible.

As for me, as you must have already gathered, these were not mummies in my eyes, they were phantoms. I saw all these faces turned to one another, all these ears seemingly listening as they leaned over toward all those mouths that seemed to be whispering together, and methought these corpses, torn out of the ground and condemned to a perpetual existence, were living in the night of a frightful and eternal life, that they were talking together in the thick fogginess of their dungeon, that they were relating to one another the sombre adventures of the soul in the grave, and that they were whispering all sorts of inexpressible things.

What horrifying dialogues! what could they be saying? Oh, abysses wherein the thought is lost! They know what is behind life. They know the secret of the great journey. They have doubled the promontory. The vast cloud is torn away for them. The rest of us are still in the country of conjectures, of hopes, of ambitions, of passions, of all the follies which we call "acts of wisdom," of all the chimæras which we call truths. They have entered into the region of the infinite, the immutable, the reality. They know the things that are, and mayhap the only things that are. All the questions that occupy us dreamers, us philosophers, night and day, all the subjects of our meditations, the aim of life, the object of creation, the persistence of the ego, the ulterior state of the soul, they know absolutely; they know the key to all our enigmas. They know the end of all our beginnings. Why have they this terrible appearance? What has given their faces that expression of despair and terror?

If our ears were not too gross to hear their speech, if God had not set between us and them that insurmountable wall of the flesh and of life, what would they not tell us? What revelations would they not bring to us? What counsels would they not give us? Should we issue from their hands wise or mad? What do they bring us from the tomb?

It would be something overwhelmingly frightful if we trusted the appearance of these spectres. But it is only an appearance and it would be height of foolishness to believe in it. Whatever we dreamers may do, we penetrate only to a very limited distance below the surface of things. The sphere of the infinite can no more be penetrated by thought than the terrestrial globe by sounding.

The various philosophies are only artesian wells; they all bring out from the same soil the same water, the same truth mixed with human mud and warmed by the warmth of God. But no well and no philosophy ever reaches the centre of things. Genius itself, which is the most powerful of all sounding-lines, can never touch the flaming nucleus,—being, the mystic geometric point, the ineffable centre of Truth. We shall never compel from the rock anything more than a single drop of water now and then, and now and then a spark of fire.

Nevertheless, let us meditate. Let us strike the rock, let us dig into the soil. It is to fulfil a law. We must meditate as others must plough.

And then let us resign ourselves. The secret which philosophy would like to wrest away is guarded by Nature. Now who can ever conquer thee, O Nature?

We see only one side of things ; God sees the other.

The relics of humanity frighten us when we contemplate them ; but they are, after all, nothing but relics, something empty and vain and uninhabited. It seems to us that this ruin reveals to us horrible things. No, it frightens us, and that is all.

Do we see the mind ? Do we see the soul ? Do we see the spirit ? Do we know what the spirit of the dead would say to us if it were given to us to communicate with it in its glorious radiance ? Let us not believe therefore in the body which is so horribly disintegrated and which is so reluctant to be destroyed ; let us not believe either in the corpse, or in the skeleton, or in the mummy ; and let us remember that if there be darkness in the sepulchre, there is also light. While the body remained in the darkness the soul was dwelling in the light ; the soul contemplates this light. What though the body grimaces, if only the soul smiles ?

I was plunged in this chaos of thoughts. These corpses holding each other in mute converse no longer inspired me with terror ; I felt almost at ease among them.

Suddenly I know not how it came into my mind that at that very instant, on the top of this tower of Saint-Michel, two hundred feet above these spectres who in the darkness were exchanging their mysterious communications, a semaphore, a miserable wooden apparatus manipulated by a cord, was gesticulating in the clouds and flinging out one after another through space in that mysterious language peculiar to it also, all those imperceptible things which the next day would be — the newspaper.

Never have I had a clearer appreciation than at that moment of the vanity of all that which we are so excited about. What a poem, this tower of Saint-Michel! What a contrast and what a lesson! On its summit, in the light and in the sun, amidst the azure of the skies, in the eyes of the busy throng swarming in the streets, a telegraph gesticulating and behaving like Pasquin on his little stage, telling and retailing minutely all the petty facts of the day's doings and the politics of the moment, — Espartero's downfall, Narvaez's rise, Lopez's pursuit of Mendizabal, the great microscopic events, the infusoria becoming dictators, the volvoes becoming tribunes, the vibrions becoming tyrants, all these littlenesses which go to make up the passing man and the fleeting moment, — and all the time, at its base, in the very midst of the masonry whereon the tower stands, in a crypt where never penetrates a ray or a sound, a council of spectres, seated in a circle in the darkness, speaking silently of the tomb and of eternity.

IV.

BIARRITZ.

July 25.

YOU know, my friend, the three points of the Norman coast which please me most, — Bourg-d'eau, Tréport, and Étretat; Étretat with its immense arches carved by the waves in the cliff; Tréport with its ancient church, its ancient stone cross, and its old port where swarm the fishing-boats; Bourg-d'eau with its wide Gothic street coming down abruptly into the open sea. Well, then, henceforth include Biarritz with Tréport, Étretat, and Bourg-d'eau among the places which I should choose for the "delight of my eyes" to use Fénelon's expression.

I know of no place more charming and more magnificent than Biarritz. There are no trees, say those who criticise everything, even the good God in his most beautiful works. But there had to be a choice, — either the ocean or the forest. The sea-breeze stunts the trees.

Biarritz is a white village with red roofs and green shutters, and it stands on ridges of turf and briers, the undulations of which it follows. You leave the village, you descend the dunes, the sand gives way under your feet, and suddenly you find yourself on a gentle, smooth

beach, in the midst of an inextricable labyrinth of rocks, chambers, arcades, grottoes and caverns, — a strange architecture flung pell-mell into the midst of the waves, and filled by the sky with sunlight and shadows, by the sea with foam, and by the wind with noise.

Nowhere else have I ever seen old Neptune ruin old Cybele with more power, gayety, and grandeur. This whole coast is full of uproar. The gulf of Gascogne eats it away and destroys it, and prolongs its immense murmurs into its stretching reefs. Yet I have never wandered over this deserted beach, at any hour, without a great peace taking possession of my heart. The tumults of Nature do not disturb solitude.

You cannot picture to your imagination all the life palpitating and growing in the apparent disorder of a crumbling sea-shore. A crust of living shells covers the rocks. Zoöphytes and mollusks swim and float, themselves transparent in the transparency of the waves. The water trickles drop by drop, and sheds long pearly tears down through the arching grottoes. Crabs and snails crawl among the varechs and sea-weeds, which outline on the wet sand the form of the waves whereon they came ashore.

Above the caverns grows a whole botany, strange and unpublished almost, the astragalus of Bayonne, the Gallic pink, the sea-flax, the pimpernel-leaved rosebush, the thyme-leaved snap-dragon.

There are narrow creeks where poor fishermen, squatting round an old smack, are engaged in cleaning the fish caught the night before, while the rising or falling tide

makes its deafening uproar on the shingle. Young bare-footed girls come down to wash in the waves the skins of the dog-fish, and every time that the foaming white billows come leaping suddenly toward them like a surly lion, they lift their petticoats and run back with loud shouts of laughter.

They bathe at Biarritz as at Dieppe, as at Havre, as at Tréport; but with a certain unconventionality inspired by the beautiful skies and tolerated by this delicious climate. Women, wearing the latest Parisian styles of bonnets, enveloped from head to foot in great shawls, with lace veils on their faces, with downcast eyes disappear into one or another of the canvas booths with which the beach is dotted, and a moment later they come out again bare-legged, dressed in a simple brown linen chemise, which in many cases reaches scarcely below the knee, and with merry laughter they run down and jump into the sea. This freedom, mingled with the joy of man and the grandeur of the sky, has its grace.

The village girls and the pretty grisettes from Bayonne go in bathing with serge chemises often very full of holes, and they seem to care too little for what the holes display or what the chemises conceal.

The second day that I went to Biarritz, as I was walking at low tide among the grottoes, hunting for shells and scaring the crabs, which scuttled off sidewise and buried themselves in the sand, I heard a voice proceeding from behind a rock and singing the following couplet in a patois, which did not prevent me from distinguishing the words:—

Gastibelza, l'homme à la carabine,
 Chantait ainsi:
 Quelqu'un a-t-il connu doña Sabine,
 Quelqu'un d'ici ?
 Dansez, chantez, villageois, la nuit gagne
 Le mont Falou.
 Le vent qui vient à travers la montagne ¹
 Me rendra fou.

It was a woman's voice. I came out on the other side of the rock. The singer was a bather, — a pretty young girl, dressed in a white chemise and a short skirt, swimming in a little creek shut in by two reefs at the entrance of a grotto. Her peasant's costume was lying on the sand at the end of the grotto. When she saw me she came half out of the water and began to sing her second stanza, and seeing that I stood motionless listening on the rock, she smiled and said in a jargon of mingled French and Spanish: —

“Señor estrangero, conoce usted cette chanson?”—
 “Stranger, do you know that song?”

“I think I do,” said I, “slightly.”

Then I went off, but she did not send me away.

Don't you find in this a certain resemblance to Ulysses listening to the siren? Nature is constantly casting aside and then restoring to us again with new life the numberless themes and motives whereupon the imagination of man has constructed all the old songs and all the old mythologies.

¹ Gastibelza, the man with the carbine, thus sang: Has any one known doña Sabine, — any one from here? Dance, sing, villagers, the night conquers Mount Falou. The wind which blows across the mountain will make me mad.

On the whole, with its cordial population, its pretty white houses, its ample dunes, its fine sand, its enormous grottoes, its superb sea, Biarritz is an admirable place.

I have only one fear, and that is lest it should become the fashion. Already people are beginning to come here from Madrid ; soon they will be coming from Paris.

Then Biarritz, this village so country-like, so rustic and so unsophisticated still, will catch the evil hunger for money, the *sacra fames*. Then Biarritz will put poplars on its bluffs, staircases on its precipices, boards on its dunes, kiosks on its rocks, benches around its grottoes, trousers on its bathers. Biarritz will become modest and rapacious. That prudery which, as Molière says, "has nothing chaste in the whole body but the ears," will take the place of the free and innocent familiarity of these young women playing with the sea.

People will read the newspapers at Biarritz, tragedy and melodrama will be played at Biarritz. O Zaïre ! what dost thou want of me ? In the evening they will go to the concert, for there will be a concert every evening and a singer in *i* ; a pot-bellied, fifty-year-old nightingale will sing soprano cavatinas a few steps distant from this old ocean, which chants the eternal music of the tides, the hurricanes, and the tempests.

Then Biarritz will no longer be Biarritz. It will be something colorless and bastard, like Dieppe and Ostende.

Nothing is grander than a hamlet of fishermen, full of antique and simple customs, built on the shore of the ocean ; nothing is grander than a city which seems to have the function of thinking for the whole human race

and of proposing to the world new things, often difficult and terrible, which civilisation craves for itself. Nothing is smaller, more contemptible, more ridiculous than a pseudo Paris.

Cities washed by the sea ought to preserve as a precious inheritance the physiognomy furnished them by their situation. The ocean has all graces, all beauties, all grandeurs. When one has the ocean, what is the good of copying Paris.

Already several symptoms seems to foretell this coming transformation of Biarritz. Ten years ago people came here from Bayonne *en cacolet*, that is, on mule-back; two years ago, they came in coucous; now they come in 'buses. A hundred years ago, twenty years ago people bathed in the old port, a little bay dominated by two ancient dismantled towers. To-day they bathe at the new port. Ten years ago there was scarcely a tavern at Biarritz; to-day there are three or four hotels.

Not that I object to the 'buses, or the new port where the surf is finer than in the old port and where bathing is consequently more pleasurable, nor the hotels which have no other fault beside not having windows facing the sea; but I fear the other possible improvements, and I should like to have Biarritz remain Biarritz. So far all is well, but let us stay as we are!

However, the omnibus line from Bayonne to Biarritz was not established without resistance. The coucou struggled against the 'bus just as doubtless ten years ago the cacolet struggled against the coucou. All the common carriers of the city were up in arms against two saddlers,

Castex and Anatole, who conceived the idea of the 'buses. There is a league, competition, coalition. It is an Iliad of hack-drivers exposing the traveller's purse to strange shocks.

The morning after my arrival at Bayonne I wanted to go to Biarritz. Not knowing the way I addressed a passer-by, a peasant of Navarre dressed in a handsome costume; for he wore wide trousers of olive velvet, a red belt, a shirt with a wide rolling collar fastened with a gold ring, a waistcoat of coarse chocolate-coloured cloth all embroidered with brown silk, and a little velvet-trimmed Henry II. hat set off with a curled black ostrich feather. I asked this magnificent creature the road to Biarritz.

"Take the Pont-Magour Street," he replied, "and follow it till you reach the Spanish gate."

"Is it easy," I asked further, "to find carriages to go to Biarritz?"

The Navarre peasant looked at me with a grave smile, and said with his native accent this memorable sentence, the depth of which I did not appreciate until much later:—

"Monsieur, it is easy to go there, but hard to get back."

I took the Pont-Magour Street.

On my way up I came across many posters of various colours in which livery-men offered the public carriages for Biarritz at various fair prices; I observed, but very indifferently, that all these posters ended with the invariable notice: "These prices remain the same until eight o'clock P. M."

I reached the Spanish gate. There were grouped in

wild confusion a large number of vehicles of every kind, — char-à-bancs, cabs, coucous, barges, barouches, coupés, 'buses. I had scarcely glanced at all this swarm of teams, when I found myself surrounded by another kind of swarm. It was the drivers. In a moment I was deafened. All the voices, all the accents, all the different kinds of patois, all the objurgations, and all the offers at once.

One took me by the right arm.

"Monsieur, I am Monsieur Cortex's driver; take your place on the front seat, — fifteen sous for a seat."

Another took me by the left arm.

"Monsieur, I am Ruspit; I also have a front seat, — a place for twelve sous."

A third blocked my way.

"Monsieur, it is I, Anatole. Here is my barouche; I will take you for ten sous."

A fourth shouted in my ear: —

"Monsieur, come with Momus; I am Momus, — full speed to Biarritz for six sous."

"Five sous!" cried others around me.

"See, monsieur, this handsome carriage, — Le Sultan de Biarritz; a place for five sous."

The first man who had spoken to me, and who still held me by the right arm, at last got the upper hand of the crowd.

"Monsieur, it was I who first spoke to you. I claim your preference."

"He asked fifteen sous," shouted the other drivers.

"Monsieur," continued the man, coldly, "I ask you three sous."

There was a perfect silence.

"I spoke to monsieur first," added the man.

Then taking advantage of his rival's amazement, he quickly opened the door of his vehicle and put me into the coupé, before I had time to realise where I was; he shut the door, climbed to his box, and was off at a gallop. His omnibus was full. He seemed to have been waiting for no one else but me.

The vehicle was quite new and very good; the horses excellent. In less than half an hour we were at Biarritz.

When we got there, not wishing to take advantage of my position, I took out of my pocket fifteen sous and gave them to the driver. As I was turning away he seized me by the sleeve.

"Monsieur," said he, "it is only three sous."

"Bah!" I rejoined, "you said fifteen at first. It shall be fifteen sous."

"No, monsieur, I said that I would bring you here for three sous. It is three sous."

He returned the change to me and almost compelled me to keep it.

"By Jove!" said I to myself as I started off, "that's an honest man."

The other passengers had, like myself, paid only three sous. Toward evening, after I had walked all day long on the sea-shore, I bethought myself of returning to Bayonne. I was tired, and I remembered with considerable pleasure the excellent carriage and the virtuous driver who had brought me there. Eight o'clock was striking on the distant clocks in the plain as I climbed up the steep

incline of the old port. I paid no heed to a throng of pedestrians coming up from all directions and evidently hastening to reach the village entrance where the carriage stand was. The evening was superb; a few stars were beginning to dot the clear twilight sky; the sea, scarcely stirring, had the opaque and dull reflection of an immense sheet of oil.

A revolving light had just been kindled on my right; it shone out, then faded away, then suddenly flashed out again and threw a quick and brilliant stream of light, as if it were trying to rival the eternal Sirius, who was beginning to beam in the mist at the other end of the horizon.

I paused and pondered for some time on this melancholy spectacle, which was for me like the type of human effort in presence of the divine power.

Meantime the night was growing darker, and at last the thought of Bayonne and of my inn suddenly flashed across my contemplation. I started off again and reached the carriage stand. There was only one vehicle left. A lantern set on the ground showed it to me. It was a barouche with four places; three of the places were already filled. As I came up, —

“Hé! monsieur, come along,” cried a voice addressing me; “it’s the last place, and we are the last carriage.”

I recognised the voice of my coachman of the morning; I had found once more that antique man. The chance seemed to me providential. I thanked God. A moment later and I should have been compelled to walk the distance back to Bayonne, — three good country leagues.

"By Jove!" said I, "you are a noble coachman, and I am glad to see you again."

"Hurry up and get in," said the man.

I hurriedly took my place in the barouche.

When I was seated the coachman, with his hand on the handle of the door, said to me:—

"Monsieur knows that the hour is past?"

"What hour?" I asked.

"Eight o'clock."

"That's so, I heard some clock striking."

"Monsieur knows," continued the man, "that after eight o'clock the price changes. We come here after passengers as an accommodation. It is the custom to pay in advance."

"Perfectly satisfactory," I replied, taking out my purse. "How much is it?"

The man answered pleasantly:—

"Monsieur, it is twelve francs."

I instantly understood the trick. In the morning the announcement is made that passengers would be carried to Biarritz for three sous apiece; there is a crowd who take advantage of it. In the evening this crowd is carried back to Bayonne for twelve francs a head.

I had that morning experienced my coachman's stoic unbendingness.

I replied never a word, and I paid his price.

But as we flew back toward Bayonne the fine maxim of the Navarre peasant recurred to my mind, and I made this translation of it into the vernacular for the benefit of travellers:—

“Carriages for Biarritz. Price for going, three sous each ; for returning, twelve francs each.”

Don't you find that is a fine oscillation ?

A short distance from Bayonne one of my travelling companions pointed out to me in the darkness on a hill the château of Marrac, or at least what remains of it at the present time.

The château of Marrac is famous for having been the head-quarters of the Emperor in 1808 at the time of the interview of Bayonne. Napoleon on this occasion had a grand idea, but Providence did not accept it ; and although Joseph I. governed the Castiles like a good and wise prince, the idea of giving a new dynasty to Spain, advantageous as it would have been to Europe, to France, to Spain, was fatal to Napoleon, as it had been to Louis XIV.

Josephine, who was a Creole and superstitious, accompanied the Emperor to Bayonne. She seemed to have strange presentiments, and like Nuñez Salado in the Spanish romance, she often repeated : “ Ill will result from this.”

To-day, at a distance of thirty years, we can see the under side of these events now buried in history ; we can distinguish in the minutest details all the sinister elements, and it is evident that Fatality held all the threads.

Here is one little incident, wholly unknown and deserving to be preserved :—

During his sojourn at Bayonne, the Emperor desired to visit the public works which he was executing at Le Boucaut. Inhabitants of Bayonne who were then young

men, still remember that the Emperor one morning went on foot down the path to the sea, intending to board the brigantine anchored in the harbour; in this he was to sail to the mouth of the Adour.

He offered his arm to Josephine. As usual he had his suite of kings, and on this occasion it was the princes of the South and the Spanish Bourbons who attended him: the old King Charles IV. and his queen; the Prince of the Asturias, who has since been crowned and is called Ferdinand VII.; Don Carlos, to-day the pretender under the name of Charles VI.

All the population of Bayonne was out by the sea and pressing around the Emperor, who was walking unguarded. Soon the throng became so numerous and so rude in their Southern curiosity that Napoleon doubled his pace. The poor Bourbons found great difficulty in keeping up with him.

The Emperor reached the yawl of the brigantine at such a swift pace that Josephine, in her anxiety to grasp the hand which the ship-captain extended to her as she was stepping on board, fell into the water up to her knees. In any other circumstances she would have turned it off with a laugh. The Duchess de C——, who told me the story, remarked:—

“That would have been a chance for her to display her leg, which was charming.”

It was remarked that this time she shook her head sadly. The omen was unpropitious.

All who took part in this incident met with a bad end. Napoleon died in exile. Josephine died divorced. Charles

IV. and his queen lost their crowns and died. As for those who were then young princes, one is dead—Ferdinand; the other, Don Carlos, is a prisoner. The brigantine on which the Emperor sailed was shipwrecked two years later with all on board, on Cape Ferret in the Bay of Arcachon; the captain who gave his hand to Josephine—his name was Lafon—was condemned to death and shot. Finally, the château of Marrac where Napoleon lodged was successively transformed into a barracks and a seminary, and then was destroyed in a fire. In 1820, one stormy night, it was set on fire at each of the four corners, and the perpetrators were never discovered.

V.

THE OX-CART.

SAINT-SÉBASTIEN, July 28.

YESTERDAY, the twenty-seventh of July, 1843, just as I was entering Spain between Bidart and San-Juan-de-Luz, at the door of a wretched tavern I met once again an old Spanish ox-cart. I mean by that the little Biscayan cart with two oxen, and two solid wheels turning with the axle and making a frightful racket which may be heard for a league among the mountains.

Do not smile, my friend, at the tender care with which I chronicle this memory so circumstantially. If you only knew how delightful to me is this racket which for every one else is so horrible! It recalls blessed days.

I was very small when I crossed these mountains the first time and heard it. Yesterday as soon as it struck my ear, merely to hear it made me suddenly feel young again; it seemed to me that all my vanished youth came to life again in me.

I can't tell you the strange and supernatural manner in which my memory came back to me as fresh as an April morning, the minutest details of that happy time appearing to me clear-cut, luminous, as if lighted by the rising sun.

The nearer the ox-cart approached with its wild music, the more distinctly I saw that fascinating past once more, and it seemed to me that between that past and to-day there was no interval. It was yesterday.

Oh! the delicious days, those sweet and radiant years! I was a child, I was young, I was loved. I was inexperienced, and I had my mother.

The other travellers were stopping up their ears; I, I had delight in my heart. Never did a chorus by Weber, never did a symphony by Beethoven, never did a melody by Mozart bring forth in a human soul such angelic and ineffable blossoms as the furious grinding of those two ill-greased solid wheels over an ill-paved track wakened in my soul.

The cart rattled on into the distance, the noise died away little by little, and in proportion as it faded out among the mountains, so faded the dazzling apparition of my infancy; then all became blurred, and when the last note of that melody (musical to me alone) had vanished, I found myself suddenly face to face with the reality, with the present, with life, with the night.

Blessings on that poor unknown drover, who had the mysterious power of irradiating my thought, and who, without realizing what he was doing, caused that magic evocation in my soul! May Heaven dwell with that chance passer-by who rejoiced a dreamer's gloomy spirit with an unexpected light!

My friend, this quite filled my heart. I will write you nothing further to-day.

VI.

FROM BAYONNE TO SAN-SEBASTIANO.

July 29.

I STARTED from Bayonne at sunrise. The route is delightful as it runs across a high plateau, with Biarritz on the right and the sea on the horizon. Nearer, a mountain; still nearer, a great green pool, at which a perfectly naked child was watering a cow. The landscape is magnificent, — blue skies, blue seas, brilliant sun. From the top of a hill an ass was gazing down on it all, —

In lazy unconcern,
A learned mandarin feeding on thistles.

Yonder is a pretty château of the time of Louis XIII., the last which France possesses in this direction toward the south.

At Bidart the horses are changed. I noticed at the church door a strange idol, worshipped at the present time just as of yore, — a god for the pagans, a saint for the Christians. Those who do not think, require fetishes.

San-Juan-de-Luz is a village lying at random in the anfractuositities of the mountains. A small turreted mansion, in the style of those of the hôtel d'Angoulême at the

Marais, was undoubtedly built for Mazarin at the time of Louis XIV.

La Bidassoa, a pretty river with a Basque name, seems to serve as the frontier for the two languages, as well as for the two countries, and keep its neutrality between the French and the Spanish.

We cross the bridge. At the northern end the carriage stops. Our passports are required. A soldier in torn duck trousers, and a green jacket patched with blue on the elbow and around the neck, makes his appearance at the carriage door. It is the sentinel; I am in Spain.

Here I am in the country where *v* is pronounced *b*. That was what delighted that old toper of a Scaliger. "Felices populi," he cried, "quibus *vivere* est *biberere*." — "Fortunate people, for whom *living* is *bibbing*."

I did not even cast a glance at the Isle of Pheasants, where the house of France wedded the house of Austria, where Mazarin, the athlete of astuteness, had a hand-to-hand struggle with Louis de Haro, the athlete of pride. Meantime a cow was cropping the grass. Is the picture less inspiring? Is the field disappointing? Machiavel would say, "Yes;" Hesiod would say, "No."

No pheasants in the island. The cow and three ducks stand for the pheasants, — dummies doubtless hired to play the part for the satisfaction of the passers-by.

That is the general rule. At Paris, at the Marais there is no marsh; in the Rue des Trois-Pavillons there are no flags; in the Rue de la Perle there are soiled pearls; in

the Isle of Swans there are only floatsam and jetsam and dead dogs. When a place is called the Island of Pheasants, you find ducks ! O travellers, impertinent curiosity-seekers, do not forget that !

We are at Irun.

My eyes looked eagerly for Irun. There it was that Spain appeared to me for the first time, and astonished me so much with its black houses, its narrow streets, its wooden balconies, and its fortress-doors, — me, a French boy accustomed to the mahogany of the empire. My eyes, used to studded bedsteads, swan-necked armchairs, Sphinx fire-dogs, gilded bronzes, and turquoise blue marbles, looked with a kind of terror on the great carved chests, tables with twisted feet, canopied beds, the clumsy and ungraceful plate, the leaded panes, all that old and new world that revealed itself to me.

Alas ! Irun is no longer Irun. Irun is now more "empire" and more mahogany than Paris. There are only white houses and green blinds. You feel that Spain, always lagging behind, is now reading Jean Jacques. Irun has lost all its physiognomy. O villages, how ugly you become when the attempt is made to embellish you. Where is history ? Where is the past ? Where is poetry ? Where are memories ? Irun is now like Les Batignolles.

There are not more than two or three black houses with overhanging balconies left. Still, I thought I recognised the old house opposite that which my mother occupied ; I saluted with heartfelt emotion that ancient house which I

used to study long hours at a time with so much astonishment, and even then with a sort of appreciation of its picturesqueness, though only a child, and French, and brought up in the mahogany style. The house in which my mother lodged has disappeared in an "improvement."

There is still in the square an ancient column with the arms of Spain of the time of Philip II. The Emperor Napoleon, when he passed through Irun, leaned against this column.

On departing from Irun I recognised the form of the road; one side of it slopes up, the other slopes down. I recalled it as if I saw it. It was morning. The soldiers of our escort, gay as soldiers always are in war-time when going out with three days' rations, went up by the ascending road and we followed by the descending road.

Fontarabie had left a luminous impression on me. It remained in my mind like the silhouette of a golden village with pointed spire, at the head of a blue gulf, but immensely magnified. The second time it did not impress me as it did the first. Fontarabie is a rather pretty village situated on a plateau, with a shaded promenade at the foot of it and sea on one side, and quite near Irun, — half a league.

The road penetrates into mountains, superb in form and charming in their verdure. The hills have green velvet cassocks, worn through here and there. A house comes in sight, a great balconied stone mansion with a monstrous escutcheon which at first sight might be taken for the coat

of arms of Spain, so pompous is it and imperially quartered. An inscription reads : ESTAS ARMAS DE LA CASA SOLAR. AÑO 1759.

A torrent flows along by the highway. Every little while there are arched bridges, ivy-hung, shaking under some ox-cart crossing them. Frightful shriek of the wheels in the ravines.

For some moments a man armed with a short blunderbus has been riding beside the diligence, dressed like a suburban of Paris : a round jacket and wide trousers of leather-coloured velveteen ; his cartridge-case on his stomach ; wearing a shiny round hat such as our hack-drivers wear, bearing this inscription : CAZADORES DE GUIPUZCOA.

That shows he is a policeman. He acts as escort to the diligence. Can it be there are robbers ? Impossible ! We are going out of France. There is a shrugging of shoulders. Meantime we enter a village. What is the name of this place ? Astigarraga.

What is that long green-painted wagon at the door of yonder tavern ?

It is the mail-coach.

Why is it stopped, why have the horses been taken out, why does it stand unloaded ?

It stands unloaded because it has no longer a load ; the horses have been taken out because there are no more horses ; it has stopped because it has been stopped.

Stopped ? By whom ?

By robbers, who killed the postilion, carried off the horses, robbed the coach, and rifled the travellers.

And those poor devils standing on the door-sill of the tavern with that pathetic air ?

Those are the passengers.

Ah ? really ?

Now you wake up ! So it is possible. Decidedly, you see, we are outside of France.

The *cazador* leaves you. Another takes his place. The one who departs comes to the door and asks alms. It is his pay.

You think of the gold pieces in your pocket and give him a silver coin. Poor men give a sou, the miserly a half-sou. The policeman takes anything, receives the peseta, takes the sou, and accepts the half-sou. About the only thing that the *cazador* knows how to do is to ride up and down the road, carry a musket, and ask alms. That is his whole industry.

I propounded to myself the question, What would become of the *cazador* if there were no more robbers ? Beautiful question ; he would turn robber !

At least I fear he would. The *cazador* must get his living. Two-thirds of the villages are ruined by the Carlists, if not by the Cristinos. Civil war carried on a guerilla campaign in Guipuzcoa and Navarre less than six years ago. In Spain the highway belongs to civil war from time to time, to robbers chronically. Robbers are the ordinary course of things.

Just as you enter Hernani the road takes an abrupt turn to the right. There is a sidewalk for the pedestrians who follow this route. Numbers of peasants in broad hats were on their way to market to sell their cattle.



As the diligence was rushing down one slope at a gallop a poor frightened ox leaped into the brambles. A small boy four or five years old, who had charge of the animal, seized his head and hid it in his breast, gently patting him with his hand. He did for the ox what his mother had undoubtedly done for him as a child. The ox, trembling in every limb, with perfect trust hid his great head ornamented with enormous horns between the child's slender arms, but he cast askance a frightened look on the diligence dashing by with its six mules and a horrible jingling of bells and chains. The child smiled and talked reassuringly to him. Nothing more touching and wonderful than to see that blind and brute force so gracefully restrained by intelligent weakness.

The diligence reached the top of a hill; magnificent spectacle.

On the right a promontory, on the left a promontory, two gulfs, an isthmus in the midst, a mountain in the sea; at the foot of the mountain, a city. Behold San-Sebastiano.

The first impression is magical, the second is amusing. An ancient light-house on the promenade at the left. An island in the bay under the light-house. A ruined convent. A sandy beach. Ox-carts are emptying on the beach ships freighted with iron ore. The port of San-Sebastiano is a curious concatenation of complicated ditch-endings.

On the right, Loyola's valley full of robin-red-breasts, where the Arumea, a beautiful steel-coloured river, makes a gigantic horse-shoe. On the northern promontory, a few sections of rased walls, the remains of the fort from which

Wellington bombarded the city in 1813. The sea is breaking finely.

Over the city gate, a handsome cartouch, now defaced, but belonging to the time of Philip II., doubtless formerly contained the city arms, which may have been wiped out by some revolution *à la Française*. On the inside of this same gate, above the watch-house and the sentinel, a tall wooden Christ with painted drops of blood staining the brow under the crown of thorns. A holy-water basin on one side. The soldiers of the guard were playing the guitar and castanets.

San-Sebastiano has the appearance of a city newly built up, square and regular as a checker-board.

Since there are no edifices worth describing, shall I give you a few sketches of the local customs ?

While I was busy dining I heard a burst of laughter and the sound of castanets in the street. I stepped outside and was surrounded by a swarm of strange men, ragged, clad in tatters, haughty and elegant as figures by Callot; hats such as the beaus of the Directory might have worn; little moustaches; noble, intelligent, bold faces. There was a shout near me : —

“ Los estudiantes ! Los estudiantes ! ”

They were students from Salamanca on their vacation. One of them approached me, saluted me, and held out his hat to me. I threw a peseta into it. He straightened himself up. All cried : “ Viva ! ” Thus they scour the country begging. Some of them are rich. It is pastime for them. In Spain there is nothing shocking in begging. It is a custom.

I go to a barber's. This artist inhabits a sort of cellar. Three high walls without a window; a door in the back. The room is furnished with a Louis XV. mirror of exquisite beauty, two coloured engravings of Austerlitz and Marengo, a small child and four or five great wheels such as there might have been formerly in a hangman's house. The man speaks four languages, smells abominably, and shaves admirably. This is his story: He was born at Aix-la-Chapelle, and speaks German. The emperor made a Frenchman of him, and the empire a soldier; he speaks French. The Spanish made him their prisoner in 1811; he speaks Spanish. He married in the country, and his wife is a *basquaise*, as he says; he speaks Basque. That is the result of having adventures in four different languages.

A tall, powerful Basque, who told me his name was Oyarbide, offered to carry my effects. He "hefts" them.

"They're heavy."

"How much do you want?"

"One peseta."

"All right."

He puts the whole on top of his head and seems to groan under the weight. We meet a woman, a poor old woman, barefooted, already heavily laden. He goes up to her, says something in Basque; the woman stops. He tips his whole burden from his own head into the huge half-filled basket which she is carrying, and then comes back to me. The woman marches on ahead of us. Oyarbide, with his hands behind his back, walks beside me and engages me in conversation. He has a horse; he offers

it to me for an excursion to Rentiera and Fontarabia; it would cost for one day eight piécettes.

We reach my destination. The old woman lays the burden at Oyarbide's feet and makes a courtesy; I give Oyarbide his peseta.

"Are n't you going to give anything to this poor woman?" he asks me.

VII.

SAN-SEBASTIANO.

SAN-SEBASTIANO, August 2.

I AM in Spain. At least, I have one foot in it. This is a country of poets and smugglers. Nature is magnificent; wild as dreamers like to have it, rough as robbers like to have it. A mountain in the midst of the sea. Traces of bombshells on all the houses, traces of tempests on all the rocks, traces of fleas on all the roads; behold San-Sebastiano.

But am I really here in Spain? San-Sebastiano is attached to Spain as Spain is attached to Europe, by a tongue of land. It is almost a peninsula on a peninsula; and here again, as in a host of other things, the physical aspect is the type of the moral state. It is scarcely Spanish at all at San-Sebastiano; it is Basque.¹

This is Guipuzcoa, it is the ancient country of the *fueros*; these are the old free Vascongadas provinces. Spanish is spoken to a certain extent, to be sure, but everywhere they speak *bascunee*. The women wear the mantilla, but not the basquina; and, moreover, this mantilla, which the women of Madrid wear with so much coquetry and grace even up to their eyes, the women of Guipuzcoa relegate to the top of the back hair; this, however, does

¹ Basques are the Forest people, as the Iberians are the River people.

not prevent them from being very coquettish and very graceful. In the evening, they dance on the lawns, cracking their fingers in the hollow of their hands; it is only the ghost of a castanet. The women who dance sway with harmonious flexibility, but without life, without passion, without energy, without voluptuousness; it is only the ghost of the *cachucha*.

And then the French are everywhere: in the city, out of every twelve merchants keeping *boticas* there are three Frenchmen. I am not complaining, I merely state the fact. Moreover, regarding all these cities from the standpoint of customs and manners, on one side of the line as well as on the other, Bayonne as well as San-Sebastiano, Oloron as well as Tolosa, have only mixed populations. You feel the eddying of mingling peoples. They are the mouths of rivers. This is neither France nor Spain, neither sea nor river.

There is another singular point of view, and one worthy of study. I add that here all the members of the mysterious Basque family are united by a secret and far-reaching bond, one that cannot be broken, which unites even in spite of treaties, which are *diplomatic* boundaries, even in spite of the Pyrenees, which are the natural frontiers. The old word *Navarre* is not a word. They are born Basque, they speak Basque, they live Basque, and they die Basque. The Basque tongue is a country, I almost said a religion. Speak a Basque word to a mountaineer in the mountains; before you uttered it you were hardly a man in his eyes; now, lo, you are his brother! The Spanish language is here as much a foreign language as French is.

Doubtless this Vascongada unity tends to diminish, and will ultimately disappear. Great States are bound to swallow up little ones; 'tis the law of history and of nature. But it is remarkable that this unity, so sorry in appearance, has held out so long. France seized one slope of the Pyrenees; Spain took the other; neither France nor Spain succeeded in disintegrating the Basque group. Under the new history which has been superimposed on it during four centuries, it is still as perfectly visible as a crater under a lake.

Never did the law of molecular adhesion, whereby nations are formed, act more energetically against the thousand influences of every sort and kind which dissolve and recompose these great natural formations. Be it said in passing, I could wish that the makers of history and the makers of treaties would study a little more carefully than they have hitherto done this mysterious chemistry, in accordance with which humanity is made and unmade.

This Basque unity brings about strange results. Thus Guipuzcoa is an ancient country of communes. The antique republican spirit of Andorra and Bagnères has been for upwards of a century spread abroad in the Jaitzquivel mountains, which are in a certain sense the Jura of the Pyrenees. Here they lived under a charter while France was under the absolute "very Christian" monarchy, and Spain under the absolute Catholic monarchy. Here since time immemorial the people elect the *alcade*, and the *alcade* governs the people. The *alcade* is mayor, the *alcade* is judge, and he belongs to the people. The priest

belongs to the pope. What is left for the king? The soldier. But if he is a Castilian soldier, the people will have none of him; if he is a Basque soldier, the priest and the alcade will hold his affections, the king will have only his uniform.

At first thought, it would seem that such a people was admirably prepared to receive French novelties. Mistake. The ancient liberties fear the new liberty. The Basque nation has proved it satisfactorily.

At the beginning of this century, the Cortes, which at every opportunity and often appropriately made translations from the Constituent Assembly, decreed Spanish unity. The Basque unity revolted against it. The Basque unity, taking its stand among its mountains, undertook the war of the North against the South. The day when the throne broke with the Cortes, royalty, tracked and panic-struck, took refuge in Guipuzcoa. The country of Rights, the nation of the *fueros*, cried:—

“Viva el rey neto!”—“Hurrah for the genuine king!” The antique Basque liberty made common cause with the antique monarchy of the Spains and the Indies against the revolutionary spirit.

And under this apparent contradiction there was a profound logic and a true instinct. Revolutions—let us make this point emphatic—treat the ancient liberties no less rudely than did the ancient powers. They put everything on a new basis and rebuild everything on a grand scale; for they work for the future, and they take from the immediate present the measure of future Europe. Hence these immense generalisations, which are, so to

speak, the frame-work for the nations of the future, and which accommodate themselves with such difficulty to old peoples, and which make such small account of old customs, old laws, old habits, old franchises, old frontiers, old idioms, old encroachments, the old ties between all things, old principles, old systems, old facts.

In the revolutionary language, old principles are called *prejudices*, old facts are called *abuses*. This is at once true and false. Ancient societies, whatever they be, whether republican or monarchical, are full of abuses, just as old men are covered with wrinkles, and old edifices with ruins; but it is necessary to make distinctions: we must pluck off the brambles, and respect the edifice; remove the abuse, and respect the State. That is the very thing which revolutions do not appreciate, and do not wish, or are not able, to do. To pick out, to choose, to prune—they have time enough for that sort of work, indeed, but they do not come to weed the ground, but to shake the earth.

A revolution is not a gardener, it is the breath of God. When first it passes, everything crumbles; when it passes a second time, everything is born again.

Revolutions therefore maltreat the past. Everything that has a past dreads them. In the eyes of revolutions the old king of Spain was an abuse, the ancient Basque alcade was another. The two abuses scented the peril and joined together against the common enemy; the king put his dependence on the alcade. And this is how it happened, to the great amazement of those who see only the surface of things, that the old Guipuzcoan republic fought

for the old Castilian despotism against the Constitution of 1812.

Moreover, this has some analogy with the fact of La Vendée. Brittany was a country of states and franchises. The day when the Republic, one and indivisible, was decreed, Brittany confusedly felt that Breton unity was about to be lost in the great French unity; it rose like one man to defend the past and fight for the King of France against the National Convention.

Ancient peoples who fight in this way are too feeble to descend into the plain and engage in set battles with new races, new ideas, new armies; they summon Nature to their aid; they carry on a bushwhacking war, a mountain war, a desert war. La Vendée carried on a bushwhacking war; Guipuzcoa carried on a mountain war; Africa carries on a desert war.

This war has left its trace everywhere hereabouts. Amid the loveliest nature and the loveliest cultivation, amid tomato-fields where the vines grow as high as your hips, amid fields of corn where the plough is driven twice each season, you suddenly come on a house without window-panes, without door, without roof, without occupants. What does it mean? You look. The marks of fire are on the stones of the wall. Who burned this house? The Carlists. The road takes a turn. Here is another; who burned this? The Cristinos. I attempted to count the ruins which I saw between Hernani and San-Sebastiano. In five minutes I had counted seventeen. I gave it up.

On the other hand, the little anti-Espartero revolution,

called *el Pronunciamento*, was carried on at San-Sebastiano in the most peaceable manuer in the world. San-Sebastiano did not budge, but left the other cities in the province to come out as they pleased. Whereupon a message arrives from the people of Pampeluna : either there must be a *pronunciamento* at San-Sebastiano, or otherwise they would come down on them. San-Sebastiano is not afraid, but the poor city is tired out. Espartero's civil war, after the civil war in behalf of Don Carlos, was too much. The leading men of the city held a meeting at the *ayuntamiento* ; they convoked the two officers of each company of the city militia ; they set up a table with green baize in the middle of the hall ; on the table something or other was drawn up : this document was read from the window to the people in the square ; a few children who were playing hopscotch stopped for a moment and shouted " Hurrah ! "

The same evening these events were announced to the garrison stationed in the *castillo*. The garrison adhered to the thing written on the table in the mayor's office and read from the window overlooking the square.

The next day the general took post-horses, the day following the political chief took the diligence, two days later the colonel went away. The revolution was over.

Such at least was the history of it as it was related to me.

In crossing this beautiful, devastated country I travelled with a former Carlist captain who roosted as I did on the imperial of *las diligencias peninsulares* of Bayonne. He was a man of good bearing, fine presence, silent, moody. I asked him point-blank, in Spanish : —

"Que pensa usted de don Carlos?"—"What do you think of Don Carlos?" He replied in French:—

"C'est un imbécile."

Take the word "imbécile" in the sense of *imbecillis*, weak, and you will have a true criticism, not on the man alone, but on the particular moment when the man lived.

That war between 1833 and 1839 was savage and violent. The peasantry lived for five years scattered about in the forests and the mountains, without entering their houses. Sad moments for a nation when the home, the *chez soi*, vanishes. Some were enrolled, some took to flight. One had to be either Carlist or Cristiano. Parties expect partisanship. The Cristinos burned Carlists, and Carlists Cristinos. 'T is the old law, the old, old story, the old human nature.

Those who remained neutral were hunted down to-day by the Carlists, and shot to-morrow by the Cristinos. Forever some fire was smoking on the horizon.

Nations at war understand the laws of humanity, partisans ignore it.

Here Nature does all in her power to make man happy, and man does all in his power to cast a gloom over Nature.

Don Carlos personally took no part in the war. He lived part of the time at Tolosa, part of the time at Hernani. Sometimes he went from one city to the other, holding a petty court, with his levees, and living in accordance with the most exacting Spanish etiquette. When he came to any village where he had never before lodged, the best house was selected for him; but he knew how to be

contented with little. He went about, ordinarily, dressed in a dark-coloured redingote without epaulets or embroidery, but wearing the Golden Fleece and the medal of Charles III. His son, the Prince of the Asturias, wore the Basque cap, and it was very becoming to him indeed. Don Carlos, Madame la Princesse de Beira his wife, and the Prince of the Asturias set the example of courage in danger and gayety in fatigue. Many times the royal party was almost surprised by Espartero; then the princess would joyously mount on horseback and cry laughingly "Vamos!"

Ferdinand VII. did not like Don Carlos, and was afraid of him. He charged him with conspiracy during his reign. It was not true. Nevertheless, the last person whom King Ferdinand saw every night before going to bed was his brother. At midnight Don Carlos was in the habit of entering the king's presence, kissing his hand and then going out again, frequently without either of the brothers exchanging a word.

The king's body-guard were under orders not to permit any one besides Don Carlos and the famous Padre Cyrillo to enter the apartments at this hour. This Padre Cyrillo was witty and well-educated. He stands out well between two such princes and two such brothers. The partisans exhibited strange fury in making a caricature of the relationship.

There were many English in Ferdinand VII.'s body-guard. The king liked best to talk with them when after Mass he went to play billiards, a game which was his chief occupation and lasted almost all day. When he was in good-humour he used to give them cigars.

To tell the truth, Don Carlos was lost as a pretender the day when Zumalacarregui died. Zumalacarregui was a true Basque. He was the knot that fastened together the Carlist fagots. After his death the army of Charles V. was only a bundle untied, as the Marquis de Mirabeau declared. There were two parties around Don Carlos : the party of the court, of *el rey neto* ; and the party of the Laws, *los fueros*. Zumalacarregui was the man of "los fueros." He neutralised the clerical influence over the prince ; he often said : " *Il demonio los frayles !*" — "To the devil with the monks!" He resisted Padre Larranaga, Don Carlos's confessor. Navarre adored Zumalacarregui. Thanks to him Don Carlos's army at one time amounted to 30,000 regular combatants and 250,000 auxiliary insurgents, scattered over the plain, the forest, and the mountains.

The Basque general, however, treated "his king" rather cavalierly. He it was who moved and removed according to his own fancy this chief figure in the game of chess which was playing at that time in Spain. Zumalacarregui would write on a slip of paper, "Hoy su majestad ira á tal parte." — "To-day his Majesty will go to such a place." Don Carlos would go.

The war of Navarre ended in 1839, suddenly. Maroto's treason, which was bought, so it is said, for a million piastres, broke the Carlist army. Don Carlos, obliged to take refuge in France, was conducted to the very frontier with a fusillade of musket-shots.

On that day several families from Bayonne had gone on a picnic to the very spot on the frontier where chance brought Don Carlos. They were present when the prince

made his escape, and witnessed the last struggle of the faithful little company that guarded him. As soon as the prince set foot on French territory the shots ceased.

There was a miserable shelter-hut of a goatherd. Don Carlos entered it. As he entered he said to Madame la Princesse de Beira, who accompanied him : —

“ Are you afraid ? ”

“ No, seigneur,” she replied.

Then the prince asked for a chair and had Mass said by his chaplain. After Mass he took some chocolate and smoked a cigar.

The handful of men who had fought for him to the last minute was composed exclusively of Navarrais. They were surrounded and taken prisoners by a French detachment. These poor soldiers went in one direction, and Don Carlos in another. He said not a word to them, he did not even look at them. The prince and his army separated without a farewell.

Elio, who had spent seventeen months in prison by order of Don Carlos, was a member of this troop. When he reached Bayonne General Harispe said to him : —

“ General Elio, I have been ordered to make an exception in your favour. Ask of me whatever you desire. What would you like for yourself and your family ? ”

“ Bread and shoes for my soldiers,” said Elio.

“ And for your family ? ”

“ I have just told you.”

“ You spoke only of your soldiers,” insisted General Harispe.

“ My soldiers,” said Elio, “ are my family.”

Elio was a hero.

San-Sebastiano witnessed these events and many others. It was bombarded by the French in 1719, and burnt by the English in 1813.

But the word comes that the courier is off. I hastily do up in an envelope all this scribbling without re-reading it. It seems to me that I can finish this letter by a bombardment and a fire.

VIII.

PASAGES.

THE other day I left San-Sebastiano at the hour of the high tide. I turned off to the left, at the end of the promenade, crossing the Urumeç by the wooden bridge, the toll of which is a quarto. A route presented itself; I took it at hap-hazard, and I went on walking up into the mountain without any very clear idea where I was going.

Little by little the external landscape, which I gazed at, scarcely heeding, had developed in me that other interior landscape which we call revery. I had my eyes turned inward, and wide open, and I no longer beheld Nature, I beheld my own spirit. I could not tell what I was doing in that state, to which you know I am subject; I only remember, in a confused way, that I remained standing some minutes before a convolvulus on which an ant was wandering up and down, and that in my revery this spectacle was translated into this thought: An ant on a convolvulus; work and perfume,—two great mysteries, two great counsels.

I know not how long I had been walking in this state, when suddenly a shrill sound made up of a thousand strange cries brought me to myself. I looked around;

I was between two hills with lofty mountains cutting off the horizon, and I was walking straight toward an arm of the sea, at which the road I was following abruptly ended twenty yards ahead of me. At the place where the road plunged into the water there was something strange.

Forty or fifty women drawn up in a single line like a company of infantry, seemed to be waiting for some one, calling him, encouraging him to approach, with formidable screams.

The circumstance amazed me greatly; but what doubled my surprise was to recognise after a moment that the person so awaited, so called, so encouraged was myself! The road was deserted, and that perfect tempest of cries was indeed addressed to me.

I approached, and my astonishment was still further increased. These women overwhelmed me with the most lively and most persuasive speeches:—

“Señor frances, benga usted con migo! Con migo, caballero! Ven, hombre, muy bonita soy!”¹

They called me with the most varied and most expressive pantomines, and not one advanced toward me. They seemed like living statues rooted in the soil, as if a magician had said to them, “Cry out if you wish, make every kind of gesture, but do not take a step.”

Moreover, they were of every age and of every species of countenance, young, old, ugly, pretty; the pretty ones coquettish and handsomely dressed, the old ones in rags.

¹ “Mr. Frenchman, come with me. With me, sir. Come, I am very pretty.”

In country districts woman is less fortunate than the butterfly of her field. The butterfly begins by being a caterpillar ; here the woman ends her life in the caterpillar state.

As they were all talking at once, I could not understand any one of them, and it was some time before I unriddled the mystery. At last I noticed some boats drawn up along the shore, and I discovered what was meant. I was in the midst of a group of boat-women who were offering to take me across the water. But why boat-women and not boat-men ? What was the significance of that eager importunity which seemed to have a never-to-be-violated frontier ? Finally, where did they want to carry me ? So many enigmas, so many reasons for persisting in going ahead.

I asked the prettiest of them her name ; it was Pepa. I sprang into her boat.

At that moment I perceived a passenger already settled in another boat. We ran the risk of each of us waiting a long time ; if we joined forces we might start immediately. As I was the last comer, it was for me to join the other man. So I left Pepa's boat ; Pepa made up a face ; I gave her a peseta. She took the money and continued to grimace, and that flattered me exceedingly ; for a peseta, as my chance companion explained, was double the maximum price of the passage. She got her money, and she was spared the bother.

Meantime we had pushed off from shore and were rowing across a gulf where everything was green, the waves and the hill, the water and the earth. Our boat was rowed by two women, an old one and a young one, a mother and

her daughter. The girl, who was very pretty and very gay, was called *Manuela la Catalana*. The two boat-women rowed standing facing forward, each with a single oar, with a slow, simple, and graceful movement. Both of them spoke French fairly well. *Manuela* wore a little oil-cloth cap ornamented with a big rose, her long plait of hair hanging down behind in the country fashion, a bright yellow neckerchief, a short petticoat, a nicely embroidered skirt; she laughed a great deal, showing the prettiest teeth ever seen; she was charming. The mother, alas! had passed her butterfly stage.

My companion was a silent Spaniard, who, finding that I was even more taciturn than himself, took it upon him, as usually happens, to address me. He began, you must understand, by first finishing his cigar. Then he turned to me. In Spain, cigar finished, talk begins. As I don't smoke, I don't talk. I never have the ultimate reason for beginning a conversation, — the end of a cigar.

"Señor," said my man, in Spanish, "have you seen it yet?"

I replied in Spanish: —

"No, Señor."

Notice that "No" and admire it! If I had said, "What?" as would have been more natural, I should have had an explanation, and I should probably have immediately had a key to my enigmas; now I was anxious to preserve my little mystery as long as possible, and I persisted in not knowing where I was going.

"In that case," pursued my companion, "you are going to see something very fine."

"Really?" I hazarded.

"It is very long."

"Very long?" I said to myself; "what can it be?"

The Spaniard continued:—

"It is the longest there is in the whole province."

His use of the feminine adjective struck me. "Good!" said I to myself, "I know so much."

"Señor," again asked my companion, "have you ever seen any like it?"

"I think so," I replied. Another reply after the style of the first.

"I will wager that you never saw one so long."

"Oh, ho! you might lose your bet."

"Come now, what ones has el señor caballero seen?"

The question was rather awkward. I replied:—

"The one at Bayonne."

I did not know what we were talking about.

"The one at Bayonne!" exclaimed my man, "the one at Bayonne! Well, sir, the one at Bayonne is three hundred feet shorter than this one. Have you measured it?"

"Sí, señor," I replied with the same coolness.

"Very well, measure this one."

"I intend to."

"You will be edified. A squadron of cavalry in single file might be drawn up in it."

"Impossible!"

"It is as I tell you, caballero. I see that the señor caballero is an amateur."

"Wild over it."

"You are French," continued my man, and growing effusive he added:—

"Perhaps you came from France on purpose to see it."

"I did. That's just it."

My Spaniard was radiant. He held out his hand to me and said:—

"Well, sir" (he used the French word "monsieur," which was a great piece of courtesy), "you will be satisfied. It is as straight as a die. It was laid out by rule and line. It is magnificent."

"The devil!" I said to myself, "can it be that this pretty bay can have a Rue de Rivoli as its finishing touch? What bitter irony! To go as far as possible from the Rue de Rivoli into Guipuzcoa and to find it again stuck on an arm of the sea,—it would be sad!"

Meantime our boat was on its steady course. We doubled a little cape dominated by a great ruined house, its four walls having doorless entrances and sashless windows.

Suddenly, as though by magic, and without the slightest sound of the stage-manager's whistle, the scenery changed, and a ravishing spectacle greeted my eyes.

A curtain of lofty green mountains outlining their summits against a brilliant sky; at the foot of those mountains, a row of houses placed close together; those houses painted all white, saffron, and green, with two or three stories of great balconies sheltered by the prolongation of their red-tiled roofs; on all those balconies a thousand floating objects, clothes drying, nets, red rags, green rags, blue rags; at the foot of those houses, the sea; on my right,

half-way up the hill, a white church; at my left in the foreground, at the foot of another mountain, another group of balconied houses extending up to an old dismantled tower; ships of every shape and vessels of every size drawn up before the houses, moored under the tower, flying across the bay; the ships, the tower, the houses, the church, the rags, the mountains, and the sky all giving an impression of boundless life, activity, sunlight, azure, air, and gayety. That is what I had before my eyes.

This place, magnificent and fascinating as everything is that possesses the double character of joy and grandeur, this unpublished locality which is one of the most beautiful that I ever saw and which no "tourist" ever visits, this humble corner of earth and water which would be admired if it were in Switzerland and celebrated if it were in Italy, and which is unknown because it is in Guipuzcoa, this little radiant Eden which I had accidentally strayed into without knowing where I was going, is called in Spanish *Pasages* and in French *Le Passage*.

Low tide leaves half of the bay dry, and separates it from San-Sebastiano, which in turn is almost separated from the world. The high tide re-establishes the Passage. Hence the name. The population of this community has only one industry, work on the water. The two sexes share this labour according to their strength. The men have their vessels, women their boats; men have the sea, women the bay; the men go out fishing and venture away from the gulf, the women remain in the gulf and "ferry" over all those whom business or interest bring from San-Sebastiano. Hence the *bateleras*.

These poor women so rarely have passengers that they have been obliged to come to an agreement. They would tear one another in pieces, and very likely they would tear the passenger in pieces too, unless they made for themselves a limit which they never cross and a charter which they never violate. It is an extraordinary country.

As soon as the tide begins to rise and covers the road, they bring their boats there and establish themselves among the rocks, plying their distaffs, waiting.

Whenever a stranger comes in sight, they rush to the line which they have settled upon, and each tries to obtain the custom of the new arrival. The stranger makes his choice. When once his choice is made, all relapse into silence. The stranger who has chosen is sacred. He is left to her who has him. The passage is not very expensive. The poor give a sou, the middle class a *real*, gentlemen a *media-peseta*, emperors, princes, and poets a peseta.

Meantime the boat had touched the opposite landing-place. I was so dazzled by the view that I hastily flung Manuela a peseta and jumped on land, entirely forgetting what the Spaniard had said to me, and the Spaniard himself, who, now I come to think about it, must have looked at my precipitate departure with amazement.

Once on terra firma I took the first road that offered,— an excellent procedure, which always brings you where you want to go, especially in towns like Pasages, where there is only one road.

I walked from one end of this street to the other. It is formed by the mountain on the right, and on the left by the rear-façades of all the houses which face the gulf.

Here a new surprise. Nothing could be more radiantly fresh and attractive than *Le Pasage* seen from the water; nothing more stern and melancholy than *Le Pasage* seen from the mountain.

These houses, so coquettish, so gay, so white, so full of light, seen from the sea, when seen from this narrow, tortuous street, with its flagstones like a Roman road, seem to be nothing more than lofty walls of blackish granite, with occasional square windows, stained with the emanations of the rock; a gloomy row of strange edifices, on which are sculptured in high relief enormous scutcheons supported by lions or Herculean figures and capped with gigantic morions. In front they are chalets; from behind they are citadels.

I asked myself a thousand questions. What is this extraordinary place? What signifies a street escutcheoned from one end to the other? One sees such streets only in cities of chevaliers like Rhodes and Malta. As a general thing armorial bearings do not elbow each other. They prefer isolation; they require room, like everything that is great. A blazon needs a whole donjon-keep, just as an eagle needs a whole mountain. What meaning can there be in an emblazoned village? Huts in front, palaces behind—what does that mean? When you arrive there by sea your heart expands, you think you are looking at something bucolic; you exclaim: Oh, the sweet and frank and simple population of fishermen! You enter the village; you find yourself among the homes of hidalgos; you breathe the air of the Inquisition; you see rising at the other end of the street the livid spectre of Philip II.

Whose homes are these at Pasages? Peasants' or great lords'? Are you in Switzerland or in Castile? Is not this little nook of Spain quite unique in all the world, with History and Nature meeting face to face, and each building one side of the same town, — Nature with all its most lovely effects, History with its most forbidding.

There are three churches at Pasages, two black and one white.

The principal one, which is black, has a surprising character. From without it is a block of stones; on the inside there is all the bareness of a sarcophagus. Only against those morose walls, unrelieved by any sculpture, unadorned by any fresco, uncheered by any window, you suddenly see gleaming and shining an altar which in its splendour is a perfect cathedral.

It is an immense edifice of wood applied to the wall and carved, painted, dovetailed together, worked, gilded, with statuettes, twisted columns, foliations, arabesques, volutes, reliques, roses, wax-candles, saints male and female, tinsel and passequilles. This begins at the floor, and ends only at the ceiling. There is no transition between the nakedness of the wall and the elaboration of the altar. It is a magnificent, brilliant, florid architecture, blooming like some strange flower in the darkness of this granite vault, and at the least expected moment putting forth in dark corners spines of gold and precious stones.

There are four or five of these altars in the church at Pasages. This way of doing things is, however, peculiar to provincial churches; but at Pasages the contrast is most singularly presented.

The first thing that struck me on entering the church was a sculptured head in the wall facing the door. This head is painted black, with white eyes, white teeth, and red lips, and gazes at the church with an expression of wonder. While I was studying this mysterious sculpture, el señor cura passed by; he came near me; I asked him if he knew what this negro effigy before the threshold of his church meant. He did not know, and he told me that no one in the country had ever known.

At the end of two hours, having seen, or at least glanced at everything, I re-embarked. Manuela was waiting for me. For it was all over; she had possession of me, I was hers, I belonged to her.

As I was stepping over the edge of the boat some one seized my arm; I turned round. It was the worthy man with whom I had that morning crossed the arm of the sea. I forgot to paint his portrait for you; I will atone for it now:—

A threadbare high hat with narrow rim, blue redingote worn along the seams, with every other button buttoned, a great watch-chain with cornelian key, a face of the penniless Jew who lends his name for dubious operations. Now here is our dialogue on board the boat:—

Imagine it spoken in the most rapid Spanish.

“ Well, señor Francese ? ”

“ Well ? ”

“ What do you think about it ? ”

“ About what ? ”

“ Did you see it ? ”

"What?"

"Did you measure it?"

"What?"

"Is n't it the longest in the province?"

"Of what province, and what is long?"

"Heavens! The rope-walk."

"What rope-walk?"

"The rope-walk you have just been seeing. The rope-walk here, of course."

"Is there a rope-walk here?"

"Ah! The señor Francese is in a happy frame of mind and wants to make fun; but he knows well that there is a rope-walk, for he has come two hundred miles on purpose to see it."

"I? Not at all."

"Is n't it fine? Laid out straight as a die? Long? Magnificent? Straight as an I."

"I know nothing at all about it."

"Now there!" pursued the man, looking me straight in the eye. "Seriously, caballero, have n't you seen it?"

"Seen what?"

"The rope-walk."

"You must know, señor," I replied majestically, "that I particularly detest magnificent long things, straight as a die, and that I would gladly travel two hundred miles not to see a rope-walk."

I said these memorable words in such a solemn fashion and in such a deep tone that my man started back. He gazed at me with a scared look, and while the skiff was moving off from the shore I heard him saying to the

bateleras waiting on the steps, indicating me with a shrug of his shoulders:—

“Un loco.” — “A crazy man!”

On my return to San-Sebastiano, I announced at my inn that I was going the next day to take up my abode at Pasages.

That caused general consternation.

“But what are you going to do there, monsieur? 'Tis a hole. A desert. A land of savages! Why, you'll find no inn there.”

“I shall take lodgings in the first house that presents itself. One can always find a house, a room, a bed.”

“But the houses have no roofs, the rooms have no doors, and the beds have no mattresses.”

“That must be queer.”

“What will you eat?”

“Whatever there is.”

“You'll get only mouldy bread, hard cider, rancid oil, and goat-skin wine.”

“Well, I am going to experiment with that fare.”

“What? Are you in earnest?”

“Yes, I am in earnest.”

“You are doing what no one else would dare to do.”

“Indeed? That tempts me.”

“Go and lodge at Pasages! such a thing was never heard of before.” And they almost crossed themselves.

I would not listen to their protests, and on the next day, when the tide served, I started for Pasages.

Now do you want to know the result? Behold what my imprudence has brought me to.

I will begin by describing what I have before my eyes as I write.

I am on a long balcony overlooking the sea. I lean my elbows on a square table covered with a green cloth. On my right I have a long window opening like a door into my room, for I have a room, and my room has a door. At my left I have the bay. Under my balcony two vessels are moored; one of them is old, and a Bayonne sailor is working on it; he sings from morning till night. Before me, two cables' length away is another vessel, quite new and very handsome — just about starting on a voyage to the Indies. Beyond this ship, the old dismantled tower, the group of houses called el otro Pasage, and the three-fold ridge of a mountain. All around the bay, a wide semi-circle of hills the undulations of which stretch away till they are lost in the distant horizon; these are dominated by the gaunt pinnacles of Mount Arun.

The bay is enlivened by the skiffs of the bateleras, coming and going incessantly, and as they hail one another the gulf rings from one end to the other with cries resembling the crowing of cocks. The weather is magnificent, and the sunshine is more brilliant than anywhere else in the world. I hear my sailor singing, children laughing, boat-women shouting to one another, laundresses pounding their linen on the stones, after the custom of the country, the ox-carts creaking through the ravines, the goats bleating in the mountains, the hammers resounding in the ship-yard, the anchor chains clanking on the capstans, the wind blowing, the sea rising. All this noise is a music, for it is filled with joy.

If I lean over my balcony, I see at my feet a narrow terrace on which grass is sprouting, a flight of black steps leading down to the water and covered by the rising tide, an old anchor buried in the mud, and a group of fishermen, men and women up to their knees in the water, pulling in their nets and singing.

Finally, if you desire me to tell the whole story, there, under my eyes, on the terrace and on the steps, whole constellations of crabs executing with solemn slowness all the mysterious dances of which Plato ever dreamed.

The sky has all the shades of blue from turquoise to sapphire, and the bay all the shades of green from emerald to chrysoprase.

There is no grace lacking to this bay ; when I gaze off at the horizon which shuts it in, it is a lake ; when I look at the rising tide it is the sea.

What do you say to it ? And in this connection — I do not forget and you remind me in your letter that during the three weeks since I have been away I have been recreant to my confirmed habit of sending you the landscape from my window. I will immediately make up for this neglect. At Bordeaux my window fronted a high wall ; at Bayonne, a street lined with trees ; at San-Sebastiano, an old woman killing her fleas. Now you are satisfied. I hasten back to Pasages.

The house where I am lodging is at once one of the most solemn seen from the street and one of the gayest seen from the bay. Above the roof I see along the rocks flights of steps climbing up across spots of green toward the old white church which seems like one more heifer

shaking the bell on its neck, on the mountain side. For in the churches of Guipuzcoa the bell is seen hung bare on the roof, under a sort of arcade which looks like a collar.

The house where I lodge has two stories and two entrances. It is curious and rare above all the rest, and carries to the highest degree the double character so peculiar to the houses of Pasages. It is the monumental patched on to the rustic. It is a hut mixed and joined with a palace.

The first entrance is a pillared portal of the time of Philip II., sculptured by the fascinating artists of the Renaissance, mutilated by Time and mischievous children, worn away by rains, the moon, and the sea winds. You know sandstone defaced makes admirable ruins. This doorway has a fine chamois colour. The escutcheon remains, but the years have effaced the emblazonment.

You push open the little door at the right of the portal and find a stairway made of joists and planks, joists and planks as black as coal, roughly hewn, hardly squared. At the top of the staircase, the venerable steps of which show great cracks, there is a heavy fortress-door, in the middle of which opens a narrow grated window. This door creaks on its massive iron hinges and ushers you into the dwelling.

The antechamber is a whitewashed corridor, hung with enormous tapestried spider-webs (for I will hide nothing from you) and lighted by a window facing the street. Opposite this window the side of the mountain lifts up its gigantic wall as far as the eye can see.

The corridor leading from the staircase on the second story is entered by two doors ; the one on the right leads to the kitchen, to which you mount by two massive wooden steps ; the other, on the left, opens into a great hall flanked on its four corners by four small rooms, and this hall with its four closets and the kitchen makes the first story of the house. Two of these closets are dark, having no other opening than their door into the hall. Still, people sleep in them.

The other two rooms are, like the hall, level with the balcony, to which they have access by door-windows painted green and provided with shutters. Each chamber has one of these door-windows. The great hall has two, and between them there is a pretty casement almost square.

The interiors are whitewashed just the same as the sea-front. The black and rotting floors resemble the wooden apron of a rustic bridge. The doors are like the floors. A round table, a few chests, a few straw chairs make the entire furnishings of the hall. An escutcheon, not very correct heraldically, is coarsely painted over the middle door. No fireplaces. The climate does not require them. The walls are of stone and as thick as those of a dungeon.

I occupy the chamber on the balcony at the left-hand angle of the hall. The other closets are the cells of the various inhabitants of the house, of whom I shall speak presently.

The second floor is like the first. A sleeping-room takes the place of the kitchen. The balcony of the second story

shelters the balcony of the first story and is itself protected by the wide projecting roof, the hammer-beams of which are gayly rounded and carved. The balconies are tiled with red bricks and painted green.

But it seems as if the whole thing would fall in. The walls have cracks through which the landscape can be seen; the bricks in the top balcony are so loose that you can see the lower one through the chinks; the chamber floors give under the weight of the foot.

The staircase leading from the first to the second story is most extraordinary.

"*Tout l'escalier branlait du haut jusques en bas*" (The whole staircase shook from top to bottom), says Régnier of some mansion, I forget now what. This staircase is at the same time shaky and massive. It has great beams, great planks, great spikes, fastened together and united three hundred years back, trembling with old age and yet having something robust and formidable about it. It threatens in the double significance of the word. No window, nothing but an oblique light falling from above. The steps, bunglingly constructed out of planks laid across and apparently at hazard, resemble wolf-traps. It is at once crumbling and formidable. Immense spiders climb back and forth in this darksome labyrinth. An oaken door four inches thick, provided with solid though rusted ironwork, shuts off this stairway, and in case of necessity isolates the second story from the first. Always the fortress in the hovel.

What do you say to this as a whole? Is it sad? Repulsive? Terrible? Well, no; it is charming.

In the first place, nothing could be more unexpected. It is a house such as you could find nowhere else. At any moment when you are thinking that you are in a hovel, a piece of carving, a fresco, an exquisite and useless ornament tells you that you are in a palace. You go into ecstasies over detail which is a luxury and a grace, and the raucous grating of a key makes you imagine that you are the inmate of a prison. You go to the window; there is the balcony, there is the lake-like bay; you are in a chalet at Zug or Lucerne.

And then a brilliant sunshine penetrates and fills this singular dwelling; the arrangement of it is gay, convenient, and original; the salt air of the sea makes it wholesome; the pure southern sun dries it and warms it and vivifies it. Everything becomes joyous in this joyous light.

Everywhere else dust arises from slovenliness. Here the dust is merely the result of old age. Yesterday's dust is odious; the ashes of three centuries are venerable. What more shall I say? In this country of fishermen and hunters, the spiders, hunting and tending their nets, have the right of citizenship; they are at home.

In short, I take this dwelling as I find it.

Only, I insist on my room being swept out, and I have given notice to quit to the spiders, who have held prior occupancy.

What gives the finishing touch to the strange physiognomy of this house is the fact that I have not set eyes on a single man. Four women and a child occupy it: the landlady, her two daughters, her servant Iñacia, a pretty barefooted Basque girl, and her grandson, a lovely baby eighteen months old.

The landlady, Madame Basquetz, is an excellent woman, with lively eyes, prepossessing, cordial, and gay; she is French by birth, wholly French in heart, and speaks French very well. Her two daughters speak only Spanish and Basque.

The elder is a gentle, pensive young woman, somewhat of an invalid. The younger is called Pepa, like all Spanish women. She is twenty, with slender form, flexible waist, well-made hand, a small foot, — a rare thing in Guipuzcoa, — large black eyes, splendid hair. In the evening she leans over the balcony in a melancholy attitude, but turns round with joyous vivacity, if her mother calls. She has reached the age when the unconsciousness of the maiden begins to disappear, gradually veiled under the melancholy of the grown woman.

The baby, who crawls up and down the staircase from one story to the other, is on the trot all day long, laughing, filling the whole house and warming it with his innocent grace and artlessness. A baby in a house is a furnace of gayety!¹

As he sleeps near my room, I hear him in the evening cooing softly while the four women sing him to sleep.

I told you that the house had another entrance. It is a staircase without balustrades, made of great hewn stones, mounting from the street to the kitchen, and from thence meeting other stone steps that climb the mountain amidst the foliage.

The house is placed sidewise on the street, like the château of Chenonceaux on the Cher, and the street passes

¹ Poêle de gaieté.

underneath it by means of a sort of arched bridge, long, narrow, vaulted, and dark, lighted at night by a lantern, while in a niche, at one side of an air-vent closed with a fifteenth-century grating, burns a blessed taper recommended to poor passing sailors by the following inscription:—

“VNA LIMOSNA PARA
ALVMBRAR AL S^{to}. C^{to}.
D. BVEN BIAJE.
AÑO 1756.

“AN OFFERING TO LIGHT THE HOLY CHRIST OF THE PROSPEROUS VOYAGE. A.D. 1756.”

Now you know the house, you know the inhabitants; I have told you where my room is; but I have not told you what it is.

Imagine four white walls, two cane-seated chairs, a washstand on three legs, a child's hat, ornamented with feathers and trinkets, hanging on a nail, a shelf holding several pots of pomade, and three odd volumes of Jean Jacques Rousseau, a canopy bed hung with fine old chintz, with two mattresses hard as marble, and a most beautifully painted wooden head-piece, a leaning mirror with an exquisite frame fastened to the wall, and a door that does not shut. Such is my room. Add to it the long window of which I have spoken, and a table standing on the balcony. From my bed I see the sea and the mountain.

You perceive that in spite of the sinister predictions of

the civilised people of San-Sebastiano, I have succeeded in finding a lodging-place among the savages of Pasages.

Have I succeeded in getting anything to eat there? Judge for yourself.

The graceful Pepa, awake with the dawn, comes about ten o'clock and lays my green-covered table, which stays all the time on the balcony, with a white cover; then she brings me oysters, dug that very morning in the bay, two lamb cutlets, a fried loubine, which is a delicious fish, sugared eggs, a chocolate cream, pears and peaches, a cup of very good coffee, and a glass of Malaga wine. I have also cider to drink, as I cannot bring myself to endure the goat-skin taste of the wine. That is my breakfast.

Now here is my dinner, which takes place in the evening about seven o'clock, when I have returned from my trips on the bay or along the coast: an excellent soup, *puchero* (Spanish stew) with bacon and chick-peas without saffron and peppers, slices of cod fried in oil, a roast fowl, a salad of water-cresses gathered in the stream, green peas with hard-boiled eggs, a corn cake with milk and orange-flower, nectarines, strawberries, and a glass of Malaga.

While Pepita is serving me, going and coming around me, bringing me all these delicacies, things that can tempt a mountaineer's appetite, the sun sets, the moon rises, a fisherman's boat makes its way out of the bay, all the spectacles of ocean and of the mountains, married to all the spectacles of the sky, unroll before me.

I speak Basque and Spanish to Pepita. I tell her incredible stories of sorcerers, inventing them as I go on and pretending to believe them myself; she laughs and

tries to dissuade me ; I hear the boat-women singing in the distance, and I do not notice that the porcelain is faience and the plate is pewter.

The whole costs me five francs a day.

At San-Sebastiano they probably suppose that I have starved to death and am eaten up by savages.

Moreover, nothing was easier than to find lodgings here. I asked Manuela if she knew of any house at Pasages where I could obtain a room for a few days. This fancy at first somewhat surprised Manuela ; but I pressed the point, and she brought me where I now am. The worthy Madame Basquetz received me smilingly ; I gave her the price she asked. It was very simple, as you see.

The bay of Pasages, sheltered on all sides and from all winds, might make a magnificent harbour. Napoleon thought favourably of it, and as he was a clever engineer he himself sketched out a plan of the necessary works. The basin is many miles in circumference and the entrance leading from the sea is so narrow that it admits only one vessel at a time. This passage, shut in between two lofty rocky crests, is itself divided into three little basins separated by narrows easy to fortify and defend.

In the sixteenth century the Caracas Company, since united with the Philippine Company, had its emporium and store-houses at Pasages. This company, in order to protect the bay, constructed the beautiful tower which is now its ornament.

This tower was dismantled a few years ago by the Car-

lists. The Carlists, be it said in passing, have left melancholy traces at Pasages. They demolished and burned many houses. They only pillaged the one which I occupy.

"Great good fortune!" exclaimed my hostess, clasping her hands.

The English have also occupied Pasages at various epochs, and quite recently also.

They built on elevated points along the shore a number of forts, now destroyed. Those were burned by the inhabitants. And if the truth must be told, these fires were bonfires. The English are not liked in Guipuzcoa. Lord Wellington's landing with the Portuguese in 1813 is a sad memory for the Basques. The hearts of these mountaineers have, like their mountains, long, solemn echoes, and the bombardment of San-Sebastiano still reverberates there.

The English left no other trace in the town of Pasages than the two syllables OLD. COLD. which made a part of some merchant's sign and are still visible, next the portrait of Philip II., on the wall of the house where I am living.

At the present time the port of Pasages is almost deserted. Only the boats of fishermen occupy it. Ship-owners of Bayonne are building here vessels destined for the Spanish trade and bearing Spanish names which are furnished them at Bilbao or at Santander, for they would not enjoy certain privileges were they not built on Spanish soil. Pasages is convenient for this purpose. And that is why the great rope-walk in the ship-yard — the one that aroused so much disdain in me — was established, in 1842,

I believe. This rope-walk is a long intestine and a fine rope-walk. I finally went to see it. You see I am becoming civilised.

From a military standpoint the port is protected only by a little castillo built on a rock half-way up, at the beginning of the second articulation of the gorge. This fortress is defended by countless fleas and also by a few soldiers.

Pasages, however, is practically self-fortified. Nature has admirably strengthened it. The entrance to the harbour is formidable. Every year some vessel is wrecked there. Last year a ship, loaded with lumber valued at fifty thousand francs, in trying to make the harbour in a heavy storm was caught, just as it was about to enter the second basin of the narrows, and thrown by a wave on the rock more than sixty feet above the level of the sea. It did not slide back. The sharp points of the crag caught it and pierced it through and through. An iron cross trembling in the wind to-day marks the place where that great ship remained pinned down.

Would you like to know now the kind of life that I am leading here? As I do not shut my window and my door does not shut, I am wakened at dawn by the sunrise and the chattering of the baby. I don't hear the cocks crowing, but I hear the boat-women singing, which is much the same thing. If the tide is coming in I see them from my balcony, even while I am dressing, hurrying away toward the end of the bay.

There are always two in a boat, partly so as to trim it,

principally because of the jealousy of husbands and lovers. This brings them into couples and each couple has its name, — La Catalana and her mother; Maria Juana and Maria Andrés, Pepa and Pepita, the *compañeras* and the *evaristas*. — The evaristas are very pretty. The officers of the garrison of San-Sebastiano like to have these girls take them out; but they are wise, they do indeed take the officers out. They always wear bouquets on their oiled caps, and when they bend over their oars, their short petticoats of black cloth in wide folds display well-turned legs and neat foot-gear. They belong to the small number of those who wear stockings; they are the aristocracy of boat-women.

Pepa and Pepita, the two sisters, are still prettier than the evaristas.

Could anything be gayer and purer than this bay in the morning? I hear the bells of the three churches ringing behind me; the sun outlines the wrinkles of the old tower. Each vessel leaves its wake on the surface of the water, and seems to trail behind it a long silver evergreen with all its branches.

Before breakfast I take a turn through the village, or the town if you prefer, for I am uncertain which name to give to this isolated place. I always discover something that I had not seen before. There are sheds fashioned out of the crags that jut into the street and make gaps between the houses. In these sheds are kept stores of wood, — stumps of trees gnarly as chestnuts, fragments of boats, carcasses of vessels.

There is a girl spinning in front of her door; the thread

leaves her hand and flies up to the very roof of the house, and falls back again, having at the end the spindle hanging before the spinner.

There are oriental shutters at Gothic windows, and fresh young faces behind those close meshes of black wood.

There are pretty little girls, bare-legged and bronzed by the climate, dancing and singing : —

Gentil muchacha,
Toma la derecha.
Hombre de nada,
Toma la izquierda ;¹

which I would be pleased to translate thus, according to the spirit rather than the letter : —

Fille adroite,
Prends la droite.
Homme gauche,
Prends la gauche.²

At Pasages there is working, dancing, singing. Some work, many dance, all sing.

As in all primitive and rustic places, there are at Pasages only young girls and old women, that is to say, flowers and — on my word, look in Ronsard for the other word ! Woman properly so-called, that magnificent rose blooming from twenty-five to forty, is a rare and exquisite product of extreme civilisation, of elegant civilisation, and exists only in cities. To produce woman, culture is required ; it needs — and you will excuse the expression — that gardening which we call the spirit of society.

¹ Pretty girl, take the right hand. Man of nothing, take the left.

² Clever girl, take the right. Awkward man, take the left.

Where there is no spirit of society, you will not find woman. You will have Agnes, you will have Gertrude, you will not have Elmira.

At Pasages there are always girls washing and clothes drying. The girls wash in the brooks, the clothes dry on the balconies. That enlivens the ear and the eyes.

These balconies are the most curious things in the world to look at and to study. You cannot imagine what there is besides clothes drying in the open air on a Pasages balcony.

The balustrade itself, which is almost always ancient, that is to say twisted or carved, is, to begin with, well worth examining. Then on the roof of the balcony, — for every balcony has a roof formed either by the upper balcony or the overhanging roof,— on this ceiling, I say, hang cords, nets of all kinds, coils of rope, sponges, a parrot in a wooden cage, hanging-boxes full of bright carnations, among which are entangled knots of ferns, little aërial gardens making you think of Semiramis.

On the walls between the windows are fastened bouquets of everlasting fashioned into crosses, together with rags, old embroidered vests, flags, dish-cloths; then fantastic things, the use of which cannot be imagined; they are there for ornament, — four laths fastened into a square, an iron hoop, a broken Basque drum. A few sketches outlined in charcoal on the white wall, several buckets with bright iron hoops for carrying water, and a young girl leaning over the balustrade and laughing, complete the furniture of the balcony.

In old Pasages, on the other side of the bay, I saw a

fifteenth-century house, the balcony of which, more swarming with things and more filled up than a Norman farmyard, is framed between two stern profiles of chevaliers carved out of large oaken planks.

The day of my arrival, as if to celebrate my coming, an old skirt composed of many rags of all colours sewed together, floated like a banner from one of these balconies. This brilliant medley of colours swelled out in the breeze with inexpressible pride and pomp. I never saw a more magnificent harlequin mantle.

By noon the sun casts under all roofs and balconies wide bands of horizontal shadow, bringing out the whiteness of the façades and making this city when it is seen from a distance and against the dark-green mountain background, seem all alive with extraordinary luminous life.

The square is especially brilliant. For at Pasages there is a square, which, like all Spanish squares, is called la Plaza de la Constitucion. In spite of that parliamentary and rainy name, the plaza of Pasages sparkles and glistens with admirable animation. This plaza is nothing more than the prolongation of the street, widened out and open to the sea. Some of the huge mansions surrounding it are perched on colossal arcades. The central house bears in front the coloured escutcheon of the city. All the ground-floors are shops.

On occasional Sundays the city indulges in a bull-fight, and this plaza serves for the amphitheatre, as is proved by collection of joists set up in the sidewalk along the parapet. However, plaza de toros, or plaza de la Constitucion,

nothing, I repeat, can be gayer, more curious, more diverting to the eye.

The superabundant life animating Pasages is summed up in this plaza, and here attains its full paroxysm. The boat-women collect at one end, the majos and sailors at the other. Children crawl, climb, walk, totter, cry, and play all over the pavement; the painted façades display all the colours of the parrot, the liveliest yellow, the freshest green, the vividest red. The rooms and shops are caverns full of magical chiaroscuro, in which you detect amid the lights and reflections all sorts of fantastic furniture, chests such as you find only in Spain, mirrors such as you see only at Pasages.

Good, honest, cordial faces bloom at every door.

I mentioned recently the Old Pasages, which I said was also called *el otro* Pasage. There are really two Pasages, — a new and an old. The new Pasage is three hundred years old. It is the one where I am living.

The other morning I took it into my head to cross the bay and visit the old town. It is a sort of Southern Bacharach. There, as at Bacharach on the Rhine, the stranger is indeed strange, haggard children and wan old women watch you with stupefaction as you pass.

One woman cried to me, as I stopped in front of her house, "Hijo, dibuja eso. Viejas cosas, hermosas cosas" — "My son, sketch this. Old things, handsome things."

The dwelling was in fact a magnificent ruin of the thirteenth century, more dilapidated and more tumble-down than you could imagine.

The street of the old Pasages is a genuine Arab street:

massive white houses, set at every angle, pierced here and there with a few little holes. If it were not for the roofs, one would think one's self at Tetuan. This street, where the ivy crosses from one side to the other, is paved with slabs, — wide scales of stone, undulating like the back of a snake.

The church spoils the general impression. That is modern, and was restored during the last century. A half-peseta opened it to me. An inscription on the organ gives the date which is however only too plainly written in the architecture : —

MANVEL MARTIN
CARRERA ME HIZO
AÑO 1774

This church is dull ; old Pasage is forlorn. Nothing could be more discordant. The dulness is the forlornness of what is small. Old Pasage has grandeur.

You see, my friend, that my morning excursion was not without object. Having accomplished this walk, I come home, I breakfast, and I climb up through the rocky roads. I give the morning to the city and the day to the mountain.

I mount into the mountain by perpendicular staircases, with very high and very narrow steps of masonry solidly fastened to the cliff, and overgrown by the rude vegetation of the crag. When you reach the top of one staircase you find another. They join thus, end to end, and go straight

up to heaven like those frightful ladders which are seen trembling in the impossible and mysterious architectures of Piranese. Piranese's ladders, however, penetrate into the infinite, and the staircases of Pasages come to an end.

When I reach the top of the stairs, I generally find a cornice, a goat-path, a kind of gutter formed by the streams and rains and forming an edge to the mountain. And along this I make my way, at the risk of falling down on the roofs of the village, and of tumbling down a chimney into a kettle, and adding myself as one more ingredient to some *olla-podrida*.

Mountain-tops are for us unknown worlds. There vegetates, blooms, and palpitates a refugee nature living by itself. There are joined in a sort of mysterious marriage the wild and the charming, the fierce and the peaceful. Man is afar, Nature is tranquil. A sort of confidence unknown in lowlands where animals hear human steps modifies and pacifies the brute instincts. It is no longer the timid, anxious nature of the prairies. The butterfly does not try to escape; the grasshopper allows itself to be caught; the lizard, which is to stones what the bird is to leaves, peeps out of his hole and watches you pass.

No noise except the wind, no movement except of the grass below and the clouds on high. On the mountain-top the soul is lifted, the heart is purified; the thought takes its part in this profound peace. One seems to be conscious of the eye of Jehovah open close at hand.

The mountains of Pasages have for me two peculiar attractions. The first is that they touch the sea, which every little distance makes gulfs of their valleys and promon-

tories of their crests. The second is that they are sandstone.

Sandstone is rather scorned by geologists, who class it, I believe, among the parasites of the mineral kingdom. I for my part set a high value on sandstone.

You know my dear, that for thoughtful minds, all parts of Nature, even those that at first seem the most dissimilar, have a connection through a host of secret harmonies, invisible threads of creation which the contemplative can perceive, making an inextricable network of the whole, living in one single life, nourished by one single sap, one in variety. These are, so to speak, the very roots of being. Thus to me there is a harmony between the oak and the granite, the one in the vegetable kingdom, the other in the mineral realm waking the same idea as the lion and the eagle among the animals, — power, grandeur, force, excellence.

There is another harmony, still more subtle, between the elm and the sandstone.

The sandstone is the most amusing and the most strangely compounded rock that there is. It is among rocks what the elm is among trees. No appearance that it does not assume, no caprice that it does not show, no dream that it does not realise. It takes all shapes, it makes all kinds of grimaces. It seems animated by a multiple soul. Pardon me for this epigram regarding this thing.

In the great landscape-drama the sandstone plays the fantastic rôle. Sometimes it is grand and severe, sometimes comic. It bends over like a wrestler, it doubles up like a clown; it is sponge, pudding, tent, cabin, tree-

trunk; it crops up in a field in the grass in little fawn-coloured flaky humps and imitates a flock of sleeping sheep. It has laughing faces, staring eyes, jaws that seem to be nibbling and browsing on the ferns. It seizes clumps of brier as if it were a giant's fist suddenly thrust up out of the earth. Antiquity, which was fond of complete allegories, might well have made the statue of Proteus out of sandstone.

A plain dotted with elms is never tiresome; a mountain of sandstone is always full of surprises and interest. Whenever dead nature seems alive it stirs us with a strange emotion.

Especially in the evening, at the disquieting twilight hour, this part of creation which grows into phantom-life begins to take form. Sombre and mysterious transfiguration!

Have you noticed at nightfall along our highways in the vicinity of Paris the monstrous and supernatural outlines of all the elms as the swift rolling of the carriage brings them successively before you? Some seem to be yawning, others twist themselves up skyward and open wide mouths as if they were emitting frightful howls. Some laugh with wild, hideous laughter, suitable for the darkness; the wind tosses their branches: they bend back with the contortions of the damned, or lean toward one another and whisper into their vast leafy ears words, the strange bizarre syllables of which you catch as you pass. Some have exaggerated eyebrows, absurd noses, disordered tresses, formidable wigs; yet these things do not in the slightest degree detract from whatever of terror and gloom their fantastic reality possesses. The dreamer thinks that he

sees drawn up along the road in threatening and misshapen lines, and leaning over him as he passes, the unknown and possible demons of the night.

We are tempted to question whether we do not see before us those mysterious beings which live in the darkness as their home, and are composed of darkness as the crocodile is composed of stone and the humming-bird is composed of air and sunlight.

All thinkers are dreamers; revery is thought in fluid and fluctuating form. Never was there a great mind that was not possessed, charmed, frightened or at least astonished by the visions arising from Nature. Some have spoken of them and have, so to speak, left on deposit in their works, to live there forever in the immortal life of their style and of their thought, the extraordinary and fugitive forms, the nameless things which they had beheld in the "obscure of the night," — *visa sub obscurum noctis*. Cicero calls them *imagines*; Cassius *spectra*, Quintillian *figuræ*, Lucretius *effigies*, Vergil *simulacra*, Charlemagne *masca* (*stryga vel masca*). In Shakespeare Hamlet speaks of them to Horatio. Gassendi was interested in the matter, and Lagrange dreamed about it after having translated Lucretius and meditated on Gassendi.

I am thinking out loud, my dear, with you for a listener. One idea leads me on to another. I let myself go. You are kind and indulgent and sympathetic. You are accustomed to my gait, and you throw the bridle over my neck and let me have free course of thought. Now here I am far away from the subject of sandstone, at least apparently. I return.

The aspects presented by sandstone, the singular copies that it makes of a thousand things, have this peculiarity, — that they are not dissipated by daylight or driven away. Here at Pasages, the mountain, sculptured and worked by the rains, the sea and the wind, is peopled by the sandstone with a host of mute, motionless, eternal, almost terrifying inhabitants of stone.

There is a cowed hermit seated at the entrance of the bay on the summit of an inaccessible rock, with arms extended, seeming, according as the sky is blue or threatening, to bless the sea or warn the sailors. There are bird-beaked dwarfs, monsters with human form and two heads, one laughing, the other weeping, near the sky on a desert plateau, in the clouds where there is no cause for laughter and no cause for weeping. There are gigantic limbs, *disjecti membra gigantis*, here the knee, there the torso and the shoulder-blade, the head farther away. There is a pot-bellied idol with an ox-muzzle and necklace round the neck and two pairs of huge short arms, behind it great briers waving like fly-flappers. There is a gigantic toad squatting on the top of a high hill, marbled by lichens with yellow and livid spots; it opens a horrible mouth and seems to breathe forth the tempest over the ocean.

IX.

AROUND PASAGES.

WALKS IN THE MOUNTAIN. — WRITTEN ON THE WAY.

I.

Aug. 3, 3 P. M.

WHILE out sailing on the bay I perceived a kind of ruin on the top of a mountain. This ruin has in no respect the outline of an ancient ruin. It is a modern and probably recent piece of destruction. The English during their stay here, the Carlists and the Cristinos during the last war, built forts on the heights: this is doubtless one of their forts which has been pulled down since. I am going to see it.

I climb the mountain. There is apparently a path, but I do not know where to find it. I strike at haphazard across the broom. The climb is long, almost perpendicular, and toilsome enough. Half-way up I sit down on the sandstone.

The horizon has grown extended; the sea shows below. The bells on the browsing goats come floating up from the precipice. I see near my feet a lovely buprestidan, its green back all sewn with golden spots.

I start on my way up the mountain again. The summit curves away and grows round; it becomes easier.

I reach the ruin. A stone chimney blackened with smoke rises above the wall.

An immense heap of hewn stones thrown about. A ditch full of plaster. I make my way over the stones. They are mixt with tiles and broken bricks.—I am on the plateau.

A flag-paved road for bringing up cannon, apparently as new as though it had been made yesterday. And yet the grass is growing in the interstices between the flags.

I enter the first ruin.

A square stone chamber. Heavy thick walls. Three loop-holes commanding the passage.—In the middle an enormous strange-looking fireplace of stone and brick, all demolished; it was the chimney which I saw from the outside.—Many brick compartments, cubical and circular; probably a furnace to heat shot. The interior is only a mass of rubbish. Not a human sound penetrates to this spot. You hear only the wind and the sea. It begins to rain. The stones roll down under my feet. I have some difficulty in getting out.

The second room about ten feet in each direction: like the first. Three port-holes commanding the village. One window facing the sea, a beam in an embrasure: it is rotten. I break off a piece. Two other little windowless rooms; the one all blackened with smoke. I sketch the plan of it as I lean on the top of the wall. Burnt wood mixt with the rubbish. The three rooms have no roof: there is not even the vestige of one.

I enter the second ruin. A great room, less encumbered with rubbish, with a small fireplace at the back. On one

side, a smaller room ; both are four square. Everything about them is gone to rack and ruin, destroyed. Hideous insects scuttle away from the stones which I lift with the end of my cane. The rain increases in violence. Mist covers the sea and the country. I start to return.

I make up my mind to climb the rest of the ruin. A mass of stones which must have been the third casemate. Behind this heap a little cultivated field twelve feet square, covered with stumps of burnt wood. The ditch borders the field and surrounds the three ruins.

It simply pours. A kind of night comes down. The fog grows thicker and thicker. Everything around vanishes from sight. I see only the ruins, the flagged road and the plateau. I shall never be able to find my way, and I shall be surely lost over the cliff!

The Lord have mercy !

A magnificent butterfly driven before the rain takes refuge before me on a stone. He fears me less than the storm. I start to return. It is clearing up a little. The rain diminishes. It grows lighter.

I see the little roadstead. It is full of fishing-boats flying across the water, each under four oars. From my height the roadstead full of boats looks like a pool covered with skippers.

II.

Aug. 4, half-past two P.M. on the mountain.

DESOLATE nature. — Violent wind. Little bay tightly squeezed in between the capes of the passage.

The waves break furiously on a reef of rocks half closing the bay and left bare by the falling tide. In the offing the sea is gloomy and rough. A leaden sky. The sun and shadow wander over the billows.

Yonder a trincadoure from Fontarabia with two sails spread is trying to make the entrance to the bay. She bears toward the channel. The wave shakes her violently from stem to stern. Each billow lifts her up, then hurls her forward headlong into the liquid abyss, which then swells up and lifts the vessel on a height once more.

Only a few minutes ago on the mountain, a goatherd was saying to me in Basque, "Iguraldia gaiztoa;" that means "bad weather."

But here comes the vessel; she almost touches the rocks, which the sea covers with foam. The masts bend forward, the sails flap. She goes by. She has gone by.

A cricket chirps in the grass beside me.

3 P.M., on the very edge of the precipice.

Rocks as bare as the skulls of the dead. Brambles. I stick my cane into the sand and write as I stand. Flowers

everywhere and many-coloured grasshoppers and the loveliest butterflies I ever saw. I hear in the depths below me young girls laughing, but I cannot see them.

One of the rocks before me has a human profile. I am sketching it. The cheek seems to have been bitten off as well as the eye and the ear, and you would think that you saw laid open the inner recesses of the organ. In front of this rock and just a little higher up, another block boulder represents a dog. You could imagine it was barking at the open sea.

5 P.M.

I am on a rocky point at the very end of a cape. I went round the boulder in descending the cliff. I rested my hands and my feet in those strange holes with which the rocks along this coast are punctured: they resemble the prints of enormous soles. Thus I have managed to climb down to a sort of bracket with a back jutting out over the depths. I sit down in it; my feet hang over into the air.

The sea, nothing but the sea.

Magnificent and eternal spectacle! It breaks white down yonder on those black rocks. The horizon is foggy, though the sun is scorching. The wind blows hard.

A sea-gull sails majestically by in the abyss a hundred fathoms below me.

The roar is constant and solemn. From time to time I hear sudden crashes, quick and distant downfalls as if something gave way; then there are noises resembling a multitude of human voices. You would think you heard a throng engaged in conversation.

A silvery fringe, delicate and brilliant, follows the windings of the coast as far as the eye can reach.

Behind me a lofty rock standing on end looks like an immense eagle inclining toward its eyrie, its two claws clinging to the mountain. Solemn, superb sculpture of the ocean!

6 P. M.

Here I am on the very top of a high mountain, on the very highest summit that I have reached during the day. To attain to it I had to crawl up on hands and knees.

I have an immense horizon before me: all the mountains as far as Roncevaux; all the ocean from Bilboa on the left, all ocean from Bayonne on the right.

I am writing this with my elbow leaning on a block formed like a cock's comb, making the tip-top of the mountain. On this rock some one has carved deeply on the left three letters:—

L. R. H.

and on the right two letters:—

V. H.

Around this rock there is a little triangular plateau covered with dry heath and surrounded by a kind of moat, very steep. Nevertheless I found in a crevice a pretty little brier rose in bloom. I picked it.

7 P. M.

Another castillo much larger than yesterday's. A thousand insects torment me. I am in the enclosure, having scaled the moat. A great square of stone walls surmounted by an earthwork still standing here and there,

and covered with grass. Four Basque shepherds in their wide hats and red coats are asleep in the shade in the moat. A great white dog is asleep on the top of the wall.

Remains of chambers. In one of them, the relics of a fireplace are still visible. In the midst of the great enclosure one smaller, one angle of which is scorched and blackened with smoke. Behind this small enclosure, a terrace reached by four steps.

One of the shepherds awoke and came to me. I said to him with all solemnity, "Jaincoa berorrecrequin."—"God be with you."

He manifested great astonishment. He goes off to wake up the others. I see them through the embrasures looking at me with a singular expression.

Do their faces express anxiety or ill-will? I can not tell. Perhaps both. I have no other weapon than my cane. The dog has also waked up, and is growling.

A wonderful carpet of green turf, thick as fur, studded with a million daisies or camomile flowers, fills the whole ruin, even to the very last corner.

I am going to climb up on the terrace.

Here I am. I have sat down on the top of the wall of dry bricks. Behind me the sea, before me an amphitheatre of mountains. On my left I can see in the distance, on a crest touching the very clouds, the dismantled fort which I visited yesterday; at my right, still farther distant, Fort Wellington and the ancient tower of the lighthouse beyond San-Sebastiano; in a ravine the valley of Loyola; in another ravine the valley of Hernani.

One of the shepherds has just come up toward me

again. I looked at him with a steady stare: he ran away crying:—“Ahuatlacouata! ahuatlacouata!”

Now I am going down again.

On the way down.

A spectacle reminding me of the one I saw yesterday. A little triangle set in an enormous circle of mountains, on that water a few aphides. That water is the bay; those aphides are the vessels.

III.

Aug. 5, noon.

As I keep following the road half-way up the hill, having passed the castillo, its sentry-box and its sentinel, I come upon a laundry.

This laundry is the charmingest cavern that was ever seen. An enormous rock, one of the very ribs of the mountain, stretching far out over my head, forms a sort of natural grotto. This grotto gives rise to a spring, from which there flows an abundant supply of water, although it falls drop by drop from chinks of the arch. It is like a rain of pearls. The entrance to the grotto is carpeted with a vegetation so rich and so thick that it is like an enormous porch of verdure. All this verdure is full of flowers. Amid branches and leaves a long grass-blade forms a sort of microscopic aqueduct serving to conduct a little thread of water which runs down and falls from its very end, bending over against the dark background of the grotto like a silver thread. A sheet of limpid water made into a reservoir by a dam fills the whole grotto. The uncemented stones give free course to the water, which escapes among the pebbles.

The path passes some little distance from the dam, from which it is separated by a wide fresh lawn of cresses. The

water can be seen through the leaves and can be heard murmuring under the verdure. Turning round, you see the Bay of Pasages and on the horizon the open sea.

Three women, up to their knees in water, are washing their linen in the laundry. It can't be said that they are beating it but rather that they are striking it. Their process consists in violently whipping the stone of the dam with the linen, which they hold in their hands. One of them is an old woman; the other two are young girls. They pause for a few moments and gaze at me, and then go on with their work.

After a few moments of silence —

“Monsieur,” says the old woman in bad French, “do you come from the mountain?”

I reply in mediocre Basque :—

“Buy, bicho nequesa.”—“Yes, a hard road.”

The young girls exchange sly glances and begin to laugh.

One of them is blonde, the other is brunette. The blonde is the younger and prettier. Her hair plaited into one long pig-tail and hanging down her back, in the style of the country, shows on the top of her head a reddish-brown tint, like those skeins of silk which, having been left exposed to the air, have faded. However, the young washerwoman is very graceful with her red petticoat and blue bodice, those two colours being favourites with the Basques.

I go near her and engage her in conversation in Spanish.

“What is your name?”

"Maria Juana, at your service, caballero."

"How old are you?"

"Seventeen."

"Are you a native here?"

"Sí, Señor."

"Are you bourgeois?"

"No, Señor, I am a boat-woman."

"Batellera? Then why are n't you down by the sea?"

"It is low tide, and besides one has to wash one's linen."

Here the young girl took courage and went on:—

"I was on the shore, the other day, caballero, when you first came. I saw you. At first you took Pepa to ferry you across; but as you were with Señor Leon, as the señor had already taken passage and as Manuela la Catalana is his boat-woman, you went over to Manuela. Poor Pepa! But you gave her a good fee."

"Do you remember," she asked, turning to her companion, "do you remember, Maria Andrès? The señor caballero took Pepa first."

"And why did I choose her?"

The young girl looked at me out of her big innocent eyes and replied unhesitatingly:—

"Because she is the prettiest."

Then she began once more to beat her linen. The old woman, having finished her task and about to start away, said, as she passed me:—

"*La muchacha* is right, señor."

And as she said this she set her basket down on the ground and sat on the edge of the path, looking at the two

young girls and myself with her little grey eyes which pierced as with a gimlet through the midst of her wrinkles.

"Would n't you like me to help you lift your basket on your head again?" I asked.

"A thousand thanks, caballero! No one helped me yesterday, no one will help me to-morrow; it is better that no one help me to-day."

"What do you call this herb in Spanish?" I asked, pointing at the cresses with the end of my cane.

"*Verros*, señor."

"And in Basque?"

She gave me in reply a very long word which I don't recollect well enough to write it.

I turned to the young girls:—

"Maria Juana, what is the name of your *querido*?"

"I have no lover."

"And Maria Andrès?"

"Maria Andrès has one."

The young girl said this deliberately, without hesitating, without seeming surprised at the question or embarrassed at the reply.

"What is the name of Maria Andrès's *querido*?"

"Oh, he is a fisherman, a poor *mozo*. He is very jealous. There he is yonder on the bay: you can see from here, in his boat."

Here the old woman put in her word:—

"And fortunately for you he does not see you. He would be in a fine state of mind if he should see Maria Andrès laughing and talking with this señor! Speaking

with a Frenchman, holy Jesus! Better chatter with the four demons of the East and of the West, of the North and of the South."

A soldier passed by; I saluted the young girls with a wave of the hand; they returned it with a smile, and I went on my way.

IV.

Aug. 6, three o'clock.

I HEARD a young cock crowing in the distance, and I continued my walk. I reached here by a very steep road hewn out of the rock and wide enough for ox-carts ; and I have come to a strangely wild ravine. The rocks emerging from the brambles on the escarped face of the mountain form all sorts of gigantic heads: there are skulls, Egyptian profiles, bearded Silenuses grinning in the grass, gloomy cavaliers with stern features. Everything is here, even to Odry snickering under a brambly wig.

Through a gap between the two mountains on the right I perceive an arm of the sea, three villages, two ruins, one of a monastery, an admirable valley, a chain of lofty cloud-covered summits.

The village of Leso, which is the nearest of the three, has a beautiful Gothic church of simple and solemn form. You take it for a fortress. God himself inhabits citadels in this country where war never dies out on one edge of the horizon without kindling again on the other.

Half-past five.

Here the spectacle is of formidable magnificence. The horizon is divided into two parts: sea and mountains. The coast stretches away before me as far as the

eye can reach. It has the angle and the form of an immense cliff of an immense intrenchment turfed with brambles. A precipice having the same angle forms the counterscarp.

On the land side the sea angrily assaults and breaks down this intrenchment, on the crest of which Nature has placed a parapet which would seem to have been laid out with the square. The intrenchment is crumbling here and there, and great flakes fall away in monoliths into the ocean. Imagine slates eighty feet long! Where I am, the assault is furious, the damage done is terrible. A monstrous breach has been made.

I am sitting at the extreme end of the overhanging rock which looks down on this breach. A forest of ferns fills the upper part of the landslide. A throng of dwarf oaks cut down by the sea wind to the height of tall grass is growing around me. I pick a pretty red leaf.

Microscopic fishing-boats are swimming in the depths of the abysm at my feet. The mackerel, the sardines and the lubines shine in the sun in the bottom of the boats like heaps of stars. The clouds give the sea brassy tints.

Seven o'clock.

The sun is setting. I go back down. A child is singing on the mountain side. I see him passing way down yonder in a sunken road, driving six cows. The mountain crests throw their shadows wide over a ruddy field over which sheep are grazing. The sea is a glaucous green. It is growing darker in colour. The sky is losing its brilliancy.

X.

LESO.

August 8.

FOR several days I have noticed on the mountain a village of strange and forbidding aspect. I believe it is called Leso. It is situated at the very end of the gulf of Pasages, at a place left dry at low tide. Yesterday as the sun was setting I took half-way up the mountain an ox road which leads to it.

This road is frequently very steep, paved in places with slabs of sandstone and slabs of marble, and is cut here and there by something like abrupt staircases made by the slabs crumbling. Moreover, it runs over the slope of two mountains, covered at the present time by violet brambles and yellow broom, as by an immense cope of flowers.

I have on my right passed by a great stone farmhouse with an ogive door, then on my left a very wild gorge where a torrent pours in the strangest wildest fashion, forcing its way across the ruin of what was once a house. I crossed this brook by a narrow one-arched bridge and climbed the slope of the opposite mountain.

Women were singing; children were splashing in the pools of water; French workmen from Bayonne, engaged just now in building a ship on the bay, were on their way

down a ravine, lugging — seven at once — a long beam. I heard the tinkling cowbells and the creaking of trees; the landscape had a magnificent gayety. The wind filled everything with life, the sun tinged everything with gold.

Then I came on a ruin on my right, a ruin on my left, then another, then a group of three or four behind a clump of apple-trees, and I suddenly found myself only a few steps from the village.

I make wrong use of the word "ruin" here. I should never employ any other word than "*masure*." These ruins are generally composed of four roofless walls, pierced with a few windows, the majority blocked up with a screen of bricks and converted into port-holes, with traces of fire everywhere, and on the inside a cow or two goats browsing contentedly on the grass of the floor and the ivy of the wall. These ruins are the results of the last war.

As I entered the village, a solemn-looking beggar-woman — certainly a hundred years old — rose up at the angle of a wall and asked for alms with a formidable patronising gesture. I gave this personified century a sou.

I entered a lugubrious street, lined with tall black stone houses, some with massive iron balconies of ancient workmanship, others with enormous escutcheons sculptured in high relief half-way up the façade.

Pale faces apparently just awakened suddenly appeared at the doors as I passed. Almost all the windows had vast spider-webs instead of curtains. Through those long narrow windows I could look into the houses, and I saw the interiors of tombs!

In an instant there was a head at every window, but

each head was older than the window. All these forlorn, cadaverous people, as though dazed by excess of light, were shaking, bending, whispering. My arrival had greatly agitated this swarm of spectres. It seemed to me as if I were in a village of ghosts and lamias, and all these shades were staring with wrath and terror at a living being.

The street through which I was striding was tortuous and cut, so to speak, into two levels. The right-hand side skirted the mountain, the left-hand side sloped down valleywards.

There were many fifteenth-century houses, each with two great doors; on the key-stone over the first door was sculptured in the most delicate and most elegant style the number of the house combined with some religious emblem, — a cross, a dove, a spray of lilies; on the key-stone of the second door were chiselled the symbols of the occupant's occupation, — a wheel for a wheelwright, an ax for a wood-cutter. In this village everything had a sombre and singular grandeur. A sign was a *bas-relief*.

It was deep poverty, but it was not vulgar poverty. It was poverty in houses made of hewn stone; a poverty having wrought-iron balconies, such as the Louvre has, and armorial bearings on marble tablets as at the Escorial. A population of ragged gentlefolk in granite hovels.

I saw no young faces except a few tattered urchins following me at a distance, who, as soon as I looked around, retreated without running away, just as if they had been young famished wolves.

Every two or three houses there was one in ruins, generally covered with ivy and obstructed with brambles;

some of these were ancient, the most of them were modern.

While climbing over portions of walls, I came on a house that seemed to be untenanted. The whole façade on what had been the street had that forlorn aspect peculiar to an unused dwelling, doors carefully closed, at the windows green blinds of woodwork of the time of Louis XIII., and all shut tight.

I climbed over a small fence so as to get to the rear of this house, and there I found it open, but frightfully open, open from top to bottom by the tearing away of the whole side; the wall of it lay in one whole mass on the ground in a cornfield crushed down by its fall. I walked over this wall as over a pavement, and entered the house.

What desolation! I could see at a glance the four disembowelled stories. The staircase had been burnt; the well of it was only a wide hole on which all the rooms abutted. The red and hideous walls everywhere showed the marks of fire.

I could examine only the ground-floor as the stairs were lacking.

This house was very wide and very lofty; it is supported now only by a few columns and a few beams eaten away by the fire. I could see it tottering and shaking above my head; from time to time a stone, a brick, a piece of plastering dropped off and fell at my feet, making a noise as of sinister life in this dead mansion.

On the third story a half-burnt plank remained hanging to a nail; the wind shakes it and makes it creak mournfully. I could see in the rooms the blinds solidly fastened

with bolts. There are a few strips of paper on the walls. One room is painted rose-colour. In the kitchen, at a spot now inaccessible, I noticed on the white mantelpiece of the high fireplace a little ship sketched in charcoal by a child's hand.

From a venerable ruin you depart with your soul magnified and dilated. From the ruin of yesterday you depart with your heart oppressed. In the ancient ruin I imagine the phantom; in the recent ruin I picture to myself the proprietor. The phantom is not so melancholy.

A lofty, huge, granite, melancholy church dominates this wild village.

From a distance it is not a church, it is a block. As you approach you distinguish a few holes in the wall, and in the apse three or four fifteenth-century ogives. As they found, doubtless, that these gave too much light for this stone box, they walled up the ogives, leaving in the centre of each only a narrow bull's eye window. The walls are red, rough, eaten by lichens.

The façade is a great wall cut off squarely, without window, without bay, and displaying no other opening than the porch, which is low and gloomy, with two broken columns and a bare pediment. Two long toothings of black stone gash this façade from top to bottom. It is flanked on the right by a tall narrow tower which barely tops the roof of the edifice.

Seven or eight hideous old women were crouching solitarily here and there round the church. I know not whether the arrangement was accidental or not, but each of these old hags seemed to be paired off with a gargoyle

stretching out its neck over her head on the edge of the roof. From time to time the old creatures would raise their eyes heavenward and apparently exchange tender looks with the gargoyles.

One of the wild beggar-women fastened on me a keener and more wild-beast-like look than the others. I went straight up to her; this seemed to astonish her. Then I pointed to the church and said to her: "Guiltza." That word in Basque signifies key. The living gargoyle, tamed by that word and a demi-peseta which I tossed into her apron, stood up and said: "Bay," that is to say "Yes." Then she disappeared behind the church.

I was left standing alone in front of the porch. The other old women had all got up and were grouped at a corner, from which they were staring at me.

A few moments later the one who had disappeared came back, bringing a key. She opened the church door with it, and I entered.

Was it the hour, the approaching night, the state of my mind, or the very emanation of the building? I never felt before such a chilling sensation as I did on penetrating that church.

It was a lofty nave, as bare inside as it was outside, dark, cold, miserable and grand, feebly lighted by the wan and pallid gleams of the dying day.

At the end, behind the tabernacle, on a stone platform rose from the very floor to the very vault of the roof an immense altar-back, loaded with statues and *bas-reliefs*, formerly gilded, now time-worn, lifting up over a surface of sixty feet in height the fear-inspiring saints of the Inquisition mingled with the forbidding and tragic archi-

ture of Philip II. This altar, viewed in such a gloom, had something about it strangely pitiless and terrible.

The old hag had lighted a candle-end, and it flashed out from a huge lantern of stamped-tin tastefully made, hanging before the altar. This feeble light took away nothing from the darkness and added something to the horror.

The priest ascends to this altar by a wide step shut in by a massive stone-balustrade admirably carved in the severe and elegant style of Charles V., which corresponds to what we call in France the style of François Premier, and to what in England is called the Tudor architecture.

I mounted this staircase and from the top looked down into the church, which is truly majestic and funereal.

The old woman was somewhere in some obscure corner. The door was left open, and I could see in the distance the country already covered with the shadows of night, the sky growing dark, the bay a vast dry strand at that moment; in the foreground a ruin of what had been a cottage; in the middle distance a ruin of what had been an alcade's house; in the background the ruin of a convent. The ruined cottage, the ruined house, the ruined monastery, the sky darkened by the flying day, the strand from which the sea has retreated — was it not all a perfect symbol? ¹ It seemed to me that from the interior of that

¹ Compare Matthew Arnold's lines :

“The Sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round Earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd;
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating to the breath
Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.”

mysterious church, I was looking out not on any landscape but on the figure of Spain.

At that instant a strange noise came to my ears. I listened, not being able to believe my ears, and listened again. It was a remarkable thing, showing how far-reaching the revolution that is taking place in this country has already gone: — the band of children who had followed me at a distance had seen the church-door open; they came and took their places in the porch, and then they sang at the tops of their voices, derisively and with shrieks of laughter, the mass and the vesper service, parodying the priest at the altar and the choir in the chancel.

Need I tell you, my friend, at this moment I felt in my heart of hearts an infinite pity for these poor children who will be deprived of religion before they are furnished with civilisation.

And then, from the children, my pity extended to this poor old nave of the Holy Office, obliged silently to endure the insult. What a punishment! What a reaction! Children making sport of what has so long made men tremble! Oh! if stones have hearts, if the soul of institutions is imparted to the edifices which the institutions erect, what dismal, what inexpressible wrath must at this moment stir to their very foundations these stern and formidable walls! And to think that this was taking place near the cradle of Saint Ignatius, only a few miles from the valley of Loyola!

While the children were singing, the nave grew darker and darker, and the night which was filling the church seemed to be the image of the night which was coming over their faith. Melancholy church of Saint-Dominique!

thou didst think to overcome Satan and thou art overcome by Voltaire !

Behold how everything in Spain has fallen to rack and ruin : the house, the home of men, is ruined in the field ; religion, the home of the soul, is ruined in the heart.

It was dark night when I left the church. All the windows and all the doors in the village were tightly closed. Not a light, not a native. One would think that these sepulchres had been shut up once more and that these spectres had gone back to sleep.

However, in one place I made out a faint light. I walked toward it, and I saw in a low chamber an old woman crouching down motionless, with her back against a newly whitewashed wall. Above her head burned a lamp attached to a nail, — the ancient Spanish lamp, which is shaped like a sepulchral lamp. It seemed to me that I was looking on Lady Macbeth.

The light of this light allowed me to read over the door of the house opposite this inscription :

POSADA

LHABIT.

I was ready for anything except to find an inn there. The moon was rising behind the mountains of Jaitzquivel as I left the village. It was easy for me to find my way back. Nevertheless, in the state of mind in which I had been left by my visit to this strange place, I found it difficult to recognise the landscape which had charmed me so much a few hours before. This region, so gay in the sun-

light, became lugubrious in the moonlight. The solitude of night filled the horizon.

I was approaching Pasages. Here and there travellers began to appear along the road.

I had my eyes fastened on the ruin of a castillo which stood out in the distance in the moonlight on the crest of a rather high mountain rising from a narrow, wild and deserted valley.

What disturbed me was a light that had just begun to show in that ruin at the end of the gable. There was something inexplicable and strange about this light: first because of the place where it was shining, and secondly because of the way in which it was shining. It acted like a revolving light, shining brightly, then disappearing, then flaring up again and shining out suddenly like a great star. What was that fire, and what did it mean?

As I reached the gorge where the bridge is, a poor woman whom I habitually found at the entrance of the ropewalk and almost every morning gave a slight benefaction, was crossing the road on her way to her cottage, half-way up the hill. When she saw me she turned round, made the sign of the cross and pointed to the light, saying, —

“Los demonios.” — “The demons.”

I went on my way.

A little farther on, at the entrance of the steep-paved slope down to Pasages, a man, a fisherman, was standing on a block of red marble and, like the old woman, was looking at the light. “Qué es eso?” — “What is that?” I asked as I came up to him.

The man did not take his eyes from the light and replied :

“Contrabandistas.” — “Smugglers.”

As I was going up to my room my landlady, the excellent Madame Basquetz, came to me :—

“Ah, monsieur, how late you are! You have not had anything to eat, have you? Where have you been?”

“At Leso.”

“Ah! You have been at Leso?”

“Yes, madame.”

She repeated a moment later with a pensive air :—

“At Leso?”

“Why, yes,” said I. “Have you never been there?”

“No, sir.”

“And why?”

“Because here we never go to Leso.”

“And why don't you ever go there?”

“I don't know.”

XI.

PAMPELUNA.

August 11.

I AM at Pampeluna, and I could not tell you what strange sensations come over me. I had never seen this place before, and yet it seems to me as if I recognised each street, each house, each door. All Spain, just as I saw it in my childhood, appears to me here as on the day when I heard the first ox-cart passing. Thirty years are wiped out of my life; I am a child once more, the little French boy, *el niño, el chiquito frances*, as they used to call me. A whole world sleeping within me wakes to life and swarms in my memory. I thought it was almost effaced, — here it is, more vivid and resplendent than ever.

This is indeed genuine Spain. I see arcaded squares, pavements with pebble mosaics, boats with awnings, gayly painted houses, which make my heart beat fast. It seems to me only yesterday. Yes, I came in only yesterday under this great *porte-cochère* leading to a little stairway. I bought last Sunday as I went out to walk with my young comrades of the Nobles' School some queer little ginger cakes called *rosquillas* at this shop, at the front of which hang goat-skins for carrying wine.

Along this high wall I played ball back of an old church. All this is distinct, certain, real, palpable.

Here are wall foundations of marble of such extravagant colouring that they delight my very soul. I spent two hours of ecstasy in contemplation of an old green blind with little panels; it opened in two parts so as to make a window when half thrown back and a balcony if wholly opened. This blind had been for thirty years in a corner of my mind without my suspecting it. I said to myself: —

“Ha! here is my old blind!”

What a mystery is the past! And how true it is that we leave ourselves in the objects that surround us! We think them inanimate, but they are alive nevertheless; they live on the life which we give them. At every phase of our lives we strip off our entire being and leave it forgotten in some corner of the world. All this ensemble of unspeakable things which was once ourselves remains there in the shade coalescing with the objects on which we have unconsciously left our imprint.

One day, at last, however, we see these objects once more; they rise suddenly before us and lo! instantly they bring back to us our past with the omnipotence of reality. It is like a sudden light; they recognise us, they make us recognise them; they bring to us dazzlingly and in all their entirety our stored-up memories and give us a charming phantom of ourselves, — the playing child, the young man in love.

So I left San-Sebastiano yesterday.

Mountains give us two kinds of roads: those which wind

flat on the ground like vipers, those which wind undulating in leaps like boa-constrictors. Allow me to use these two comparisons which make my idea clear. The road from San-Sebastiano to Tolosa is of the latter species ; that from Tolosa to Pampeluna of the first. That is to say, the road from San-Sebastiano to Tolosa climbs up and down over the crest of the hills, while the road from Tolosa to Pampeluna follows the sinuosities of the valleys. The one is charming, the other is wild.

As I left San-Sebastiano I gave one final glance at the peninsula, at the sea superbly breaking on the sands, at Mount Urgoll and the three monasteries at the entrance of the city, — one of them burnt by the Cristinos, the other two by the Carlists.

Hernani has no monuments, — a church the pompadour portal of which is rather rich, however, and an insignificant *ayuntamiento*, — but Hernani has a lovely landscape and a street worth a cathedral. The main street of Hernani, all lined with projecting escutcheons, with balcony-jewels, with seignorial doorways, closed by an ancient postern which at the present time has instead of battlements tufts of blossoming nasturtiums, is a magnificent book, in which you can read page by page, house by house, the architecture of four centuries.

As I crossed through the city I regretted that nothing indicated to the passer-by the house in which was born Juan de Urbata, that Spanish captain who on the day of Pavia had the distinguished honour of taking François I. prisoner. Urbata performed the ceremony like a gentleman, and François I. submitted to it like a king. Spain

owes Urbata a marble slab in the main street of Hernani.

Moreover, these mountains are full of illustrious names. Motrico is the country of Charruca who died at Trafalgar. Sebastian de Elcano, who circumnavigated the world in 1519 (notice the date), and Alonzo de Ercilla, who wrote an epic poem, were born one at Guetaria, the other at Bermio. The valley of Loyola in 1491 saw the birth of Ignaz, who from being a page became a saint; and the bridge of Lozedo saw the landing, on his way from Germany to Saint Just, of Charles V. who from being an emperor became a monk.

Tolosa, which is the ancient Iturissa, has more beauty than Hernani and more life and more wealth, but less grandeur and less solemnity.

In spite of the fine rain which had been falling since early morning, I saw the whole city. A few ancient houses, one of which was built under Alphonse the Wise, the astronomer-king, a rather fine church which has been turned into a forage barn; the two pretty rivers, the Oria and Araxa — that was all that I had for my trouble.

On the first-story front of a building in the main street there is an inscription on black marble beginning *Sic visum superis*, and ending with *el emperador le . . . caballero*. I had begun to copy it, but this unheard-of action collected such a crowd around me within a few moments that I gave up the inscription. At a moment when the *ayuntamientos* were trembling like aspen leaves I feared lest I should inadvertently cause a revolution at Tolosa.

Hernani, where I had been when a child, and the memory of which still remained with me, is much more Spanish in

appearance than Tolosa. The fourteen diligences which leave Tolosa every morning carry away with them something of the old customs, of the old ideas, of the old costumes, of that which in fact makes the old Spain.

And then there is work done at Tolosa. There is Urbieta's hat-factory, a paper-manufactory, many shops where leather, horse-shoes, wrought-iron boilers, polished iron balcony-railings, sabres, and guns are made; the whole mountain is full of forges. Now if anything can deform Spain it is work.

Spain is essentially the land of gentlemen. For three centuries they have been kept in idleness by the wealth of the Indies and the Americas. Hence the emblazoned streets. In Spain they used to wait for the galleon just as in France they vote the budget. Tolosa, with its activity, its industry, its mills, its waterfalls, its shade-trees, its anvils, and its noise, resembles a pretty French town. It seems as if its din must disturb its neighbour Castilla Vieja, and that this half-sleeping town must be more than once tempted to turn round and say, "Hush, will you!"

At the instant that I reached the door of the *fonda* at Tolosa a swarm of maid-servants bare-legged and in short petticoats, eager and cordial and some of them pretty, surrounded me and took possession of my luggage. All of them tried to say a few words in French.

This morning at three o'clock, long before daybreak, as you may imagine, I took my seat in the coupé of the diligence of *la Coronilla de Aragon* and departed from Tolosa.

In pitch-black night we drove through the street and across the bridge and entered the highway, eight mules galloping furiously under the stimulus of three men shouting and plying whip and prick and spur.

One of the three men was a boy, but he was worth the other two. He seemed not to be more than eight or nine years old. This fierce young lad, whom I had seen before we started, under the lantern of the stable, with his hat *à la* Henri II., his blouse of ticking, and his leathern gaiters, had an Arab profile, almond-shaped eyes, and the most graceful gait that was ever seen. As soon as he was on horseback he was transformed; he seemed to me like a gnome who had become a postilion. He was almost imperceptible on his enormous mule; he seemed to be screwed on his saddle; brandishing a monstrous whip in his little hand, every time he cracked it the animals sprang forward, and thus he drove headlong through the darkness this enormous equipage, rumbling, jolting, bounding, thumping over bridges and roads with the rumble of an earthquake. It was the fly on the coach but what a fear-inspiring fly!

Imagine a demon dragging the thunder.

The *mayoral* sitting on the box at the right, solemn as a bishop, waved for his sceptre a gigantic whip, the end of which reached as far as the eighth mule at the very end of the team; the snapper seemed to be of fire. From time to time he would cry out, "Anda, niño," — "Come, boy!" And the little postilion would bend madly over his mule, and the whole would leap off as if the carriage were going to fly.

At the left of the mayoral was placed a tall beggar about twenty years old and almost as fantastic as the postilion. It was the *zagal* (under-coachman). This strange young fellow, tied around with a rope, shod with a rag, dressed in tatters, and wearing a flat cap on his head, risked his life twenty times an hour. Every minute he would be springing to the ground, darting to the head of the team, insulting the mules, calling them by name with frightful screams:—

“La capitana! la gaillarda! la generale! Leona! la carabiniere! la collegiana! la carcaña!” whipping them, pricking them, pinching them, biting them, pounding them, kicking them, compelling them to drag the diligence at a triple gallop, until it seemed as if he could no longer keep up with it, and after it had passed him like a lightning flash and you would have supposed that he was quarter of a mile behind, just as the speed was at its height a man apparently shot from a howitzer would suddenly plump down on the box next the mayoral. It was the *zagal* taking his place once more.

And taking his place with absolute calmness and imperturbability, — not out of breath, without a drop of sweat on his brow. A miser who has just given a copper to a beggar is surely more breathless. He who has never seen a Navarese *zagal* run on the road from Tolosa to Pampe-luna does not comprehend all the meaning of the famous proverb, “to run like a Basque.”

My senses were dulled by that kind of drowsiness in which the traveller is plunged by the weariness of a bad night, the fresh morning air, and the rolling of the carriage.

You know that kind of somnolence, at once vague and transparent, in which the mind floats half-drowned, in which realities, confusedly presenting themselves, tremble, enlarge, reel, vanish, and become dreams even while they remain realities. A diligence becomes a whirlwind, and remains a diligence. The voices of people speaking sound like trumpets; at the post station the postilion's lantern flames like Sirius; the shadow which it casts on the pavement seems like a huge spider seizing the coach and shaking it between its pincers. My eight mules and my three postilions showed themselves to me across this exaggerating revery.

But is there not sometimes reason in hallucinations and truth in dreams? And are not such strange states of the mind full of revelations?

There now, shall I tell you? In this situation wherein so many philosophers have vainly endeavoured to study themselves, singular doubts, fanciful and new questions presented themselves to my thought. I asked myself: "What may be taking place, what is taking place in these poor mules, which, in the kind of somnambulism in which they live, vaguely enlightened by the flickering gleams of instinct, deafened by a hundred bells around their ears, almost blinded by their *guardaojos*, imprisoned by their harness, overpowered by the jangling of chains, the rumble of wheels, and the echo of the road ceaselessly pursuing them, feeling the wild attacks upon them of these three Satans, unseen by them but heard in the darkness and the tumult? What signifies for them this dream, this vision, this reality? Is it a punishment? But they have committed no crime. What do they think of man?"

My friend, the dawn, was beginning to appear; a corner of the firmament was growing white with that mysterious whiteness which always accompanies the first morning-light. Everything that had distinct and definite life was still sleeping, in nests hidden under leaves and in cottages buried in the woods; but it seemed to me that Nature was not asleep. The trees, dimly made out in the darkness, like phantoms gradually emerged from the mist in the deep gorges of Tolosa, and appeared above us at the edge of the sky as if they were pushing their heads over the hill-tops; the grasses were shivering along the edge of the road; on the rocks, black intertwining brambles were struggling as if with despair. I heard no noise, no voice, no complaint; but I tell you it seemed to me that Nature was not sleeping. It seemed to me that she was gradually waking all around us, and that in these trees, in these grasses, in these brambles, it was she, the common mother, leaning over in unspeakable pain and in infinite pity, from the edge of the road and the tops of the mountains, to see passing and suffering in this darkness-shrouded route these poor frightened mules, these abandoned and wretched animals—her children as much as we are, and living nearer to her than we do!

O my friend, if Nature really looks at us at certain times, if she sees the brutal deeds which we commit without need and as if from mere wantonness, if she suffers by reason of the wicked things done by man, how solemn is her attitude and how terrible her silence!

No one has ever investigated these questions. Human philosophy has cared little for man outside of man, and has

only superficially and almost disdainfully inquired into the relations of man with things and with the animal which in his eyes is only a thing. But are there not here mighty depths for the thinker?

Must a man consider himself ridiculous because he has in his heart the sentiment of universal pity? Are there not certain laws of a mysterious equity, cleaving off from the totality of things and infringed by the useless and unintelligent way in which men treat animals? Of course the sovereignty of man over things may not be denied; but God's sovereignty has the precedence over man's.

Now do you think, for example, that man may, without violating some secret and paternal intention of the Creator, make the ox, the ass, or the horse the slaves of creation? Let him make them serve him: that is all right; but let him not make them suffer! Let him even put them to death, if it be necessary; it is his necessity and it is his right, but at least—and I insist on this—let him not expose them to useless suffering.

I for my part think that pity is a law as much as justice, that goodness is a duty as much as probity. Whatever is weak has a claim on the goodness and the pity of whatever is strong. The animal is weak because it lacks intelligence. Let us therefore be kind and pitiful toward it.

In man's relations with animals, with flowers, with the objects of creation, there is a great system of morality as yet scarcely perceived, but destined to be more and more observed and to become the corollary and complement of human morals. I admit the exceptions and restrictions,

which are numberless, but it is a matter of certainty to me that when Jesus uttered the Golden Rule the word "others" in his mind had an immense application: "others" went beyond man and embraced the universe.

The principal object for which man was created, his grand aim, his grand function, is to love. God desires man to love. The man who does not love is below the man who does not think. In other words, the egoist is inferior to the imbecile, the wicked man stands lower in the social scale than the idiot.

Everything in nature gives man the fruit that it bears, the benefit that it produces. All objects serve man according to the laws peculiar to them: the sun gives its light, the fire its heat, the animal its instinct, the flower its perfume.

It is their way of loving man. They follow their law, and they do not shirk it and they do not refuse it. Man ought to obey his. He ought to give to humanity and render to nature what is his light, his heat, his instinct and his perfume—love.

Doubtless it was the first duty—and with this one must begin and the various legislators of the human mind have been right in neglecting every other care for this—it was necessary to civilise man on the side of man. The task is already far advanced and makes advances every day. But man must be civilised also on the side of Nature. Here everything is to be done.

This is my reverie. Take it for what it is, but whatever you say, I declare that it arises from a deep sentiment that I have in me. Now, think, let us think it over, but say

nothing more of it. The seed must be sown and the furrow be ploughed.

August 12.

What shall I say to you? I am delighted. It is a wonderful country and very curious and very amusing. While you are having rain at Paris I am enjoying the sun here and the blue sky and just enough clouds to make magnificent wreaths over the mountains.

Everything here is capricious, contradictory, and strange. There is a mixture of primitive manners and degenerate manners; innocence and corruption; nobility and bastardy; pastoral life and civil war; beggars who have the looks of heroes, and heroes who have the appearance of beggars; an ancient civilisation which is going to rack and ruin in the midst of a young nature and a new nation: it is old and it is being born; it is rancid and it is fresh. It is inexpressible. Especially is it amusing.

Unique country where the incompatible is married at every instant, at the end of every field, at every street-corner. *Table d'hôte* waitresses courtesy like duchesses to receive two sous. Behold yonder village girl passing; she is miraculously handsome, with her hair ravishingly arranged, smart and adorned like a madonna; look down: you see a horrible ragged petticoat, beneath which protrude two frightful big feet bare and dirty; the madonna terminates in a mule-driver. The wine is execrable, it tastes of the buck-skin; the oil is abominable, its smell is beyond words to describe; every tavern sign offers you wine and oil,—*vino y aceyte*. The highways have sidewalks, beggars wear jewels, cottages bear escutcheons, the

inhabitants wear no shoes. All the soldiers thrum their guitars in all the guard-houses. Priests climb up on the imperial, smoke cigars, stare at the women's ankles, eat like tigers, and are thin as nails. The roads are studded with picturesque beggars.

O decrepit Spain! O country wholly new! Grand history, grand past, grand future! hideous and wretched present! O miseries! O marvels! One is repelled, one is attracted. I tell you again there are no words for it!

In the evening these same beggars may be seen with a carbine on their shoulders on the hill-tops outlined against the sky.

The gorge leading from Tolosa to Pampeluna would be celebrated if it were ever visited. But it is one of those routes that no one ever takes. A zig-zag journey in Spain would be a voyage of discoveries. There are seven or eight great routes: every one takes those. No one knows the intermediate places.

However, Europe is threatened with something similar. The neglect of intermediary places is one of the probable and redoubtable results of railways. Civilisation will certainly find the remedy, but it must be sought for.

There is a class of people, of minds if you please, who are fatigued or left behind by enthusiasm, and who meet all the beauties of art or of nature with this convenient phrase: "It is always the same thing."

For these deep scorners, what is the sea? A beach or a dune and a long but very monotonous blue or green line.

What is the Rhine? Water, a crag, and a ruin. And so on from Mayence to Cologne.

What is a cathedral? A spire, arches, stained glass, and flying buttresses.

What is a forest? Trees, and then more trees.

What is a gorge? A torrent between two mountains.

"It is always the same thing."

Worthy imbeciles, who have no suspicion of the immense part played in this world by detail and shading. In nature it is life, in art it is style. Superb, scornful simpletons, who do not know that the air, the sun, the gray or clear sky, the puff of wind, the accident of light, reflection, the season, God's fancy, the poet's fancy, the landscape's fancy are worlds. The same motive gives the Bay of Constantinople, the Bay of Naples, and the Bay of Rio Janeiro. The same skeleton gives Venus and the Virgin. In fact, all creation, this multiple, variegated, dazzling, and melancholy spectacle, which all thinkers since Plato have been studying, which all poets since Homer have been contemplating, may be reduced to two things: green and blue. Yes, but God is the painter. With this green he makes the earth, with this blue he makes the sky.

So then this Gorge of Tolosa is a gorge like all gorges, "always the same thing," a torrent between two mountains; but this torrent utters such a horrible cry, but the mountains have such lofty attitudes, that as man enters them he feels his feebleness and insignificance. A forest mingles with the rocks, and there are wide masses of living rock descending from the highest summits all studded with great oaks that are almost inexplicable. You see the tree,

you see the rock ; you ask yourself where its root is and on what it lives.

As in everything terrible that Nature does, there are charming nooks, carpets of turf, rills trickling off from the torrents and murmuring with that gentle babbling such as young eagles must make in the eyrie, grassy spots full of flowers and sweet odours ; a thousand resting-places pleasant for the eye and for the thought. Man alone remains gloomy. Passing peasants have a dreamy air ; no villages ; here and there lofty stone mansions pierced with three or four little windows which even thus are found to be too small, for they are half walled up.

In this country, I am obliged to repeat, the window is no longer a window, it is only a loop-hole. The house is no longer a house, it is a fortress. At every step a ruin. The truth is that all the civil wars of Navarre for four centuries have rolled down this ravine pell-mell with this torrent. This white foamy water has many, many times been red with blood. Perhaps that is why the torrent howls so pathetically. That is surely the reason that man here is dreamy.

A lofty mountain, a steep climb, as travellers would style it, a bad incline, in postilion's language, cuts this gorge in two. The road, very fine in other respects, twists and doubles along the side of the precipice with frightful angles. Two oxen had been added to our eight mules, and the diligence dragged along by this immense team climbed up at a snail's pace. In the middle of the ascent a great stone milestone tells you that you are six leagues from Pampeluna, — SEIS LEGUAS A PAMPELUNA.

The mountains make admirable masses around the precipice. Harvesters, as large as ants, are mowing their grain in the abyss.

I had dismounted from the coach, and as I walked along accompanied by the jingle of the oxen's and the mules' chains, I picked a bouquet of wild flowers. I met a beggar and gave him a real. Then on the very summit I came upon a little cascade and threw my bouquet into it. One must also give alms to the naiads.

There I climbed up on the imperial, and the oxen were taken off. At that instant the six forward mules, feeling themselves free, set off at a gallop. The mayoral, the postilion and the zagal, swearing, started after the mules and left the coach where it was. The diligence was still on a very steep incline; the two shaft mules left alone to hold it back were not strong enough; their feet slipped and the coach began to glide slowly toward the precipice. The passengers, greatly alarmed, shouted to the drivers, but they did not hear. The hind wheel was only a few inches from the edge when the beggar, a poor old man all bent over and paralytic, came up and pushed a stone under with his foot. That was enough. The stone blocked the wheel and the coach came to a stand-still.

There was a priest next me on the seat. He made the sign of the cross and said to me:—

“God has just saved twenty people.”

I replied: “Yes, with a stone and an old man.”

The drivers brought back the mules, which had wandered to a considerable distance.

An hour after, we were coming out on the plain of Pam-

peluna between two enormous promontories,—the last towers which the mountain has on this side.

Pampeluna is a town that holds more than it promises. If you lift up your head and gaze from a distance no monumental profile appears; as soon as you are fairly in the town the impression changes. In the streets there is something to interest you at every step; on the ramparts, you are delighted.

The situation is admirable. Nature has made a circular plain, round as an amphitheatre, and girdled it with mountains. In the centre of this plain man has made a city. It is Pampeluna.

A Vascon city, according to some authorities, with the ancient name of Pompelon, a Roman city according to others, with Pompey as its founder, Pampeluna is to-day the Navarrese city of which the house of Évreux made a Gothic city, of which the house of Austria made a Castilian city, and of which the sun has made almost an oriental city.

All around, the mountains are bald, the plain is arid. A pretty river, the Arga, gives nourishment to a few poplar trees. The gentle undulations rising from the plain to the mountains are covered with manufactories of Poussin. It is not only a great plain, it is a great landscape.

Viewed close at hand the city has the same character. The streets, filled with black houses decorated with gay paintings, balconies, floating curtains, are at once cheerful and severe.

A magnificent square tower of unmortared bricks of the simplest and proudest outline dominates the promenade, which is planted with trees. It is the thirteenth century modified by Arab taste, as it is in Germany and Lombardy by the Byzantine taste. A portal in the style of Philip IV. richly furnishes the lower part of this tower, which otherwise would perhaps be a little bare. This portal, which has nothing about it loud or extravagant, is a happy addition there. It is almost rococo, and yet it belongs to the Renaissance.

However, the Spanish rococo is a backward rococo, like everything else which Spain has produced; it borrows from the sixteenth century and preserves into the seventeenth and even into the eighteenth the slenderness of columns and the complicated broken fronts, a great grace of the Henry II. style. The forms of the Renaissance mingled with chicories and rock-work¹ give the Castilian rococo a peculiar originality composed of nobility and caprice.

This magnificent tower is a steeple. The ancient church of which it formed a part has disappeared. Who destroyed it? Was it not burned in one of the numerous sieges which Pampeluna has sustained?

I was asking myself these questions, and an angle of the bell-tower where a deep breach seems to have been torn out by bombs confirmed in my mind this conjecture. However, I opened a door at the foot of the tower and entered into a frightful church in the so-called "good taste," in the wretchedest and meanest style, like the Madeleine and the guard-house of the Boulevard du Temple. This puzzled

¹ *Aux chicorées et aux rocailles.*

me. Could it have been to build this platitude decorated with triglyphs and archivoltas that they have demolished the old semi-roman and semi-moresque church of the thirteenth century ?

The "good school," alas ! has made its way even into Spain, and this work would have been prowess worthy of it. It has more disfigured ancient cities than all sieges and all fires. I should sooner prefer a hail-storm of bombshells than an architect of "the good school." For pity's sake bombard the ancient edifices, don't restore them ! The bombshell is only brutal, the classic masons are simpletons. Our venerable cathedrals proudly defy shells, grenades, cannon-balls, and Congreve rockets. They tremble to their foundations before M. Fontaine. At least rockets, cannon-balls, grenades, and shells do not carve Corinthian capitals, do not excavate flutings, and do not cause a solid Roman arch to blossom out with new-cut ovolos. Saint-Denis has just been restored and is no longer Saint-Denis ; the Parthenon has been bombarded and is still the Parthenon !

The houses, almost all built of yellow bricks, the flat roofs with hollow tiles, the dust floating in the air, the ruddy plains, and the burned mountains lining the horizon give Pampeluna a peculiarly wan appearance, which at first sight strikes the eye sadly ; but, as I told you, in the city everything rejoices it. This fantastic style of ornament peculiar to Southern peoples takes its revenge on the fronts of all the buildings. The variegated colours in the hangings, the gayety of the frescos, the groups of pretty women leaning out over the street and talking by means of signs

from one balcony to another, the varied and odd displays in the shops, the joyous noises and the perpetual life in the streets and squares have something lively and radiant.

Every instant you see a revelation of the taste, at once wild and elegant, peculiar to half-civilised nations. Here you see a common well, the curb of which, made of almost hewn stone, supports six little white marble columns surmounted by a cupola serving as the pedestal for the statue of a saint. Here is a madonna doll surrounded by paintings, loaded with bawbles, tinsel, spangles, installed under a dais of red velvet damask at the corner of a walk with whitewashed arcades.

This taste imprinted upon the decoration and furnishing of churches introduces grace and light. At Pampeluna the external architecture of the monuments being very austere, the internal architecture escapes being wearisome. I for my part like it, and in my opinion the greatest merit of the "art rocaille et chicorée," which ought to atone for all its vices, is the continual effort which it makes to please and to amuse.

Aside from the cathedral, of which I shall speak to you shortly, the churches of Pampeluna, although almost all are ancient edifices, have preserved few traces of their Gothic origin. Yet I noticed in one of them, in the midst of a lofty wall, over a door, a fourteenth century *bas-relief* representing a cavalier setting off on a crusade. The man and the horse were hidden under their warlike caparison. The cavalier, proudly morioned, with the cross on his shield, spurs on his horse which curvets and gallops forward. You can see behind the baron on a hill his castle with its

crenelated towers, the portcullis still raised, the gate still open from which he has just taken his departure and which he may never again pass through. Above the donjon is a great cloud, which opens and gives passage to a hand, an all-powerful and fatal hand, the pointed finger indicating to the cavalier his route and his goal. The cavalier turns his back on the hand and sees it not, but you perceive that he is sensible of it. It impels him, it sustains him. This work is full of mystery and grandeur. Roughly and superbly cut as it was in the granite it seemed to me that I saw actually enacted the beautiful Castilian romance which begins thus: "Bernard, his lance in his hand, swiftly rides along the shores of the Arlanza. He has departed, the gay, valiant, and determined young Spaniard."

All the churches have an altar to Saint Saturnin, who was the first apostle of Pampeluna; and another to Saint Firmin, who was its first bishop. Pampeluna is the oldest Christian city in Spain, and is proud of it, if such a thing can ever be a cause of pride. These two names, Firmin and Saturnin, are not only in all churches, they are also on all the shops. At every street corner you read: SATURNINO, ROPERO; FERMIN, SASTRE.

There is in one street — I forget which — a hotel porch which impressed me. Imagine a wide archivolt around which creep, climb, and twine, like a stone vegetation, all the odd tulips and all the extravagant lotoses which the rococo mingles with shells and volutes; now summon forth from these lotos-flowers and these tulips, instead of scaled sirens and naked naiads, drum-majors decorated with

three-cornered hats, and mustached halberdiers clad like the Folard's foot-soldiers; add to this, rock-work and garlands in the midst of which cannoniers are loading their pieces, and arabesques which bear daintily at the end of their tendrils drums, bayonets, and bursting grenades, give to all this the rather round and heavy but flexible style of the time of Charles II., and you will get some idea of this little military and pastoral poem chiselled on this door. It is an eclogue ornamented with cannon-balls.

The first object which the eye looks for when one sees for the first time a city on the horizon is the cathedral.

As I came near Pampeluna I perceived in the distance, towards the eastern end of the city, two abominable steeples of the time of Charles III. — the epoch corresponding to our worse Louis XV. These two belfries, which set out to be spires, are similar. If you try to imagine what one of them looks like, conceive of four huge corkscrews supporting a queer kind of big-bellied, turgescient tumour crowned with one of those classic pots vulgarly called urns, which have every appearance of being born from the marriage of an amphora and a jug. The whole thing made of stone. I was perfectly indignant.

"What!" I exclaimed, "is that what they have done to this almost Roman cathedral of Pampeluna, which saw the citadel of Philip II. built, which saw a French arquebuse wound Ignaz de Loyola, and which seemed to Charles d'Évreux so beautiful that he desired to have his tomb placed within it?"

I was tempted not to go to it at all. However, when I reached Pampeluna and saw from the end of the street the pitiful aspect of the two belfries, I was overcome by a scruple and I started for the portal.

Viewed from near at hand, it is still worse. The two excrescences hewed out like cabbage-stalks and decorated with the name of spires, as I have just told you, are supported by a colonnade to be compared to nothing else than the colonnade of Saint-Denis of the Holy Sacrament in our Rue Saint-Louis at Paris. And these turpitudes are shown in schools as Greek and Roman Art! Oh, my friend, how hideous the hideous is when it pretends to be beautiful!

I drew back from before such architecture and was on the point of leaving the church where it stood, when as I turned to the left I perceived behind the façade the high black walls, the ogives with flamboyant windows, the delicate small spires, the robust buttresses of the venerable cathedral of Pampeluna. I recognised the church of my dreams.

It stands there, as if it were undergoing some strange penance, hidden, sombre, melancholy, humiliated, behind the odious portal with which "good taste" has desecrated it. What a mask that façade! What a fool's-cap those two belfries!

Reconciled and satisfied, I entered the edifice by a side portal of the fifteenth century, simple, scarcely ornamented, but elegant. The doors are studded with nails and *fleurs de lys*, and the iron knocker, made of dragons biting each other, has a lovely Byzantine form.

The interior of the church fascinated me. It is Gothic with magnificent stained-glass windows.

I recently spoke to you about a hotel-entrance as being a lovely little poem. The cathedral of Pampeluna is also a poem, but a great and beautiful poem; and since I have been led to this comparison between the things of architecture and the things of poesy, permit me to add that this poem is in four cantos, which I should entitle: the high altar, the choir, the cloister, the sacristy.

When I entered the cathedral it was a little past five o'clock in the morning. It had just been opened; it was still deserted and dark. The first rays of the rising sun poured horizontally through the panes in the lofty nave and threw from one ogive to the other great golden beams which stood out distinctly against the sombre background and gleamed in the dusky church. An old priest all bent over was saying early mass before the high altar.

The high altar, dimly lighted by a few candles, half surrounded by a floating wall of tapestries and hangings attached to the columns of the apsis and intercepting the light of day, seemed like a heap of precious stones in the enveloping fog. All around were grouped all sorts of sparkling furniture, such as are seen only in Spanish churches, — credences, cabinets, chests, cased buffets with little drawers. In the background behind clumps of lilies, above the high altar, in the midst of a kind of halo which may have been only gilded wood but which took from the hour and the place a strange majesty, between the glittering walls of a golden armory with its two doors opened, gleamed a madonna in a silver robe, the imperial crown on her head and the Infant Jesus in her arms.

This I beheld across a marvellous iron grating of the

time of Joanna the Mad, the work of the magician-sculptors of the fifteenth century. It is all loaded with flowers, arabesques, and figures. This grating is more than twenty feet in height and is reached by a flight of several steps. It shuts off the sanctuary on the only side in which the eyes can penetrate in that direction.

Nothing could be more striking than this white-haired man alone at this sacred and sublime morning hour in the midst of this grand church, clad in splendid garments, speaking in a low voice, turning the leaves of a book, and doing something mysterious in this magnificent, dim, silent, and veiled place. The mass was sung for God, for immensity, and for an old woman who was listening crouching behind a column a few paces from me.

All this was grand. This old church, this old priest, and this old woman seemed to be a sort of trinity, and to make only one. The two sexes and the edifice made a symbol to which nothing was lacking. The priest had been strong and was broken ; the woman had been beautiful and was faded ; the edifice had been perfect and was mutilated. The man who had grown old in his flesh and in his work, adoring God in the presence of this blazing sun which nothing cools, which nothing extinguishes, which nothing wrinkles, which nothing alters, — say, do you not think it was grand ?

I was moved to the bottom of my heart. No discordant thought issued from this melancholy contrast ; on the contrary, I felt that an inexplicable unity was unfolded from it. Assuredly it is only a very deep and very unfathomable mystery that can thus unite in one inward and reli-

gious harmony the incurable decrepitude of the creature and the eternal youth of creation.

When the mass was finished I turned round and looked at the choir, which in the churches of northern Spain faces the altar.

The choir in the cathedral at Pampeluna shows the lofty and dark carpentry work of the sixteenth century: it is composed of two ranges of stalls occupying the three sides of a rectangle, the fourth side of which is filled and strengthened by an iron grating, — a magnificent piece of iron-work of the same period. Behind each stall is carved in the oak one of the saints of the liturgy. All the wood is cut with the flexible and intelligent chisel of the Renaissance. In the midst of the shorter side of the rectangle, facing the grating and consequently the altar, rises the bishop's throne surmounted by a charming open-work spire. The present bishop of Pampeluna, who had little sympathy with Espartero, is just now in France, — at Pau, I believe, — where he took refuge two years ago.

I was tired from having walked all the morning, so I sat down in the empty throne. A throne! don't you find this a singular choice for a resting-place? Yet so I did. The bishop's choir-book was before me on the desk. I opened it. Almost every leaf was torn.

The grating of the choir, with its floating angels and intertwining vipers as if in a magic foliage, faces the grating of the high altar. The art of the fifteenth century and the art of the sixteenth are face to face, both in their most striking and most opposing characteristics; the one is more delicate, the other is fuller; it is hard to tell which is the more charming.

In the centre of the choir, another iron grille, resembling a large cage, covers and protects, though it still leaves visible the cenotaph of Charles III. of Évreux, king of Navarre.

It is an adorable tomb of the fifteenth century, worthy of being at Bruges with the tombs of Marie of Flanders and Charles le Téméraire, or at Dijon with the tombs of the dukes of Burgundy, or at Brou with the tombs of the dukes of Savoie. The motive has no variety, but it is so simple and so beautiful! The king with his lion, the queen with her greyhound are lying side by side, each crowned, on that marble bed,—a touching conjugal tomb, around which circles a procession of mourning figurines under little bits of architecture of the most exquisite workmanship. A part of the tomb is odiously mutilated. Almost all the statues are in two pieces.

Seven or eight enormous missals, like that law codex which furnished Boileau such a fine rhyme¹ and such a charming couplet, all bound in parchment and ornamented with copper corners, were ranged around the cenotaph and lying on the ground like the shields of soldiers in repose. They were piled up against the grating of the sepulchre. Fate seems to have had a design in leaning the books of the church upon the tomb.

A large organ case, in the taste of the last century, very rich and very heavily gilded, dominates the entire choir and does not spoil it. High up on it may be read this

¹ I presume Victor Hugo meant this couplet, quoted in *Littre*:—

“A ces mots il saisit un vieux infortiat
Grossi des visions d'accursé et d'alciat.”

verse, which is found inscribed on almost all the organs of Spain: *Laudate Deum in chordis et organo*. Below is the date: año 1742.

The chapels surrounding the high altar and the choir are ornamented — one might almost say overloaded — with those immense sculptured and gilded tops in which this ancient Catholic country has always delighted. It is a fashion carried to excess. I have seen in a chapel one of these altar tops of the fifteenth century and in one of the aisles another of the thirteenth. In the midst of this reredos there was hanging from three nails a great Byzantine Christ, perfectly black, with curly hair and projecting ribs, covered with a vast petticoat of white lace. Where the deuce is this lace going to hide itself?

Banners hanging on the wall, madonnas in red damask niches, and tombs sculptured in the sides at different heights completed the furnishing of the church.

As I walked out of the choir, a strange effect of *chiaroscuro* drew me toward the right to the side door facing the one whereby I had entered, and I found myself suddenly in one of the loveliest cloisters that I have ever seen in my life.

It is a vast quadrilateral surrounded by great ogives, the mullions of which contain rich, strong windows of the fourteenth century. Several of these ogives show the traces of recent restoration, but, I hasten to say, intelligent restoration. Above the ogival gallery a second and lower gallery with sculptured beams sustains the roof, over the hollow tiles of which rise here and there slender black stone spires of exquisite form.

The cloister court is a garden very well kept up, where trimmed box-plants trace all those charming arabesques of seventeenth-century gardens.

Everything in this cloister is beautiful, — dimensions, proportions, form, colour, the ensemble, the details, the light and the shade. Here an old fresco animates the wall, filling it with life; here is a marble sepulchre gnawed by time; here is an oaken door mended and patched in such a way as curiously to mingle the carpentry work of all epochs.

While I was passing, the wind shook ancient Navarrese *fleurs de lys* half torn off from the iron fences of the cloister; beside them were blooming in all their splendour of perfume and colour the eternal *fleurs de lys* of the good God.

The pavement whereon you tread is formed of long black slabs. Each slab bears a cipher and covers a dead body. There is something sterile and chilling in this fashion of thus ticketing the dead. I am willing to become dust, ashes, a shade; it is repugnant to me to become a cipher. It is annihilation without its poetry; it is too much negation.

At one of the angles of the cloister a number of lancet ogives partly walled up are placed around a sort of mysterious chamber. It is a chapel. But why is it separated from the church? All I could see was some very dilapidated furniture, a crucifix, a wooden altar, a tin lantern. Nevertheless, I admired the iron grating which protects the two sides of the chapel facing the cloister; it is a precious example of the lively and complicated iron-work of the fourteenth century. This grating is the curiosity of

the chapel, both from its workmanship and from its material. It is only iron, however, but it is illustrious iron.

At the battle of Tolosa the *miramolin* surrounded his camp with an iron chain which the king of Navarre broke with a single blow of his battle-axe. Like Berenice's hair which took its place among the stars, this chain became one of the constellations of the escutcheon. It went to make up the armorial bearings of the kingdom of Navarre, and not so very long ago it occupied half of the shield of France. Now this grating is made of the iron of that chain. Such at least is the story revealed to the passer-by and affirmed on a placard placed above the grating, telling in rather barbarous and enigmatical Latin how the iron chains broken in the destruction of a barbaric people serve to protect the crucifix.

CINGERE QVÆ CERNIS CRVCIFIXVM FERREA VINCLA
 BARBARICÆ GENTIS FVNERE RVPTA MANENT.
 SANCTIVS EXUVIAS DISCERPTAS VINDICE FERRO
 HVC ILLVC SPARSIT STEMATA FRVSTA PIVS.

AÑO 1212.

I have nothing to say to this quatrain except to remark that the work on the grating betrays the fourteenth and not at all the thirteenth century.

The interior portal whereby I entered the cloister from the church is also of the fourteenth century. There drums, covings, capitals, little columns, medallions, statuettes, everything is in the finest style of that beautiful period. Add to this the fact that, being protected by the cloister against the air and by chance against daubers, this

portal has preserved in all their lustre and almost in all their freshness the gilding and the painting of the period. I was filled with amazement.

"By Jove!" I said to myself, "it is worth worshipping before!"

I turned round and beheld some one who was in very deed "worshipping" before it and kneeling on the slabs; and who? A woman of about forty, still handsome, of a noble face and enveloped in a rich black-lace mantilla. As I was looking at her in amazement a woman, old and ragged, came into the cloister and knelt down close to the first. Then a third. Notice, we were outside of the church.

"Well," said I to myself, "here is genuine adoration of architecture!"

A little attention explained the whole thing to me. There was on the mullion over the door a puppet madonna, and on one side on the wall this inscription:—

EL EMINEN^{mo} S^r CARDE
 NAL PEREIRA CONCEDIO
 80 DIAS DE YNDVLGEN^a
 Y EL S^r OBISPO MURILLO
 40 AL QVE REZARE VNA
 SALVE DE RRODILLAS DE
 LANTE ESTA S^{ma} YMAGEN
 DE N^{ra} S^{ra} DE EL AMPARO

"The most eminent seigneur Cardinal Pereira has granted eighty days' indulgences, and Bishop Murillo forty to whoever shall recite a *salve* on their knees before this most holy image of Our Lady of el Amparo."

It is quite likely that this inscription is the "chance" of which I was just speaking, and that it prevented the daubing. The puppet has saved the portal.

While I was finishing my copy of the inscription the pretty devotee arose from her knees, and as she passed near me she said over her shoulder, almost without turning her head: "It will be worth the French gentleman's while — as he is looking at everything — to go and see the sacristy."

Then she hastened away.

I went back into the church, I searched everywhere, and at last by trying all the doors I reached the sacristy. Oh! that was indeed a sacristy after the heart of a handsome Spanish devotee. Imagine an immense boudoir in the rocaille order, gilded, artificial, gaudy, smart, brilliant, charming. Paper-hangings imitate the damask ones which have been removed; the pavement in brick and stone imitates mosaic. Everywhere beautiful ivory Christs, grief-stricken Magdalens, leaning mirrors, sofas with fat cushions, claw-footed toilet-tables; corner buffets with shelves of Aleppo breccia; a brilliant light, mysterious recesses; unknown and varied furniture; priests coming and going; chasubles sparkling in open drawers; perfume as of a marquis's abode, an odour as of an abbé, — such is the sacristy of Pampeluna.

A most worthy ecclesiastic, the Cardinal Antonio Zapata, offered this gallantry to the cathedral. The transition is abrupt; it is almost a shock. Dante is in the cloister; Madame de Pompadour is in the sacristy.

After all, even here the one completes the other and

harmony is at the basis. The sacristy invites to sin, and the cloister to penitence.

The priests were already saying mass in all the chapels and the church was beginning to be crowded with the faithful—especially women. I walked round it once more, for the last time.

Toward the grand entrance the choir is screened by a thick wall against which abuts a white marble tomb. The epitaph, in gilt letters almost effaced, indicates that there lie the remains of that worthy don, Bonaventura Dumont, Comte de Gages, who beat the imperial forces and M. de Savoie himself in many encounters.

One of these skirmishes was a very fine battle which may be seen sculptured in *bas-relief* above the epitaph. There are represented cannon pointed, horses prancing, officers giving their commands, dense battalions crossing their pikes and looking like brambles commingled by a furious wind. There could be nothing stranger than this petrified mêlée forever motionless in this gloomy church, in which from time to time is heard the feeble intermittent squeak of the choir boy.

The mighty tumult made by the battle and the mighty silence made by the tomb leave a solemn lesson in the heart. Behold, then, what the glory of warriors is in death! It is silent. The glory of poets and thinkers sings and speaks eternally.

While I was buried in some such reverie before this tomb the sound of the organ and a violent, lugubrious, and wild song bursting out suddenly at my left in the neighbouring chapel caused me to turn my head.

A bier, which doubtless had just been brought in, was deposited on the slabs on the ground. The wood of which it was made could be seen under the threadbare and dilapidated cloth which barely covered it. Four candles were burning around it; three round loaves were ranged on a board on the ground, at the side of the head of the coffin. At a distance of a few steps toward the right four large resin torches were flaming; the light they cast gave me a confused glimpse of a priest in black chasuble with a white cross on it singing the mass for the dead in a dark chapel. The organ tones came from on high like a supernatural song. It was impossible to distinguish where they came from. Around me a throng of women of all ages, ranged in a sort of semicircle at some distance from the bier, all of them with their heads gracefully arrayed and enveloped in black-silk mantillas, were crouching on the pavement of the church according to the Spanish manner, in the indolent, charming attitude of the women of the seraglio, their eyes more frequently raised than dropped, and playing with their fans as they listened to the mass and looked at the passers-by.

I gazed first at the count's sepulchre, and then at this burial of a poor unknown. Two nothings. The one honoured, the other scorned. My friend, if the things which we call inanimate could suddenly speak, what a dialogue between this marble cenotaph and this pine coffin.

In the evening I took a walk on the ramparts, alone and full of thoughts.

There are days in life which stir up within us all the

past. I was full of inexpressible ideas. The grass on the counterscarps, agitated by the wind, was faintly sighing at my feet. The cannon thrust out their necks between the battlements as if to look out over the country. The mountains on the horizon outlined by the twilight had taken on magnificent forms ; the plain was dark ; the Arga, wrinkled by a thousand luminous reflections, glided among the trees like a silver serpent.

As I passed before the city entrance I heard the chains of the drawbridge creaking and the dull rumble of the portcullis falling into place. The gate had just been shut. At that moment the moon rose. Then, forgive me the absurdity of quoting myself, but these verses which I wrote fifteen years ago came into my mind :—

Armed ever 'gainst her foes
The gloomy Pampelune
Or ere to rest she goes
Beneath the yellow moon
Shuts fast her mighty belt of towers.

August 13.

In the cities of Spain there are many *ventas*, that is to say many taverns, a few *posadas*, that is to say a few inns, and very few *fondas*, that is to say very few hotels. At San-Sebastiano there is only the *fonda Ysabel*, so called to distinguish it from the French hostelry kept by an excellent good man named Lafitte. At Tolosa and at Pampe-luna the *fonda* has neither name nor sign. It is called *la fonda*, and this says in so many words that it is the only one.

The room which I occupy in the *fonda* of Pampeluna, *al segundo piso*, that is, on the second floor, has two large windows opening on the great square.

This plaza has nothing remarkable about it. Just now they are building at one end, toward the east, some kind of hideous structure like a theatre; it will be of hewn stone. I recommend this to the first man of sense who shall bombard Pampeluna.

Pardon me, my friend, for this lugubrious joke. I do not erase it because it arises from the very nature of things. Is it not the fate of all Spanish towns to be periodically bombarded? Last year Espartero bombarded Barcelona. This year Van Halen bombards Seville. Who will do the bombarding next year, and what will be bombarded? I do not know, but hold it for a certainty that there will be a bombardment. This being the case I pray for the inhabitants, for the houses, and for the cathedrals; and as the bombs must have their fair share, I gladly abandon to them all the copies of our Paris Bourse which I have seen.

Having said this let us return to Pampeluna and climb up to my room.

It is a sort of whitewashed hall with two beds, one of them very large and called by the servants *el matrimonio*. On the wall hang a few coloured pictures representing smiling lovers and sulking spouses. A small table, two willow chairs, and an enormous door with panels buttressed with oaken timber, prison-bolts, and a lock worthy of a citadel.

It seems that in Spain the possibility of a capture by

storm is anticipated on every floor. To arm his casement and balconies with close-latticed Persian blinds so as to protect his wife from gallants, and his door with solid iron-work to protect his house from pillage,—such is the two-fold care of the bourgeois in Spain; jealousy makes the window, and fear makes the door.

Half of the chief plaza of Pampeluna is just now occupied, in other words invaded, by a colossal scaffolding put up for the bull-fights which are to take place in a fortnight, and which are keeping the city in a great state of excitement. This *corrida* will last four days, from the eighteenth to the twenty-second of August. The first day there will be a race of *novillos*, and the last day Muchares, an *espada* famous in the whole country, will kill the bull.

The amphitheatre is four-square; it masks the ground-floors on two sides of the plaza, the balconies and windows of which will on the day of the *corrida* serve as first and second boxes; the garrets will be the “paradise.” This theatre (for that is what it is) is very simply built with carpentry work, and framed together with innumerable seats as rude as possible; from my windows, I can distinguish the numbers on the boards.

Add to this ensemble two or three diligences standing with the horses taken out, and a corps of guards, the soldiers of which promenade in front of the *fonda*, and you will have the “view from my window.”

The city hall at Pampeluna is an elegant little edifice of the time of Philip III. The façade offers a curious ex-

ample of a kind of ornamentation peculiar to the seventeenth century in Spain. It consists of flat arabesques and volutes which you would take to be punched out from the stone. I had already seen a house of this kind in the strange and melancholy village of Leso. The pediment of this city hall is surmounted by lions, bells, and statues, making a confusion curious to see.

What has amused me to no small degree is the fair which is going on just at this time on a small plaza directly in front of the city hall. The open booths full of knick-knacks and *passequilles*, the shop-women full of jovial talk, the passers-by elbowing one another, the busy buyers, all this whirl of shouts, laughter, insults, and songs which goes under the name of "fair," under the Spanish sun, is even more than usually noisy and gay.

In the midst of this throng, a formidable looking young fellow of very high stature was standing with his back against a pillar of the city hall. His great bare feet protruded from his red knitted leggings; a *muleta* of white linen with madder-coloured stripes covered his head, enveloping it wholly with its sculpturesque folds and allowing you to see only his swarthy face with its high cheek bones, his square nose, his angular jaws, his prominent chin, his black and bristling beard, — a face of Florentine bronze with wild-cat eyes. In the very centre of this noise and bustle this man remained motionless, grave, and mute. It was not a Spaniard, it was surely an Arab.

Two paces distant from this statue an Italian mountebank with huge goggles on his nose was exhibiting marionettes and beating on a drum, and at the same

time singing on his little stage that ancient cadence of
l'unchinello:—

Fantoccini,
Buraccini,
Puppi,

of which in France we have made the villanelle,—

Le Pantalon
De Toinon
N'a pas d'fond.

The Pantalon and the Wild Man were gazing at each other without understanding each other, like two inhabitants from two different moons.

One cannot pass through a fair, especially such a one as this, without buying something. I gave myself up to it, opened my purse, and sent to the fonda whatever I was tempted to buy.

On my return I found on my table a complete stock for a peddler: amulets of Saragossa in gold, vermilion, filigree; garters with posies from Segovia; *bénitiers* in Bilboa glass; tin night-lights from Cauteretz; a box of matches from Hernani; a box of resinous sticks which take the place of candles at Elizondo; paper from Tolosa; a mountaineer's belt from the pass of Pantacosa; an iron-tipped cane; cord shoes; and two Pampeluna-made muletas of magnificent linen, of coarse workmanship, but exquisitely tasteful.

Aside from this fair and a few squares, Pampeluna remains melancholy and silent all day long. But as soon as the sun has gone down, as soon as the windows and the

lanterns are lighted up, the city awakes, life is a-quake everywhere, joy sparkles, it is a hive of excitement. A fanfare with trumpets and cymbals breaks out over the great principal plaza; it is the band of the garrison giving the city a serenade. The city responds. In every story, at every window, on every balcony are heard songs, voices, the tinkling of guitars, and the clicking of castanets. Every house sounds like an enormous bell. Add to this the angelus chimes from all the spires in the city.

Perhaps you imagine that all this tumult is discordant, and that all these mingled concerts give out only an immense *charivari* perfectly compounded. You would be mistaken. When a city makes itself into an orchestra, a symphony is always the result. The wind tempers the sharp tones, space extinguishes discords; everything takes its place in the ensemble, and the result is harmonious. In a small room it would be a jargon, on a great scale it is a kind of music.

This music fills the population with gayety. Children are playing in front of the shops; the inhabitants emerge from their houses; the great plaza is covered with promenaders; priests and officers join ladies in mantillas; conversations are discreetly carried on behind fans; under the arcades the mule-drivers tease the wenches; a gentle light pouring from a hundred open windows brightly illuminated vaguely shines across the plaza. The throng goes and comes, crossing and intercrossing through the shadows, and nothing is more charming than the glimpse of this discreet mingling of pretty faces and the sound of stifled bursts of merry laughter.

The liberty of the priests in this lovely climate has nothing scandalous about it. It is a familiarity admitted by custom. Yet from my casement, from which I could see all that was going on, I heard three priests, wearing enormous *sombreros* on their heads and enveloped in vast black capes, talking before the fonda, and I must confess that one of them pronounced the word *muchachas* — girls — in a way that would have made Voltaire smile.

Toward ten o'clock the plaza becomes empty and Pampeluna goes to sleep. But the noise does not instantly quiet down; it is prolonged; it does not end with the beginning of slumber. One might say that during the first hours this slumber still thrilled with all the joys of the evening.

At midnight silence reigns and you hear nothing more than the voices of the *serenos* calling the hour, which even while you are falling off to sleep bursts forth suddenly from the neighbouring tower, then is repeated in the distance and not so loud from another tower at the end of the plaza, then goes in a diminuendo from clock to clock and vanishes in the darkness.

XII.

THE CABIN IN THE MOUNTAIN.

THE sun was going down, the mists were beginning to rise from the brooks which could be heard murmuring in the depths of invisible ravines. No trace of habitation. The pass was growing wilder and wilder.

I was overcome with fatigue. I perceived at my right half-way up the hillside, a few steps from the path, at the foot of a high-peaked rock, a block of white marble half-buried in the ground. A huge fir-tree, dead of old age, had tumbled over the cliff, and as it went rolling down the slope had come to a stand-still at this block, and now covered it with its dry and ugly foliage. In my utter weariness that block and that dead tree, on which in my mind I attached our mattress and our blankets like tents, seemed to me to form a comfortable sleeping-room. I called my companions, who were twenty paces ahead of me, and I explained to them my nocturnal architecture, declaring that it was my intention to bivouac there. Azcoaga began to laugh; Irumberri, for all response, gazed at the smoke of his cigar floating off heavenward. Escamuturra el Puffo, that is to say, "the Fist," seized me by the hand.

"Are you really thinking of it, Señor Francese? and are you determined to do it?"

"I am not determined, but I am used up."

"You want to sleep there?"

"I am resigned to sleeping there."

"Bah! but just see what your resting-place will be made of. It is only the dead who sleep in marble and deal chambers."

Mountaineers, like sailors, are superstitious. Now, I affirm that among the mountains I am a mountaineer, and that at sea I am a sailor; in other words, superstitious in either case, and unreasonably superstitious, just as those about me are. Escamuturra's sepulchral observation made me hesitate.

"Come," he insisted, "only a few steps farther, *amigo*. I swear to you, señor, that only an eighth of a league beyond here we shall find comfortable quarters."

"An eighth of a Spanish league!" I exclaimed. "It is six o'clock; it will be midnight before we get there."

Escamuturra replied gravely: "It will be midnight if the devil stretches out the road, and we shall be there within twenty minutes if the French señor will stretch his legs."

"Andamos." — "Let us on, then," I said.

The caravan started on its way again.

The sun set, the twilight came; yet I must confess that the devil did not stretch out the road. We had been for about half an hour climbing up a steep foot-path winding between granite blocks which one might have thought a giant had scattered over the mountain-side. Suddenly a

lawn presented itself to us, the gentlest, the freshest, most delightful to the foot, and most unexpected.

Escanuturra turned toward me. "Here we are," he said.

I looked straight ahead to see where we were, and could see only the dark and bare outline of the mountain. The lawn was confined like an avenue between two low walls of unpointed stones which I had not at first perceived.

Meantime my companions were quickening their steps, and I did likewise.

Soon I saw gradually rising, like something emerging from the earth and standing out against the clear twilight sky, a sort of dark and angular hump, which began to take the form of a roof surmounted by a chimney.

It was in truth a house hidden in a bend of the mountain. As I came nearer to it I studied it. The day was not absolutely gone. I made what in strategic style is called a reconnaissance. The house was quite large, and built, like the bounds of the lawn, of unpointed stones mingled with blocks of marble. The fancy-thatched roof was like steps. I have since found this style in wretched Pyrenean hovels.

At the foot of the wall facing the slope of the mountain there was a square aperture from which flowed a slender stream of water crystalline and cool, which fell over the rock and disappeared down the ravine with a lively and merry noise. The low, massive door was closed. There was only one window, pierced at the side of the door; this window was very narrow and three-quarters stopped-up with bricks in very rude mason-work.

This poor dwelling, like all the isolated habitations of Guipuzcoa and Navarre, had the appearance of a fortress, but it was rather in its defiant look than in its strength; because the thatch-roof was within easy reach, and one could compel the place to surrender with no more powerful artillery than a friction-match.

Moreover, there was no light on the inside, not a voice, not a step, not a sound. It was not a house; it was a black mass, mute and melancholy as a tomb.

Escamuturra leaped to the ground, approached the door, and began to whistle softly the first part of a queer and charming melody. Then he stopped short, and listened.

There was no movement in the hovel. Not a breath replied. The night which had now come down upon us had added a peculiarly gloomy and funereal touch to the mysterious deepness of the silence.

Escamuturra began to whistle his melody once more; then when he reached the same note as before he stopped. The hovel was still silent. He began a third time, still more softly, whistling, so to speak, in a whisper.

All four of us stood bending toward the hovel and listening. I confess I held my breath and my heart beat a little.

Suddenly, as Escamuturra was finishing, we heard the second part of the melody from behind the door in the house, but whistled so softly and low that it was more singular, if possible, and more terrifying than the silence. It was all the more melancholy because it was so sweet. One might have thought it the song of a spirit in a tomb.

El Puño clapped his hands three times.

Then a man's voice was heard in the hovel, and this swift laconic dialogue in Basque was exchanged in the darkness between the questioner and Escamuturra who replied:—

"*Zucc?*" — "You?"

"*Guc.*" — "We."

"*Nun?*" — "Where?"

"*Emen.*" — "Here."

"*Cembat?*" — "How many?"

"*Lau.*" — "Four."

A light flashed out in the interior of the room, a candle was lit, and the door was thrown open — slowly and noisily, for it had been barricaded.

A man appeared on the door-sill. He had in his hand and raised above his head a large iron candlestick in which was burning a resin torch. It was one of those swarthy and sun-burnt faces which may be of any age. He might have been thirty, he might have been fifty. Moreover, fine teeth, a keen eye and an agreeable smile—for he was smiling. A red handkerchief was tied around his forehead after the fashion of the Aragon mule-drivers, and fastened down on his temple his thick black hair. The top of his head was shaven; he wore a large white muleta which covered him from his chin to his knees, short breeches of olive velvet, white linen leggings with black button-holes, and rope shoes; his feet were bare.

The thick resinous torch flaming in the wind sent a swift exchange of light and shadow over this figure. Nothing could be stranger than the cordial smile in the dubious blaze of light.

Suddenly he caught sight of me and his smile vanished like a light when it is puffed out. His brows contracted, his eyes remained fixed on me. He did not say a word.

Escamuturra laid his hand on his shoulder and said in a half-whisper, jerking his thumb in my direction: "*Adisquidea*." — "A friend."

The man stood aside to let me pass in, but his smile did not appear again.

Meantime Azcoaga and Irumberri had driven the mules into the hovel. Escamuturra and our host were conversing in low tones in a corner. The door had been shut once more, and Irumberri had carefully barricaded it as though he were used to the operation.

While Azcoaga was unlading his mule I sat down on a bundle and studied the interior of the building.

The house contained only one room, that in which we were, but this room contained a universe.

It was a vast low hall, the ceiling of which, made of laths and scantlings, left interstices through which stuck and hung the long hay-stalks with which the top of the house at the hollow of the roof was filled. Latticed partitions, resembling trellises rather than partitions, formed capricious compartments in this hall.

One of these compartments at the left of the door included a corner of the hovel, the window, the fireplace,— an enormous cavern of stones blackened by fire,— and the bed, that is to say, a kind of coffin in which puckered the thousand folds of a brown mattress and a russet-coloured blanket. This was the sleeping-room.

Opposite the sleeping-room another compartment con-

tained a calf sleeping on a heap of manure, and a few fowls roosting in a sort of box. This was the stable.

In the opposite angle, in a third compartment, was piled up a formless heap of bristling stumps and sharp-pointed fagots,—the store of firewood for the winter. A few wine-skins and mules' harnesses were ranged with some appearance of care next the wood-pile. This was the cellar.

There was a carbine in the corner near the window between the cellar and the stable; but in still another compartment, filled with trumpery of every sort,—old muletas, old baskets, a broken Basque drum, unstrung guitars,—I saw shining under a basket of rags the handle of a *navaja*, sharp, black, and trimmed with copper, like the sleeve of an Andalous. I distinguished in the darkness at one side two or three musket-barrels, buried under rags, and a sort of metal trumpet, which at first I took to be the bell of a mountain-horn; it was a blunderbuss. That heap of rags was an arsenal.

A great mass of rock filling the corner at the right of the door, and serving as a foundation for the masonry of the house, formed a granite shed in the inside of the cabin and made a pillow for several bundles of straw thrown down. This was doubtless the hostelry.

A perfectly naked child, which had been sleeping on this straw and had been undoubtedly awakened by our arrival, was crouching on the granite shed with its knees up against its breast, and arms crossed over its knees, and was gazing at us with scared eyes. At the first moment I took him for a gnome; then I said to myself, "It is a monkey!" finally I recognised that it was a child.

Two tall wrought-iron fire-dogs rusted by the heat and the rain, stood in the fireplace on their four massive feet and thrust out from the ends of their long necks two open mouths. One could easily imagine them the two dragons of the place ready to bellow or bite.

In the cabin there was no other cooking utensil than a frying-pan hung in the chimney ; this with the iron candlestick, the fire-dogs, and the bed, composed the whole stock of furniture.

An oil jar stood near the bed, and next the door was another jar full of milk. On the rim of the jar stood a wooden bowl of the purest and most elegant shape. It was almost an Etruscan porringer.

Two lean yellow cats, awakened like the child by our arrival, were prowling around us with threatening looks. Judging from the way they glared at us it was evident that they would have liked nothing better than to be tigers.

I have an idea that a hog was grunting in a dark corner.

The house had that sickening sugary odour peculiar to all Spanish hovels.

There was not a table, not a chair to be seen. Whoever entered either remained standing or squatted on the ground. If you had a bundle you might sit on it. In this place the expression "sit at table" has no sense. I remained for some time plunged in this melancholy reflection. I was half-dead with hunger.

In such circumstances sad thoughts arise from the stomach.

I was aroused from my revery by a pleasant little noise,

a sort of cautious continuous rustling, which I had heard ever since going into the cabin. When one has no prospect of a dinner what is to be done in an abode unless to use one's eyes? So I looked with all my eyes, but I could not make out where the noise came from.

At last when my eyes fell on the ground I just made out in the darkness a sort of metallic tinkling, a line of luminous silkiness, and I discovered that a brook ran diagonally across the cabin from one side to the other.

This brook, which flowed swiftly at an inclined plane in a hollowed log buried level with the ground, entered the cabin by a hole made in the wall and made its escape through the opposite wall. It was this stream which went tumbling down into the ravine, as I had noticed on our arrival.

Singular room, where the mountain seemed to feel at home and entered familiarly; the rock had lodgings there, the brook ran through it.

While I was noting these things in the elegiac attitude of a dreamer who has had no dinner, the mules, freed from their burdens and their headgear, were peacefully pulling down the long stalks of straw that hung from the ceiling.

When Escamuturra saw it he made a signal to our host, who drove them to the rear of the cabin and gave each a bundle of fodder.

Meantime my companions had made themselves at home, — one, like myself, on a bundle, another on a saddle lying on the ground; Azcoaga had stretched himself out full length, wrapped up in his muleta.

Our host had piled up in the fireplace a scaffolding of broom over a heap of dry fern. He touched his resin torch to it; in a twinkling a snapping fire shot up into the chimney with a whirl of sparks; a splendid ruddy flame filled the cabin, bringing out into vivid relief against the dark recesses the flanks of the mules, the hen-coop, the sleeping calf, the concealed blunderbusses, the rock, the streamlet, the straws hanging from the roof like threads of gold, the keen faces of my companions and the haggard eyes of the scared child.

The two black fire-dogs with their monster-jaws stood amid the burning embers and resembled two hell-hounds panting in the furnace.

But nothing of all this, I confess, attracted my attention; it was otherwise wholly occupied.

A great event was just on the point of occurring in the cabin.

Our host had taken the frying-pan down from the nail.

XIII.

CAUTERETZ.

To LOUIS B.

CAUTERETZ.

I AM writing you, dear Louis, with the worst eyes in the world. Nevertheless, to write you is a sweet old custom which I do not wish to drop. I do not wish a single stone from the arch of our friendship to be lost out. Here for almost twenty-five years we have been brothers, brothers in heart, brothers in thought. We look on creation with the same eyes, we regard art with the same notions. You love Dante as I love Rafael. We have together spent many days of struggle and of trial without our sympathies growing less, without our devotion falling off a single degree. So, then, let us remain until the very last just as we have been from the very first. Let us suffer no change in what has been so fine and so sweet. At Paris we join hands; absent we write.

When I am far away from you I must let a letter tell you something of what I see, of what I think, of what I feel. This time it will be short; that is to say, not so long as usual. My eyes will compel me to have some mercy on yours. Don't complain, you will have less nonsense and just as much friendship.

I have come from the sea, and I am on the mountain. This is, so to speak, only changing the emotions. The mountains and the sea speak to the same side of the spirit.

If you were here (I cannot help constantly indulging in this dream) what a charming life we would lead together! What pictures you would bring back in your mind, to give them again to art more beautiful even than Nature presented them to you!

Imagine, Louis; I get up every morning at four o'clock, and at this hour, both dark and light at once, I walk out into the mountain. I make my way along a torrent; I bury myself in the wildest gorge that I can find, and under the pretext of soaking in warm water and drinking sulphur I enjoy every day a new spectacle unexpected and wonderful.

Yesterday the night had been rainy. The air was cool, the wet fir-trees were blacker than usual. Fog-wreaths were rising from all parts of the ravines like smoke from the cracks of a volcano. A hideous, terrible roar arose out of the darkness below, from the precipice under my feet; it was the cry of rage of the torrent concealed by the mist. Something strangely vague and supernatural and impossible mingled with this landscape. All around me was dark and as though pensive. The immense spectres of the mountains showed themselves to me through the rifts of the clouds as though across torn shrouds. The dawn gave no light whereby to distinguish. Only, through a rift above my head I perceived far away in the infinite a corner of the blue sky,—pale, icy, lugubrious, and yet

brilliant. Everything that I could make out of earth, rocks, forests, fields, glaciers, came and went in the rushing of the mists, and seemed to flee as though carried by the wind across space in a gigantic net-work of clouds.

This morning the night had been pleasant. The sky was starry, but what a sky, and what stars! You know that freshness, that grace, that melancholy, indescribable transparence of the morning, the stars clear-cut on a white sky, a crystal vault studded with diamonds. Against this immense vault in all directions arose enormous mountains, black, shaggy, deformed. Those in the east lifted against the most vivid light of the dawn their crown of firs, which looked like leaves when the grubs have left only the fibres and made a lace of them.

Those in the west, black at the base and almost to the summits, wore on their crests a rosy light. Not a cloud, not a vapor. An obscure and charming life animated the dark slopes of the mountains; one could distinguish grass, flowers, stones, brambles, in a sort of sweet and joyous commingling. The noise of the *gave*, as the brook is called in the Pyrenees, had no longer anything horrible; it was a vast murmur mingling in this vast silence. No sad thought, no anxiety came forth from this perfectly harmonious whole. The valley was like an immense urn in which the sky during the sacred hours of the dawn poured the peace of the spheres and the brilliancy of the constellations.

It seems to me, my friend, that these things are more than the landscape. It is Nature beheld at certain mysterious moments when everything seems to dream, I

almost said to think, when the dawn, the rock, the cloud, and the thicket more visibly live than at other times, and seem to thrill with the subtle beating of universal life.

Strange vision — to me almost a reality : at the time when the eyes of man are shut something unknown appears in creation. Don't you think as I do? Might not one say that at those moments when thought ceases in man it begins in Nature? Is it because the calm is deeper, the silence more absolute, the solitude more complete, and that then the watching dreamer can better conceive in all its subtle and marvellous details the extraordinary fact of creation? Or is it in reality some revelation, some manifestation of the grand intelligence entering into communication with the grand whole, some new attitude of Nature? Does Nature feel herself more at ease when we are not present? Does she act more freely?

It is certain that, in appearance at least, there are for those objects which we call inanimate a crepuscular life and a nocturnal life. This life is perhaps only in our minds; the realities of sense present themselves to us at certain hours under an unusual aspect; they move us; a mirage is created within us and we take the new ideas which they suggest for a new life belonging to them.

These are the questions. Decide them. As for me I confine myself to dreaming. I dedicate my mind to the contemplation of the world and the study of its mysteries. I spend my life between an exclamation-point and an interrogation-point.

XIV.

GAVARNIE.

WHEN you have crossed the bridge of Les Darroucats and are only a mile or so from Gèdre two mountains suddenly open out and show you something unexpected.

You have perhaps visited the Alps, the Andes, the Cordilleras, you have had for some weeks the Pyrenees under your eyes ; whatever your experience, what you now see in no respect resembles what you have elsewhere seen. Till now you have seen mountains, you have contemplated excrescences of all forms, of all heights, you have explored slopes of green, of gneiss, or of marble or of schist, precipices rounded or jagged, glaciers, fir-forests mingling with the clouds, needles of granite, needles of ice ; but, I repeat, you have nowhere else seen what you now see against the horizon.

In the midst of the uneven curves of the mountains, bristling with obtuse angles and acute angles, suddenly appear straight, simple, calm, horizontal and vertical lines, either parallel or cutting each other at right angles, and combined so that their combination gives the brilliant, genuine figure of an impossible and extraordinary object, full of azure and of sunlight.

Is it a mountain? But what mountain has ever shown such rectilinear surfaces, such regular planes, such absolute parallelisms, such strange symmetries, such a geometric aspect?

Is it a wall? There certainly are towers which buttress it and support it, there are battlements, there are cornices, architrave courses of stones which the eyes can make out and almost count, there are two breaches deeply cut, waking in the mind thoughts of sieges, trenches, and assaults; but there are also snowdrifts, wide layers of snow heaped up on these courses, on these battlements, on these architraves, and on these towers. We are in the heart of summer and of the South; these, then, are everlasting snows. Now what wall, what human architecture has ever been erected on the terrific level of the everlasting snows? Babel, the effort of the whole human race, sank back on itself before attaining it.

What then is this inexplicable object which cannot be a mountain and yet has the height of mountains, which cannot be a wall and yet has the form of walls?

It is at once a mountain and a wall; it is the most mysterious edifice of the most mysterious of architects; it is the colosseum of Nature,— it is Gavarnie.

Imagine this magnificent silhouette as it reveals itself at first at a distance of three leagues,— a long and gloomy wall, of which all the projections, all the wrinkles, are marked by lines of snow, and all the platforms carry glaciers. Toward the middle two enormous towers: the one facing the sunrise, square and turning one of its angles toward France; the other facing the sunset as though it

were less a tower than a sheaf of turrets,— both covered with snow. At the right, two deep gashes, the breaches, which cut into the wall like two vases filled with clouds. Finally, still at the right and at the very western end, a sort of huge ledge wrinkled with a thousand folds, offering to the eye, though in monstrous proportions, what in architecture is called the elevation of an amphitheatre.

Imagine it as I saw it, — the black wall, the black towers, the dazzling snow, the blue sky; something complete, unprecedentedly grand, sublimely serene.

There one gets an impression unlike any other; so singular, and at the same time powerful, that it effaces all the rest, so that one becomes for some little time, even after this magic vision has disappeared behind a turn of the road, indifferent to everything else.

Yet the surrounding landscape is admirable; you are entering a valley where all the magnificences and all the graces surround you.

Two-tiered villages like Tracy-le-Haut and Tracy-le-Bas, Upper Gèdre and Lower Gèdre, with their gables like stairs and their ancient church of the Templars, stretch along the slope of two mountains along a *gave* (Pyrenean brook) white with foam under the gay and fantastic clusters of a delightful vegetation. All this is lively, fascinating, happy, exquisite. It is Switzerland and the Black-Forest abruptly commingling with the Pyrenees. A thousand cheerful noises reach you, like voices and words of this gentle landscape, — songs of birds, laughter of children, murmurs of the torrent, rustling of the leaves, gentle sougling of the wind.

You see nothing, you hear nothing ; you scarcely receive more than a dubious and confused impression of this graceful ensemble. The apparition of Gavarnie is always before your eyes, and it gleams in your thoughts like those supernatural horizons which you sometimes see in the depths of your dreams.

In the evening, on returning from Gavarnie, I note down a marvellous moment. This is what I see from my window :—

A great mountain fills the earth ; a great cloud fills the sky. Between the cloud and the mountain a slender band of twilight sky, clear and translucent, and Jupiter sparkling like a golden pebble in an azure brook. There is nothing more melancholy and more reassuring and more beautiful than this little point of light between those two masses of darkness.

XV.

LUZ.

LUZ is a charming old city—a rare thing in the Pyrenees—delightfully situated in a deep triangular valley. Three great rays of day enter it by the three embrasures of the three mountains.

When the Spanish bandits and smugglers came from Aragon by the breach of Roland and by the dark and hideous path from Gavarnie, they suddenly perceived at the end of the dark gorge a bright light such as the mouth of a cavern is to those who are inside of it. They quickened their steps and found a great *bourg* lighted up by the sun and full of life. They called this bourg Light, Luz.

You find there a rare and curious church built by the Templars,—a fortress as well as church, with crenelated enclosures and donjon door. I made the circuit of it between the church and the crenelated wall. There is the cemetery studded with slabs of slate on which crucifixes and the names of mountaineers scratched in with a nail are wearing away under the rain, the snow, and the feet of the passers-by.

A door, at the present time walled up, was the door of the *cagots*. The *cagots*, as those afflicted with goitres were called, were pariahs. Their door was low, as one can

perceive by the vague line indicating where the walling stones were placed.

The external holy-water basin is a charming little piece of Byzantine work, to which still adhere two capitals almost Roman in design.

I stopped to puzzle over an inscription almost effaced by time, scratched with a knife, covered with dust. A few Spanish words may be distinguished: *Aqui. Abri.* However, the words *filla de . . .* seem to indicate patois. I almost deciphered the last line, but it made no sense: SUB DESERA LO FE.

The corbels of the external wall of the apse support odd designs. The principal portal, representing Jesus in the midst of the four symbolical animals, is in the finest Roman style, solid, robust, strong, severe. There are traces of paintings on the wall representing mosaics and edifices. The interior of the church is a sort of barn.

Under the vault of the portal of the entrance tower Byzantine pictures restored and half whitewashed have lost much of their character. On the top of the vault, the Christ with the imperial crown. Below, the angels of the Judgment are blowing trumpets. This inscription: SVRGITE MORTVY. VENYTE. AD. IVDICIVM.¹

In the four corners, a few traces of the four Evangelists. The ox, with the inscription SANC. LVC. The eagle, with SANC. . . . The dampness has made a cloud in which the rest is lost. The winged lion in fine style, with the inscription SANT MARC. In the shadow an angel's head with the few letters: . . . CTE MYCHAEL.

¹ Arise from the dead, and come to be judged.

XVI.

THE ISLAND OF OLÉRON.

September 8.

PICTURE to yourself a piece of ice laid on the ground and a ladder put on this ice, or better still a window laid flat, with its sash and its panes. Give this window a circuit of half a mile and you have a salt marsh. If the glass is losing its polish it means that the salt is forming.

Imagine a long, flat, narrow tongue of land, which from a bird's-eye view would seem covered with these immense windows, scarcely separated by narrow bands of ground filled with rushes and tamarinds; here and there a meadow, a few vineyards enriched with sea-weed, and giving an oily, bitter wine, a few clumps of trees, a few foot-paths; here and there white villages along the shore; on the French side, a border of fortifications; on the ocean side, cliffs which are called "la côte sauvage." On the southern point, sand-dunes studded with pines, telling the presence of the great Landes; cover this region with dirty gray mists arising from the marshes in every direction and you have the isle d'Oléron.

If after you have studied the whole landscape you come down to the details, the melancholy of it will increase at every step that you take, and you will feel your very heart crushed with sadness.

A muddy beach, a desert horizon, two or three heavily turning windmills. Lean cattle in wretched pastures; on the edge of the marsh, heaps of salt, gray or white cones according as they are thatched for the winter or exposed to the sun to dry. On the door-steps of the houses, pretty, pale girls, livid children, shattered, shivering men, few old men, fever everywhere; this is the melancholy, lugubrious world into which you penetrate.

It is not easy to reach the island of Oléron. The tourist is only brought hither a step at a time; it would seem as if it was proposed to give time for reflection and reconsideration.

From Rochefort one is brought to Marennnes, in a kind of omnibus running from Rochefort twice a day. It is a first initiation.

Three leagues in the salt marshes. Vast plains from which rise, like two obelisks in a cemetery, the beautiful English stone steeples of Moise and Marennnes. All along the road, pools of green water; all the fields, which are marshes, have enormous padlocked fences; not a passer-by; from time to time a custom-officer, musket in hand, standing in front of his cabin of brambles and earth, with a pale, startled face; no trees; no shelter against the wind and the rain in winter, or against the sun in dog-days; a glacial cold or a furnace heat; in the midst of the marsh, the unhealthy village of Brouage buried in its square of walls, with its ruins dating from the time of the religious wars, its low houses white as the sepulchres of which the Bible speaks, and its spectres shivering before their doors at high noon. That is the first stage.

If you keep on, a coucou carriage takes possession of you at Marennnes, puts fifteen of you into a vehicle meant to hold not more than six, and these fifteen patients in the inside and a mountain of packages on the imperial start off with a lame and staggering horse across the *landes* and the brambles to La Pointe.

There, if your courage still holds out, you are embarked or disembarked (as you please to use the word) into one of those boats which the country people call "riskalls." This has three sailors, four oars, two masts, and two sails, one of which is called the "cut-wind." You have two miles to sail on this float. The sailors who are loading the boat begin by putting safely in the best division of the boat the oxen, the horses, the carts; then they store the baggage; then into the remaining room, between the horns of an ox and the wheels of a coach, the travellers are thrust.

There you dream as the wind, the sun, or the rain permits. During the trip you hear fever-stricken passengers choking, or the *pertuis* of Maumusson roaring: this place is on the point of the island, and sailors can hear it roar for fifteen miles. As a distraction they explain the noise to you.

The *pertuis*, or strait, of Maumusson is one of the navels of the sea. The waters of the Seudre, the waters of the Gironde, the great currents of the ocean, the little currents at the southern extremity of the island press there from four different points at once on the shifting sands which the sea has heaped up on this coast, and they turn this mass into a whirlpool. It is not an abyss; the

sea looks smooth and level at the surface ; you can barely distinguish a slight flexion ; but you can hear under this calm surface a formidable noise.

Any great ship that touches the pertuis is doomed. It stops short, then it slowly sinks, keeps sinking, and gradually disappears from sight. Soon the port-holes are no longer to be seen ; then the deck plunges under the waves ; then the yards and the top-masts, — you can only just distinguish the main-truck ; then a little wrinkle is made in the sea : all has gone from sight. Nothing can arrest the slow and terrible spiral movement which has seized the ship.

Vessels, however, that draw little water boldly cross the pertuis, — “without risk,” the sailors say. A moment later they add : “Still, old Monier, the castle pilot, had one day only just time enough to jump into the sea, leaving his boat to sink, while he had to swim four hours before he escaped from the pertuis.”

While these scraps of conversation are going on you come to land ; the “cut-wind” is furled, the cable is flung out, the gang-plank is shoved ashore.

At your right, a fortress which is a prison ; at your left, a hideous beach which is the fever ; you disembark between the two.

Pretty serving-maids, charming in the immense white head-dress which they wear with much grace, are waiting for you on the pier, take your valise and your carpet-bag, and start off in advance of you.

You pass along a rampart, at the foot of which are swarming hundreds of men, all dressed in gray, — haggard,

silent, guarded by gendarmes ; they are in all attitudes of work, digging trenches in the infected mud. They are men condemned to wear the chain and ball, poor soldiers, mostly deserters overwhelmed by homesickness ; nostalgics not blasted by the law but severely punished by an exceptional code, and who come to die here though they are not condemned to death.

While you are making these reflections you arrive at the *Cheval-Blanc* — the White Horse Inn. It is a good inn since I tell the whole truth. You are shown to a large whitewashed chamber, in the midst of which, like a promontory, stands out a huge canopy bed of the seventeenth century. The walls are white, the sheets are white ; the landlord is cordial, the landlady is gracious ; everything is convenient and pleasing in this abode. Only, don't look too narrowly at the water put in your pitcher and called soft water in this country.

The evening of my arrival at Oléron I was overwhelmed with melancholy.

This island seemed to me desolate, forbidding, and in accordance with my feelings. I walked along the beach stepping on the sea-weed to avoid the mud. I skirted the moats of the castle. The prisoners were just returning ; they were calling the roll, and I could hear their replies as the officer in charge spoke their names. At my right the marshes stretched out as far as eye could see ; at my left the leaden-coloured sea was lost in the mists masking the coast.

I saw in the whole island no other human creature than a soldier on guard, motionless, on the horn of a retrenchment and standing out against the mist. I could barely make out the little fortress called *Le Pavé*, isolated in the sea between the mainland and the island. No noise in the offing, not a sail, not a bird. At the rim of the sky, in the west, hung an enormous round moon, which in these livid fogs looked like the red and unglided impression of the moon.

I had death in my soul. Perhaps I looked at everything through the atmosphere of my depression. Perhaps another day, at another hour, I might have a different feeling. But that evening was for me funereal and melancholy. It seemed to me as if this island were a great coffin resting on the sea, and that this moon was the torch that lighted it.

NOTE.

On the eighth of September Victor Hugo wrote :—

“I had death in my soul,”—“That evening was for me funereal.”—“It seemed to me as if this island were a great coffin resting on the sea.”

The next day Victor Hugo, fleeing from the unwholesome island where he had spent the night under such a weight of melancholy, found himself at Rochefort. While waiting for the diligence to start, he went into a café and asked for a glass of beer. His eyes fell on a newspaper.

Suddenly a witness saw him turn pale and put his hand on his heart as if to keep it from bursting. Then he sprang up, rushed out of the town, and began to walk up and down the ramparts like a madman.

The journal which he had seen told about the catastrophe at Villequier.

Five days before—on the fourth of September, 1843—his daughter Léopoldine had perished in a pleasure trip on the Seine. She had been married scarcely six months before to Charles Vacquerie, who, not being able to save her, had chosen to die with her.

They are buried at Villequier in the same coffin.

Thus the journey to the Pyrenees was interrupted. The unhappy father hastened back to Paris.

The admirable and grief-penetrated poems entitled *Pauca Meae* in the “Contemplations” have been read, will be read eternally.

THE END.



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