INNOCENTS ABROAD

by Mark Twain

[From an 1869--1st Edition]

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PREFACE

This book is a record of a pleasure trip. If it were a record of a

solemn scientific expedition, it would have about it that gravity, that

profundity, and that impressive incomprehensibility which are so proper

to works of that kind, and withal so attractive. Yet notwithstanding it

is only a record of a pic-nic, it has a purpose, which is to suggest to

the reader how he would be likely to see Europe and the East if he looked

at them with his own eyes instead of the eyes of those who traveled in

those countries before him. I make small pretense of showing anyone how

he ought to look at objects of interest beyond the sea--other books do

that, and therefore, even if I were competent to do it, there is no need.

I offer no apologies for any departures from the usual style of

travel-writing that may be charged against me--for I think I have seen with

impartial eyes, and I am sure I have written at least honestly, whether

wisely or not.

In this volume I have used portions of letters which I wrote for the

Daily Alta California, of San Francisco, the proprietors of that journal

having waived their rights and given me the necessary permission. I have

also inserted portions of several letters written for the New York

Tribune and the New York Herald.

THE AUTHOR.

SAN FRANCISCO.

CHAPTER I.

For months the great pleasure excursion to Europe and the Holy Land was

chatted about in the newspapers everywhere in America and discussed at

countless firesides. It was a novelty in the way of excursions--its like

had not been thought of before, and it compelled that interest which

attractive novelties always command. It was to be a picnic on a gigantic

scale. The participants in it, instead of freighting an ungainly steam

ferry--boat with youth and beauty and pies and doughnuts, and paddling up

some obscure creek to disembark upon a grassy lawn and wear themselves

out with a long summer day's laborious frolicking under the impression

that it was fun, were to sail away in a great steamship with flags flying

and cannon pealing, and take a royal holiday beyond the broad ocean in

many a strange clime and in many a land renowned in history! They were to

sail for months over the breezy Atlantic and the sunny Mediterranean;

they were to scamper about the decks by day, filling the ship with shouts

and laughter--or read novels and poetry in the shade of the smokestacks,

or watch for the jelly-fish and the nautilus over the side, and the

shark, the whale, and other strange monsters of the deep; and at night

they were to dance in the open air, on the upper deck, in the midst of a

ballroom that stretched from horizon to horizon, and was domed by the

bending heavens and lighted by no meaner lamps than the stars and the

magnificent moon--dance, and promenade, and smoke, and sing, and make

love, and search the skies for constellations that never associate with

the "Big Dipper" they were so tired of; and they were to see the ships of

twenty navies--the customs and costumes of twenty curious peoples--the

great cities of half a world--they were to hob-nob with nobility and hold

friendly converse with kings and princes, grand moguls, and the anointed

lords of mighty empires! It was a brave conception; it was the offspring

of a most ingenious brain. It was well advertised, but it hardly needed

it: the bold originality, the extraordinary character, the seductive

nature, and the vastness of the enterprise provoked comment everywhere

and advertised it in every household in the land. Who could read the

program of the excursion without longing to make one of the party? I will

insert it here. It is almost as good as a map. As a text for this book,

nothing could be better:

EXCURSION TO THE HOLY LAND, EGYPT,

THE CRIMEA, GREECE, AND INTERMEDIATE POINTS OF INTEREST.

BROOKLYN, February 1st, 1867

The undersigned will make an excursion as above during the coming

season, and begs to submit to you the following programme:

A first-class steamer, to be under his own command, and capable of

accommodating at least one hundred and fifty cabin passengers, will

be selected, in which will be taken a select company, numbering not

more than three-fourths of the ship's capacity. There is good

reason to believe that this company can be easily made up in this

immediate vicinity, of mutual friends and acquaintances.

The steamer will be provided with every necessary comfort,

including library and musical instruments.

An experienced physician will be on board.

Leaving New York about June 1st, a middle and pleasant route will

be taken across the Atlantic, and passing through the group of

Azores, St. Michael will be reached in about ten days. A day or two

will be spent here, enjoying the fruit and wild scenery of these

islands, and the voyage continued, and Gibraltar reached in three or

four days.

A day or two will be spent here in looking over the wonderful

subterraneous fortifications, permission to visit these galleries

being readily obtained.

From Gibraltar, running along the coasts of Spain and France,

Marseilles will be reached in three days. Here ample time will be

given not only to look over the city, which was founded six hundred

years before the Christian era, and its artificial port, the finest

of the kind in the Mediterranean, but to visit Paris during the

Great Exhibition; and the beautiful city of Lyons, lying

intermediate, from the heights of which, on a clear day, Mont Blanc

and the Alps can be distinctly seen. Passengers who may wish to

extend the time at Paris can do so, and, passing down through

Switzerland, rejoin the steamer at Genoa.

From Marseilles to Genoa is a run of one night. The excursionists

will have an opportunity to look over this, the "magnificent city of

palaces," and visit the birthplace of Columbus, twelve miles off,

over a beautiful road built by Napoleon I. From this point,

excursions may be made to Milan, Lakes Como and Maggiore, or to

Milan, Verona (famous for its extraordinary fortifications), Padua,

and Venice. Or, if passengers desire to visit Parma (famous for

Correggio's frescoes) and Bologna, they can by rail go on to

Florence, and rejoin the steamer at Leghorn, thus spending about

three weeks amid the cities most famous for art in Italy.

From Genoa the run to Leghorn will be made along the coast in one

night, and time appropriated to this point in which to visit

Florence, its palaces and galleries; Pisa, its cathedral and

"Leaning Tower," and Lucca and its baths, and Roman amphitheater;

Florence, the most remote, being distant by rail about sixty miles.

From Leghorn to Naples (calling at Civita Vecchia to land any who

may prefer to go to Rome from that point), the distance will be made

in about thirty-six hours; the route will lay along the coast of

Italy, close by Caprera, Elba, and Corsica. Arrangements have been

made to take on board at Leghorn a pilot for Caprera, and, if

practicable, a call will be made there to visit the home of

Garibaldi.

Rome [by rail], Herculaneum, Pompeii, Vesuvius, Vergil's tomb, and

possibly the ruins of Paestum can be visited, as well as the

beautiful surroundings of Naples and its charming bay.

The next point of interest will be Palermo, the most beautiful

city of Sicily, which will be reached in one night from Naples. A

day will be spent here, and leaving in the evening, the course will

be taken towards Athens.

Skirting along the north coast of Sicily, passing through the

group of Aeolian Isles, in sight of Stromboli and Vulcania, both

active volcanoes, through the Straits of Messina, with "Scylla" on

the one hand and "Charybdis" on the other, along the east coast of

Sicily, and in sight of Mount Etna, along the south coast of Italy,

the west and south coast of Greece, in sight of ancient Crete, up

Athens Gulf, and into the Piraeus, Athens will be reached in two and

a half or three days. After tarrying here awhile, the Bay of

Salamis will be crossed, and a day given to Corinth, whence the

voyage will be continued to Constantinople, passing on the way

through the Grecian Archipelago, the Dardanelles, the Sea of

Marmora, and the mouth of the Golden Horn, and arriving in about

forty-eight hours from Athens.

After leaving Constantinople, the way will be taken out through

the beautiful Bosphorus, across the Black Sea to Sebastopol and

Balaklava, a run of about twenty-four hours. Here it is proposed to

remain two days, visiting the harbors, fortifications, and

battlefields of the Crimea; thence back through the Bosphorus,

touching at Constantinople to take in any who may have preferred to

remain there; down through the Sea of Marmora and the Dardanelles,

along the coasts of ancient Troy and Lydia in Asia, to Smyrna, which

will be reached in two or two and a half days from Constantinople.

A sufficient stay will be made here to give opportunity of visiting

Ephesus, fifty miles distant by rail.

From Smyrna towards the Holy Land the course will lay through the

Grecian Archipelago, close by the Isle of Patmos, along the coast

of Asia, ancient Pamphylia, and the Isle of Cyprus. Beirut will be

reached in three days. At Beirut time will be given to visit

Damascus; after which the steamer will proceed to Joppa.

From Joppa, Jerusalem, the River Jordan, the Sea of Tiberias,

Nazareth, Bethany, Bethlehem, and other points of interest in the

Holy Land can be visited, and here those who may have preferred to

make the journey from Beirut through the country, passing through

Damascus, Galilee, Capernaum, Samaria, and by the River Jordan and

Sea of Tiberias, can rejoin the steamer.

Leaving Joppa, the next point of interest to visit will be

Alexandria, which will be reached in twenty-four hours. The ruins

of Caesar's Palace, Pompey's Pillar, Cleopatra's Needle, the

Catacombs, and ruins of ancient Alexandria will be found worth the

visit. The journey to Cairo, one hundred and thirty miles by rail,

can be made in a few hours, and from which can be visited the site

of ancient Memphis, Joseph's Granaries, and the Pyramids.

From Alexandria the route will be taken homeward, calling at

Malta, Cagliari (in Sardinia), and Palma (in Majorca), all

magnificent harbors, with charming scenery, and abounding in fruits.

A day or two will be spent at each place, and leaving Parma in the

evening, Valencia in Spain will be reached the next morning. A few

days will be spent in this, the finest city of Spain.

From Valencia, the homeward course will be continued, skirting

along the coast of Spain. Alicant, Carthagena, Palos, and Malaga

will be passed but a mile or two distant, and Gibraltar reached in

about twenty-four hours.

A stay of one day will be made here, and the voyage continued to

Madeira, which will be reached in about three days. Captain

Marryatt writes: "I do not know a spot on the globe which so much

astonishes and delights upon first arrival as Madeira." A stay of

one or two days will be made here, which, if time permits, may be

extended, and passing on through the islands, and probably in sight

of the Peak of Teneriffe, a southern track will be taken, and the

Atlantic crossed within the latitudes of the northeast trade winds,

where mild and pleasant weather, and a smooth sea, can always be

expected.

A call will be made at Bermuda, which lies directly in this route

homeward, and will be reached in about ten days from Madeira, and

after spending a short time with our friends the Bermudians, the

final departure will be made for home, which will be reached in

about three days.

Already, applications have been received from parties in Europe

wishing to join the Excursion there.

The ship will at all times be a home, where the excursionists, if

sick, will be surrounded by kind friends, and have all possible

comfort and sympathy.

Should contagious sickness exist in any of the ports named in the

program, such ports will be passed, and others of interest

substituted.

The price of passage is fixed at $1,250, currency, for each adult

passenger. Choice of rooms and of seats at the tables apportioned

in the order in which passages are engaged; and no passage

considered engaged until ten percent of the passage money is

deposited with the treasurer.

Passengers can remain on board of the steamer, at all ports, if

they desire, without additional expense, and all boating at the

expense of the ship.

All passages must be paid for when taken, in order that the most

perfect arrangements be made for starting at the appointed time.

Applications for passage must be approved by the committee before

tickets are issued, and can be made to the undersigned.

Articles of interest or curiosity, procured by the passengers

during the voyage, may be brought home in the steamer free of

charge.

Five dollars per day, in gold, it is believed, will be a fair

calculation to make for all traveling expenses onshore and at the

various points where passengers may wish to leave the steamer for

days at a time.

The trip can be extended, and the route changed, by unanimous vote

of the passengers.

CHAS. C. DUNCAN, 117 WALL STREET, NEW YORK R. R. G\*\*\*\*\*\*,

Treasurer

Committee on Applications J. T. H\*\*\*\*\*, ESQ. R. R. G\*\*\*\*\*,

ESQ. C. C. Duncan

Committee on Selecting Steamer CAPT. W. W. S\* \* \* \*, Surveyor

for Board of Underwriters

C. W. C\*\*\*\*\*\*, Consulting Engineer for U.S. and Canada J. T.

H\*\*\*\*\*, Esq. C. C. DUNCAN

P.S.--The very beautiful and substantial side-wheel steamship

"Quaker City" has been chartered for the occasion, and will leave

New York June 8th. Letters have been issued by the government

commending the party to courtesies abroad.

What was there lacking about that program to make it perfectly

irresistible? Nothing that any finite mind could discover. Paris,

England, Scotland, Switzerland, Italy--Garibaldi! The Grecian

Archipelago! Vesuvius! Constantinople! Smyrna! The Holy Land! Egypt and

"our friends the Bermudians"! People in Europe desiring to join the

excursion--contagious sickness to be avoided--boating at the expense of

the ship--physician on board--the circuit of the globe to be made if the

passengers unanimously desired it--the company to be rigidly selected by

a pitiless "Committee on Applications"--the vessel to be as rigidly

selected by as pitiless a "Committee on Selecting Steamer." Human nature

could not withstand these bewildering temptations. I hurried to the

treasurer's office and deposited my ten percent. I rejoiced to know that

a few vacant staterooms were still left. I did avoid a critical personal

examination into my character by that bowelless committee, but I referred

to all the people of high standing I could think of in the community who

would be least likely to know anything about me.

Shortly a supplementary program was issued which set forth that the

Plymouth Collection of Hymns would be used on board the ship. I then

paid the balance of my passage money.

I was provided with a receipt and duly and officially accepted as an

excursionist. There was happiness in that but it was tame compared to

the novelty of being "select."

This supplementary program also instructed the excursionists to provide

themselves with light musical instruments for amusement in the ship, with

saddles for Syrian travel, green spectacles and umbrellas, veils for

Egypt, and substantial clothing to use in rough pilgrimizing in the Holy

Land. Furthermore, it was suggested that although the ship's library

would afford a fair amount of reading matter, it would still be well if

each passenger would provide himself with a few guidebooks, a Bible, and

some standard works of travel. A list was appended, which consisted

chiefly of books relating to the Holy Land, since the Holy Land was part

of the excursion and seemed to be its main feature.

Reverend Henry Ward Beecher was to have accompanied the expedition, but

urgent duties obliged him to give up the idea. There were other

passengers who could have been spared better and would have been spared

more willingly. Lieutenant General Sherman was to have been of the party

also, but the Indian war compelled his presence on the plains. A popular

actress had entered her name on the ship's books, but something

interfered and she couldn't go. The "Drummer Boy of the Potomac"

deserted, and lo, we had never a celebrity left!

However, we were to have a "battery of guns" from the Navy Department (as

per advertisement) to be used in answering royal salutes; and the

document furnished by the Secretary of the Navy, which was to make

"General Sherman and party" welcome guests in the courts and camps of the

old world, was still left to us, though both document and battery, I

think, were shorn of somewhat of their original august proportions.

However, had not we the seductive program still, with its Paris, its

Constantinople, Smyrna, Jerusalem, Jericho, and "our friends the

Bermudians?" What did we care?

CHAPTER II.

Occasionally, during the following month, I dropped in at 117 Wall Street

to inquire how the repairing and refurnishing of the vessel was coming

on, how additions to the passenger list were averaging, how many people

the committee were decreeing not "select" every day and banishing in

sorrow and tribulation. I was glad to know that we were to have a little

printing press on board and issue a daily newspaper of our own. I was

glad to learn that our piano, our parlor organ, and our melodeon were to

be the best instruments of the kind that could be had in the market. I

was proud to observe that among our excursionists were three ministers of

the gospel, eight doctors, sixteen or eighteen ladies, several military

and naval chieftains with sounding titles, an ample crop of "Professors"

of various kinds, and a gentleman who had "COMMISSIONER OF THE UNITED

STATES OF AMERICA TO EUROPE, ASIA, AND AFRICA" thundering after his name

in one awful blast! I had carefully prepared myself to take rather a

back seat in that ship because of the uncommonly select material that

would alone be permitted to pass through the camel's eye of that

committee on credentials; I had schooled myself to expect an imposing

array of military and naval heroes and to have to set that back seat

still further back in consequence of it maybe; but I state frankly that I

was all unprepared for this crusher.

I fell under that titular avalanche a torn and blighted thing. I said

that if that potentate must go over in our ship, why, I supposed he must

--but that to my thinking, when the United States considered it necessary

to send a dignitary of that tonnage across the ocean, it would be in

better taste, and safer, to take him apart and cart him over in sections

in several ships.

Ah, if I had only known then that he was only a common mortal, and that

his mission had nothing more overpowering about it than the collecting of

seeds and uncommon yams and extraordinary cabbages and peculiar bullfrogs

for that poor, useless, innocent, mildewed old fossil the Smithsonian

Institute, I would have felt so much relieved.

During that memorable month I basked in the happiness of being for once

in my life drifting with the tide of a great popular movement. Everybody

was going to Europe--I, too, was going to Europe. Everybody was going to

the famous Paris Exposition--I, too, was going to the Paris Exposition.

The steamship lines were carrying Americans out of the various ports of

the country at the rate of four or five thousand a week in the aggregate.

If I met a dozen individuals during that month who were not going to

Europe shortly, I have no distinct remembrance of it now. I walked about

the city a good deal with a young Mr. Blucher, who was booked for the

excursion. He was confiding, good-natured, unsophisticated,

companionable; but he was not a man to set the river on fire. He had the

most extraordinary notions about this European exodus and came at last to

consider the whole nation as packing up for emigration to France. We

stepped into a store on Broadway one day, where he bought a handkerchief,

and when the man could not make change, Mr. B. said:

"Never mind, I'll hand it to you in Paris."

"But I am not going to Paris."

"How is--what did I understand you to say?"

"I said I am not going to Paris."

"Not going to Paris! Not g---- well, then, where in the nation are you

going to?"

"Nowhere at all."

"Not anywhere whatsoever?--not any place on earth but this?"

"Not any place at all but just this--stay here all summer."

My comrade took his purchase and walked out of the store without a word

--walked out with an injured look upon his countenance. Up the street

apiece he broke silence and said impressively: "It was a lie--that is my

opinion of it!"

In the fullness of time the ship was ready to receive her passengers.

I was introduced to the young gentleman who was to be my roommate, and

found him to be intelligent, cheerful of spirit, unselfish, full of

generous impulses, patient, considerate, and wonderfully good-natured.

Not any passenger that sailed in the Quaker City will withhold his

endorsement of what I have just said. We selected a stateroom forward of

the wheel, on the starboard side, "below decks." It bad two berths in

it, a dismal dead-light, a sink with a washbowl in it, and a long,

sumptuously cushioned locker, which was to do service as a sofa--partly

--and partly as a hiding place for our things. Notwithstanding all this

furniture, there was still room to turn around in, but not to swing a cat

in, at least with entire security to the cat. However, the room was

large, for a ship's stateroom, and was in every way satisfactory.

The vessel was appointed to sail on a certain Saturday early in June.

A little after noon on that distinguished Saturday I reached the ship and

went on board. All was bustle and confusion. [I have seen that remark

before somewhere.] The pier was crowded with carriages and men;

passengers were arriving and hurrying on board; the vessel's decks were

encumbered with trunks and valises; groups of excursionists, arrayed in

unattractive traveling costumes, were moping about in a drizzling rain

and looking as droopy and woebegone as so many molting chickens. The

gallant flag was up, but it was under the spell, too, and hung limp and

disheartened by the mast. Altogether, it was the bluest, bluest

spectacle! It was a pleasure excursion--there was no gainsaying that,

because the program said so--it was so nominated in the bond--but it

surely hadn't the general aspect of one.

Finally, above the banging, and rumbling, and shouting, and hissing of

steam rang the order to "cast off!"--a sudden rush to the gangways--a

scampering ashore of visitors-a revolution of the wheels, and we were

off--the pic-nic was begun! Two very mild cheers went up from the

dripping crowd on the pier; we answered them gently from the slippery

decks; the flag made an effort to wave, and failed; the "battery of guns"

spake not--the ammunition was out.

We steamed down to the foot of the harbor and came to anchor. It was

still raining. And not only raining, but storming. "Outside" we could

see, ourselves, that there was a tremendous sea on. We must lie still,

in the calm harbor, till the storm should abate. Our passengers hailed

from fifteen states; only a few of them had ever been to sea before;

manifestly it would not do to pit them against a full-blown tempest until

they had got their sea-legs on. Toward evening the two steam tugs that

had accompanied us with a rollicking champagne-party of young New Yorkers

on board who wished to bid farewell to one of our number in due and

ancient form departed, and we were alone on the deep. On deep five

fathoms, and anchored fast to the bottom. And out in the solemn rain, at

that. This was pleasuring with a vengeance.

It was an appropriate relief when the gong sounded for prayer meeting.

The first Saturday night of any other pleasure excursion might have been

devoted to whist and dancing; but I submit it to the unprejudiced mind if

it would have been in good taste for us to engage in such frivolities,

considering what we had gone through and the frame of mind we were in.

We would have shone at a wake, but not at anything more festive.

However, there is always a cheering influence about the sea; and in my

berth that night, rocked by the measured swell of the waves and lulled by

the murmur of the distant surf, I soon passed tranquilly out of all

consciousness of the dreary experiences of the day and damaging

premonitions of the future.

CHAPTER III.

All day Sunday at anchor. The storm had gone down a great deal, but the

sea had not. It was still piling its frothy hills high in air "outside,"

as we could plainly see with the glasses. We could not properly begin a

pleasure excursion on Sunday; we could not offer untried stomachs to so

pitiless a sea as that. We must lie still till Monday. And we did. But

we had repetitions of church and prayer-meetings; and so, of course, we

were just as eligibly situated as we could have been any where.

I was up early that Sabbath morning and was early to breakfast. I felt a

perfectly natural desire to have a good, long, unprejudiced look at the

passengers at a time when they should be free from self-consciousness

--which is at breakfast, when such a moment occurs in the lives of human

beings at all.

I was greatly surprised to see so many elderly people--I might almost

say, so many venerable people. A glance at the long lines of heads was

apt to make one think it was all gray. But it was not. There was a

tolerably fair sprinkling of young folks, and another fair sprinkling of

gentlemen and ladies who were non-committal as to age, being neither

actually old or absolutely young.

The next morning we weighed anchor and went to sea. It was a great

happiness to get away after this dragging, dispiriting delay. I thought

there never was such gladness in the air before, such brightness in the

sun, such beauty in the sea. I was satisfied with the picnic then and

with all its belongings. All my malicious instincts were dead within me;

and as America faded out of sight, I think a spirit of charity rose up in

their place that was as boundless, for the time being, as the broad ocean

that was heaving its billows about us. I wished to express my feelings

--I wished to lift up my voice and sing; but I did not know anything to

sing, and so I was obliged to give up the idea. It was no loss to the

ship, though, perhaps.

It was breezy and pleasant, but the sea was still very rough. One could

not promenade without risking his neck; at one moment the bowsprit was

taking a deadly aim at the sun in midheaven, and at the next it was

trying to harpoon a shark in the bottom of the ocean. What a weird

sensation it is to feel the stem of a ship sinking swiftly from under you

and see the bow climbing high away among the clouds! One's safest course

that day was to clasp a railing and hang on; walking was too precarious a

pastime.

By some happy fortune I was not seasick.--That was a thing to be proud

of. I had not always escaped before. If there is one thing in the world

that will make a man peculiarly and insufferably self-conceited, it is to

have his stomach behave itself, the first day it sea, when nearly all his

comrades are seasick. Soon a venerable fossil, shawled to the chin and

bandaged like a mummy, appeared at the door of the after deck-house, and

the next lurch of the ship shot him into my arms. I said:

"Good-morning, Sir. It is a fine day."

He put his hand on his stomach and said, "Oh, my!" and then staggered

away and fell over the coop of a skylight.

Presently another old gentleman was projected from the same door with

great violence. I said:

"Calm yourself, Sir--There is no hurry. It is a fine day, Sir."

He, also, put his hand on his stomach and said "Oh, my!" and reeled away.

In a little while another veteran was discharged abruptly from the same

door, clawing at the air for a saving support. I said:

"Good morning, Sir. It is a fine day for pleasuring. You were about to

say--"

"Oh, my!"

I thought so. I anticipated him, anyhow. I stayed there and was

bombarded with old gentlemen for an hour, perhaps; and all I got out of

any of them was "Oh, my!"

I went away then in a thoughtful mood. I said, this is a good pleasure

excursion. I like it. The passengers are not garrulous, but still they

are sociable. I like those old people, but somehow they all seem to have

the "Oh, my" rather bad.

I knew what was the matter with them. They were seasick. And I was glad

of it. We all like to see people seasick when we are not, ourselves.

Playing whist by the cabin lamps when it is storming outside is pleasant;

walking the quarterdeck in the moonlight is pleasant; smoking in the

breezy foretop is pleasant when one is not afraid to go up there; but

these are all feeble and commonplace compared with the joy of seeing

people suffering the miseries of seasickness.

I picked up a good deal of information during the afternoon. At one time

I was climbing up the quarterdeck when the vessel's stem was in the sky;

I was smoking a cigar and feeling passably comfortable. Somebody

ejaculated:

"Come, now, that won't answer. Read the sign up there--NO SMOKING ABAFT

THE WHEEL!"

It was Captain Duncan, chief of the expedition. I went forward, of

course. I saw a long spyglass lying on a desk in one of the upper-deck

state-rooms back of the pilot-house and reached after it--there was a

ship in the distance.

"Ah, ah--hands off! Come out of that!"

I came out of that. I said to a deck-sweep--but in a low voice:

"Who is that overgrown pirate with the whiskers and the discordant

voice?"

"It's Captain Bursley--executive officer--sailing master."

I loitered about awhile, and then, for want of something better to do,

fell to carving a railing with my knife. Somebody said, in an

insinuating, admonitory voice:

"Now, say--my friend--don't you know any better than to be whittling the

ship all to pieces that way? You ought to know better than that."

I went back and found the deck sweep.

"Who is that smooth-faced, animated outrage yonder in the fine clothes?"

"That's Captain L\*\*\*\*, the owner of the ship--he's one of the main

bosses."

In the course of time I brought up on the starboard side of the

pilot-house and found a sextant lying on a bench. Now, I said, they

"take the sun" through this thing; I should think I might see that vessel

through it. I had hardly got it to my eye when someone touched me on the

shoulder and said deprecatingly:

"I'll have to get you to give that to me, Sir. If there's anything you'd

like to know about taking the sun, I'd as soon tell you as not--but I

don't like to trust anybody with that instrument. If you want any

figuring done--Aye, aye, sir!"

He was gone to answer a call from the other side. I sought the

deck-sweep.

"Who is that spider-legged gorilla yonder with the sanctimonious

countenance?"

"It's Captain Jones, sir--the chief mate."

"Well. This goes clear away ahead of anything I ever heard of before.

Do you--now I ask you as a man and a brother--do you think I could

venture to throw a rock here in any given direction without hitting a

captain of this ship?"

"Well, sir, I don't know--I think likely you'd fetch the captain of the

watch may be, because he's a-standing right yonder in the way."

I went below--meditating and a little downhearted. I thought, if five

cooks can spoil a broth, what may not five captains do with a pleasure

excursion.

CHAPTER IV.

We plowed along bravely for a week or more, and without any conflict of

jurisdiction among the captains worth mentioning. The passengers soon

learned to accommodate themselves to their new circumstances, and life in

the ship became nearly as systematically monotonous as the routine of a

barrack. I do not mean that it was dull, for it was not entirely so by

any means--but there was a good deal of sameness about it. As is always

the fashion at sea, the passengers shortly began to pick up sailor terms

--a sign that they were beginning to feel at home. Half-past six was no

longer half-past six to these pilgrims from New England, the South, and

the Mississippi Valley, it was "seven bells"; eight, twelve, and four

o'clock were "eight bells"; the captain did not take the longitude at

nine o'clock, but at "two bells." They spoke glibly of the "after

cabin," the "for'rard cabin," "port and starboard" and the "fo'castle."

At seven bells the first gong rang; at eight there was breakfast, for

such as were not too seasick to eat it. After that all the well people

walked arm-in-arm up and down the long promenade deck, enjoying the fine

summer mornings, and the seasick ones crawled out and propped themselves

up in the lee of the paddle-boxes and ate their dismal tea and toast, and

looked wretched. From eleven o'clock until luncheon, and from luncheon

until dinner at six in the evening, the employments and amusements were

various. Some reading was done, and much smoking and sewing, though not

by the same parties; there were the monsters of the deep to be looked

after and wondered at; strange ships had to be scrutinized through

opera-glasses, and sage decisions arrived at concerning them; and more

than that, everybody took a personal interest in seeing that the flag was

run up and politely dipped three times in response to the salutes of

those strangers; in the smoking room there were always parties of

gentlemen playing euchre, draughts and dominoes, especially dominoes,

that delightfully harmless game; and down on the main deck, "for'rard"

--for'rard of the chicken-coops and the cattle--we had what was called

"horse billiards." Horse billiards is a fine game. It affords good,

active exercise, hilarity, and consuming excitement. It is a mixture of

"hop-scotch" and shuffleboard played with a crutch. A large hop-scotch

diagram is marked out on the deck with chalk, and each compartment

numbered. You stand off three or four steps, with some broad wooden

disks before you on the deck, and these you send forward with a vigorous

thrust of a long crutch. If a disk stops on a chalk line, it does not

count anything. If it stops in division No. 7, it counts 7; in 5, it

counts 5, and so on. The game is 100, and four can play at a time. That

game would be very simple played on a stationary floor, but with us, to

play it well required science. We had to allow for the reeling of the

ship to the right or the left. Very often one made calculations for a

heel to the right and the ship did not go that way. The consequence was

that that disk missed the whole hopscotch plan a yard or two, and then

there was humiliation on one side and laughter on the other.

When it rained the passengers had to stay in the house, of course--or at

least the cabins--and amuse themselves with games, reading, looking out

of the windows at the very familiar billows, and talking gossip.

By 7 o'clock in the evening, dinner was about over; an hour's promenade

on the upper deck followed; then the gong sounded and a large majority of

the party repaired to the after cabin (upper), a handsome saloon fifty or

sixty feet long, for prayers. The unregenerated called this saloon the

"Synagogue." The devotions consisted only of two hymns from the Plymouth

Collection and a short prayer, and seldom occupied more than fifteen

minutes. The hymns were accompanied by parlor-organ music when the sea

was smooth enough to allow a performer to sit at the instrument without

being lashed to his chair.

After prayers the Synagogue shortly took the semblance of a writing

school. The like of that picture was never seen in a ship before.

Behind the long dining tables on either side of the saloon, and scattered

from one end to the other of the latter, some twenty or thirty gentlemen

and ladies sat them down under the swaying lamps and for two or three

hours wrote diligently in their journals. Alas! that journals so

voluminously begun should come to so lame and impotent a conclusion as

most of them did! I doubt if there is a single pilgrim of all that host

but can show a hundred fair pages of journal concerning the first twenty

days' voyaging in the Quaker City, and I am morally certain that not ten

of the party can show twenty pages of journal for the succeeding twenty

thousand miles of voyaging! At certain periods it becomes the dearest

ambition of a man to keep a faithful record of his performances in a

book; and he dashes at this work with an enthusiasm that imposes on him

the notion that keeping a journal is the veriest pastime in the world,

and the pleasantest. But if he only lives twenty-one days, he will find

out that only those rare natures that are made up of pluck, endurance,

devotion to duty for duty's sake, and invincible determination may hope

to venture upon so tremendous an enterprise as the keeping of a journal

and not sustain a shameful defeat.

One of our favorite youths, Jack, a splendid young fellow with a head

full of good sense, and a pair of legs that were a wonder to look upon in

the way of length and straightness and slimness, used to report progress

every morning in the most glowing and spirited way, and say:

"Oh, I'm coming along bully!" (he was a little given to slang in his

happier moods.) "I wrote ten pages in my journal last night--and you

know I wrote nine the night before and twelve the night before that.

Why, it's only fun!"

"What do you find to put in it, Jack?"

"Oh, everything. Latitude and longitude, noon every day; and how many

miles we made last twenty-four hours; and all the domino games I beat and

horse billiards; and whales and sharks and porpoises; and the text of the

sermon Sundays (because that'll tell at home, you know); and the ships we

saluted and what nation they were; and which way the wind was, and

whether there was a heavy sea, and what sail we carried, though we don't

ever carry any, principally, going against a head wind always--wonder

what is the reason of that?--and how many lies Moult has told--Oh, every

thing! I've got everything down. My father told me to keep that

journal. Father wouldn't take a thousand dollars for it when I get it

done."

"No, Jack; it will be worth more than a thousand dollars--when you get it

done."

"Do you?--no, but do you think it will, though?

"Yes, it will be worth at least as much as a thousand dollars--when you

get it done. May be more."

"Well, I about half think so, myself. It ain't no slouch of a journal."

But it shortly became a most lamentable "slouch of a journal." One night

in Paris, after a hard day's toil in sightseeing, I said:

"Now I'll go and stroll around the cafes awhile, Jack, and give you a

chance to write up your journal, old fellow."

His countenance lost its fire. He said:

"Well, no, you needn't mind. I think I won't run that journal anymore.

It is awful tedious. Do you know--I reckon I'm as much as four thousand

pages behind hand. I haven't got any France in it at all. First I

thought I'd leave France out and start fresh. But that wouldn't do,

would it? The governor would say, 'Hello, here--didn't see anything in

France? That cat wouldn't fight, you know. First I thought I'd copy

France out of the guide-book, like old Badger in the for'rard cabin,

who's writing a book, but there's more than three hundred pages of it.

Oh, I don't think a journal's any use--do you? They're only a bother,

ain't they?"

"Yes, a journal that is incomplete isn't of much use, but a journal

properly kept is worth a thousand dollars--when you've got it done."

"A thousand!--well, I should think so. I wouldn't finish it for a

million."

His experience was only the experience of the majority of that

industrious night school in the cabin. If you wish to inflict a

heartless and malignant punishment upon a young person, pledge him to

keep a journal a year.

A good many expedients were resorted to to keep the excursionists amused

and satisfied. A club was formed, of all the passengers, which met in

the writing school after prayers and read aloud about the countries we

were approaching and discussed the information so obtained.

Several times the photographer of the expedition brought out his

transparent pictures and gave us a handsome magic-lantern exhibition.

His views were nearly all of foreign scenes, but there were one or two

home pictures among them. He advertised that he would "open his

performance in the after cabin at 'two bells' (nine P.M.) and show the

passengers where they shall eventually arrive"--which was all very well,

but by a funny accident the first picture that flamed out upon the canvas

was a view of Greenwood Cemetery!

On several starlight nights we danced on the upper deck, under the

awnings, and made something of a ball-room display of brilliancy by

hanging a number of ship's lanterns to the stanchions. Our music

consisted of the well-mixed strains of a melodeon which was a little

asthmatic and apt to catch its breath where it ought to come out strong,

a clarinet which was a little unreliable on the high keys and rather

melancholy on the low ones, and a disreputable accordion that had a leak

somewhere and breathed louder than it squawked--a more elegant term does

not occur to me just now. However, the dancing was infinitely worse than

the music. When the ship rolled to starboard the whole platoon of

dancers came charging down to starboard with it, and brought up in mass

at the rail; and when it rolled to port they went floundering down to

port with the same unanimity of sentiment. Waltzers spun around

precariously for a matter of fifteen seconds and then went scurrying down

to the rail as if they meant to go overboard. The Virginia reel, as

performed on board the Quaker City, had more genuine reel about it than

any reel I ever saw before, and was as full of interest to the spectator

as it was full of desperate chances and hairbreadth escapes to the

participant. We gave up dancing, finally.

We celebrated a lady's birthday anniversary with toasts, speeches, a

poem, and so forth. We also had a mock trial. No ship ever went to sea

that hadn't a mock trial on board. The purser was accused of stealing an

overcoat from stateroom No. 10. A judge was appointed; also clerks, a

crier of the court, constables, sheriffs; counsel for the State and for

the defendant; witnesses were subpoenaed, and a jury empaneled after much

challenging. The witnesses were stupid and unreliable and contradictory,

as witnesses always are. The counsel were eloquent, argumentative, and

vindictively abusive of each other, as was characteristic and proper.

The case was at last submitted and duly finished by the judge with an

absurd decision and a ridiculous sentence.

The acting of charades was tried on several evenings by the young

gentlemen and ladies, in the cabins, and proved the most distinguished

success of all the amusement experiments.

An attempt was made to organize a debating club, but it was a failure.

There was no oratorical talent in the ship.

We all enjoyed ourselves--I think I can safely say that, but it was in a

rather quiet way. We very, very seldom played the piano; we played the

flute and the clarinet together, and made good music, too, what there was

of it, but we always played the same old tune; it was a very pretty tune

--how well I remember it--I wonder when I shall ever get rid of it. We

never played either the melodeon or the organ except at devotions--but I

am too fast: young Albert did know part of a tune something about

"O Something-Or-Other How Sweet It Is to Know That He's His

What's-his-Name" (I do not remember the exact title of it, but it was

very plaintive and full of sentiment); Albert played that pretty much

all the time until we contracted with him to restrain himself. But

nobody ever sang by moonlight on the upper deck, and the congregational

singing at church and prayers was not of a superior order of

architecture. I put up with it as long as I could and then joined in

and tried to improve it, but this encouraged young George to join in

too, and that made a failure of it; because George's voice was just

"turning," and when he was singing a dismal sort of bass it was apt to

fly off the handle and startle everybody with a most discordant cackle

on the upper notes. George didn't know the tunes, either, which was

also a drawback to his performances. I said:

"Come, now, George, don't improvise. It looks too egotistical. It will

provoke remark. Just stick to 'Coronation,' like the others. It is a

good tune--you can't improve it any, just off-hand, in this way."

"Why, I'm not trying to improve it--and I am singing like the others

--just as it is in the notes."

And he honestly thought he was, too; and so he had no one to blame but

himself when his voice caught on the center occasionally and gave him the

lockjaw.

There were those among the unregenerated who attributed the unceasing

head-winds to our distressing choir-music. There were those who said

openly that it was taking chances enough to have such ghastly music going

on, even when it was at its best; and that to exaggerate the crime by

letting George help was simply flying in the face of Providence. These

said that the choir would keep up their lacerating attempts at melody

until they would bring down a storm some day that would sink the ship.

There were even grumblers at the prayers. The executive officer said the

pilgrims had no charity:

"There they are, down there every night at eight bells, praying for fair

winds--when they know as well as I do that this is the only ship going

east this time of the year, but there's a thousand coming west--what's a

fair wind for us is a head wind to them--the Almighty's blowing a fair

wind for a thousand vessels, and this tribe wants him to turn it clear

around so as to accommodate one--and she a steamship at that! It ain't

good sense, it ain't good reason, it ain't good Christianity, it ain't

common human charity. Avast with such nonsense!"

CHAPTER V.

Taking it "by and large," as the sailors say, we had a pleasant ten days'

run from New York to the Azores islands--not a fast run, for the distance

is only twenty-four hundred miles, but a right pleasant one in the main.

True, we had head winds all the time, and several stormy experiences

which sent fifty percent of the passengers to bed sick and made the ship

look dismal and deserted--stormy experiences that all will remember who

weathered them on the tumbling deck and caught the vast sheets of spray

that every now and then sprang high in air from the weather bow and swept

the ship like a thunder-shower; but for the most part we had balmy summer

weather and nights that were even finer than the days. We had the

phenomenon of a full moon located just in the same spot in the heavens at

the same hour every night. The reason of this singular conduct on the

part of the moon did not occur to us at first, but it did afterward when

we reflected that we were gaining about twenty minutes every day because

we were going east so fast--we gained just about enough every day to keep

along with the moon. It was becoming an old moon to the friends we had

left behind us, but to us Joshuas it stood still in the same place and

remained always the same.

Young Mr. Blucher, who is from the Far West and is on his first voyage,

was a good deal worried by the constantly changing "ship time." He was

proud of his new watch at first and used to drag it out promptly when

eight bells struck at noon, but he came to look after a while as if he

were losing confidence in it. Seven days out from New York he came on

deck and said with great decision:

"This thing's a swindle!"

"What's a swindle?"

"Why, this watch. I bought her out in Illinois--gave $150 for her--and I

thought she was good. And, by George, she is good onshore, but somehow

she don't keep up her lick here on the water--gets seasick may be. She

skips; she runs along regular enough till half-past eleven, and then, all

of a sudden, she lets down. I've set that old regulator up faster and

faster, till I've shoved it clear around, but it don't do any good; she

just distances every watch in the ship, and clatters along in a way

that's astonishing till it is noon, but them eight bells always gets in

about ten minutes ahead of her anyway. I don't know what to do with her

now. She's doing all she can--she's going her best gait, but it won't

save her. Now, don't you know, there ain't a watch in the ship that's

making better time than she is, but what does it signify? When you hear

them eight bells you'll find her just about ten minutes short of her

score sure."

The ship was gaining a full hour every three days, and this fellow was

trying to make his watch go fast enough to keep up to her. But, as he

had said, he had pushed the regulator up as far as it would go, and the

watch was "on its best gait," and so nothing was left him but to fold his

hands and see the ship beat the race. We sent him to the captain, and he

explained to him the mystery of "ship time" and set his troubled mind at

rest. This young man asked a great many questions about seasickness

before we left, and wanted to know what its characteristics were and how

he was to tell when he had it. He found out.

We saw the usual sharks, blackfish, porpoises, &c., of course, and by and

by large schools of Portuguese men-of-war were added to the regular list

of sea wonders. Some of them were white and some of a brilliant carmine

color. The nautilus is nothing but a transparent web of jelly that

spreads itself to catch the wind, and has fleshy-looking strings a foot

or two long dangling from it to keep it steady in the water. It is an

accomplished sailor and has good sailor judgment. It reefs its sail when

a storm threatens or the wind blows pretty hard, and furls it entirely

and goes down when a gale blows. Ordinarily it keeps its sail wet and in

good sailing order by turning over and dipping it in the water for a

moment. Seamen say the nautilus is only found in these waters between

the 35th and 45th parallels of latitude.

At three o'clock on the morning of the twenty-first of June, we were

awakened and notified that the Azores islands were in sight. I said I

did not take any interest in islands at three o'clock in the morning.

But another persecutor came, and then another and another, and finally

believing that the general enthusiasm would permit no one to slumber in

peace, I got up and went sleepily on deck. It was five and a half

o'clock now, and a raw, blustering morning. The passengers were huddled

about the smoke-stacks and fortified behind ventilators, and all were

wrapped in wintry costumes and looking sleepy and unhappy in the pitiless

gale and the drenching spray.

The island in sight was Flores. It seemed only a mountain of mud

standing up out of the dull mists of the sea. But as we bore down upon

it the sun came out and made it a beautiful picture--a mass of green

farms and meadows that swelled up to a height of fifteen hundred feet and

mingled its upper outlines with the clouds. It was ribbed with sharp,

steep ridges and cloven with narrow canyons, and here and there on the

heights, rocky upheavals shaped themselves into mimic battlements and

castles; and out of rifted clouds came broad shafts of sunlight, that

painted summit, and slope and glen, with bands of fire, and left belts of

somber shade between. It was the aurora borealis of the frozen pole

exiled to a summer land!

We skirted around two-thirds of the island, four miles from shore, and

all the opera glasses in the ship were called into requisition to settle

disputes as to whether mossy spots on the uplands were groves of trees or

groves of weeds, or whether the white villages down by the sea were

really villages or only the clustering tombstones of cemeteries. Finally

we stood to sea and bore away for San Miguel, and Flores shortly became a

dome of mud again and sank down among the mists, and disappeared. But to

many a seasick passenger it was good to see the green hills again, and

all were more cheerful after this episode than anybody could have

expected them to be, considering how sinfully early they had gotten up.

But we had to change our purpose about San Miguel, for a storm came up

about noon that so tossed and pitched the vessel that common sense

dictated a run for shelter. Therefore we steered for the nearest island

of the group--Fayal (the people there pronounce it Fy-all, and put the

accent on the first syllable). We anchored in the open roadstead of

Horta, half a mile from the shore. The town has eight thousand to ten

thousand inhabitants. Its snow-white houses nestle cosily in a sea of

fresh green vegetation, and no village could look prettier or more

attractive. It sits in the lap of an amphitheater of hills which are

three hundred to seven hundred feet high, and carefully cultivated clear

to their summits--not a foot of soil left idle. Every farm and every

acre is cut up into little square inclosures by stone walls, whose duty

it is to protect the growing products from the destructive gales that

blow there. These hundreds of green squares, marked by their black lava

walls, make the hills look like vast checkerboards.

The islands belong to Portugal, and everything in Fayal has Portuguese

characteristics about it. But more of that anon. A swarm of swarthy,

noisy, lying, shoulder-shrugging, gesticulating Portuguese boatmen, with

brass rings in their ears and fraud in their hearts, climbed the ship's

sides, and various parties of us contracted with them to take us ashore

at so much a head, silver coin of any country. We landed under the walls

of a little fort, armed with batteries of twelve-and-thirty-two-pounders,

which Horta considered a most formidable institution, but if we were ever

to get after it with one of our turreted monitors, they would have to

move it out in the country if they wanted it where they could go and find

it again when they needed it. The group on the pier was a rusty one--men

and women, and boys and girls, all ragged and barefoot, uncombed and

unclean, and by instinct, education, and profession beggars. They

trooped after us, and never more while we tarried in Fayal did we get rid

of them. We walked up the middle of the principal street, and these

vermin surrounded us on all sides and glared upon us; and every moment

excited couples shot ahead of the procession to get a good look back,

just as village boys do when they accompany the elephant on his

advertising trip from street to street. It was very flattering to me to

be part of the material for such a sensation. Here and there in the

doorways we saw women with fashionable Portuguese hoods on. This hood is

of thick blue cloth, attached to a cloak of the same stuff, and is a

marvel of ugliness. It stands up high and spreads far abroad, and is

unfathomably deep. It fits like a circus tent, and a woman's head is

hidden away in it like the man's who prompts the singers from his tin

shed in the stage of an opera. There is no particle of trimming about

this monstrous capote, as they call it--it is just a plain, ugly

dead-blue mass of sail, and a woman can't go within eight points of the

wind with one of them on; she has to go before the wind or not at all.

The general style of the capote is the same in all the islands, and will

remain so for the next ten thousand years, but each island shapes its

capotes just enough differently from the others to enable an observer to

tell at a glance what particular island a lady hails from.

The Portuguese pennies, or reis (pronounced rays), are prodigious. It

takes one thousand reis to make a dollar, and all financial estimates are

made in reis. We did not know this until after we had found it out

through Blucher. Blucher said he was so happy and so grateful to be on

solid land once more that he wanted to give a feast--said he had heard it

was a cheap land, and he was bound to have a grand banquet. He invited

nine of us, and we ate an excellent dinner at the principal hotel. In

the midst of the jollity produced by good cigars, good wine, and passable

anecdotes, the landlord presented his bill. Blucher glanced at it and

his countenance fell. He took another look to assure himself that his

senses had not deceived him and then read the items aloud, in a faltering

voice, while the roses in his cheeks turned to ashes:

"'Ten dinners, at 600 reis, 6,000 reis!' Ruin and desolation!

"'Twenty-five cigars, at 100 reis, 2,500 reis!' Oh, my sainted mother!

"'Eleven bottles of wine, at 1,200 reis, 13,200 reis!' Be with us all!

"'TOTAL, TWENTY-ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED REIS!' The suffering Moses!

There ain't money enough in the ship to pay that bill! Go--leave me to

my misery, boys, I am a ruined community."

I think it was the blankest-looking party I ever saw. Nobody could say a

word. It was as if every soul had been stricken dumb. Wine glasses

descended slowly to the table, their contents untasted. Cigars dropped

unnoticed from nerveless fingers. Each man sought his neighbor's eye,

but found in it no ray of hope, no encouragement. At last the fearful

silence was broken. The shadow of a desperate resolve settled upon

Blucher's countenance like a cloud, and he rose up and said:

"Landlord, this is a low, mean swindle, and I'll never, never stand it.

Here's a hundred and fifty dollars, Sir, and it's all you'll get--I'll

swim in blood before I'll pay a cent more."

Our spirits rose and the landlord's fell--at least we thought so; he was

confused, at any rate, notwithstanding he had not understood a word that

had been said. He glanced from the little pile of gold pieces to Blucher

several times and then went out. He must have visited an American, for

when he returned, he brought back his bill translated into a language

that a Christian could understand--thus:

10 dinners, 6,000 reis, or . . .$6.00

25 cigars, 2,500 reis, or . . . 2.50

11 bottles wine, 13,200 reis, or 13.20

Total 21,700 reis, or . . . . $21.70

Happiness reigned once more in Blucher's dinner party. More refreshments

were ordered.

CHAPTER VI.

I think the Azores must be very little known in America. Out of our

whole ship's company there was not a solitary individual who knew

anything whatever about them. Some of the party, well read concerning

most other lands, had no other information about the Azores than that

they were a group of nine or ten small islands far out in the Atlantic,

something more than halfway between New York and Gibraltar. That was

all. These considerations move me to put in a paragraph of dry facts

just here.

The community is eminently Portuguese--that is to say, it is slow, poor,

shiftless, sleepy, and lazy. There is a civil governor, appointed by the

King of Portugal, and also a military governor, who can assume supreme

control and suspend the civil government at his pleasure. The islands

contain a population of about 200,000, almost entirely Portuguese.

Everything is staid and settled, for the country was one hundred years

old when Columbus discovered America. The principal crop is corn, and

they raise it and grind it just as their great-great-great-grandfathers

did. They plow with a board slightly shod with iron; their trifling

little harrows are drawn by men and women; small windmills grind the

corn, ten bushels a day, and there is one assistant superintendent to

feed the mill and a general superintendent to stand by and keep him from

going to sleep. When the wind changes they hitch on some donkeys and

actually turn the whole upper half of the mill around until the sails are

in proper position, instead of fixing the concern so that the sails could

be moved instead of the mill. Oxen tread the wheat from the ear, after

the fashion prevalent in the time of Methuselah. There is not a

wheelbarrow in the land--they carry everything on their heads, or on

donkeys, or in a wicker-bodied cart, whose wheels are solid blocks of

wood and whose axles turn with the wheel. There is not a modern plow in

the islands or a threshing machine. All attempts to introduce them have

failed. The good Catholic Portuguese crossed himself and prayed God to

shield him from all blasphemous desire to know more than his father did

before him. The climate is mild; they never have snow or ice, and I saw

no chimneys in the town. The donkeys and the men, women, and children of

a family all eat and sleep in the same room, and are unclean, are ravaged

by vermin, and are truly happy. The people lie, and cheat the stranger,

and are desperately ignorant, and have hardly any reverence for their

dead. The latter trait shows how little better they are than the donkeys

they eat and sleep with. The only well-dressed Portuguese in the camp

are the half a dozen well-to-do families, the Jesuit priests, and the

soldiers of the little garrison. The wages of a laborer are twenty to

twenty-four cents a day, and those of a good mechanic about twice as

much. They count it in reis at a thousand to the dollar, and this makes

them rich and contented. Fine grapes used to grow in the islands, and an

excellent wine was made and exported. But a disease killed all the vines

fifteen years ago, and since that time no wine has been made. The

islands being wholly of volcanic origin, the soil is necessarily very

rich. Nearly every foot of ground is under cultivation, and two or three

crops a year of each article are produced, but nothing is exported save a

few oranges--chiefly to England. Nobody comes here, and nobody goes

away. News is a thing unknown in Fayal. A thirst for it is a passion

equally unknown. A Portuguese of average intelligence inquired if our

civil war was over. Because, he said, somebody had told him it was--or

at least it ran in his mind that somebody had told him something like

that! And when a passenger gave an officer of the garrison copies of the

Tribune, the Herald, and Times, he was surprised to find later news in

them from Lisbon than he had just received by the little monthly steamer.

He was told that it came by cable. He said he knew they had tried to lay

a cable ten years ago, but it had been in his mind somehow that they

hadn't succeeded!

It is in communities like this that Jesuit humbuggery flourishes. We

visited a Jesuit cathedral nearly two hundred years old and found in it a

piece of the veritable cross upon which our Saviour was crucified. It

was polished and hard, and in as excellent a state of preservation as if

the dread tragedy on Calvary had occurred yesterday instead of eighteen

centuries ago. But these confiding people believe in that piece of wood

unhesitatingly.

In a chapel of the cathedral is an altar with facings of solid silver--at

least they call it so, and I think myself it would go a couple of hundred

to the ton (to speak after the fashion of the silver miners)--and before

it is kept forever burning a small lamp. A devout lady who died, left

money and contracted for unlimited masses for the repose of her soul, and

also stipulated that this lamp should be kept lighted always, day and

night. She did all this before she died, you understand. It is a very

small lamp and a very dim one, and it could not work her much damage, I

think, if it went out altogether.

The great altar of the cathedral and also three or four minor ones are a

perfect mass of gilt gimcracks and gingerbread. And they have a swarm of

rusty, dusty, battered apostles standing around the filagree work, some

on one leg and some with one eye out but a gamey look in the other, and

some with two or three fingers gone, and some with not enough nose left

to blow--all of them crippled and discouraged, and fitter subjects for

the hospital than the cathedral.

The walls of the chancel are of porcelain, all pictured over with figures

of almost life size, very elegantly wrought and dressed in the fanciful

costumes of two centuries ago. The design was a history of something or

somebody, but none of us were learned enough to read the story. The old

father, reposing under a stone close by, dated 1686, might have told us

if he could have risen. But he didn't.

As we came down through the town we encountered a squad of little donkeys

ready saddled for use. The saddles were peculiar, to say the least.

They consisted of a sort of saw-buck with a small mattress on it, and

this furniture covered about half the donkey. There were no stirrups,

but really such supports were not needed--to use such a saddle was the

next thing to riding a dinner table--there was ample support clear out to

one's knee joints. A pack of ragged Portuguese muleteers crowded around

us, offering their beasts at half a dollar an hour--more rascality to the

stranger, for the market price is sixteen cents. Half a dozen of us

mounted the ungainly affairs and submitted to the indignity of making a

ridiculous spectacle of ourselves through the principal streets of a town

of 10,000 inhabitants.

We started. It was not a trot, a gallop, or a canter, but a stampede,

and made up of all possible or conceivable gaits. No spurs were

necessary. There was a muleteer to every donkey and a dozen volunteers

beside, and they banged the donkeys with their goad sticks, and pricked

them with their spikes, and shouted something that sounded like

"Sekki-yah!" and kept up a din and a racket that was worse than Bedlam

itself. These rascals were all on foot, but no matter, they were always

up to time--they can outrun and outlast a donkey. Altogether, ours was

a lively and a picturesque procession, and drew crowded audiences to the

balconies wherever we went.

Blucher could do nothing at all with his donkey. The beast scampered

zigzag across the road and the others ran into him; he scraped Blucher

against carts and the corners of houses; the road was fenced in with high

stone walls, and the donkey gave him a polishing first on one side and

then on the other, but never once took the middle; he finally came to the

house he was born in and darted into the parlor, scraping Blucher off at

the doorway. After remounting, Blucher said to the muleteer, "Now,

that's enough, you know; you go slow hereafter."

But the fellow knew no English and did not understand, so he simply said,

"Sekki-yah!" and the donkey was off again like a shot. He turned a corner

suddenly, and Blucher went over his head. And, to speak truly, every

mule stumbled over the two, and the whole cavalcade was piled up in a

heap. No harm done. A fall from one of those donkeys is of little more

consequence than rolling off a sofa. The donkeys all stood still after

the catastrophe and waited for their dismembered saddles to be patched up

and put on by the noisy muleteers. Blucher was pretty angry and wanted

to swear, but every time he opened his mouth his animal did so also and

let off a series of brays that drowned all other sounds.

It was fun, scurrying around the breezy hills and through the beautiful

canyons. There was that rare thing, novelty, about it; it was a fresh,

new, exhilarating sensation, this donkey riding, and worth a hundred worn

and threadbare home pleasures.

The roads were a wonder, and well they might be. Here was an island with

only a handful of people in it--25,000--and yet such fine roads do not

exist in the United States outside of Central Park. Everywhere you go,

in any direction, you find either a hard, smooth, level thoroughfare,

just sprinkled with black lava sand, and bordered with little gutters

neatly paved with small smooth pebbles, or compactly paved ones like

Broadway. They talk much of the Russ pavement in New York, and call it a

new invention--yet here they have been using it in this remote little

isle of the sea for two hundred years! Every street in Horta is

handsomely paved with the heavy Russ blocks, and the surface is neat and

true as a floor--not marred by holes like Broadway. And every road is

fenced in by tall, solid lava walls, which will last a thousand years in

this land where frost is unknown. They are very thick, and are often

plastered and whitewashed and capped with projecting slabs of cut stone.

Trees from gardens above hang their swaying tendrils down, and contrast

their bright green with the whitewash or the black lava of the walls and

make them beautiful. The trees and vines stretch across these narrow

roadways sometimes and so shut out the sun that you seem to be riding

through a tunnel. The pavements, the roads, and the bridges are all

government work.

The bridges are of a single span--a single arch--of cut stone, without a

support, and paved on top with flags of lava and ornamental pebblework.

Everywhere are walls, walls, walls, and all of them tasteful and

handsome--and eternally substantial; and everywhere are those marvelous

pavements, so neat, so smooth, and so indestructible. And if ever roads

and streets and the outsides of houses were perfectly free from any sign

or semblance of dirt, or dust, or mud, or uncleanliness of any kind, it

is Horta, it is Fayal. The lower classes of the people, in their persons

and their domiciles, are not clean--but there it stops--the town and the

island are miracles of cleanliness.

We arrived home again finally, after a ten-mile excursion, and the

irrepressible muleteers scampered at our heels through the main street,

goading the donkeys, shouting the everlasting "Sekki-yah," and singing

"John Brown's Body" in ruinous English.

When we were dismounted and it came to settling, the shouting and jawing

and swearing and quarreling among the muleteers and with us was nearly

deafening. One fellow would demand a dollar an hour for the use of his

donkey; another claimed half a dollar for pricking him up, another a

quarter for helping in that service, and about fourteen guides presented

bills for showing us the way through the town and its environs; and every

vagrant of them was more vociferous, and more vehement and more frantic

in gesture than his neighbor. We paid one guide and paid for one

muleteer to each donkey.

The mountains on some of the islands are very high. We sailed along the

shore of the island of Pico, under a stately green pyramid that rose up

with one unbroken sweep from our very feet to an altitude of 7,613 feet,

and thrust its summit above the white clouds like an island adrift in a

fog!

We got plenty of fresh oranges, lemons, figs, apricots, etc., in these

Azores, of course. But I will desist. I am not here to write Patent

Office reports.

We are on our way to Gibraltar, and shall reach there five or six days

out from the Azores.

CHAPTER VII.

A week of buffeting a tempestuous and relentless sea; a week of

seasickness and deserted cabins; of lonely quarterdecks drenched with

spray--spray so ambitious that it even coated the smokestacks thick with

a white crust of salt to their very tops; a week of shivering in the

shelter of the lifeboats and deckhouses by day and blowing suffocating

"clouds" and boisterously performing at dominoes in the smoking room at

night.

And the last night of the seven was the stormiest of all. There was no

thunder, no noise but the pounding bows of the ship, the keen whistling

of the gale through the cordage, and the rush of the seething waters.

But the vessel climbed aloft as if she would climb to heaven--then paused

an instant that seemed a century and plunged headlong down again, as from

a precipice. The sheeted sprays drenched the decks like rain. The

blackness of darkness was everywhere. At long intervals a flash of

lightning clove it with a quivering line of fire that revealed a heaving

world of water where was nothing before, kindled the dusky cordage to

glittering silver, and lit up the faces of the men with a ghastly luster!

Fear drove many on deck that were used to avoiding the night winds and

the spray. Some thought the vessel could not live through the night, and

it seemed less dreadful to stand out in the midst of the wild tempest and

see the peril that threatened than to be shut up in the sepulchral

cabins, under the dim lamps, and imagine the horrors that were abroad on

the ocean. And once out--once where they could see the ship struggling

in the strong grasp of the storm--once where they could hear the shriek

of the winds and face the driving spray and look out upon the majestic

picture the lightnings disclosed, they were prisoners to a fierce

fascination they could not resist, and so remained. It was a wild night

--and a very, very long one.

Everybody was sent scampering to the deck at seven o'clock this lovely

morning of the thirtieth of June with the glad news that land was in

sight! It was a rare thing and a joyful, to see all the ship's family

abroad once more, albeit the happiness that sat upon every countenance

could only partly conceal the ravages which that long siege of storms had

wrought there. But dull eyes soon sparkled with pleasure, pallid cheeks

flushed again, and frames weakened by sickness gathered new life from the

quickening influences of the bright, fresh morning. Yea, and from a

still more potent influence: the worn castaways were to see the blessed

land again!--and to see it was to bring back that motherland that was in

all their thoughts.

Within the hour we were fairly within the Straits of Gibraltar, the tall

yellow-splotched hills of Africa on our right, with their bases veiled in

a blue haze and their summits swathed in clouds--the same being according

to Scripture, which says that "clouds and darkness are over the land."

The words were spoken of this particular portion of Africa, I believe.

On our left were the granite-ribbed domes of old Spain. The strait is

only thirteen miles wide in its narrowest part.

At short intervals along the Spanish shore were quaint-looking old stone

towers--Moorish, we thought--but learned better afterwards. In former

times the Morocco rascals used to coast along the Spanish Main in their

boats till a safe opportunity seemed to present itself, and then dart in

and capture a Spanish village and carry off all the pretty women they

could find. It was a pleasant business, and was very popular. The

Spaniards built these watchtowers on the hills to enable them to keep a

sharper lookout on the Moroccan speculators.

The picture on the other hand was very beautiful to eyes weary of the

changeless sea, and by and by the ship's company grew wonderfully

cheerful. But while we stood admiring the cloud-capped peaks and the

lowlands robed in misty gloom a finer picture burst upon us and chained

every eye like a magnet--a stately ship, with canvas piled on canvas till

she was one towering mass of bellying sail! She came speeding over the

sea like a great bird. Africa and Spain were forgotten. All homage was

for the beautiful stranger. While everybody gazed she swept superbly by

and flung the Stars and Stripes to the breeze! Quicker than thought,

hats and handkerchiefs flashed in the air, and a cheer went up! She was

beautiful before--she was radiant now. Many a one on our decks knew then

for the first time how tame a sight his country's flag is at home

compared to what it is in a foreign land. To see it is to see a vision

of home itself and all its idols, and feel a thrill that would stir a

very river of sluggish blood!

We were approaching the famed Pillars of Hercules, and already the

African one, "Ape's Hill," a grand old mountain with summit streaked with

granite ledges, was in sight. The other, the great Rock of Gibraltar,

was yet to come. The ancients considered the Pillars of Hercules the

head of navigation and the end of the world. The information the

ancients didn't have was very voluminous. Even the prophets wrote book

after book and epistle after epistle, yet never once hinted at the

existence of a great continent on our side of the water; yet they must

have known it was there, I should think.

In a few moments a lonely and enormous mass of rock, standing seemingly

in the center of the wide strait and apparently washed on all sides by

the sea, swung magnificently into view, and we needed no tedious traveled

parrot to tell us it was Gibraltar. There could not be two rocks like

that in one kingdom.

The Rock of Gibraltar is about a mile and a half long, I should say, by

1,400 to 1,500 feet high, and a quarter of a mile wide at its base. One

side and one end of it come about as straight up out of the sea as the

side of a house, the other end is irregular and the other side is a steep

slant which an army would find very difficult to climb. At the foot of

this slant is the walled town of Gibraltar--or rather the town occupies

part of the slant. Everywhere--on hillside, in the precipice, by the

sea, on the heights--everywhere you choose to look, Gibraltar is clad

with masonry and bristling with guns. It makes a striking and lively

picture from whatsoever point you contemplate it. It is pushed out into

the sea on the end of a flat, narrow strip of land, and is suggestive of

a "gob" of mud on the end of a shingle. A few hundred yards of this flat

ground at its base belongs to the English, and then, extending across the

strip from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, a distance of a quarter of

a mile, comes the "Neutral Ground," a space two or three hundred yards

wide, which is free to both parties.

"Are you going through Spain to Paris?" That question was bandied about

the ship day and night from Fayal to Gibraltar, and I thought I never

could get so tired of hearing any one combination of words again or more

tired of answering, "I don't know." At the last moment six or seven had

sufficient decision of character to make up their minds to go, and did

go, and I felt a sense of relief at once--it was forever too late now and

I could make up my mind at my leisure not to go. I must have a

prodigious quantity of mind; it takes me as much as a week sometimes to

make it up.

But behold how annoyances repeat themselves. We had no sooner gotten rid

of the Spain distress than the Gibraltar guides started another--a

tiresome repetition of a legend that had nothing very astonishing about

it, even in the first place: "That high hill yonder is called the Queen's

Chair; it is because one of the queens of Spain placed her chair there

when the French and Spanish troops were besieging Gibraltar, and said she

would never move from the spot till the English flag was lowered from the

fortresses. If the English hadn't been gallant enough to lower the flag

for a few hours one day, she'd have had to break her oath or die up

there."

We rode on asses and mules up the steep, narrow streets and entered the

subterranean galleries the English have blasted out in the rock. These

galleries are like spacious railway tunnels, and at short intervals in

them great guns frown out upon sea and town through portholes five or six

hundred feet above the ocean. There is a mile or so of this subterranean

work, and it must have cost a vast deal of money and labor. The gallery

guns command the peninsula and the harbors of both oceans, but they might

as well not be there, I should think, for an army could hardly climb the

perpendicular wall of the rock anyhow. Those lofty portholes afford

superb views of the sea, though. At one place, where a jutting crag was

hollowed out into a great chamber whose furniture was huge cannon and

whose windows were portholes, a glimpse was caught of a hill not far

away, and a soldier said:

"That high hill yonder is called the Queen's Chair; it is because a queen

of Spain placed her chair there once when the French and Spanish troops

were besieging Gibraltar, and said she would never move from the spot

till the English flag was lowered from the fortresses. If the English

hadn't been gallant enough to lower the flag for a few hours one day,

she'd have had to break her oath or die up there."

On the topmost pinnacle of Gibraltar we halted a good while, and no doubt

the mules were tired. They had a right to be. The military road was

good, but rather steep, and there was a good deal of it. The view from

the narrow ledge was magnificent; from it vessels seeming like the

tiniest little toy boats were turned into noble ships by the telescopes,

and other vessels that were fifty miles away and even sixty, they said,

and invisible to the naked eye, could be clearly distinguished through

those same telescopes. Below, on one side, we looked down upon an

endless mass of batteries and on the other straight down to the sea.

While I was resting ever so comfortably on a rampart, and cooling my

baking head in the delicious breeze, an officious guide belonging to

another party came up and said:

"Senor, that high hill yonder is called the Queen's Chair--"

"Sir, I am a helpless orphan in a foreign land. Have pity on me. Don't

--now don't inflict that most in-FERNAL old legend on me anymore today!"

There--I had used strong language after promising I would never do so

again; but the provocation was more than human nature could bear. If you

had been bored so, when you had the noble panorama of Spain and Africa

and the blue Mediterranean spread abroad at your feet, and wanted to gaze

and enjoy and surfeit yourself in its beauty in silence, you might have

even burst into stronger language than I did.

Gibraltar has stood several protracted sieges, one of them of nearly four

years' duration (it failed), and the English only captured it by

stratagem. The wonder is that anybody should ever dream of trying so

impossible a project as the taking it by assault--and yet it has been

tried more than once.

The Moors held the place twelve hundred years ago, and a staunch old

castle of theirs of that date still frowns from the middle of the town,

with moss-grown battlements and sides well scarred by shots fired in

battles and sieges that are forgotten now. A secret chamber in the rock

behind it was discovered some time ago, which contained a sword of

exquisite workmanship, and some quaint old armor of a fashion that

antiquaries are not acquainted with, though it is supposed to be Roman.

Roman armor and Roman relics of various kinds have been found in a cave

in the sea extremity of Gibraltar; history says Rome held this part of

the country about the Christian era, and these things seem to confirm the

statement.

In that cave also are found human bones, crusted with a very thick, stony

coating, and wise men have ventured to say that those men not only lived

before the flood, but as much as ten thousand years before it. It may be

true--it looks reasonable enough--but as long as those parties can't vote

anymore, the matter can be of no great public interest. In this cave

likewise are found skeletons and fossils of animals that exist in every

part of Africa, yet within memory and tradition have never existed in any

portion of Spain save this lone peak of Gibraltar! So the theory is that

the channel between Gibraltar and Africa was once dry land, and that the

low, neutral neck between Gibraltar and the Spanish hills behind it was

once ocean, and of course that these African animals, being over at

Gibraltar (after rock, perhaps--there is plenty there), got closed out

when the great change occurred. The hills in Africa, across the channel,

are full of apes, and there are now and always have been apes on the rock

of Gibraltar--but not elsewhere in Spain! The subject is an interesting

one.

There is an English garrison at Gibraltar of 6,000 or 7,000 men, and so

uniforms of flaming red are plenty; and red and blue, and undress

costumes of snowy white, and also the queer uniform of the bare-kneed

Highlander; and one sees soft-eyed Spanish girls from San Roque, and

veiled Moorish beauties (I suppose they are beauties) from Tarifa, and

turbaned, sashed, and trousered Moorish merchants from Fez, and

long-robed, bare-legged, ragged Muhammadan vagabonds from Tetuan and

Tangier, some brown, some yellow and some as black as virgin ink--and

Jews from all around, in gabardine, skullcap, and slippers, just as they

are in pictures and theaters, and just as they were three thousand years

ago, no doubt. You can easily understand that a tribe (somehow our

pilgrims suggest that expression, because they march in a straggling

procession through these foreign places with such an Indian-like air of

complacency and independence about them) like ours, made up from fifteen

or sixteen states of the Union, found enough to stare at in this

shifting panorama of fashion today.

Speaking of our pilgrims reminds me that we have one or two people among

us who are sometimes an annoyance. However, I do not count the Oracle in

that list. I will explain that the Oracle is an innocent old ass who

eats for four and looks wiser than the whole Academy of France would have

any right to look, and never uses a one-syllable word when he can think

of a longer one, and never by any possible chance knows the meaning of

any long word he uses or ever gets it in the right place; yet he will

serenely venture an opinion on the most abstruse subject and back it up

complacently with quotations from authors who never existed, and finally

when cornered will slide to the other side of the question, say he has

been there all the time, and come back at you with your own spoken

arguments, only with the big words all tangled, and play them in your

very teeth as original with himself. He reads a chapter in the

guidebooks, mixes the facts all up, with his bad memory, and then goes

off to inflict the whole mess on somebody as wisdom which has been

festering in his brain for years and which he gathered in college from

erudite authors who are dead now and out of print. This morning at

breakfast he pointed out of the window and said:

"Do you see that there hill out there on that African coast? It's one of

them Pillows of Herkewls, I should say--and there's the ultimate one

alongside of it."

"The ultimate one--that is a good word--but the pillars are not both on

the same side of the strait." (I saw he had been deceived by a

carelessly written sentence in the guidebook.)

"Well, it ain't for you to say, nor for me. Some authors states it that

way, and some states it different. Old Gibbons don't say nothing about

it--just shirks it complete--Gibbons always done that when he got stuck

--but there is Rolampton, what does he say? Why, he says that they was

both on the same side, and Trinculian, and Sobaster, and Syraccus, and

Langomarganbl----"

"Oh, that will do--that's enough. If you have got your hand in for

inventing authors and testimony, I have nothing more to say--let them be

on the same side."

We don't mind the Oracle. We rather like him. We can tolerate the

Oracle very easily, but we have a poet and a good-natured enterprising

idiot on board, and they do distress the company. The one gives copies

of his verses to consuls, commanders, hotel keepers, Arabs, Dutch--to

anybody, in fact, who will submit to a grievous infliction most kindly

meant. His poetry is all very well on shipboard, notwithstanding when he

wrote an "Ode to the Ocean in a Storm" in one half hour, and an

"Apostrophe to the Rooster in the Waist of the Ship" in the next, the

transition was considered to be rather abrupt; but when he sends an

invoice of rhymes to the Governor of Fayal and another to the commander

in chief and other dignitaries in Gibraltar with the compliments of the

Laureate of the Ship, it is not popular with the passengers.

The other personage I have mentioned is young and green, and not bright,

not learned, and not wise. He will be, though, someday if he recollects

the answers to all his questions. He is known about the ship as the

"Interrogation Point," and this by constant use has become shortened to

"Interrogation." He has distinguished himself twice already. In Fayal

they pointed out a hill and told him it was 800 feet high and 1,100 feet

long. And they told him there was a tunnel 2,000 feet long and 1,000

feet high running through the hill, from end to end. He believed it. He

repeated it to everybody, discussed it, and read it from his notes.

Finally, he took a useful hint from this remark, which a thoughtful old

pilgrim made:

"Well, yes, it is a little remarkable--singular tunnel altogether--stands

up out of the top of the hill about two hundred feet, and one end of it

sticks out of the hill about nine hundred!"

Here in Gibraltar he corners these educated British officers and badgers

them with braggadocio about America and the wonders she can perform! He

told one of them a couple of our gunboats could come here and knock

Gibraltar into the Mediterranean Sea!

At this present moment half a dozen of us are taking a private pleasure

excursion of our own devising. We form rather more than half the list of

white passengers on board a small steamer bound for the venerable Moorish

town of Tangier, Africa. Nothing could be more absolutely certain than

that we are enjoying ourselves. One can not do otherwise who speeds over

these sparkling waters and breathes the soft atmosphere of this sunny

land. Care cannot assail us here. We are out of its jurisdiction.

We even steamed recklessly by the frowning fortress of Malabat

(a stronghold of the Emperor of Morocco) without a twinge of fear.

The whole garrison turned out under arms and assumed a threatening

attitude--yet still we did not fear. The entire garrison marched and

counter-marched within the rampart, in full view--yet notwithstanding

even this, we never flinched.

I suppose we really do not know what fear is. I inquired the name of the

garrison of the fortress of Malabat, and they said it was Mehemet Ali Ben

Sancom. I said it would be a good idea to get some more garrisons to

help him; but they said no, he had nothing to do but hold the place, and

he was competent to do that, had done it two years already. That was

evidence which one could not well refute. There is nothing like

reputation.

Every now and then my glove purchase in Gibraltar last night intrudes

itself upon me. Dan and the ship's surgeon and I had been up to the

great square, listening to the music of the fine military bands and

contemplating English and Spanish female loveliness and fashion, and at

nine o'clock were on our way to the theater, when we met the General, the

Judge, the Commodore, the Colonel, and the Commissioner of the United

States of America to Europe, Asia, and Africa, who had been to the Club

House to register their several titles and impoverish the bill of fare;

and they told us to go over to the little variety store near the Hall of

Justice and buy some kid gloves. They said they were elegant and very

moderate in price. It seemed a stylish thing to go to the theater in kid

gloves, and we acted upon the hint. A very handsome young lady in the

store offered me a pair of blue gloves. I did not want blue, but she

said they would look very pretty on a hand like mine. The remark touched

me tenderly. I glanced furtively at my hand, and somehow it did seem

rather a comely member. I tried a glove on my left and blushed a little.

Manifestly the size was too small for me. But I felt gratified when she

said:

"Oh, it is just right!" Yet I knew it was no such thing.

I tugged at it diligently, but it was discouraging work. She said:

"Ah! I see you are accustomed to wearing kid gloves--but some gentlemen

are so awkward about putting them on."

It was the last compliment I had expected. I only understand putting on

the buckskin article perfectly. I made another effort and tore the glove

from the base of the thumb into the palm of the hand--and tried to hide

the rent. She kept up her compliments, and I kept up my determination to

deserve them or die:

"Ah, you have had experience! [A rip down the back of the hand.] They

are just right for you--your hand is very small--if they tear you need

not pay for them. [A rent across the middle.] I can always tell when a

gentleman understands putting on kid gloves. There is a grace about it

that only comes with long practice." The whole after-guard of the glove

"fetched away," as the sailors say, the fabric parted across the

knuckles, and nothing was left but a melancholy ruin.

I was too much flattered to make an exposure and throw the merchandise on

the angel's hands. I was hot, vexed, confused, but still happy; but I

hated the other boys for taking such an absorbing interest in the

proceedings. I wished they were in Jericho. I felt exquisitely mean

when I said cheerfully:

"This one does very well; it fits elegantly. I like a glove that fits.

No, never mind, ma'am, never mind; I'll put the other on in the street.

It is warm here."

It was warm. It was the warmest place I ever was in. I paid the bill,

and as I passed out with a fascinating bow I thought I detected a light

in the woman's eye that was gently ironical; and when I looked back from

the street, and she was laughing all to herself about something or other,

I said to myself with withering sarcasm, "Oh, certainly; you know how to

put on kid gloves, don't you? A self-complacent ass, ready to be

flattered out of your senses by every petticoat that chooses to take the

trouble to do it!"

The silence of the boys annoyed me. Finally Dan said musingly:

"Some gentlemen don't know how to put on kid gloves at all, but some do."

And the doctor said (to the moon, I thought):

"But it is always easy to tell when a gentleman is used to putting on kid

gloves."

Dan soliloquized after a pause:

"Ah, yes; there is a grace about it that only comes with long, very long

practice."

"Yes, indeed, I've noticed that when a man hauls on a kid glove like he

was dragging a cat out of an ash hole by the tail, he understands putting

on kid gloves; he's had ex--"

"Boys, enough of a thing's enough! You think you are very smart, I

suppose, but I don't. And if you go and tell any of those old gossips in

the ship about this thing, I'll never forgive you for it; that's all."

They let me alone then for the time being. We always let each other

alone in time to prevent ill feeling from spoiling a joke. But they had

bought gloves, too, as I did. We threw all the purchases away together

this morning. They were coarse, unsubstantial, freckled all over with

broad yellow splotches, and could neither stand wear nor public

exhibition. We had entertained an angel unawares, but we did not take

her in. She did that for us.

Tangier! A tribe of stalwart Moors are wading into the sea to carry us

ashore on their backs from the small boats.

CHAPTER VIII.

This is royal! Let those who went up through Spain make the best of it

--these dominions of the Emperor of Morocco suit our little party well

enough. We have had enough of Spain at Gibraltar for the present.

Tangier is the spot we have been longing for all the time. Elsewhere we

have found foreign-looking things and foreign-looking people, but always

with things and people intermixed that we were familiar with before, and

so the novelty of the situation lost a deal of its force. We wanted

something thoroughly and uncompromisingly foreign--foreign from top to

bottom--foreign from center to circumference--foreign inside and outside

and all around--nothing anywhere about it to dilute its foreignness

--nothing to remind us of any other people or any other land under the sun.

And lo! In Tangier we have found it. Here is not the slightest thing

that ever we have seen save in pictures--and we always mistrusted the

pictures before. We cannot anymore. The pictures used to seem

exaggerations--they seemed too weird and fanciful for reality. But

behold, they were not wild enough--they were not fanciful enough--they

have not told half the story. Tangier is a foreign land if ever there

was one, and the true spirit of it can never be found in any book save

The Arabian Nights. Here are no white men visible, yet swarms of

humanity are all about us. Here is a packed and jammed city enclosed in

a massive stone wall which is more than a thousand years old. All the

houses nearly are one-and two-story, made of thick walls of stone,

plastered outside, square as a dry-goods box, flat as a floor on top, no

cornices, whitewashed all over--a crowded city of snowy tombs! And the

doors are arched with the peculiar arch we see in Moorish pictures; the

floors are laid in varicolored diamond flags; in tesselated, many-colored

porcelain squares wrought in the furnaces of Fez; in red tiles and broad

bricks that time cannot wear; there is no furniture in the rooms (of

Jewish dwellings) save divans--what there is in Moorish ones no man may

know; within their sacred walls no Christian dog can enter. And the

streets are oriental--some of them three feet wide, some six, but only

two that are over a dozen; a man can blockade the most of them by

extending his body across them. Isn't it an oriental picture?

There are stalwart Bedouins of the desert here, and stately Moors proud

of a history that goes back to the night of time; and Jews whose fathers

fled hither centuries upon centuries ago; and swarthy Riffians from the

mountains--born cut-throats--and original, genuine Negroes as black as

Moses; and howling dervishes and a hundred breeds of Arabs--all sorts and

descriptions of people that are foreign and curious to look upon.

And their dresses are strange beyond all description. Here is a bronzed

Moor in a prodigious white turban, curiously embroidered jacket, gold and

crimson sash, of many folds, wrapped round and round his waist, trousers

that only come a little below his knee and yet have twenty yards of stuff

in them, ornamented scimitar, bare shins, stockingless feet, yellow

slippers, and gun of preposterous length--a mere soldier!--I thought he

was the Emperor at least. And here are aged Moors with flowing white

beards and long white robes with vast cowls; and Bedouins with long,

cowled, striped cloaks; and Negroes and Riffians with heads clean-shaven

except a kinky scalp lock back of the ear or, rather, upon the after

corner of the skull; and all sorts of barbarians in all sorts of weird

costumes, and all more or less ragged. And here are Moorish women who

are enveloped from head to foot in coarse white robes, and whose sex can

only be determined by the fact that they only leave one eye visible and

never look at men of their own race, or are looked at by them in public.

Here are five thousand Jews in blue gabardines, sashes about their

waists, slippers upon their feet, little skullcaps upon the backs of

their heads, hair combed down on the forehead, and cut straight across

the middle of it from side to side--the selfsame fashion their Tangier

ancestors have worn for I don't know how many bewildering centuries.

Their feet and ankles are bare. Their noses are all hooked, and hooked

alike. They all resemble each other so much that one could almost

believe they were of one family. Their women are plump and pretty, and

do smile upon a Christian in a way which is in the last degree

comforting.

What a funny old town it is! It seems like profanation to laugh and jest

and bandy the frivolous chat of our day amid its hoary relics. Only the

stately phraseology and the measured speech of the sons of the Prophet

are suited to a venerable antiquity like this. Here is a crumbling wall

that was old when Columbus discovered America; was old when Peter the

Hermit roused the knightly men of the Middle Ages to arm for the first

Crusade; was old when Charlemagne and his paladins beleaguered enchanted

castles and battled with giants and genii in the fabled days of the olden

time; was old when Christ and his disciples walked the earth; stood where

it stands today when the lips of Memnon were vocal and men bought and

sold in the streets of ancient Thebes!

The Phoenicians, the Carthagenians, the English, Moors, Romans, all have

battled for Tangier--all have won it and lost it. Here is a ragged,

oriental-looking Negro from some desert place in interior Africa, filling

his goatskin with water from a stained and battered fountain built by the

Romans twelve hundred years ago. Yonder is a ruined arch of a bridge

built by Julius Caesar nineteen hundred years ago. Men who had seen the

infant Saviour in the Virgin's arms have stood upon it, maybe.

Near it are the ruins of a dockyard where Caesar repaired his ships and

loaded them with grain when he invaded Britain, fifty years before the

Christian era.

Here, under the quiet stars, these old streets seem thronged with the

phantoms of forgotten ages. My eyes are resting upon a spot where stood

a monument which was seen and described by Roman historians less than two

thousand years ago, whereon was inscribed:

"WE ARE THE CANAANITES. WE ARE THEY THAT

HAVE BEEN DRIVEN OUT OF THE LAND OF CANAAN

BY THE JEWISH ROBBER, JOSHUA."

Joshua drove them out, and they came here. Not many leagues from here is

a tribe of Jews whose ancestors fled thither after an unsuccessful revolt

against King David, and these their descendants are still under a ban and

keep to themselves.

Tangier has been mentioned in history for three thousand years. And it

was a town, though a queer one, when Hercules, clad in his lion skin,

landed here, four thousand years ago. In these streets he met Anitus,

the king of the country, and brained him with his club, which was the

fashion among gentlemen in those days. The people of Tangier (called

Tingis then) lived in the rudest possible huts and dressed in skins and

carried clubs, and were as savage as the wild beasts they were constantly

obliged to war with. But they were a gentlemanly race and did no work.

They lived on the natural products of the land. Their king's country

residence was at the famous Garden of Hesperides, seventy miles down the

coast from here. The garden, with its golden apples (oranges), is gone

now--no vestige of it remains. Antiquarians concede that such a

personage as Hercules did exist in ancient times and agree that he was an

enterprising and energetic man, but decline to believe him a good,

bona-fide god, because that would be unconstitutional.

Down here at Cape Spartel is the celebrated cave of Hercules, where that

hero took refuge when he was vanquished and driven out of the Tangier

country. It is full of inscriptions in the dead languages, which fact

makes me think Hercules could not have traveled much, else he would not

have kept a journal.

Five days' journey from here--say two hundred miles--are the ruins of an

ancient city, of whose history there is neither record nor tradition.

And yet its arches, its columns, and its statues proclaim it to have been

built by an enlightened race.

The general size of a store in Tangier is about that of an ordinary

shower bath in a civilized land. The Muhammadan merchant, tinman,

shoemaker, or vendor of trifles sits cross-legged on the floor and

reaches after any article you may want to buy. You can rent a whole

block of these pigeonholes for fifty dollars a month. The market people

crowd the marketplace with their baskets of figs, dates, melons,

apricots, etc., and among them file trains of laden asses, not much

larger, if any, than a Newfoundland dog. The scene is lively, is

picturesque, and smells like a police court. The Jewish money-changers

have their dens close at hand, and all day long are counting bronze coins

and transferring them from one bushel basket to another. They don't coin

much money nowadays, I think. I saw none but what was dated four or five

hundred years back, and was badly worn and battered. These coins are not

very valuable. Jack went out to get a napoleon changed, so as to have

money suited to the general cheapness of things, and came back and said

he had "swamped the bank, had bought eleven quarts of coin, and the head

of the firm had gone on the street to negotiate for the balance of the

change." I bought nearly half a pint of their money for a shilling

myself. I am not proud on account of having so much money, though. I

care nothing for wealth.

The Moors have some small silver coins and also some silver slugs worth a

dollar each. The latter are exceedingly scarce--so much so that when

poor ragged Arabs see one they beg to be allowed to kiss it.

They have also a small gold coin worth two dollars. And that reminds me

of something. When Morocco is in a state of war, Arab couriers carry

letters through the country and charge a liberal postage. Every now and

then they fall into the hands of marauding bands and get robbed.

Therefore, warned by experience, as soon as they have collected two

dollars' worth of money they exchange it for one of those little gold

pieces, and when robbers come upon them, swallow it. The stratagem was

good while it was unsuspected, but after that the marauders simply gave

the sagacious United States mail an emetic and sat down to wait.

The Emperor of Morocco is a soulless despot, and the great officers under

him are despots on a smaller scale. There is no regular system of

taxation, but when the Emperor or the Bashaw want money, they levy on

some rich man, and he has to furnish the cash or go to prison.

Therefore, few men in Morocco dare to be rich. It is too dangerous a

luxury. Vanity occasionally leads a man to display wealth, but sooner or

later the Emperor trumps up a charge against him--any sort of one will

do--and confiscates his property. Of course, there are many rich men in

the empire, but their money is buried, and they dress in rags and

counterfeit poverty. Every now and then the Emperor imprisons a man who

is suspected of the crime of being rich, and makes things so

uncomfortable for him that he is forced to discover where he has hidden

his money.

Moors and Jews sometimes place themselves under the protection of the

foreign consuls, and then they can flout their riches in the Emperor's

face with impunity.

CHAPTER IX.

About the first adventure we had yesterday afternoon, after landing here,

came near finishing that heedless Blucher. We had just mounted some

mules and asses and started out under the guardianship of the stately,

the princely, the magnificent Hadji Muhammad Lamarty (may his tribe

increase!) when we came upon a fine Moorish mosque, with tall tower, rich

with checker-work of many-colored porcelain, and every part and portion

of the edifice adorned with the quaint architecture of the Alhambra, and

Blucher started to ride into the open doorway. A startling "Hi-hi!" from

our camp followers and a loud "Halt!" from an English gentleman in the

party checked the adventurer, and then we were informed that so dire a

profanation is it for a Christian dog to set foot upon the sacred

threshold of a Moorish mosque that no amount of purification can ever

make it fit for the faithful to pray in again. Had Blucher succeeded in

entering the place, he would no doubt have been chased through the town

and stoned; and the time has been, and not many years ago, either, when a

Christian would have been most ruthlessly slaughtered if captured in a

mosque. We caught a glimpse of the handsome tessellated pavements within

and of the devotees performing their ablutions at the fountains, but even

that we took that glimpse was a thing not relished by the Moorish

bystanders.

Some years ago the clock in the tower of the mosque got out of order.

The Moors of Tangier have so degenerated that it has been long since

there was an artificer among them capable of curing so delicate a patient

as a debilitated clock. The great men of the city met in solemn conclave

to consider how the difficulty was to be met. They discussed the matter

thoroughly but arrived at no solution. Finally, a patriarch arose and

said:

"Oh, children of the Prophet, it is known unto you that a Portuguee dog

of a Christian clock mender pollutes the city of Tangier with his

presence. Ye know, also, that when mosques are builded, asses bear the

stones and the cement, and cross the sacred threshold. Now, therefore,

send the Christian dog on all fours, and barefoot, into the holy place to

mend the clock, and let him go as an ass!"

And in that way it was done. Therefore, if Blucher ever sees the inside

of a mosque, he will have to cast aside his humanity and go in his

natural character. We visited the jail and found Moorish prisoners

making mats and baskets. (This thing of utilizing crime savors of

civilization.) Murder is punished with death. A short time ago three

murderers were taken beyond the city walls and shot. Moorish guns are

not good, and neither are Moorish marksmen. In this instance they set up

the poor criminals at long range, like so many targets, and practiced on

them--kept them hopping about and dodging bullets for half an hour before

they managed to drive the center.

When a man steals cattle, they cut off his right hand and left leg and

nail them up in the marketplace as a warning to everybody. Their surgery

is not artistic. They slice around the bone a little, then break off the

limb. Sometimes the patient gets well; but, as a general thing, he

don't. However, the Moorish heart is stout. The Moors were always

brave. These criminals undergo the fearful operation without a wince,

without a tremor of any kind, without a groan! No amount of suffering

can bring down the pride of a Moor or make him shame his dignity with a

cry.

Here, marriage is contracted by the parents of the parties to it. There

are no valentines, no stolen interviews, no riding out, no courting in

dim parlors, no lovers' quarrels and reconciliations--no nothing that is

proper to approaching matrimony. The young man takes the girl his father

selects for him, marries her, and after that she is unveiled, and he sees

her for the first time. If after due acquaintance she suits him, he

retains her; but if he suspects her purity, he bundles her back to her

father; if he finds her diseased, the same; or if, after just and

reasonable time is allowed her, she neglects to bear children, back she

goes to the home of her childhood.

Muhammadans here who can afford it keep a good many wives on hand. They

are called wives, though I believe the Koran only allows four genuine

wives--the rest are concubines. The Emperor of Morocco don't know how

many wives he has, but thinks he has five hundred. However, that is near

enough--a dozen or so, one way or the other, don't matter.

Even the Jews in the interior have a plurality of wives.

I have caught a glimpse of the faces of several Moorish women (for they

are only human, and will expose their faces for the admiration of a

Christian dog when no male Moor is by), and I am full of veneration for

the wisdom that leads them to cover up such atrocious ugliness.

They carry their children at their backs, in a sack, like other savages

the world over.

Many of the Negroes are held in slavery by the Moors. But the moment a

female slave becomes her master's concubine her bonds are broken, and as

soon as a male slave can read the first chapter of the Koran (which

contains the creed) he can no longer be held in bondage.

They have three Sundays a week in Tangier. The Muhammadans' comes on

Friday, the Jews' on Saturday, and that of the Christian Consuls on

Sunday. The Jews are the most radical. The Moor goes to his mosque

about noon on his Sabbath, as on any other day, removes his shoes at the

door, performs his ablutions, makes his salaams, pressing his forehead to

the pavement time and again, says his prayers, and goes back to his work.

But the Jew shuts up shop; will not touch copper or bronze money at all;

soils his fingers with nothing meaner than silver and gold; attends the

synagogue devoutly; will not cook or have anything to do with fire; and

religiously refrains from embarking in any enterprise.

The Moor who has made a pilgrimage to Mecca is entitled to high

distinction. Men call him Hadji, and he is thenceforward a great

personage. Hundreds of Moors come to Tangier every year and embark for

Mecca. They go part of the way in English steamers, and the ten or

twelve dollars they pay for passage is about all the trip costs. They

take with them a quantity of food, and when the commissary department

fails they "skirmish," as Jack terms it in his sinful, slangy way. From

the time they leave till they get home again, they never wash, either on

land or sea. They are usually gone from five to seven months, and as

they do not change their clothes during all that time, they are totally

unfit for the drawing room when they get back.

Many of them have to rake and scrape a long time to gather together the

ten dollars their steamer passage costs, and when one of them gets back

he is a bankrupt forever after. Few Moors can ever build up their

fortunes again in one short lifetime after so reckless an outlay. In

order to confine the dignity of Hadji to gentlemen of patrician blood and

possessions, the Emperor decreed that no man should make the pilgrimage

save bloated aristocrats who were worth a hundred dollars in specie. But

behold how iniquity can circumvent the law! For a consideration, the

Jewish money-changer lends the pilgrim one hundred dollars long enough

for him to swear himself through, and then receives it back before the

ship sails out of the harbor!

Spain is the only nation the Moors fear. The reason is that Spain sends

her heaviest ships of war and her loudest guns to astonish these Muslims,

while America and other nations send only a little contemptible tub of a

gunboat occasionally. The Moors, like other savages, learn by what they

see, not what they hear or read. We have great fleets in the

Mediterranean, but they seldom touch at African ports. The Moors have a

small opinion of England, France, and America, and put their

representatives to a deal of red-tape circumlocution before they grant

them their common rights, let alone a favor. But the moment the Spanish

minister makes a demand, it is acceded to at once, whether it be just or

not.

Spain chastised the Moors five or six years ago, about a disputed piece

of property opposite Gibraltar, and captured the city of Tetouan. She

compromised on an augmentation of her territory, twenty million dollars'

indemnity in money, and peace. And then she gave up the city. But she

never gave it up until the Spanish soldiers had eaten up all the cats.

They would not compromise as long as the cats held out. Spaniards are

very fond of cats. On the contrary, the Moors reverence cats as

something sacred. So the Spaniards touched them on a tender point that

time. Their unfeline conduct in eating up all the Tetouan cats aroused a

hatred toward them in the breasts of the Moors, to which even the driving

them out of Spain was tame and passionless. Moors and Spaniards are foes

forever now. France had a minister here once who embittered the nation

against him in the most innocent way. He killed a couple of battalions

of cats (Tangier is full of them) and made a parlor carpet out of their

hides. He made his carpet in circles--first a circle of old gray

tomcats, with their tails all pointing toward the center; then a circle

of yellow cats; next a circle of black cats and a circle of white ones;

then a circle of all sorts of cats; and, finally, a centerpiece of

assorted kittens. It was very beautiful, but the Moors curse his memory

to this day.

When we went to call on our American Consul General today I noticed that

all possible games for parlor amusement seemed to be represented on his

center tables. I thought that hinted at lonesomeness. The idea was

correct. His is the only American family in Tangier. There are many

foreign consuls in this place, but much visiting is not indulged in.

Tangier is clear out of the world, and what is the use of visiting when

people have nothing on earth to talk about? There is none. So each

consul's family stays at home chiefly and amuses itself as best it can.

Tangier is full of interest for one day, but after that it is a weary

prison. The Consul General has been here five years, and has got enough

of it to do him for a century, and is going home shortly. His family

seize upon their letters and papers when the mail arrives, read them over

and over again for two days or three, talk them over and over again for

two or three more till they wear them out, and after that for days

together they eat and drink and sleep, and ride out over the same old

road, and see the same old tiresome things that even decades of centuries

have scarcely changed, and say never a single word! They have literally

nothing whatever to talk about. The arrival of an American man-of-war is

a godsend to them. "O Solitude, where are the charms which sages have

seen in thy face?" It is the completest exile that I can conceive of.

I would seriously recommend to the government of the United States that

when a man commits a crime so heinous that the law provides no adequate

punishment for it, they make him Consul General to Tangier.

I am glad to have seen Tangier--the second-oldest town in the world. But

I am ready to bid it good-bye, I believe.

We shall go hence to Gibraltar this evening or in the morning, and

doubtless the Quaker City will sail from that port within the next

forty-eight hours.

CHAPTER X.

We passed the Fourth of July on board the Quaker City, in mid-ocean. It

was in all respects a characteristic Mediterranean day--faultlessly

beautiful. A cloudless sky; a refreshing summer wind; a radiant sunshine

that glinted cheerily from dancing wavelets instead of crested mountains

of water; a sea beneath us that was so wonderfully blue, so richly,

brilliantly blue, that it overcame the dullest sensibilities with the

spell of its fascination.

They even have fine sunsets on the Mediterranean--a thing that is

certainly rare in most quarters of the globe. The evening we sailed away

from Gibraltar, that hard-featured rock was swimming in a creamy mist so

rich, so soft, so enchantingly vague and dreamy, that even the Oracle,

that serene, that inspired, that overpowering humbug, scorned the dinner

gong and tarried to worship!

He said: "Well, that's gorgis, ain't it! They don't have none of them

things in our parts, do they? I consider that them effects is on account

of the superior refragability, as you may say, of the sun's diramic

combination with the lymphatic forces of the perihelion of Jubiter. What

should you think?"

"Oh, go to bed!" Dan said that, and went away.

"Oh, yes, it's all very well to say go to bed when a man makes an

argument which another man can't answer. Dan don't never stand any

chance in an argument with me. And he knows it, too. What should you

say, Jack?"

"Now, Doctor, don't you come bothering around me with that dictionary

bosh. I don't do you any harm, do I? Then you let me alone."

"He's gone, too. Well, them fellows have all tackled the old Oracle, as

they say, but the old man's most too many for 'em. Maybe the Poet Lariat

ain't satisfied with them deductions?"

The poet replied with a barbarous rhyme and went below.

"'Pears that he can't qualify, neither. Well, I didn't expect nothing

out of him. I never see one of them poets yet that knowed anything.

He'll go down now and grind out about four reams of the awfullest slush

about that old rock and give it to a consul, or a pilot, or a nigger, or

anybody he comes across first which he can impose on. Pity but

somebody'd take that poor old lunatic and dig all that poetry rubbage out

of him. Why can't a man put his intellect onto things that's some value?

Gibbons, and Hippocratus, and Sarcophagus, and all them old ancient

philosophers was down on poets--"

"Doctor," I said, "you are going to invent authorities now and I'll leave

you, too. I always enjoy your conversation, notwithstanding the

luxuriance of your syllables, when the philosophy you offer rests on your

own responsibility; but when you begin to soar--when you begin to support

it with the evidence of authorities who are the creations of your own

fancy--I lose confidence."

That was the way to flatter the doctor. He considered it a sort of

acknowledgment on my part of a fear to argue with him. He was always

persecuting the passengers with abstruse propositions framed in language

that no man could understand, and they endured the exquisite torture a

minute or two and then abandoned the field. A triumph like this, over

half a dozen antagonists was sufficient for one day; from that time

forward he would patrol the decks beaming blandly upon all comers, and so

tranquilly, blissfully happy!

But I digress. The thunder of our two brave cannon announced the Fourth

of July, at daylight, to all who were awake. But many of us got our

information at a later hour, from the almanac. All the flags were sent

aloft except half a dozen that were needed to decorate portions of the

ship below, and in a short time the vessel assumed a holiday appearance.

During the morning, meetings were held and all manner of committees set

to work on the celebration ceremonies. In the afternoon the ship's

company assembled aft, on deck, under the awnings; the flute, the

asthmatic melodeon, and the consumptive clarinet crippled "The

Star-Spangled Banner," the choir chased it to cover, and George came in

with a peculiarly lacerating screech on the final note and slaughtered

it. Nobody mourned.

We carried out the corpse on three cheers (that joke was not intentional

and I do not endorse it), and then the President, throned behind a cable

locker with a national flag spread over it, announced the "Reader," who

rose up and read that same old Declaration of Independence which we have

all listened to so often without paying any attention to what it said;

and after that the President piped the Orator of the Day to quarters and

he made that same old speech about our national greatness which we so

religiously believe and so fervently applaud. Now came the choir into

court again, with the complaining instruments, and assaulted "Hail

Columbia"; and when victory hung wavering in the scale, George returned

with his dreadful wild-goose stop turned on and the choir won, of course.

A minister pronounced the benediction, and the patriotic little gathering

disbanded. The Fourth of July was safe, as far as the Mediterranean was

concerned.

At dinner in the evening, a well-written original poem was recited with

spirit by one of the ship's captains, and thirteen regular toasts were

washed down with several baskets of champagne. The speeches were bad

--execrable almost without exception. In fact, without any exception but

one. Captain Duncan made a good speech; he made the only good speech of

the evening. He said:

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:--May we all live to a green old age and be

prosperous and happy. Steward, bring up another basket of champagne."

It was regarded as a very able effort.

The festivities, so to speak, closed with another of those miraculous

balls on the promenade deck. We were not used to dancing on an even

keel, though, and it was only a questionable success. But take it all

together, it was a bright, cheerful, pleasant Fourth.

Toward nightfall the next evening, we steamed into the great artificial

harbor of this noble city of Marseilles, and saw the dying sunlight gild

its clustering spires and ramparts, and flood its leagues of environing

verdure with a mellow radiance that touched with an added charm the white

villas that flecked the landscape far and near. [Copyright secured

according to law.]

There were no stages out, and we could not get on the pier from the ship.

It was annoying. We were full of enthusiasm--we wanted to see France!

Just at nightfall our party of three contracted with a waterman for the

privilege of using his boat as a bridge--its stern was at our companion

ladder and its bow touched the pier. We got in and the fellow backed out

into the harbor. I told him in French that all we wanted was to walk

over his thwarts and step ashore, and asked him what he went away out

there for. He said he could not understand me. I repeated. Still he

could not understand. He appeared to be very ignorant of French. The

doctor tried him, but he could not understand the doctor. I asked this

boatman to explain his conduct, which he did; and then I couldn't

understand him. Dan said:

"Oh, go to the pier, you old fool--that's where we want to go!"

We reasoned calmly with Dan that it was useless to speak to this

foreigner in English--that he had better let us conduct this business in

the French language and not let the stranger see how uncultivated he was.

"Well, go on, go on," he said, "don't mind me. I don't wish to

interfere. Only, if you go on telling him in your kind of French, he

never will find out where we want to go to. That is what I think about

it."

We rebuked him severely for this remark and said we never knew an

ignorant person yet but was prejudiced. The Frenchman spoke again, and

the doctor said:

"There now, Dan, he says he is going to allez to the douain. Means he is

going to the hotel. Oh, certainly--we don't know the French language."

This was a crusher, as Jack would say. It silenced further criticism

from the disaffected member. We coasted past the sharp bows of a navy of

great steamships and stopped at last at a government building on a stone

pier. It was easy to remember then that the douain was the customhouse

and not the hotel. We did not mention it, however. With winning French

politeness the officers merely opened and closed our satchels, declined

to examine our passports, and sent us on our way. We stopped at the

first cafe we came to and entered. An old woman seated us at a table and

waited for orders. The doctor said:

"Avez-vous du vin?"

The dame looked perplexed. The doctor said again, with elaborate

distinctness of articulation:

"Avez-vous du--vin!"

The dame looked more perplexed than before. I said:

"Doctor, there is a flaw in your pronunciation somewhere. Let me try

her. Madame, avez-vous du vin?--It isn't any use, Doctor--take the

witness."

"Madame, avez-vous du vin--du fromage--pain--pickled pigs' feet--beurre

--des oeufs--du boeuf--horseradish, sauerkraut, hog and hominy--anything,

anything in the world that can stay a Christian stomach!"

She said:

"Bless you, why didn't you speak English before? I don't know anything

about your plagued French!"

The humiliating taunts of the disaffected member spoiled the supper, and

we dispatched it in angry silence and got away as soon as we could. Here

we were in beautiful France--in a vast stone house of quaint

architecture--surrounded by all manner of curiously worded French signs

--stared at by strangely habited, bearded French people--everything

gradually and surely forcing upon us the coveted consciousness that at

last, and beyond all question, we were in beautiful France and absorbing

its nature to the forgetfulness of everything else, and coming to feel

the happy romance of the thing in all its enchanting delightfulness--and

to think of this skinny veteran intruding with her vile English, at such

a moment, to blow the fair vision to the winds! It was exasperating.

We set out to find the centre of the city, inquiring the direction every

now and then. We never did succeed in making anybody understand just

exactly what we wanted, and neither did we ever succeed in comprehending

just exactly what they said in reply, but then they always pointed--they

always did that--and we bowed politely and said, "Merci, monsieur," and

so it was a blighting triumph over the disaffected member anyway. He was

restive under these victories and often asked:

"What did that pirate say?"

"Why, he told us which way to go to find the Grand Casino."

"Yes, but what did he say?"

"Oh, it don't matter what he said--we understood him. These are educated

people--not like that absurd boatman."

"Well, I wish they were educated enough to tell a man a direction that

goes some where--for we've been going around in a circle for an hour.

I've passed this same old drugstore seven times."

We said it was a low, disreputable falsehood (but we knew it was not).

It was plain that it would not do to pass that drugstore again, though

--we might go on asking directions, but we must cease from following

finger-pointings if we hoped to check the suspicions of the disaffected

member.

A long walk through smooth, asphaltum-paved streets bordered by blocks of

vast new mercantile houses of cream-colored stone every house and every

block precisely like all the other houses and all the other blocks for a

mile, and all brilliantly lighted--brought us at last to the principal

thoroughfare. On every hand were bright colors, flashing constellations

of gas burners, gaily dressed men and women thronging the sidewalks

--hurry, life, activity, cheerfulness, conversation, and laughter

everywhere! We found the Grand Hotel du Louvre et de la Paix, and wrote

down who we were, where we were born, what our occupations were, the

place we came from last, whether we were married or single, how we liked

it, how old we were, where we were bound for and when we expected to get

there, and a great deal of information of similar importance--all for the

benefit of the landlord and the secret police. We hired a guide and

began the business of sightseeing immediately. That first night on

French soil was a stirring one. I cannot think of half the places we

went to or what we particularly saw; we had no disposition to examine

carefully into anything at all--we only wanted to glance and go--to move,

keep moving! The spirit of the country was upon us. We sat down,

finally, at a late hour, in the great Casino, and called for unstinted

champagne. It is so easy to be bloated aristocrats where it costs

nothing of consequence! There were about five hundred people in that

dazzling place, I suppose, though the walls being papered entirely with

mirrors, so to speak, one could not really tell but that there were a

hundred thousand. Young, daintily dressed exquisites and young,

stylishly dressed women, and also old gentlemen and old ladies, sat in

couples and groups about innumerable marble-topped tables and ate fancy

suppers, drank wine, and kept up a chattering din of conversation that

was dazing to the senses. There was a stage at the far end and a large

orchestra; and every now and then actors and actresses in preposterous

comic dresses came out and sang the most extravagantly funny songs, to

judge by their absurd actions; but that audience merely suspended its

chatter, stared cynically, and never once smiled, never once applauded!

I had always thought that Frenchmen were ready to laugh at any thing.

CHAPTER XI.

We are getting foreignized rapidly and with facility. We are getting

reconciled to halls and bedchambers with unhomelike stone floors and no

carpets--floors that ring to the tread of one's heels with a sharpness

that is death to sentimental musing. We are getting used to tidy,

noiseless waiters, who glide hither and thither, and hover about your

back and your elbows like butterflies, quick to comprehend orders, quick

to fill them; thankful for a gratuity without regard to the amount; and

always polite--never otherwise than polite. That is the strangest

curiosity yet--a really polite hotel waiter who isn't an idiot. We are

getting used to driving right into the central court of the hotel, in the

midst of a fragrant circle of vines and flowers, and in the midst also of

parties of gentlemen sitting quietly reading the paper and smoking. We

are getting used to ice frozen by artificial process in ordinary bottles

--the only kind of ice they have here. We are getting used to all these

things, but we are not getting used to carrying our own soap. We are

sufficiently civilized to carry our own combs and toothbrushes, but this

thing of having to ring for soap every time we wash is new to us and not

pleasant at all. We think of it just after we get our heads and faces

thoroughly wet or just when we think we have been in the bathtub long

enough, and then, of course, an annoying delay follows. These

Marseillaises make Marseillaise hymns and Marseilles vests and Marseilles

soap for all the world, but they never sing their hymns or wear their

vests or wash with their soap themselves.

We have learned to go through the lingering routine of the table d'hote

with patience, with serenity, with satisfaction. We take soup, then wait

a few minutes for the fish; a few minutes more and the plates are

changed, and the roast beef comes; another change and we take peas;

change again and take lentils; change and take snail patties (I prefer

grasshoppers); change and take roast chicken and salad; then strawberry

pie and ice cream; then green figs, pears, oranges, green almonds, etc.;

finally coffee. Wine with every course, of course, being in France.

With such a cargo on board, digestion is a slow process, and we must sit

long in the cool chambers and smoke--and read French newspapers, which

have a strange fashion of telling a perfectly straight story till you get

to the "nub" of it, and then a word drops in that no man can translate,

and that story is ruined. An embankment fell on some Frenchmen

yesterday, and the papers are full of it today--but whether those

sufferers were killed, or crippled, or bruised, or only scared is more

than I can possibly make out, and yet I would just give anything to know.

We were troubled a little at dinner today by the conduct of an American,

who talked very loudly and coarsely and laughed boisterously where all

others were so quiet and well behaved. He ordered wine with a royal

flourish and said:

"I never dine without wine, sir" (which was a pitiful falsehood), and

looked around upon the company to bask in the admiration he expected to

find in their faces. All these airs in a land where they would as soon

expect to leave the soup out of the bill of fare as the wine!--in a land

where wine is nearly as common among all ranks as water! This fellow

said: "I am a free-born sovereign, sir, an American, sir, and I want

everybody to know it!" He did not mention that he was a lineal

descendant of Balaam's ass, but everybody knew that without his telling

it.

We have driven in the Prado--that superb avenue bordered with patrician

mansions and noble shade trees--and have visited the chateau Boarely and

its curious museum. They showed us a miniature cemetery there--a copy of

the first graveyard that was ever in Marseilles, no doubt. The delicate

little skeletons were lying in broken vaults and had their household gods

and kitchen utensils with them. The original of this cemetery was dug up

in the principal street of the city a few years ago. It had remained

there, only twelve feet underground, for a matter of twenty-five hundred

years or thereabouts. Romulus was here before he built Rome, and thought

something of founding a city on this spot, but gave up the idea. He may

have been personally acquainted with some of these Phoenicians whose

skeletons we have been examining.

In the great Zoological Gardens we found specimens of all the animals the

world produces, I think, including a dromedary, a monkey ornamented with

tufts of brilliant blue and carmine hair--a very gorgeous monkey he was

--a hippopotamus from the Nile, and a sort of tall, long-legged bird with a

beak like a powder horn and close-fitting wings like the tails of a dress

coat. This fellow stood up with his eyes shut and his shoulders stooped

forward a little, and looked as if he had his hands under his coat

tails. Such tranquil stupidity, such supernatural gravity, such

self-righteousness, and such ineffable self-complacency as were in the

countenance and attitude of that gray-bodied, dark-winged, bald-headed,

and preposterously uncomely bird! He was so ungainly, so pimply about

the head, so scaly about the legs, yet so serene, so unspeakably

satisfied! He was the most comical-looking creature that can be

imagined. It was good to hear Dan and the doctor laugh--such natural and

such enjoyable laughter had not been heard among our excursionists since

our ship sailed away from America. This bird was a godsend to us, and I

should be an ingrate if I forgot to make honorable mention of him in

these pages. Ours was a pleasure excursion; therefore we stayed with

that bird an hour and made the most of him. We stirred him up

occasionally, but he only unclosed an eye and slowly closed it again,

abating no jot of his stately piety of demeanor or his tremendous

seriousness. He only seemed to say, "Defile not Heaven's anointed with

unsanctified hands." We did not know his name, and so we called him "The

Pilgrim." Dan said:

"All he wants now is a Plymouth Collection."

The boon companion of the colossal elephant was a common cat! This cat

had a fashion of climbing up the elephant's hind legs and roosting on his

back. She would sit up there, with her paws curved under her breast, and

sleep in the sun half the afternoon. It used to annoy the elephant at

first, and he would reach up and take her down, but she would go aft and

climb up again. She persisted until she finally conquered the elephant's

prejudices, and now they are inseparable friends. The cat plays about

her comrade's forefeet or his trunk often, until dogs approach, and then

she goes aloft out of danger. The elephant has annihilated several dogs

lately that pressed his companion too closely.

We hired a sailboat and a guide and made an excursion to one of the small

islands in the harbor to visit the Castle d'If. This ancient fortress

has a melancholy history. It has been used as a prison for political

offenders for two or three hundred years, and its dungeon walls are

scarred with the rudely carved names of many and many a captive who

fretted his life away here and left no record of himself but these sad

epitaphs wrought with his own hands. How thick the names were! And

their long-departed owners seemed to throng the gloomy cells and

corridors with their phantom shapes. We loitered through dungeon after

dungeon, away down into the living rock below the level of the sea, it

seemed. Names everywhere!--some plebeian, some noble, some even

princely. Plebeian, prince, and noble had one solicitude in common--they

would not be forgotten! They could suffer solitude, inactivity, and the

horrors of a silence that no sound ever disturbed, but they could not

bear the thought of being utterly forgotten by the world. Hence the

carved names. In one cell, where a little light penetrated, a man had

lived twenty-seven years without seeing the face of a human being--lived

in filth and wretchedness, with no companionship but his own thoughts,

and they were sorrowful enough and hopeless enough, no doubt. Whatever

his jailers considered that he needed was conveyed to his cell by night

through a wicket.

This man carved the walls of his prison house from floor to roof with all

manner of figures of men and animals grouped in intricate designs. He

had toiled there year after year, at his self-appointed task, while

infants grew to boyhood--to vigorous youth--idled through school and

college--acquired a profession--claimed man's mature estate--married and

looked back to infancy as to a thing of some vague, ancient time, almost.

But who shall tell how many ages it seemed to this prisoner? With the

one, time flew sometimes; with the other, never--it crawled always. To

the one, nights spent in dancing had seemed made of minutes instead of

hours; to the other, those selfsame nights had been like all other nights

of dungeon life and seemed made of slow, dragging weeks instead of hours

and minutes.

One prisoner of fifteen years had scratched verses upon his walls, and

brief prose sentences--brief, but full of pathos. These spoke not of

himself and his hard estate, but only of the shrine where his spirit fled

the prison to worship--of home and the idols that were templed there.

He never lived to see them.

The walls of these dungeons are as thick as some bed-chambers at home are

wide--fifteen feet. We saw the damp, dismal cells in which two of Dumas'

heroes passed their confinement--heroes of "Monte Cristo." It was here

that the brave Abbe wrote a book with his own blood, with a pen made of a

piece of iron hoop, and by the light of a lamp made out of shreds of

cloth soaked in grease obtained from his food; and then dug through the

thick wall with some trifling instrument which he wrought himself out of

a stray piece of iron or table cutlery and freed Dantes from his chains.

It was a pity that so many weeks of dreary labor should have come to

naught at last.

They showed us the noisome cell where the celebrated "Iron Mask"--that

ill-starred brother of a hardhearted king of France--was confined for a

season before he was sent to hide the strange mystery of his life from

the curious in the dungeons of Ste. Marguerite. The place had a far

greater interest for us than it could have had if we had known beyond all

question who the Iron Mask was, and what his history had been, and why

this most unusual punishment had been meted out to him. Mystery! That

was the charm. That speechless tongue, those prisoned features, that

heart so freighted with unspoken troubles, and that breast so oppressed

with its piteous secret had been here. These dank walls had known the

man whose dolorous story is a sealed book forever! There was fascination

in the spot.

CHAPTER XII.

We have come five hundred miles by rail through the heart of France.

What a bewitching land it is! What a garden! Surely the leagues of

bright green lawns are swept and brushed and watered every day and their

grasses trimmed by the barber. Surely the hedges are shaped and measured

and their symmetry preserved by the most architectural of gardeners.

Surely the long straight rows of stately poplars that divide the

beautiful landscape like the squares of a checker-board are set with line

and plummet, and their uniform height determined with a spirit level.

Surely the straight, smooth, pure white turnpikes are jack-planed and

sandpapered every day. How else are these marvels of symmetry,

cleanliness, and order attained? It is wonderful. There are no

unsightly stone walls and never a fence of any kind. There is no dirt,

no decay, no rubbish anywhere--nothing that even hints at untidiness

--nothing that ever suggests neglect. All is orderly and beautiful--every

thing is charming to the eye.

We had such glimpses of the Rhone gliding along between its grassy banks;

of cosy cottages buried in flowers and shrubbery; of quaint old red-tiled

villages with mossy medieval cathedrals looming out of their midst; of

wooded hills with ivy-grown towers and turrets of feudal castles

projecting above the foliage; such glimpses of Paradise, it seemed to us,

such visions of fabled fairyland!

We knew then what the poet meant when he sang of: "--thy cornfields

green, and sunny vines, O pleasant land of France!"

And it is a pleasant land. No word describes it so felicitously as that

one. They say there is no word for "home" in the French language. Well,

considering that they have the article itself in such an attractive

aspect, they ought to manage to get along without the word. Let us not

waste too much pity on "homeless" France. I have observed that Frenchmen

abroad seldom wholly give up the idea of going back to France some time

or other. I am not surprised at it now.

We are not infatuated with these French railway cars, though. We took

first-class passage, not because we wished to attract attention by doing

a thing which is uncommon in Europe but because we could make our journey

quicker by so doing. It is hard to make railroading pleasant in any

country. It is too tedious. Stagecoaching is infinitely more

delightful. Once I crossed the plains and deserts and mountains of the

West in a stagecoach, from the Missouri line to California, and since

then all my pleasure trips must be measured to that rare holiday frolic.

Two thousand miles of ceaseless rush and rattle and clatter, by night and

by day, and never a weary moment, never a lapse of interest! The first

seven hundred miles a level continent, its grassy carpet greener and

softer and smoother than any sea and figured with designs fitted to its

magnitude--the shadows of the clouds. Here were no scenes but summer

scenes, and no disposition inspired by them but to lie at full length on

the mail sacks in the grateful breeze and dreamily smoke the pipe of

peace--what other, where all was repose and contentment? In cool

mornings, before the sun was fairly up, it was worth a lifetime of city

toiling and moiling to perch in the foretop with the driver and see the

six mustangs scamper under the sharp snapping of the whip that never

touched them; to scan the blue distances of a world that knew no lords

but us; to cleave the wind with uncovered head and feel the sluggish

pulses rousing to the spirit of a speed that pretended to the resistless

rush of a typhoon! Then thirteen hundred miles of desert solitudes; of

limitless panoramas of bewildering perspective; of mimic cities, of

pinnacled cathedrals, of massive fortresses, counterfeited in the eternal

rocks and splendid with the crimson and gold of the setting sun; of dizzy

altitudes among fog-wreathed peaks and never-melting snows, where

thunders and lightnings and tempests warred magnificently at our feet and

the storm clouds above swung their shredded banners in our very faces!

But I forgot. I am in elegant France now, and not scurrying through the

great South Pass and the Wind River Mountains, among antelopes and

buffaloes and painted Indians on the warpath. It is not meet that I

should make too disparaging comparisons between humdrum travel on a

railway and that royal summer flight across a continent in a stagecoach.

I meant in the beginning to say that railway journeying is tedious and

tiresome, and so it is--though at the time I was thinking particularly of

a dismal fifty-hour pilgrimage between New York and St. Louis. Of course

our trip through France was not really tedious because all its scenes and

experiences were new and strange; but as Dan says, it had its

"discrepancies."

The cars are built in compartments that hold eight persons each. Each

compartment is partially subdivided, and so there are two tolerably

distinct parties of four in it. Four face the other four. The seats and

backs are thickly padded and cushioned and are very comfortable; you can

smoke if you wish; there are no bothersome peddlers; you are saved the

infliction of a multitude of disagreeable fellow passengers. So far, so

well. But then the conductor locks you in when the train starts; there

is no water to drink in the car; there is no heating apparatus for night

travel; if a drunken rowdy should get in, you could not remove a matter

of twenty seats from him or enter another car; but above all, if you are

worn out and must sleep, you must sit up and do it in naps, with cramped

legs and in a torturing misery that leaves you withered and lifeless the

next day--for behold they have not that culmination of all charity and

human kindness, a sleeping car, in all France. I prefer the American

system. It has not so many grievous "discrepancies."

In France, all is clockwork, all is order. They make no mistakes. Every

third man wears a uniform, and whether he be a marshal of the empire or a

brakeman, he is ready and perfectly willing to answer all your questions

with tireless politeness, ready to tell you which car to take, yea, and

ready to go and put you into it to make sure that you shall not go

astray. You cannot pass into the waiting room of the depot till you have

secured your ticket, and you cannot pass from its only exit till the

train is at its threshold to receive you. Once on board, the train will

not start till your ticket has been examined--till every passenger's

ticket has been inspected. This is chiefly for your own good. If by any

possibility you have managed to take the wrong train, you will be handed

over to a polite official who will take you whither you belong and bestow

you with many an affable bow. Your ticket will be inspected every now

and then along the route, and when it is time to change cars you will

know it. You are in the hands of officials who zealously study your

welfare and your interest, instead of turning their talents to the

invention of new methods of discommoding and snubbing you, as is very

often the main employment of that exceedingly self-satisfied monarch, the

railroad conductor of America.

But the happiest regulation in French railway government is--thirty

minutes to dinner! No five-minute boltings of flabby rolls, muddy

coffee, questionable eggs, gutta-percha beef, and pies whose conception

and execution are a dark and bloody mystery to all save the cook that

created them! No, we sat calmly down--it was in old Dijon, which is so

easy to spell and so impossible to pronounce except when you civilize it

and call it Demijohn--and poured out rich Burgundian wines and munched

calmly through a long table d'hote bill of fare, snail patties, delicious

fruits and all, then paid the trifle it cost and stepped happily aboard

the train again, without once cursing the railroad company. A rare

experience and one to be treasured forever.

They say they do not have accidents on these French roads, and I think it

must be true. If I remember rightly, we passed high above wagon roads or

through tunnels under them, but never crossed them on their own level.

About every quarter of a mile, it seemed to me, a man came out and held

up a club till the train went by, to signify that everything was safe

ahead. Switches were changed a mile in advance by pulling a wire rope

that passed along the ground by the rail, from station to station.

Signals for the day and signals for the night gave constant and timely

notice of the position of switches.

No, they have no railroad accidents to speak of in France. But why?

Because when one occurs, somebody has to hang for it! Not hang, maybe,

but be punished at least with such vigor of emphasis as to make

negligence a thing to be shuddered at by railroad officials for many a

day thereafter. "No blame attached to the officers"--that lying and

disaster-breeding verdict so common to our softhearted juries is seldom

rendered in France. If the trouble occurred in the conductor's

department, that officer must suffer if his subordinate cannot be proven

guilty; if in the engineer's department and the case be similar, the

engineer must answer.

The Old Travelers--those delightful parrots who have "been here before"

and know more about the country than Louis Napoleon knows now or ever

will know--tell us these things, and we believe them because they are

pleasant things to believe and because they are plausible and savor of

the rigid subjection to law and order which we behold about us

everywhere.

But we love the Old Travelers. We love to hear them prate and drivel and

lie. We can tell them the moment we see them. They always throw out a

few feelers; they never cast themselves adrift till they have sounded

every individual and know that he has not traveled. Then they open their

throttle valves, and how they do brag, and sneer, and swell, and soar,

and blaspheme the sacred name of Truth! Their central idea, their grand

aim, is to subjugate you, keep you down, make you feel insignificant and

humble in the blaze of their cosmopolitan glory! They will not let you

know anything. They sneer at your most inoffensive suggestions; they

laugh unfeelingly at your treasured dreams of foreign lands; they brand

the statements of your traveled aunts and uncles as the stupidest

absurdities; they deride your most trusted authors and demolish the fair

images they have set up for your willing worship with the pitiless

ferocity of the fanatic iconoclast! But still I love the Old Travelers.

I love them for their witless platitudes, for their supernatural ability

to bore, for their delightful asinine vanity, for their luxuriant

fertility of imagination, for their startling, their brilliant, their

overwhelming mendacity!

By Lyons and the Saone (where we saw the lady of Lyons and thought little

of her comeliness), by Villa Franca, Tonnere, venerable Sens, Melun,

Fontainebleau, and scores of other beautiful cities, we swept, always

noting the absence of hog-wallows, broken fences, cow lots, unpainted

houses, and mud, and always noting, as well, the presence of cleanliness,

grace, taste in adorning and beautifying, even to the disposition of a

tree or the turning of a hedge, the marvel of roads in perfect repair,

void of ruts and guiltless of even an inequality of surface--we bowled

along, hour after hour, that brilliant summer day, and as nightfall

approached we entered a wilderness of odorous flowers and shrubbery, sped

through it, and then, excited, delighted, and half persuaded that we were

only the sport of a beautiful dream, lo, we stood in magnificent Paris!

What excellent order they kept about that vast depot! There was no

frantic crowding and jostling, no shouting and swearing, and no

swaggering intrusion of services by rowdy hackmen. These latter gentry

stood outside--stood quietly by their long line of vehicles and said

never a word. A kind of hackman general seemed to have the whole matter

of transportation in his hands. He politely received the passengers and

ushered them to the kind of conveyance they wanted, and told the driver

where to deliver them. There was no "talking back," no dissatisfaction

about overcharging, no grumbling about anything. In a little while we

were speeding through the streets of Paris and delightfully recognizing

certain names and places with which books had long ago made us familiar.

It was like meeting an old friend when we read Rue de Rivoli on the

street corner; we knew the genuine vast palace of the Louvre as well as

we knew its picture; when we passed by the Column of July we needed no

one to tell us what it was or to remind us that on its site once stood

the grim Bastille, that grave of human hopes and happiness, that dismal

prison house within whose dungeons so many young faces put on the

wrinkles of age, so many proud spirits grew humble, so many brave hearts

broke.

We secured rooms at the hotel, or rather, we had three beds put into one

room, so that we might be together, and then we went out to a restaurant,

just after lamplighting, and ate a comfortable, satisfactory, lingering

dinner. It was a pleasure to eat where everything was so tidy, the food

so well cooked, the waiters so polite, and the coming and departing

company so moustached, so frisky, so affable, so fearfully and

wonderfully Frenchy! All the surroundings were gay and enlivening. Two

hundred people sat at little tables on the sidewalk, sipping wine and

coffee; the streets were thronged with light vehicles and with joyous

pleasure-seekers; there was music in the air, life and action all about

us, and a conflagration of gaslight everywhere!

After dinner we felt like seeing such Parisian specialties as we might

see without distressing exertion, and so we sauntered through the

brilliant streets and looked at the dainty trifles in variety stores and

jewelry shops. Occasionally, merely for the pleasure of being cruel, we

put unoffending Frenchmen on the rack with questions framed in the

incomprehensible jargon of their native language, and while they writhed

we impaled them, we peppered them, we scarified them, with their own vile

verbs and participles.

We noticed that in the jewelry stores they had some of the articles

marked "gold" and some labeled "imitation." We wondered at this

extravagance of honesty and inquired into the matter. We were informed

that inasmuch as most people are not able to tell false gold from the

genuine article, the government compels jewelers to have their gold work

assayed and stamped officially according to its fineness and their

imitation work duly labeled with the sign of its falsity. They told us

the jewelers would not dare to violate this law, and that whatever a

stranger bought in one of their stores might be depended upon as being

strictly what it was represented to be. Verily, a wonderful land is

France!

Then we hunted for a barber-shop. From earliest infancy it had been

a cherished ambition of mine to be shaved some day in a palatial

barber-shop in Paris. I wished to recline at full length in a cushioned

invalid chair, with pictures about me and sumptuous furniture; with

frescoed walls and gilded arches above me and vistas of Corinthian

columns stretching far before me; with perfumes of Araby to intoxicate

my senses and the slumbrous drone of distant noises to soothe me to

sleep. At the end of an hour I would wake up regretfully and find my

face as smooth and as soft as an infant's. Departing, I would lift my

hands above that barber's head and say, "Heaven bless you, my son!"

So we searched high and low, for a matter of two hours, but never a

barber-shop could we see. We saw only wig-making establishments, with

shocks of dead and repulsive hair bound upon the heads of painted waxen

brigands who stared out from glass boxes upon the passer-by with their

stony eyes and scared him with the ghostly white of their countenances.

We shunned these signs for a time, but finally we concluded that the

wig-makers must of necessity be the barbers as well, since we could find

no single legitimate representative of the fraternity. We entered and

asked, and found that it was even so.

I said I wanted to be shaved. The barber inquired where my room was. I

said never mind where my room was, I wanted to be shaved--there, on the

spot. The doctor said he would be shaved also. Then there was an

excitement among those two barbers! There was a wild consultation, and

afterwards a hurrying to and fro and a feverish gathering up of razors

from obscure places and a ransacking for soap. Next they took us into a

little mean, shabby back room; they got two ordinary sitting-room chairs

and placed us in them with our coats on. My old, old dream of bliss

vanished into thin air!

I sat bolt upright, silent, sad, and solemn. One of the wig-making

villains lathered my face for ten terrible minutes and finished by

plastering a mass of suds into my mouth. I expelled the nasty stuff with

a strong English expletive and said, "Foreigner, beware!" Then this

outlaw strapped his razor on his boot, hovered over me ominously for six

fearful seconds, and then swooped down upon me like the genius of

destruction. The first rake of his razor loosened the very hide from my

face and lifted me out of the chair. I stormed and raved, and the other

boys enjoyed it. Their beards are not strong and thick. Let us draw the

curtain over this harrowing scene.

Suffice it that I submitted and went through with the cruel infliction of

a shave by a French barber; tears of exquisite agony coursed down my

cheeks now and then, but I survived. Then the incipient assassin held a

basin of water under my chin and slopped its contents over my face, and

into my bosom, and down the back of my neck, with a mean pretense of

washing away the soap and blood. He dried my features with a towel and

was going to comb my hair, but I asked to be excused. I said, with

withering irony, that it was sufficient to be skinned--I declined to be

scalped.

I went away from there with my handkerchief about my face, and never,

never, never desired to dream of palatial Parisian barber-shops anymore.

The truth is, as I believe I have since found out, that they have no

barber shops worthy of the name in Paris--and no barbers, either, for

that matter. The impostor who does duty as a barber brings his pans and

napkins and implements of torture to your residence and deliberately

skins you in your private apartments. Ah, I have suffered, suffered,

suffered, here in Paris, but never mind--the time is coming when I shall

have a dark and bloody revenge. Someday a Parisian barber will come to

my room to skin me, and from that day forth that barber will never be

heard of more.

At eleven o'clock we alighted upon a sign which manifestly referred to

billiards. Joy! We had played billiards in the Azores with balls that

were not round and on an ancient table that was very little smoother than

a brick pavement--one of those wretched old things with dead cushions,

and with patches in the faded cloth and invisible obstructions that made

the balls describe the most astonishing and unsuspected angles and

perform feats in the way of unlooked-for and almost impossible

"scratches" that were perfectly bewildering. We had played at Gibraltar

with balls the size of a walnut, on a table like a public square--and in

both instances we achieved far more aggravation than amusement. We

expected to fare better here, but we were mistaken. The cushions were a

good deal higher than the balls, and as the balls had a fashion of always

stopping under the cushions, we accomplished very little in the way of

caroms. The cushions were hard and unelastic, and the cues were so

crooked that in making a shot you had to allow for the curve or you would

infallibly put the "English" on the wrong side of the hall. Dan was to

mark while the doctor and I played. At the end of an hour neither of us

had made a count, and so Dan was tired of keeping tally with nothing to

tally, and we were heated and angry and disgusted. We paid the heavy

bill--about six cents--and said we would call around sometime when we had

a week to spend, and finish the game.

We adjourned to one of those pretty cafes and took supper and tested the

wines of the country, as we had been instructed to do, and found them

harmless and unexciting. They might have been exciting, however, if we

had chosen to drink a sufficiency of them.

To close our first day in Paris cheerfully and pleasantly, we now sought

our grand room in the Grand Hotel du Louvre and climbed into our

sumptuous bed to read and smoke--but alas!

It was pitiful,

In a whole city-full,

Gas we had none.

No gas to read by--nothing but dismal candles. It was a shame. We tried

to map out excursions for the morrow; we puzzled over French "guides to

Paris"; we talked disjointedly in a vain endeavor to make head or tail of

the wild chaos of the day's sights and experiences; we subsided to

indolent smoking; we gaped and yawned and stretched--then feebly wondered

if we were really and truly in renowned Paris, and drifted drowsily away

into that vast mysterious void which men call sleep.

CHAPTER XIII.

The next morning we were up and dressed at ten o'clock. We went to the

'commissionaire' of the hotel--I don't know what a 'commissionaire' is,

but that is the man we went to--and told him we wanted a guide. He said

the national Exposition had drawn such multitudes of Englishmen and

Americans to Paris that it would be next to impossible to find a good

guide unemployed. He said he usually kept a dozen or two on hand, but he

only had three now. He called them. One looked so like a very pirate

that we let him go at once. The next one spoke with a simpering

precision of pronunciation that was irritating and said:

"If ze zhentlemans will to me make ze grande honneur to me rattain in

hees serveece, I shall show to him every sing zat is magnifique to look

upon in ze beautiful Parree. I speaky ze Angleesh pairfaitemaw."

He would have done well to have stopped there, because he had that much

by heart and said it right off without making a mistake. But his

self-complacency seduced him into attempting a flight into regions of

unexplored English, and the reckless experiment was his ruin. Within ten

seconds he was so tangled up in a maze of mutilated verbs and torn and

bleeding forms of speech that no human ingenuity could ever have gotten

him out of it with credit. It was plain enough that he could not

"speaky" the English quite as "pairfaitemaw" as he had pretended he

could.

The third man captured us. He was plainly dressed, but he had a

noticeable air of neatness about him. He wore a high silk hat which was

a little old, but had been carefully brushed. He wore second-hand kid

gloves, in good repair, and carried a small rattan cane with a curved

handle--a female leg--of ivory. He stepped as gently and as daintily as

a cat crossing a muddy street; and oh, he was urbanity; he was quiet,

unobtrusive self-possession; he was deference itself! He spoke softly

and guardedly; and when he was about to make a statement on his sole

responsibility or offer a suggestion, he weighed it by drachms and

scruples first, with the crook of his little stick placed meditatively to

his teeth. His opening speech was perfect. It was perfect in

construction, in phraseology, in grammar, in emphasis, in pronunciation

--everything. He spoke little and guardedly after that. We were charmed.

We were more than charmed--we were overjoyed. We hired him at once. We

never even asked him his price. This man--our lackey, our servant, our

unquestioning slave though he was--was still a gentleman--we could see

that--while of the other two one was coarse and awkward and the other was

a born pirate. We asked our man Friday's name. He drew from his

pocketbook a snowy little card and passed it to us with a profound bow:

A. BILLFINGER,

Guide to Paris, France, Germany,

Spain, &c., &c.

Grande Hotel du Louvre.

"Billfinger! Oh, carry me home to die!"

That was an "aside" from Dan. The atrocious name grated harshly on my

ear, too. The most of us can learn to forgive, and even to like, a

countenance that strikes us unpleasantly at first, but few of us, I

fancy, become reconciled to a jarring name so easily. I was almost sorry

we had hired this man, his name was so unbearable. However, no matter.

We were impatient to start. Billfinger stepped to the door to call a

carriage, and then the doctor said:

"Well, the guide goes with the barbershop, with the billiard-table, with

the gasless room, and may be with many another pretty romance of Paris.

I expected to have a guide named Henri de Montmorency, or Armand de la

Chartreuse, or something that would sound grand in letters to the

villagers at home, but to think of a Frenchman by the name of Billfinger!

Oh! This is absurd, you know. This will never do. We can't say

Billfinger; it is nauseating. Name him over again; what had we better

call him? Alexis du Caulaincourt?"

"Alphonse Henri Gustave de Hauteville," I suggested.

"Call him Ferguson," said Dan.

That was practical, unromantic good sense. Without debate, we expunged

Billfinger as Billfinger, and called him Ferguson.

The carriage--an open barouche--was ready. Ferguson mounted beside the

driver, and we whirled away to breakfast. As was proper, Mr. Ferguson

stood by to transmit our orders and answer questions. By and by, he

mentioned casually--the artful adventurer--that he would go and get his

breakfast as soon as we had finished ours. He knew we could not get

along without him and that we would not want to loiter about and wait for

him. We asked him to sit down and eat with us. He begged, with many a

bow, to be excused. It was not proper, he said; he would sit at another

table. We ordered him peremptorily to sit down with us.

Here endeth the first lesson. It was a mistake.

As long as we had that fellow after that, he was always hungry; he was

always thirsty. He came early; he stayed late; he could not pass a

restaurant; he looked with a lecherous eye upon every wine shop.

Suggestions to stop, excuses to eat and to drink, were forever on his

lips. We tried all we could to fill him so full that he would have no

room to spare for a fortnight, but it was a failure. He did not hold

enough to smother the cravings of his superhuman appetite.

He had another "discrepancy" about him. He was always wanting us to buy

things. On the shallowest pretenses he would inveigle us into shirt

stores, boot stores, tailor shops, glove shops--anywhere under the broad

sweep of the heavens that there seemed a chance of our buying anything.

Anyone could have guessed that the shopkeepers paid him a percentage on

the sales, but in our blessed innocence we didn't until this feature of

his conduct grew unbearably prominent. One day Dan happened to mention

that he thought of buying three or four silk dress patterns for presents.

Ferguson's hungry eye was upon him in an instant. In the course of

twenty minutes the carriage stopped.

"What's this?"

"Zis is ze finest silk magazin in Paris--ze most celebrate."

"What did you come here for? We told you to take us to the palace of the

Louvre."

"I suppose ze gentleman say he wish to buy some silk."

"You are not required to 'suppose' things for the party, Ferguson. We do

not wish to tax your energies too much. We will bear some of the burden

and heat of the day ourselves. We will endeavor to do such 'supposing'

as is really necessary to be done. Drive on." So spake the doctor.

Within fifteen minutes the carriage halted again, and before another silk

store. The doctor said:

"Ah, the palace of the Louvre--beautiful, beautiful edifice! Does the

Emperor Napoleon live here now, Ferguson?"

"Ah, Doctor! You do jest; zis is not ze palace; we come there directly.

But since we pass right by zis store, where is such beautiful silk--"

"Ah! I see, I see. I meant to have told you that we did not wish to

purchase any silks to-day, but in my absent-mindedness I forgot it. I

also meant to tell you we wished to go directly to the Louvre, but I

forgot that also. However, we will go there now. Pardon my seeming

carelessness, Ferguson. Drive on."

Within the half hour we stopped again--in front of another silk store.

We were angry; but the doctor was always serene, always smooth-voiced.

He said:

"At last! How imposing the Louvre is, and yet how small! How

exquisitely fashioned! How charmingly situated!--Venerable, venerable

pile--"

"Pairdon, Doctor, zis is not ze Louvre--it is--"

"What is it?"

"I have ze idea--it come to me in a moment--zat ze silk in zis magazin--"

"Ferguson, how heedless I am. I fully intended to tell you that we did

not wish to buy any silks to-day, and I also intended to tell you that we

yearned to go immediately to the palace of the Louvre, but enjoying the

happiness of seeing you devour four breakfasts this morning has so filled

me with pleasurable emotions that I neglect the commonest interests of

the time. However, we will proceed now to the Louvre, Ferguson."

"But, doctor," (excitedly,) "it will take not a minute--not but one small

minute! Ze gentleman need not to buy if he not wish to--but only look at

ze silk--look at ze beautiful fabric. [Then pleadingly.] Sair--just only

one leetle moment!"

Dan said, "Confound the idiot! I don't want to see any silks today, and

I won't look at them. Drive on."

And the doctor: "We need no silks now, Ferguson. Our hearts yearn for

the Louvre. Let us journey on--let us journey on."

"But doctor! It is only one moment--one leetle moment. And ze time will

be save--entirely save! Because zere is nothing to see now--it is too

late. It want ten minute to four and ze Louvre close at four--only one

leetle moment, Doctor!"

The treacherous miscreant! After four breakfasts and a gallon of

champagne, to serve us such a scurvy trick. We got no sight of the

countless treasures of art in the Louvre galleries that day, and our only

poor little satisfaction was in the reflection that Ferguson sold not a

solitary silk dress pattern.

I am writing this chapter partly for the satisfaction of abusing that

accomplished knave Billfinger, and partly to show whosoever shall read

this how Americans fare at the hands of the Paris guides and what sort of

people Paris guides are. It need not be supposed that we were a stupider

or an easier prey than our countrymen generally are, for we were not.

The guides deceive and defraud every American who goes to Paris for the

first time and sees its sights alone or in company with others as little

experienced as himself. I shall visit Paris again someday, and then let

the guides beware! I shall go in my war paint--I shall carry my tomahawk

along.

I think we have lost but little time in Paris. We have gone to bed every

night tired out. Of course we visited the renowned International

Exposition. All the world did that. We went there on our third day in

Paris--and we stayed there nearly two hours. That was our first and last

visit. To tell the truth, we saw at a glance that one would have to

spend weeks--yea, even months--in that monstrous establishment to get an

intelligible idea of it. It was a wonderful show, but the moving masses

of people of all nations we saw there were a still more wonderful show.

I discovered that if I were to stay there a month, I should still find

myself looking at the people instead of the inanimate objects on

exhibition. I got a little interested in some curious old tapestries of

the thirteenth century, but a party of Arabs came by, and their dusky

faces and quaint costumes called my attention away at once. I watched a

silver swan, which had a living grace about his movements and a living

intelligence in his eyes--watched him swimming about as comfortably and

as unconcernedly as if he had been born in a morass instead of a

jeweler's shop--watched him seize a silver fish from under the water and

hold up his head and go through all the customary and elaborate motions

of swallowing it--but the moment it disappeared down his throat some

tattooed South Sea Islanders approached and I yielded to their

attractions.

Presently I found a revolving pistol several hundred years old which

looked strangely like a modern Colt, but just then I heard that the

Empress of the French was in another part of the building, and hastened

away to see what she might look like. We heard martial music--we saw an

unusual number of soldiers walking hurriedly about--there was a general

movement among the people. We inquired what it was all about and learned

that the Emperor of the French and the Sultan of Turkey were about to

review twenty-five thousand troops at the Arc de l'Etoile. We

immediately departed. I had a greater anxiety to see these men than I

could have had to see twenty expositions.

We drove away and took up a position in an open space opposite the

American minister's house. A speculator bridged a couple of barrels with

a board and we hired standing places on it. Presently there was a sound

of distant music; in another minute a pillar of dust came moving slowly

toward us; a moment more and then, with colors flying and a grand crash

of military music, a gallant array of cavalrymen emerged from the dust

and came down the street on a gentle trot. After them came a long line

of artillery; then more cavalry, in splendid uniforms; and then their

imperial majesties Napoleon III and Abdul Aziz. The vast concourse of

people swung their hats and shouted--the windows and housetops in the

wide vicinity burst into a snowstorm of waving handkerchiefs, and the

wavers of the same mingled their cheers with those of the masses below.

It was a stirring spectacle.

But the two central figures claimed all my attention. Was ever such a

contrast set up before a multitude till then? Napoleon in military

uniform--a long-bodied, short-legged man, fiercely moustached, old,

wrinkled, with eyes half closed, and such a deep, crafty, scheming

expression about them!--Napoleon, bowing ever so gently to the loud

plaudits, and watching everything and everybody with his cat eyes from

under his depressed hat brim, as if to discover any sign that those

cheers were not heartfelt and cordial.

Abdul Aziz, absolute lord of the Ottoman empire--clad in dark green

European clothes, almost without ornament or insignia of rank; a red

Turkish fez on his head; a short, stout, dark man, black-bearded,

black-eyed, stupid, unprepossessing--a man whose whole appearance

somehow suggested that if he only had a cleaver in his hand and a white

apron on, one would not be at all surprised to hear him say: "A mutton

roast today, or will you have a nice porterhouse steak?"

Napoleon III, the representative of the highest modern civilization,

progress, and refinement; Abdul-Aziz, the representative of a people by

nature and training filthy, brutish, ignorant, unprogressive,

superstitious--and a government whose Three Graces are Tyranny, Rapacity,

Blood. Here in brilliant Paris, under this majestic Arch of Triumph, the

First Century greets the Nineteenth!

NAPOLEON III., Emperor of France! Surrounded by shouting thousands, by

military pomp, by the splendors of his capital city, and companioned by

kings and princes--this is the man who was sneered at and reviled and

called Bastard--yet who was dreaming of a crown and an empire all the

while; who was driven into exile--but carried his dreams with him; who

associated with the common herd in America and ran foot races for a

wager--but still sat upon a throne in fancy; who braved every danger to

go to his dying mother--and grieved that she could not be spared to see

him cast aside his plebeian vestments for the purple of royalty; who kept

his faithful watch and walked his weary beat a common policeman of

London--but dreamed the while of a coming night when he should tread the

long-drawn corridors of the Tuileries; who made the miserable fiasco of

Strasbourg; saw his poor, shabby eagle, forgetful of its lesson, refuse

to perch upon his shoulder; delivered his carefully prepared, sententious

burst of eloquence upon unsympathetic ears; found himself a prisoner, the

butt of small wits, a mark for the pitiless ridicule of all the world

--yet went on dreaming of coronations and splendid pageants as before; who

lay a forgotten captive in the dungeons of Ham--and still schemed and

planned and pondered over future glory and future power; President of

France at last! a coup d'etat, and surrounded by applauding armies,

welcomed by the thunders of cannon, he mounts a throne and waves before

an astounded world the sceptre of a mighty empire! Who talks of the

marvels of fiction? Who speaks of the wonders of romance? Who prates of

the tame achievements of Aladdin and the Magii of Arabia?

ABDUL-AZIZ, Sultan of Turkey, Lord of the Ottoman Empire! Born to a

throne; weak, stupid, ignorant, almost, as his meanest slave; chief of a

vast royalty, yet the puppet of his Premier and the obedient child of a

tyrannical mother; a man who sits upon a throne--the beck of whose finger

moves navies and armies--who holds in his hands the power of life and

death over millions--yet who sleeps, sleeps, eats, eats, idles with his

eight hundred concubines, and when he is surfeited with eating and

sleeping and idling, and would rouse up and take the reins of government

and threaten to be a sultan, is charmed from his purpose by wary Fuad

Pacha with a pretty plan for a new palace or a new ship--charmed away

with a new toy, like any other restless child; a man who sees his people

robbed and oppressed by soulless tax-gatherers, but speaks no word to

save them; who believes in gnomes and genii and the wild fables of The

Arabian Nights, but has small regard for the mighty magicians of to-day,

and is nervous in the presence of their mysterious railroads and

steamboats and telegraphs; who would see undone in Egypt all that great

Mehemet Ali achieved, and would prefer rather to forget than emulate him;

a man who found his great empire a blot upon the earth--a degraded,

poverty-stricken, miserable, infamous agglomeration of ignorance, crime,

and brutality--and will idle away the allotted days of his trivial life

and then pass to the dust and the worms and leave it so!

Napoleon has augmented the commercial prosperity of France in ten years

to such a degree that figures can hardly compute it. He has rebuilt

Paris and has partly rebuilt every city in the state. He condemns a

whole street at a time, assesses the damages, pays them, and rebuilds

superbly. Then speculators buy up the ground and sell, but the original

owner is given the first choice by the government at a stated price

before the speculator is permitted to purchase. But above all things, he

has taken the sole control of the empire of France into his hands and

made it a tolerably free land--for people who will not attempt to go too

far in meddling with government affairs. No country offers greater

security to life and property than France, and one has all the freedom he

wants, but no license--no license to interfere with anybody or make

anyone uncomfortable.

As for the Sultan, one could set a trap any where and catch a dozen abler

men in a night.

The bands struck up, and the brilliant adventurer, Napoleon III., the

genius of Energy, Persistence, Enterprise; and the feeble Abdul-Aziz, the

genius of Ignorance, Bigotry, and Indolence, prepared for the Forward

--March!

We saw the splendid review, we saw the white-moustached old Crimean

soldier, Canrobert, Marshal of France, we saw--well, we saw every thing,

and then we went home satisfied.

CHAPTER XIV.

We went to see the Cathedral of Notre Dame. We had heard of it before.

It surprises me sometimes to think how much we do know and how

intelligent we are. We recognized the brown old Gothic pile in a moment;

it was like the pictures. We stood at a little distance and changed from

one point of observation to another and gazed long at its lofty square

towers and its rich front, clustered thick with stony, mutilated saints

who had been looking calmly down from their perches for ages. The

Patriarch of Jerusalem stood under them in the old days of chivalry and

romance, and preached the third Crusade, more than six hundred years ago;

and since that day they have stood there and looked quietly down upon the

most thrilling scenes, the grandest pageants, the most extraordinary

spectacles that have grieved or delighted Paris. These battered and

broken-nosed old fellows saw many and many a cavalcade of mail-clad

knights come marching home from Holy Land; they heard the bells above

them toll the signal for the St. Bartholomew's Massacre, and they saw the

slaughter that followed; later they saw the Reign of Terror, the carnage

of the Revolution, the overthrow of a king, the coronation of two

Napoleons, the christening of the young prince that lords it over a

regiment of servants in the Tuileries to-day--and they may possibly

continue to stand there until they see the Napoleon dynasty swept away

and the banners of a great republic floating above its ruins. I wish

these old parties could speak. They could tell a tale worth the

listening to.

They say that a pagan temple stood where Notre Dame now stands, in the

old Roman days, eighteen or twenty centuries ago--remains of it are still

preserved in Paris; and that a Christian church took its place about A.D.

300; another took the place of that in A.D. 500; and that the foundations

of the present cathedral were laid about A.D. 1100. The ground ought to

be measurably sacred by this time, one would think. One portion of this

noble old edifice is suggestive of the quaint fashions of ancient times.

It was built by Jean Sans-Peur, Duke of Burgundy, to set his conscience

at rest--he had assassinated the Duke of Orleans. Alas! Those good old

times are gone when a murderer could wipe the stain from his name and

soothe his troubles to sleep simply by getting out his bricks and mortar

and building an addition to a church.

The portals of the great western front are bisected by square pillars.

They took the central one away in 1852, on the occasion of thanksgivings

for the reinstitution of the presidential power--but precious soon they

had occasion to reconsider that motion and put it back again! And they

did.

We loitered through the grand aisles for an hour or two, staring up at

the rich stained-glass windows embellished with blue and yellow and

crimson saints and martyrs, and trying to admire the numberless great

pictures in the chapels, and then we were admitted to the sacristy and

shown the magnificent robes which the Pope wore when he crowned Napoleon

I; a wagon-load of solid gold and silver utensils used in the great

public processions and ceremonies of the church; some nails of the true

cross, a fragment of the cross itself, a part of the crown of thorns.

We had already seen a large piece of the true cross in a church in the

Azores, but no nails. They showed us likewise the bloody robe which that

archbishop of Paris wore who exposed his sacred person and braved the

wrath of the insurgents of 1848, to mount the barricades and hold aloft

the olive branch of peace in the hope of stopping the slaughter. His

noble effort cost him his life. He was shot dead. They showed us a cast

of his face taken after death, the bullet that killed him, and the two

vertebrae in which it lodged. These people have a somewhat singular

taste in the matter of relics. Ferguson told us that the silver cross

which the good archbishop wore at his girdle was seized and thrown into

the Seine, where it lay embedded in the mud for fifteen years, and then

an angel appeared to a priest and told him where to dive for it; he did

dive for it and got it, and now it is there on exhibition at Notre Dame,

to be inspected by anybody who feels an interest in inanimate objects of

miraculous intervention.

Next we went to visit the Morgue, that horrible receptacle for the dead

who die mysteriously and leave the manner of their taking off a dismal

secret. We stood before a grating and looked through into a room which

was hung all about with the clothing of dead men; coarse blouses,

water-soaked; the delicate garments of women and children; patrician

vestments, hacked and stabbed and stained with red; a hat that was

crushed and bloody. On a slanting stone lay a drowned man, naked,

swollen, purple; clasping the fragment of a broken bush with a grip

which death had so petrified that human strength could not unloose it

--mute witness of the last despairing effort to save the life that was

doomed beyond all help. A stream of water trickled ceaselessly over the

hideous face. We knew that the body and the clothing were there for

identification by friends, but still we wondered if anybody could love

that repulsive object or grieve for its loss. We grew meditative and

wondered if, some forty years ago, when the mother of that ghastly thing

was dandling it upon her knee, and kissing it and petting it and

displaying it with satisfied pride to the passers-by, a prophetic vision

of this dread ending ever flitted through her brain. I half feared that

the mother, or the wife or a brother of the dead man might come while we

stood there, but nothing of the kind occurred. Men and women came, and

some looked eagerly in and pressed their faces against the bars; others

glanced carelessly at the body and turned away with a disappointed look

--people, I thought, who live upon strong excitements and who attend the

exhibitions of the Morgue regularly, just as other people go to see

theatrical spectacles every night. When one of these looked in and

passed on, I could not help thinking--

"Now this don't afford you any satisfaction--a party with his head shot

off is what you need."

One night we went to the celebrated Jardin Mabille, but only staid a

little while. We wanted to see some of this kind of Paris life, however,

and therefore the next night we went to a similar place of entertainment

in a great garden in the suburb of Asnieres. We went to the railroad

depot, toward evening, and Ferguson got tickets for a second-class

carriage. Such a perfect jam of people I have not often seen--but there

was no noise, no disorder, no rowdyism. Some of the women and young

girls that entered the train we knew to be of the demi-monde, but others

we were not at all sure about.

The girls and women in our carriage behaved themselves modestly and

becomingly all the way out, except that they smoked. When we arrived at

the garden in Asnieres, we paid a franc or two admission and entered a

place which had flower beds in it, and grass plots, and long, curving

rows of ornamental shrubbery, with here and there a secluded bower

convenient for eating ice cream in. We moved along the sinuous gravel

walks, with the great concourse of girls and young men, and suddenly a

domed and filigreed white temple, starred over and over and over again

with brilliant gas jets, burst upon us like a fallen sun. Nearby was a

large, handsome house with its ample front illuminated in the same way,

and above its roof floated the Star-Spangled Banner of America.

"Well!" I said. "How is this?" It nearly took my breath away.

Ferguson said an American--a New Yorker--kept the place, and was carrying

on quite a stirring opposition to the Jardin Mabille.

Crowds composed of both sexes and nearly all ages were frisking about the

garden or sitting in the open air in front of the flagstaff and the

temple, drinking wine and coffee or smoking. The dancing had not begun

yet. Ferguson said there was to be an exhibition. The famous Blondin

was going to perform on a tightrope in another part of the garden. We

went thither. Here the light was dim, and the masses of people were

pretty closely packed together. And now I made a mistake which any

donkey might make, but a sensible man never. I committed an error which

I find myself repeating every day of my life. Standing right before a

young lady, I said:

"Dan, just look at this girl, how beautiful she is!"

"I thank you more for the evident sincerity of the compliment, sir, than

for the extraordinary publicity you have given to it!" This in good,

pure English.

We took a walk, but my spirits were very, very sadly dampened. I did not

feel right comfortable for some time afterward. Why will people be so

stupid as to suppose themselves the only foreigners among a crowd of ten

thousand persons?

But Blondin came out shortly. He appeared on a stretched cable, far away

above the sea of tossing hats and handkerchiefs, and in the glare of the

hundreds of rockets that whizzed heavenward by him he looked like a wee

insect. He balanced his pole and walked the length of his rope--two or

three hundred feet; he came back and got a man and carried him across; he

returned to the center and danced a jig; next he performed some gymnastic

and balancing feats too perilous to afford a pleasant spectacle; and he

finished by fastening to his person a thousand Roman candles, Catherine

wheels, serpents and rockets of all manner of brilliant colors, setting

them on fire all at once and walking and waltzing across his rope again

in a blinding blaze of glory that lit up the garden and the people's

faces like a great conflagration at midnight.

The dance had begun, and we adjourned to the temple. Within it was a

drinking saloon, and all around it was a broad circular platform for the

dancers. I backed up against the wall of the temple, and waited. Twenty

sets formed, the music struck up, and then--I placed my hands before my

face for very shame. But I looked through my fingers. They were dancing

the renowned "Can-can." A handsome girl in the set before me tripped

forward lightly to meet the opposite gentleman, tripped back again,

grasped her dresses vigorously on both sides with her hands, raised them

pretty high, danced an extraordinary jig that had more activity and

exposure about it than any jig I ever saw before, and then, drawing her

clothes still higher, she advanced gaily to the center and launched a

vicious kick full at her vis-a-vis that must infallibly have removed his

nose if he had been seven feet high. It was a mercy he was only six.

That is the can-can. The idea of it is to dance as wildly, as noisily,

as furiously as you can; expose yourself as much as possible if you are a

woman; and kick as high as you can, no matter which sex you belong to.

There is no word of exaggeration in this. Any of the staid, respectable,

aged people who were there that night can testify to the truth of that

statement. There were a good many such people present. I suppose French

morality is not of that straight-laced description which is shocked at

trifles.

I moved aside and took a general view of the can-can. Shouts, laughter,

furious music, a bewildering chaos of darting and intermingling forms,

stormy jerking and snatching of gay dresses, bobbing beads, flying arms,

lightning flashes of white-stockinged calves and dainty slippers in the

air, and then a grand final rush, riot, a terrific hubbub, and a wild

stampede! Heavens! Nothing like it has been seen on earth since

trembling Tam O'Shanter saw the devil and the witches at their orgies

that stormy night in "Alloway's auld haunted kirk."

We visited the Louvre, at a time when we had no silk purchases in view,

and looked at its miles of paintings by the old masters. Some of them

were beautiful, but at the same time they carried such evidences about

them of the cringing spirit of those great men that we found small

pleasure in examining them. Their nauseous adulation of princely patrons

was more prominent to me and chained my attention more surely than the

charms of color and expression which are claimed to be in the pictures.

Gratitude for kindnesses is well, but it seems to me that some of those

artists carried it so far that it ceased to be gratitude and became

worship. If there is a plausible excuse for the worship of men, then by

all means let us forgive Rubens and his brethren.

But I will drop the subject, lest I say something about the old masters

that might as well be left unsaid.

Of course we drove in the Bois de Boulogne, that limitless park, with its

forests, its lakes, its cascades, and its broad avenues. There were

thousands upon thousands of vehicles abroad, and the scene was full of

life and gaiety. There were very common hacks, with father and mother

and all the children in them; conspicuous little open carriages with

celebrated ladies of questionable reputation in them; there were Dukes

and Duchesses abroad, with gorgeous footmen perched behind, and equally

gorgeous outriders perched on each of the six horses; there were blue and

silver, and green and gold, and pink and black, and all sorts and

descriptions of stunning and startling liveries out, and I almost yearned

to be a flunkey myself, for the sake of the fine clothes.

But presently the Emperor came along and he outshone them all. He was

preceded by a bodyguard of gentlemen on horseback in showy uniforms, his

carriage-horses (there appeared to be somewhere in the remote

neighborhood of a thousand of them,) were bestridden by gallant-looking

fellows, also in stylish uniforms, and after the carriage followed

another detachment of bodyguards. Everybody got out of the way;

everybody bowed to the Emperor and his friend the Sultan; and they went

by on a swinging trot and disappeared.

I will not describe the Bois de Boulogne. I can not do it. It is simply

a beautiful, cultivated, endless, wonderful wilderness. It is an

enchanting place. It is in Paris now, one may say, but a crumbling old

cross in one portion of it reminds one that it was not always so. The

cross marks the spot where a celebrated troubadour was waylaid and

murdered in the fourteenth century. It was in this park that that fellow

with an unpronounceable name made the attempt upon the Russian Czar's

life last spring with a pistol. The bullet struck a tree. Ferguson

showed us the place. Now in America that interesting tree would be

chopped down or forgotten within the next five years, but it will be

treasured here. The guides will point it out to visitors for the next

eight hundred years, and when it decays and falls down they will put up

another there and go on with the same old story just the same.

CHAPTER XV.

One of our pleasantest visits was to Pere la Chaise, the national

burying-ground of France, the honored resting-place of some of her

greatest and best children, the last home of scores of illustrious men

and women who were born to no titles, but achieved fame by their own

energy and their own genius. It is a solemn city of winding streets and

of miniature marble temples and mansions of the dead gleaming white from

out a wilderness of foliage and fresh flowers. Not every city is so well

peopled as this, or has so ample an area within its walls. Few palaces

exist in any city that are so exquisite in design, so rich in art, so

costly in material, so graceful, so beautiful.

We had stood in the ancient church of St. Denis, where the marble

effigies of thirty generations of kings and queens lay stretched at

length upon the tombs, and the sensations invoked were startling and

novel; the curious armor, the obsolete costumes, the placid faces, the

hands placed palm to palm in eloquent supplication--it was a vision of

gray antiquity. It seemed curious enough to be standing face to face, as

it were, with old Dagobert I., and Clovis and Charlemagne, those vague,

colossal heroes, those shadows, those myths of a thousand years ago! I

touched their dust-covered faces with my finger, but Dagobert was deader

than the sixteen centuries that have passed over him, Clovis slept well

after his labor for Christ, and old Charlemagne went on dreaming of his

paladins, of bloody Roncesvalles, and gave no heed to me.

The great names of Pere la Chaise impress one, too, but differently.

There the suggestion brought constantly to his mind is, that this place

is sacred to a nobler royalty--the royalty of heart and brain. Every

faculty of mind, every noble trait of human nature, every high occupation

which men engage in, seems represented by a famous name. The effect is a

curious medley. Davoust and Massena, who wrought in many a battle

tragedy, are here, and so also is Rachel, of equal renown in mimic

tragedy on the stage. The Abbe Sicard sleeps here--the first great

teacher of the deaf and dumb--a man whose heart went out to every

unfortunate, and whose life was given to kindly offices in their service;

and not far off, in repose and peace at last, lies Marshal Ney, whose

stormy spirit knew no music like the bugle call to arms. The man who

originated public gas-lighting, and that other benefactor who introduced

the cultivation of the potato and thus blessed millions of his starving

countrymen, lie with the Prince of Masserano, and with exiled queens and

princes of Further India. Gay-Lussac the chemist, Laplace the

astronomer, Larrey the surgeon, de Suze the advocate, are here, and with

them are Talma, Bellini, Rubini; de Balzac, Beaumarchais, Beranger;

Moliere and Lafontaine, and scores of other men whose names and whose

worthy labors are as familiar in the remote by-places of civilization as

are the historic deeds of the kings and princes that sleep in the marble

vaults of St. Denis.

But among the thousands and thousands of tombs in Pere la Chaise, there

is one that no man, no woman, no youth of either sex, ever passes by

without stopping to examine. Every visitor has a sort of indistinct idea

of the history of its dead and comprehends that homage is due there, but

not one in twenty thousand clearly remembers the story of that tomb and

its romantic occupants. This is the grave of Abelard and Heloise--a

grave which has been more revered, more widely known, more written and

sung about and wept over, for seven hundred years, than any other in

Christendom save only that of the Saviour. All visitors linger pensively

about it; all young people capture and carry away keepsakes and mementoes

of it; all Parisian youths and maidens who are disappointed in love come

there to bail out when they are full of tears; yea, many stricken lovers

make pilgrimages to this shrine from distant provinces to weep and wail

and "grit" their teeth over their heavy sorrows, and to purchase the

sympathies of the chastened spirits of that tomb with offerings of

immortelles and budding flowers.

Go when you will, you find somebody snuffling over that tomb. Go when

you will, you find it furnished with those bouquets and immortelles. Go

when you will, you find a gravel-train from Marseilles arriving to supply

the deficiencies caused by memento-cabbaging vandals whose affections

have miscarried.

Yet who really knows the story of Abelard and Heloise? Precious few

people. The names are perfectly familiar to every body, and that is

about all. With infinite pains I have acquired a knowledge of that

history, and I propose to narrate it here, partly for the honest

information of the public and partly to show that public that they have

been wasting a good deal of marketable sentiment very unnecessarily.

STORY OF ABELARD AND HELOISE

Heloise was born seven hundred and sixty-six years ago. She may have had

parents. There is no telling. She lived with her uncle Fulbert, a canon

of the cathedral of Paris. I do not know what a canon of a cathedral is,

but that is what he was. He was nothing more than a sort of a mountain

howitzer, likely, because they had no heavy artillery in those days.

Suffice it, then, that Heloise lived with her uncle the howitzer and was

happy. She spent the most of her childhood in the convent of Argenteuil

--never heard of Argenteuil before, but suppose there was really such a

place. She then returned to her uncle, the old gun, or son of a gun, as

the case may be, and he taught her to write and speak Latin, which was

the language of literature and polite society at that period.

Just at this time, Pierre Abelard, who had already made himself widely

famous as a rhetorician, came to found a school of rhetoric in Paris.

The originality of his principles, his eloquence, and his great physical

strength and beauty created a profound sensation. He saw Heloise, and

was captivated by her blooming youth, her beauty, and her charming

disposition. He wrote to her; she answered. He wrote again; she

answered again. He was now in love. He longed to know her--to speak to

her face to face.

His school was near Fulbert's house. He asked Fulbert to allow him to

call. The good old swivel saw here a rare opportunity: his niece, whom

he so much loved, would absorb knowledge from this man, and it would not

cost him a cent. Such was Fulbert--penurious.

Fulbert's first name is not mentioned by any author, which is

unfortunate. However, George W. Fulbert will answer for him as well as

any other. We will let him go at that. He asked Abelard to teach her.

Abelard was glad enough of the opportunity. He came often and staid

long. A letter of his shows in its very first sentence that he came

under that friendly roof like a cold-hearted villain as he was, with the

deliberate intention of debauching a confiding, innocent girl. This is

the letter:

"I cannot cease to be astonished at the simplicity of Fulbert;

I was as much surprised as if he had placed a lamb in the power

of a hungry wolf. Heloise and I, under pretext of study, gave

ourselves up wholly to love, and the solitude that love seeks

our studies procured for us. Books were open before us, but we

spoke oftener of love than philosophy, and kisses came more

readily from our lips than words."

And so, exulting over an honorable confidence which to his degraded

instinct was a ludicrous "simplicity," this unmanly Abelard seduced the

niece of the man whose guest he was. Paris found it out. Fulbert was

told of it--told often--but refused to believe it. He could not

comprehend how a man could be so depraved as to use the sacred protection

and security of hospitality as a means for the commission of such a crime

as that. But when he heard the rowdies in the streets singing the

love-songs of Abelard to Heloise, the case was too plain--love-songs come

not properly within the teachings of rhetoric and philosophy.

He drove Abelard from his house. Abelard returned secretly and carried

Heloise away to Palais, in Brittany, his native country. Here, shortly

afterward, she bore a son, who, from his rare beauty, was surnamed

Astrolabe--William G. The girl's flight enraged Fulbert, and he longed

for vengeance, but feared to strike lest retaliation visit Heloise--for

he still loved her tenderly. At length Abelard offered to marry Heloise

--but on a shameful condition: that the marriage should be kept secret

from the world, to the end that (while her good name remained a wreck, as

before,) his priestly reputation might be kept untarnished. It was like

that miscreant. Fulbert saw his opportunity and consented. He would see

the parties married, and then violate the confidence of the man who had

taught him that trick; he would divulge the secret and so remove somewhat

of the obloquy that attached to his niece's fame. But the niece

suspected his scheme. She refused the marriage at first; she said

Fulbert would betray the secret to save her, and besides, she did not

wish to drag down a lover who was so gifted, so honored by the world,

and who had such a splendid career before him. It was noble,

self-sacrificing love, and characteristic of the pure-souled Heloise,

but it was not good sense.

But she was overruled, and the private marriage took place. Now for

Fulbert! The heart so wounded should be healed at last; the proud spirit

so tortured should find rest again; the humbled head should be lifted up

once more. He proclaimed the marriage in the high places of the city and

rejoiced that dishonor had departed from his house. But lo! Abelard

denied the marriage! Heloise denied it! The people, knowing the former

circumstances, might have believed Fulbert had only Abelard denied it,

but when the person chiefly interested--the girl herself--denied it, they

laughed, despairing Fulbert to scorn.

The poor canon of the cathedral of Paris was spiked again. The last hope

of repairing the wrong that had been done his house was gone. What next?

Human nature suggested revenge. He compassed it. The historian says:

"Ruffians, hired by Fulbert, fell upon Abelard by night, and

inflicted upon him a terrible and nameless mutilation."

I am seeking the last resting place of those "ruffians." When I find it

I shall shed some tears on it, and stack up some bouquets and

immortelles, and cart away from it some gravel whereby to remember that

howsoever blotted by crime their lives may have been, these ruffians did

one just deed, at any rate, albeit it was not warranted by the strict

letter of the law.

Heloise entered a convent and gave good-bye to the world and its

pleasures for all time. For twelve years she never heard of Abelard

--never even heard his name mentioned. She had become prioress of

Argenteuil and led a life of complete seclusion. She happened one day to

see a letter written by him, in which he narrated his own history. She

cried over it and wrote him. He answered, addressing her as his "sister

in Christ." They continued to correspond, she in the unweighed language

of unwavering affection, he in the chilly phraseology of the polished

rhetorician. She poured out her heart in passionate, disjointed

sentences; he replied with finished essays, divided deliberately into

heads and sub-heads, premises and argument. She showered upon him the

tenderest epithets that love could devise, he addressed her from the

North Pole of his frozen heart as the "Spouse of Christ!" The abandoned

villain!

On account of her too easy government of her nuns, some disreputable

irregularities were discovered among them, and the Abbot of St. Denis

broke up her establishment. Abelard was the official head of the

monastery of St. Gildas de Ruys, at that time, and when he heard of her

homeless condition a sentiment of pity was aroused in his breast (it is a

wonder the unfamiliar emotion did not blow his head off,) and he placed

her and her troop in the little oratory of the Paraclete, a religious

establishment which he had founded. She had many privations and

sufferings to undergo at first, but her worth and her gentle disposition

won influential friends for her, and she built up a wealthy and

flourishing nunnery. She became a great favorite with the heads of the

church, and also the people, though she seldom appeared in public. She

rapidly advanced in esteem, in good report, and in usefulness, and

Abelard as rapidly lost ground. The Pope so honored her that he made her

the head of her order. Abelard, a man of splendid talents, and ranking

as the first debater of his time, became timid, irresolute, and

distrustful of his powers. He only needed a great misfortune to topple

him from the high position he held in the world of intellectual

excellence, and it came. Urged by kings and princes to meet the subtle

St. Bernard in debate and crush him, he stood up in the presence of a

royal and illustrious assemblage, and when his antagonist had finished he

looked about him and stammered a commencement; but his courage failed

him, the cunning of his tongue was gone: with his speech unspoken, he

trembled and sat down, a disgraced and vanquished champion.

He died a nobody, and was buried at Cluny, A.D., 1144. They removed his

body to the Paraclete afterward, and when Heloise died, twenty years

later, they buried her with him, in accordance with her last wish. He

died at the ripe age of 64, and she at 63. After the bodies had remained

entombed three hundred years, they were removed once more. They were

removed again in 1800, and finally, seventeen years afterward, they were

taken up and transferred to Pere la Chaise, where they will remain in

peace and quiet until it comes time for them to get up and move again.

History is silent concerning the last acts of the mountain howitzer. Let

the world say what it will about him, I, at least, shall always respect

the memory and sorrow for the abused trust and the broken heart and the

troubled spirit of the old smooth-bore. Rest and repose be his!

Such is the story of Abelard and Heloise. Such is the history that

Lamartine has shed such cataracts of tears over. But that man never

could come within the influence of a subject in the least pathetic

without overflowing his banks. He ought to be dammed--or leveed, I

should more properly say. Such is the history--not as it is usually

told, but as it is when stripped of the nauseous sentimentality that

would enshrine for our loving worship a dastardly seducer like Pierre

Abelard. I have not a word to say against the misused, faithful girl,

and would not withhold from her grave a single one of those simple

tributes which blighted youths and maidens offer to her memory, but I am

sorry enough that I have not time and opportunity to write four or five

volumes of my opinion of her friend the founder of the Parachute, or the

Paraclete, or whatever it was.

The tons of sentiment I have wasted on that unprincipled humbug in my

ignorance! I shall throttle down my emotions hereafter, about this sort

of people, until I have read them up and know whether they are entitled

to any tearful attentions or not. I wish I had my immortelles back, now,

and that bunch of radishes.

In Paris we often saw in shop windows the sign "English Spoken Here,"

just as one sees in the windows at home the sign "Ici on parle

francaise." We always invaded these places at once--and invariably

received the information, framed in faultless French, that the clerk who

did the English for the establishment had just gone to dinner and would

be back in an hour--would Monsieur buy something? We wondered why those

parties happened to take their dinners at such erratic and extraordinary

hours, for we never called at a time when an exemplary Christian would be

in the least likely to be abroad on such an errand. The truth was, it

was a base fraud--a snare to trap the unwary--chaff to catch fledglings

with. They had no English-murdering clerk. They trusted to the sign to

inveigle foreigners into their lairs, and trusted to their own

blandishments to keep them there till they bought something.

We ferreted out another French imposition--a frequent sign to this

effect: "ALL MANNER OF AMERICAN DRINKS ARTISTICALLY PREPARED HERE." We

procured the services of a gentleman experienced in the nomenclature of

the American bar, and moved upon the works of one of these impostors. A

bowing, aproned Frenchman skipped forward and said:

"Que voulez les messieurs?" I do not know what "Que voulez les

messieurs?" means, but such was his remark.

Our general said, "We will take a whiskey straight."

[A stare from the Frenchman.]

"Well, if you don't know what that is, give us a champagne cock-tail."

[A stare and a shrug.]

"Well, then, give us a sherry cobbler."

The Frenchman was checkmated. This was all Greek to him.

"Give us a brandy smash!"

The Frenchman began to back away, suspicious of the ominous vigor of the

last order--began to back away, shrugging his shoulders and spreading his

hands apologetically.

The General followed him up and gained a complete victory. The

uneducated foreigner could not even furnish a Santa Cruz Punch, an

Eye-Opener, a Stone-Fence, or an Earthquake. It was plain that he was a

wicked impostor.

An acquaintance of mine said the other day that he was doubtless the only

American visitor to the Exposition who had had the high honor of being

escorted by the Emperor's bodyguard. I said with unobtrusive frankness

that I was astonished that such a long-legged, lantern-jawed,

unprepossessing-looking specter as he should be singled out for a

distinction like that, and asked how it came about. He said he had

attended a great military review in the Champ de Mars some time ago, and

while the multitude about him was growing thicker and thicker every

moment he observed an open space inside the railing. He left his

carriage and went into it. He was the only person there, and so he had

plenty of room, and the situation being central, he could see all the

preparations going on about the field. By and by there was a sound of

music, and soon the Emperor of the French and the Emperor of Austria,

escorted by the famous Cent Gardes, entered the enclosure. They seemed

not to observe him, but directly, in response to a sign from the

commander of the guard, a young lieutenant came toward him with a file of

his men following, halted, raised his hand, and gave the military salute,

and then said in a low voice that he was sorry to have to disturb a

stranger and a gentleman, but the place was sacred to royalty. Then this

New Jersey phantom rose up and bowed and begged pardon, then with the

officer beside him, the file of men marching behind him, and with every

mark of respect, he was escorted to his carriage by the imperial Cent

Gardes! The officer saluted again and fell back, the New Jersey sprite

bowed in return and had presence of mind enough to pretend that he had

simply called on a matter of private business with those emperors, and so

waved them an adieu and drove from the field!

Imagine a poor Frenchman ignorantly intruding upon a public rostrum

sacred to some six-penny dignitary in America. The police would scare

him to death first with a storm of their elegant blasphemy, and then pull

him to pieces getting him away from there. We are measurably superior to

the French in some things, but they are immeasurably our betters in

others.

Enough of Paris for the present. We have done our whole duty by it. We

have seen the Tuileries, the Napoleon Column, the Madeleine, that wonder

of wonders the tomb of Napoleon, all the great churches and museums,

libraries, imperial palaces, and sculpture and picture galleries, the

Pantheon, Jardin des Plantes, the opera, the circus, the legislative

body, the billiard rooms, the barbers, the grisettes--

Ah, the grisettes! I had almost forgotten. They are another romantic

fraud. They were (if you let the books of travel tell it) always so

beautiful--so neat and trim, so graceful--so naive and trusting--so

gentle, so winning--so faithful to their shop duties, so irresistible

to buyers in their prattling importunity--so devoted to their

poverty-stricken students of the Latin Quarter--so lighthearted and

happy on their Sunday picnics in the suburbs--and oh, so charmingly,

so delightfully immoral!

Stuff! For three or four days I was constantly saying:

"Quick, Ferguson! Is that a grisette?"

And he always said, "No."

He comprehended at last that I wanted to see a grisette. Then he showed

me dozens of them. They were like nearly all the Frenchwomen I ever saw

--homely. They had large hands, large feet, large mouths; they had pug

noses as a general thing, and moustaches that not even good breeding

could overlook; they combed their hair straight back without parting;

they were ill-shaped, they were not winning, they were not graceful; I

knew by their looks that they ate garlic and onions; and lastly and

finally, to my thinking it would be base flattery to call them immoral.

Aroint thee, wench! I sorrow for the vagabond student of the Latin

Quarter now, even more than formerly I envied him. Thus topples to earth

another idol of my infancy.

We have seen every thing, and tomorrow we go to Versailles. We shall see

Paris only for a little while as we come back to take up our line of

march for the ship, and so I may as well bid the beautiful city a

regretful farewell. We shall travel many thousands of miles after we

leave here and visit many great cities, but we shall find none so

enchanting as this.

Some of our party have gone to England, intending to take a roundabout

course and rejoin the vessel at Leghorn or Naples several weeks hence.

We came near going to Geneva, but have concluded to return to Marseilles

and go up through Italy from Genoa.

I will conclude this chapter with a remark that I am sincerely proud to

be able to make--and glad, as well, that my comrades cordially endorse

it, to wit: by far the handsomest women we have seen in France were born

and reared in America.

I feel now like a man who has redeemed a failing reputation and shed

luster upon a dimmed escutcheon, by a single just deed done at the

eleventh hour.

Let the curtain fall, to slow music.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERSAILLES! It is wonderfully beautiful! You gaze and stare and try to

understand that it is real, that it is on the earth, that it is not the

Garden of Eden--but your brain grows giddy, stupefied by the world of

beauty around you, and you half believe you are the dupe of an exquisite

dream. The scene thrills one like military music! A noble palace,

stretching its ornamented front, block upon block away, till it seemed

that it would never end; a grand promenade before it, whereon the armies

of an empire might parade; all about it rainbows of flowers, and colossal

statues that were almost numberless and yet seemed only scattered over

the ample space; broad flights of stone steps leading down from the

promenade to lower grounds of the park--stairways that whole regiments

might stand to arms upon and have room to spare; vast fountains whose

great bronze effigies discharged rivers of sparkling water into the air

and mingled a hundred curving jets together in forms of matchless beauty;

wide grass-carpeted avenues that branched hither and thither in every

direction and wandered to seemingly interminable distances, walled all

the way on either side with compact ranks of leafy trees whose branches

met above and formed arches as faultless and as symmetrical as ever were

carved in stone; and here and there were glimpses of sylvan lakes with

miniature ships glassed in their surfaces. And every where--on the

palace steps, and the great promenade, around the fountains, among the

trees, and far under the arches of the endless avenues--hundreds and

hundreds of people in gay costumes walked or ran or danced, and gave to

the fairy picture the life and animation which was all of perfection it

could have lacked.

It was worth a pilgrimage to see. Everything is on so gigantic a scale.

Nothing is small--nothing is cheap. The statues are all large; the

palace is grand; the park covers a fair-sized county; the avenues are

interminable. All the distances and all the dimensions about Versailles

are vast. I used to think the pictures exaggerated these distances and

these dimensions beyond all reason, and that they made Versailles more

beautiful than it was possible for any place in the world to be. I know

now that the pictures never came up to the subject in any respect, and

that no painter could represent Versailles on canvas as beautiful as it

is in reality. I used to abuse Louis XIV for spending two hundred

millions of dollars in creating this marvelous park, when bread was so

scarce with some of his subjects; but I have forgiven him now. He took a

tract of land sixty miles in circumference and set to work to make this

park and build this palace and a road to it from Paris. He kept 36,000

men employed daily on it, and the labor was so unhealthy that they used

to die and be hauled off by cartloads every night. The wife of a

nobleman of the time speaks of this as an "inconvenience," but naively

remarks that "it does not seem worthy of attention in the happy state of

tranquillity we now enjoy."

I always thought ill of people at home who trimmed their shrubbery into

pyramids and squares and spires and all manner of unnatural shapes, and

when I saw the same thing being practiced in this great park I began to

feel dissatisfied. But I soon saw the idea of the thing and the wisdom

of it. They seek the general effect. We distort a dozen sickly trees

into unaccustomed shapes in a little yard no bigger than a dining room,

and then surely they look absurd enough. But here they take two hundred

thousand tall forest trees and set them in a double row; allow no sign of

leaf or branch to grow on the trunk lower down than six feet above the

ground; from that point the boughs begin to project, and very gradually

they extend outward further and further till they meet overhead, and a

faultless tunnel of foliage is formed. The arch is mathematically

precise. The effect is then very fine. They make trees take fifty

different shapes, and so these quaint effects are infinitely varied and

picturesque. The trees in no two avenues are shaped alike, and

consequently the eye is not fatigued with anything in the nature of

monotonous uniformity. I will drop this subject now, leaving it to

others to determine how these people manage to make endless ranks of

lofty forest trees grow to just a certain thickness of trunk (say a foot

and two-thirds); how they make them spring to precisely the same height

for miles; how they make them grow so close together; how they compel one

huge limb to spring from the same identical spot on each tree and form

the main sweep of the arch; and how all these things are kept exactly in

the same condition and in the same exquisite shapeliness and symmetry

month after month and year after year--for I have tried to reason out the

problem and have failed.

We walked through the great hall of sculpture and the one hundred and

fifty galleries of paintings in the palace of Versailles, and felt that

to be in such a place was useless unless one had a whole year at his

disposal. These pictures are all battle scenes, and only one solitary

little canvas among them all treats of anything but great French

victories. We wandered, also, through the Grand Trianon and the Petit

Trianon, those monuments of royal prodigality, and with histories so

mournful--filled, as it is, with souvenirs of Napoleon the First, and

three dead kings and as many queens. In one sumptuous bed they had all

slept in succession, but no one occupies it now. In a large dining room

stood the table at which Louis XIV and his mistress Madame Maintenon, and

after them Louis XV, and Pompadour, had sat at their meals naked and

unattended--for the table stood upon a trapdoor, which descended with it

to regions below when it was necessary to replenish its dishes. In a

room of the Petit Trianon stood the furniture, just as poor Marie

Antoinette left it when the mob came and dragged her and the King to

Paris, never to return. Near at hand, in the stables, were prodigious

carriages that showed no color but gold--carriages used by former kings

of France on state occasions, and never used now save when a kingly head

is to be crowned or an imperial infant christened. And with them were

some curious sleighs, whose bodies were shaped like lions, swans, tigers,

etc.--vehicles that had once been handsome with pictured designs and

fine workmanship, but were dusty and decaying now. They had their

history. When Louis XIV had finished the Grand Trianon, he told

Maintenon he had created a Paradise for her, and asked if she could think

of anything now to wish for. He said he wished the Trianon to be

perfection--nothing less. She said she could think of but one thing--it

was summer, and it was balmy France--yet she would like well to sleigh

ride in the leafy avenues of Versailles! The next morning found miles

and miles of grassy avenues spread thick with snowy salt and sugar, and a

procession of those quaint sleighs waiting to receive the chief concubine

of the gaiest and most unprincipled court that France has ever seen!

From sumptuous Versailles, with its palaces, its statues, its gardens,

and its fountains, we journeyed back to Paris and sought its antipodes

--the Faubourg St. Antoine. Little, narrow streets; dirty children

blockading them; greasy, slovenly women capturing and spanking them;

filthy dens on first floors, with rag stores in them (the heaviest

business in the Faubourg is the chiffonier's); other filthy dens where

whole suits of second and third-hand clothing are sold at prices that

would ruin any proprietor who did not steal his stock; still other filthy

dens where they sold groceries--sold them by the half-pennyworth--five

dollars would buy the man out, goodwill and all. Up these little crooked

streets they will murder a man for seven dollars and dump the body in the

Seine. And up some other of these streets--most of them, I should say

--live lorettes.

All through this Faubourg St. Antoine, misery, poverty, vice, and crime

go hand in hand, and the evidences of it stare one in the face from every

side. Here the people live who begin the revolutions. Whenever there is

anything of that kind to be done, they are always ready. They take as

much genuine pleasure in building a barricade as they do in cutting a

throat or shoving a friend into the Seine. It is these savage-looking

ruffians who storm the splendid halls of the Tuileries occasionally, and

swarm into Versailles when a king is to be called to account.

But they will build no more barricades, they will break no more soldiers'

heads with paving-stones. Louis Napoleon has taken care of all that. He

is annihilating the crooked streets and building in their stead noble

boulevards as straight as an arrow--avenues which a cannon ball could

traverse from end to end without meeting an obstruction more irresistible

than the flesh and bones of men--boulevards whose stately edifices will

never afford refuges and plotting places for starving, discontented

revolution breeders. Five of these great thoroughfares radiate from one

ample centre--a centre which is exceedingly well adapted to the

accommodation of heavy artillery. The mobs used to riot there, but they

must seek another rallying-place in future. And this ingenious Napoleon

paves the streets of his great cities with a smooth, compact composition

of asphaltum and sand. No more barricades of flagstones--no more

assaulting his Majesty's troops with cobbles. I cannot feel friendly

toward my quondam fellow-American, Napoleon III., especially at this

time,--[July, 1867.]--when in fancy I see his credulous victim,

Maximilian, lying stark and stiff in Mexico, and his maniac widow

watching eagerly from her French asylum for the form that will never

come--but I do admire his nerve, his calm self-reliance, his shrewd good

sense.

CHAPTER XVII.

We had a pleasant journey of it seaward again. We found that for the

three past nights our ship had been in a state of war. The first night

the sailors of a British ship, being happy with grog, came down on the

pier and challenged our sailors to a free fight. They accepted with

alacrity, repaired to the pier, and gained--their share of a drawn

battle. Several bruised and bloody members of both parties were carried

off by the police and imprisoned until the following morning. The next

night the British boys came again to renew the fight, but our men had had

strict orders to remain on board and out of sight. They did so, and the

besieging party grew noisy and more and more abusive as the fact became

apparent (to them) that our men were afraid to come out. They went away

finally with a closing burst of ridicule and offensive epithets. The

third night they came again and were more obstreperous than ever. They

swaggered up and down the almost deserted pier, and hurled curses,

obscenity, and stinging sarcasms at our crew. It was more than human

nature could bear. The executive officer ordered our men ashore--with

instructions not to fight. They charged the British and gained a

brilliant victory. I probably would not have mentioned this war had it

ended differently. But I travel to learn, and I still remember that they

picture no French defeats in the battle-galleries of Versailles.

It was like home to us to step on board the comfortable ship again and

smoke and lounge about her breezy decks. And yet it was not altogether

like home, either, because so many members of the family were away. We

missed some pleasant faces which we would rather have found at dinner,

and at night there were gaps in the euchre-parties which could not be

satisfactorily filled. "Moult" was in England, Jack in Switzerland,

Charley in Spain. Blucher was gone, none could tell where. But we were

at sea again, and we had the stars and the ocean to look at, and plenty

of room to meditate in.

In due time the shores of Italy were sighted, and as we stood gazing from

the decks, early in the bright summer morning, the stately city of Genoa

rose up out of the sea and flung back the sunlight from her hundred

palaces.

Here we rest for the present--or rather, here we have been trying to

rest, for some little time, but we run about too much to accomplish a

great deal in that line.

I would like to remain here. I had rather not go any further. There may

be prettier women in Europe, but I doubt it. The population of Genoa is

120,000; two-thirds of these are women, I think, and at least two-thirds

of the women are beautiful. They are as dressy and as tasteful and as

graceful as they could possibly be without being angels. However, angels

are not very dressy, I believe. At least the angels in pictures are not

--they wear nothing but wings. But these Genoese women do look so

charming. Most of the young demoiselles are robed in a cloud of white

from head to foot, though many trick themselves out more elaborately.

Nine-tenths of them wear nothing on their heads but a filmy sort of veil,

which falls down their backs like a white mist. They are very fair, and

many of them have blue eyes, but black and dreamy dark brown ones are met

with oftenest.

The ladies and gentlemen of Genoa have a pleasant fashion of promenading

in a large park on the top of a hill in the center of the city, from six

till nine in the evening, and then eating ices in a neighboring garden an

hour or two longer. We went to the park on Sunday evening. Two thousand

persons were present, chiefly young ladies and gentlemen. The gentlemen

were dressed in the very latest Paris fashions, and the robes of the

ladies glinted among the trees like so many snowflakes. The multitude

moved round and round the park in a great procession. The bands played,

and so did the fountains; the moon and the gas lamps lit up the scene,

and altogether it was a brilliant and an animated picture. I scanned

every female face that passed, and it seemed to me that all were

handsome. I never saw such a freshet of loveliness before. I did not

see how a man of only ordinary decision of character could marry here,

because before he could get his mind made up he would fall in love with

somebody else.

Never smoke any Italian tobacco. Never do it on any account. It makes

me shudder to think what it must be made of. You cannot throw an old

cigar "stub" down anywhere, but some vagabond will pounce upon it on the

instant. I like to smoke a good deal, but it wounds my sensibilities to

see one of these stub-hunters watching me out of the corners of his

hungry eyes and calculating how long my cigar will be likely to last.

It reminded me too painfully of that San Francisco undertaker who used to

go to sick-beds with his watch in his hand and time the corpse. One of

these stub-hunters followed us all over the park last night, and we never

had a smoke that was worth anything. We were always moved to appease him

with the stub before the cigar was half gone, because he looked so

viciously anxious. He regarded us as his own legitimate prey, by right

of discovery, I think, because he drove off several other professionals

who wanted to take stock in us.

Now, they surely must chew up those old stubs, and dry and sell them for

smoking-tobacco. Therefore, give your custom to other than Italian

brands of the article.

"The Superb" and the "City of Palaces" are names which Genoa has held for

centuries. She is full of palaces, certainly, and the palaces are

sumptuous inside, but they are very rusty without and make no pretensions

to architectural magnificence. "Genoa the Superb" would be a felicitous

title if it referred to the women.

We have visited several of the palaces--immense thick-walled piles, with

great stone staircases, tesselated marble pavements on the floors,

(sometimes they make a mosaic work, of intricate designs, wrought in

pebbles or little fragments of marble laid in cement,) and grand salons

hung with pictures by Rubens, Guido, Titian, Paul Veronese, and so on,

and portraits of heads of the family, in plumed helmets and gallant coats

of mail, and patrician ladies in stunning costumes of centuries ago.

But, of course, the folks were all out in the country for the summer, and

might not have known enough to ask us to dinner if they had been at home,

and so all the grand empty salons, with their resounding pavements, their

grim pictures of dead ancestors, and tattered banners with the dust of

bygone centuries upon them, seemed to brood solemnly of death and the

grave, and our spirits ebbed away, and our cheerfulness passed from us.

We never went up to the eleventh story. We always began to suspect

ghosts. There was always an undertaker-looking servant along, too, who

handed us a program, pointed to the picture that began the list of the

salon he was in, and then stood stiff and stark and unsmiling in his

petrified livery till we were ready to move on to the next chamber,

whereupon he marched sadly ahead and took up another malignantly

respectful position as before. I wasted so much time praying that the

roof would fall in on these dispiriting flunkies that I had but little

left to bestow upon palace and pictures.

And besides, as in Paris, we had a guide. Perdition catch all the

guides. This one said he was the most gifted linguist in Genoa, as far

as English was concerned, and that only two persons in the city beside

himself could talk the language at all. He showed us the birthplace of

Christopher Columbus, and after we had reflected in silent awe before it

for fifteen minutes, he said it was not the birthplace of Columbus, but

of Columbus' grandmother! When we demanded an explanation of his conduct

he only shrugged his shoulders and answered in barbarous Italian. I

shall speak further of this guide in a future chapter. All the

information we got out of him we shall be able to carry along with us, I

think.

I have not been to church so often in a long time as I have in the last

few weeks. The people in these old lands seem to make churches their

specialty. Especially does this seem to be the case with the citizens of

Genoa. I think there is a church every three or four hundred yards all

over town. The streets are sprinkled from end to end with shovel-hatted,

long-robed, well-fed priests, and the church bells by dozens are pealing

all the day long, nearly. Every now and then one comes across a friar of

orders gray, with shaven head, long, coarse robe, rope girdle and beads,

and with feet cased in sandals or entirely bare. These worthies suffer

in the flesh and do penance all their lives, I suppose, but they look

like consummate famine-breeders. They are all fat and serene.

The old Cathedral of San Lorenzo is about as notable a building as we

have found in Genoa. It is vast, and has colonnades of noble pillars,

and a great organ, and the customary pomp of gilded moldings, pictures,

frescoed ceilings, and so forth. I cannot describe it, of course--it

would require a good many pages to do that. But it is a curious place.

They said that half of it--from the front door halfway down to the altar

--was a Jewish synagogue before the Saviour was born, and that no

alteration had been made in it since that time. We doubted the

statement, but did it reluctantly. We would much rather have believed

it. The place looked in too perfect repair to be so ancient.

The main point of interest about the cathedral is the little Chapel of

St. John the Baptist. They only allow women to enter it on one day in

the year, on account of the animosity they still cherish against the sex

because of the murder of the Saint to gratify a caprice of Herodias. In

this Chapel is a marble chest, in which, they told us, were the ashes of

St. John; and around it was wound a chain, which, they said, had confined

him when he was in prison. We did not desire to disbelieve these

statements, and yet we could not feel certain that they were correct

--partly because we could have broken that chain, and so could St. John,

and partly because we had seen St. John's ashes before, in another

church. We could not bring ourselves to think St. John had two sets of

ashes.

They also showed us a portrait of the Madonna which was painted by St.

Luke, and it did not look half as old and smoky as some of the pictures

by Rubens. We could not help admiring the Apostle's modesty in never

once mentioning in his writings that he could paint.

But isn't this relic matter a little overdone? We find a piece of the

true cross in every old church we go into, and some of the nails that

held it together. I would not like to be positive, but I think we have

seen as much as a keg of these nails. Then there is the crown of thorns;

they have part of one in Sainte Chapelle, in Paris, and part of one also

in Notre Dame. And as for bones of St. Denis, I feel certain we have

seen enough of them to duplicate him if necessary.

I only meant to write about the churches, but I keep wandering from the

subject. I could say that the Church of the Annunciation is a wilderness

of beautiful columns, of statues, gilded moldings, and pictures almost

countless, but that would give no one an entirely perfect idea of the

thing, and so where is the use? One family built the whole edifice, and

have got money left. There is where the mystery lies. We had an idea at

first that only a mint could have survived the expense.

These people here live in the heaviest, highest, broadest, darkest,

solidest houses one can imagine. Each one might "laugh a siege to

scorn." A hundred feet front and a hundred high is about the style, and

you go up three flights of stairs before you begin to come upon signs of

occupancy. Everything is stone, and stone of the heaviest--floors,

stairways, mantels, benches--everything. The walls are four to five feet

thick. The streets generally are four or five to eight feet wide and as

crooked as a corkscrew. You go along one of these gloomy cracks, and

look up and behold the sky like a mere ribbon of light, far above your

head, where the tops of the tall houses on either side of the street bend

almost together. You feel as if you were at the bottom of some

tremendous abyss, with all the world far above you. You wind in and out

and here and there, in the most mysterious way, and have no more idea of

the points of the compass than if you were a blind man. You can never

persuade yourself that these are actually streets, and the frowning,

dingy, monstrous houses dwellings, till you see one of these beautiful,

prettily dressed women emerge from them--see her emerge from a dark,

dreary-looking den that looks dungeon all over, from the ground away

halfway up to heaven. And then you wonder that such a charming moth

could come from such a forbidding shell as that. The streets are wisely

made narrow and the houses heavy and thick and stony, in order that the

people may be cool in this roasting climate. And they are cool, and stay

so. And while I think of it--the men wear hats and have very dark

complexions, but the women wear no headgear but a flimsy veil like a

gossamer's web, and yet are exceedingly fair as a general thing.

Singular, isn't it?

The huge palaces of Genoa are each supposed to be occupied by one family,

but they could accommodate a hundred, I should think. They are relics of

the grandeur of Genoa's palmy days--the days when she was a great

commercial and maritime power several centuries ago. These houses, solid

marble palaces though they be, are in many cases of a dull pinkish color,

outside, and from pavement to eaves are pictured with Genoese battle

scenes, with monstrous Jupiters and Cupids, and with familiar

illustrations from Grecian mythology. Where the paint has yielded to age

and exposure and is peeling off in flakes and patches, the effect is not

happy. A noseless Cupid or a Jupiter with an eye out or a Venus with a

fly-blister on her breast, are not attractive features in a picture.

Some of these painted walls reminded me somewhat of the tall van,

plastered with fanciful bills and posters, that follows the bandwagon of

a circus about a country village. I have not read or heard that the

outsides of the houses of any other European city are frescoed in this

way.

I can not conceive of such a thing as Genoa in ruins. Such massive

arches, such ponderous substructions as support these towering

broad-winged edifices, we have seldom seen before; and surely the great

blocks of stone of which these edifices are built can never decay; walls

that are as thick as an ordinary American doorway is high cannot

crumble.

The republics of Genoa and Pisa were very powerful in the Middle Ages.

Their ships filled the Mediterranean, and they carried on an extensive

commerce with Constantinople and Syria. Their warehouses were the great

distributing depots from whence the costly merchandise of the East was

sent abroad over Europe. They were warlike little nations and defied, in

those days, governments that overshadow them now as mountains overshadow

molehills. The Saracens captured and pillaged Genoa nine hundred years

ago, but during the following century Genoa and Pisa entered into an

offensive and defensive alliance and besieged the Saracen colonies in

Sardinia and the Balearic Isles with an obstinacy that maintained its

pristine vigor and held to its purpose for forty long years. They were

victorious at last and divided their conquests equably among their great

patrician families. Descendants of some of those proud families still

inhabit the palaces of Genoa, and trace in their own features a

resemblance to the grim knights whose portraits hang in their stately

halls, and to pictured beauties with pouting lips and merry eyes whose

originals have been dust and ashes for many a dead and forgotten century.

The hotel we live in belonged to one of those great orders of knights of

the Cross in the times of the Crusades, and its mailed sentinels once

kept watch and ward in its massive turrets and woke the echoes of these

halls and corridors with their iron heels.

But Genoa's greatness has degenerated into an unostentatious commerce in

velvets and silver filagree-work. They say that each European town has

its specialty. These filagree things are Genoa's specialty. Her smiths

take silver ingots and work them up into all manner of graceful and

beautiful forms. They make bunches of flowers, from flakes and wires of

silver, that counterfeit the delicate creations the frost weaves upon a

windowpane; and we were shown a miniature silver temple whose fluted

columns, whose Corinthian capitals and rich entablatures, whose spire,

statues, bells, and ornate lavishness of sculpture were wrought in

polished silver, and with such matchless art that every detail was a

fascinating study and the finished edifice a wonder of beauty.

We are ready to move again, though we are not really tired yet of the

narrow passages of this old marble cave. Cave is a good word--when

speaking of Genoa under the stars. When we have been prowling at

midnight through the gloomy crevices they call streets, where no

footfalls but ours were echoing, where only ourselves were abroad, and

lights appeared only at long intervals and at a distance, and

mysteriously disappeared again, and the houses at our elbows seemed to

stretch upward farther than ever toward the heavens, the memory of a cave

I used to know at home was always in my mind, with its lofty passages,

its silence and solitude, its shrouding gloom, its sepulchral echoes, its

flitting lights, and more than all, its sudden revelations of branching

crevices and corridors where we least expected them.

We are not tired of the endless processions of cheerful, chattering

gossipers that throng these courts and streets all day long, either; nor

of the coarse-robed monks; nor of the "Asti" wines, which that old doctor

(whom we call the Oracle,) with customary felicity in the matter of

getting everything wrong, misterms "nasty." But we must go,

nevertheless.

Our last sight was the cemetery (a burial place intended to accommodate

60,000 bodies,) and we shall continue to remember it after we shall have

forgotten the palaces. It is a vast marble collonaded corridor extending

around a great unoccupied square of ground; its broad floor is marble,

and on every slab is an inscription--for every slab covers a corpse. On

either side, as one walks down the middle of the passage, are monuments,

tombs, and sculptured figures that are exquisitely wrought and are full

of grace and beauty. They are new and snowy; every outline is perfect,

every feature guiltless of mutilation, flaw, or blemish; and therefore,

to us these far-reaching ranks of bewitching forms are a hundred fold

more lovely than the damaged and dingy statuary they have saved from the

wreck of ancient art and set up in the galleries of Paris for the worship

of the world.

Well provided with cigars and other necessaries of life, we are now ready

to take the cars for Milan.

CHAPTER XVIII.

All day long we sped through a mountainous country whose peaks were

bright with sunshine, whose hillsides were dotted with pretty villas

sitting in the midst of gardens and shrubbery, and whose deep ravines

were cool and shady and looked ever so inviting from where we and the

birds were winging our flight through the sultry upper air.

We had plenty of chilly tunnels wherein to check our perspiration,

though. We timed one of them. We were twenty minutes passing through

it, going at the rate of thirty to thirty-five miles an hour.

Beyond Alessandria we passed the battle-field of Marengo.

Toward dusk we drew near Milan and caught glimpses of the city and the

blue mountain peaks beyond. But we were not caring for these things

--they did not interest us in the least. We were in a fever of impatience;

we were dying to see the renowned cathedral! We watched--in this

direction and that--all around--everywhere. We needed no one to point it

out--we did not wish any one to point it out--we would recognize it even

in the desert of the great Sahara.

At last, a forest of graceful needles, shimmering in the amber sunlight,

rose slowly above the pygmy housetops, as one sometimes sees, in the far

horizon, a gilded and pinnacled mass of cloud lift itself above the waste

of waves, at sea,--the Cathedral! We knew it in a moment.

Half of that night, and all of the next day, this architectural autocrat

was our sole object of interest.

What a wonder it is! So grand, so solemn, so vast! And yet so delicate,

so airy, so graceful! A very world of solid weight, and yet it seems in

the soft moonlight only a fairy delusion of frost-work that might vanish

with a breath! How sharply its pinnacled angles and its wilderness of

spires were cut against the sky, and how richly their shadows fell upon

its snowy roof! It was a vision!--a miracle!--an anthem sung in stone, a

poem wrought in marble!

Howsoever you look at the great cathedral, it is noble, it is beautiful!

Wherever you stand in Milan or within seven miles of Milan, it is visible

and when it is visible, no other object can chain your whole attention.

Leave your eyes unfettered by your will but a single instant and they

will surely turn to seek it. It is the first thing you look for when you

rise in the morning, and the last your lingering gaze rests upon at

night. Surely it must be the princeliest creation that ever brain of man

conceived.

At nine o'clock in the morning we went and stood before this marble

colossus. The central one of its five great doors is bordered with a

bas-relief of birds and fruits and beasts and insects, which have been so

ingeniously carved out of the marble that they seem like living

creatures--and the figures are so numerous and the design so complex that

one might study it a week without exhausting its interest. On the great

steeple--surmounting the myriad of spires--inside of the spires--over the

doors, the windows--in nooks and corners--every where that a niche or a

perch can be found about the enormous building, from summit to base,

there is a marble statue, and every statue is a study in itself!

Raphael, Angelo, Canova--giants like these gave birth to the designs, and

their own pupils carved them. Every face is eloquent with expression,

and every attitude is full of grace. Away above, on the lofty roof, rank

on rank of carved and fretted spires spring high in the air, and through

their rich tracery one sees the sky beyond. In their midst the central

steeple towers proudly up like the mainmast of some great Indiaman among

a fleet of coasters.

We wished to go aloft. The sacristan showed us a marble stairway (of

course it was marble, and of the purest and whitest--there is no other

stone, no brick, no wood, among its building materials) and told us to go

up one hundred and eighty-two steps and stop till he came. It was not

necessary to say stop--we should have done that any how. We were tired

by the time we got there. This was the roof. Here, springing from its

broad marble flagstones, were the long files of spires, looking very tall

close at hand, but diminishing in the distance like the pipes of an

organ. We could see now that the statue on the top of each was the size

of a large man, though they all looked like dolls from the street. We

could see, also, that from the inside of each and every one of these

hollow spires, from sixteen to thirty-one beautiful marble statues looked

out upon the world below.

From the eaves to the comb of the roof stretched in endless succession

great curved marble beams, like the fore-and-aft braces of a steamboat,

and along each beam from end to end stood up a row of richly carved

flowers and fruits--each separate and distinct in kind, and over 15,000

species represented. At a little distance these rows seem to close

together like the ties of a railroad track, and then the mingling

together of the buds and blossoms of this marble garden forms a picture

that is very charming to the eye.

We descended and entered. Within the church, long rows of fluted

columns, like huge monuments, divided the building into broad aisles, and

on the figured pavement fell many a soft blush from the painted windows

above. I knew the church was very large, but I could not fully

appreciate its great size until I noticed that the men standing far down

by the altar looked like boys, and seemed to glide, rather than walk. We

loitered about gazing aloft at the monster windows all aglow with

brilliantly colored scenes in the lives of the Saviour and his followers.

Some of these pictures are mosaics, and so artistically are their

thousand particles of tinted glass or stone put together that the work

has all the smoothness and finish of a painting. We counted sixty panes

of glass in one window, and each pane was adorned with one of these

master achievements of genius and patience.

The guide showed us a coffee-colored piece of sculpture which he said was

considered to have come from the hand of Phidias, since it was not

possible that any other artist, of any epoch, could have copied nature

with such faultless accuracy. The figure was that of a man without a

skin; with every vein, artery, muscle, every fiber and tendon and tissue

of the human frame represented in minute detail. It looked natural,

because somehow it looked as if it were in pain. A skinned man would be

likely to look that way unless his attention were occupied with some

other matter. It was a hideous thing, and yet there was a fascination

about it some where. I am very sorry I saw it, because I shall always

see it now. I shall dream of it sometimes. I shall dream that it is

resting its corded arms on the bed's head and looking down on me with its

dead eyes; I shall dream that it is stretched between the sheets with me

and touching me with its exposed muscles and its stringy cold legs.

It is hard to forget repulsive things. I remember yet how I ran off from

school once, when I was a boy, and then, pretty late at night, concluded

to climb into the window of my father's office and sleep on a lounge,

because I had a delicacy about going home and getting thrashed. As I lay

on the lounge and my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, I fancied I

could see a long, dusky, shapeless thing stretched upon the floor. A

cold shiver went through me. I turned my face to the wall. That did not

answer. I was afraid that that thing would creep over and seize me in

the dark. I turned back and stared at it for minutes and minutes--they

seemed hours. It appeared to me that the lagging moonlight never, never

would get to it. I turned to the wall and counted twenty, to pass the

feverish time away. I looked--the pale square was nearer. I turned

again and counted fifty--it was almost touching it. With desperate will

I turned again and counted one hundred, and faced about, all in a

tremble. A white human hand lay in the moonlight! Such an awful sinking

at the heart--such a sudden gasp for breath! I felt--I cannot tell what

I felt. When I recovered strength enough, I faced the wall again. But

no boy could have remained so with that mysterious hand behind him. I

counted again and looked--the most of a naked arm was exposed. I put my

hands over my eyes and counted till I could stand it no longer, and then

--the pallid face of a man was there, with the corners of the mouth drawn

down, and the eyes fixed and glassy in death! I raised to a sitting

posture and glowered on that corpse till the light crept down the bare

breastline by line--inch by inch--past the nipple--and then it disclosed

a ghastly stab!

I went away from there. I do not say that I went away in any sort of a

hurry, but I simply went--that is sufficient. I went out at the window,

and I carried the sash along with me. I did not need the sash, but it

was handier to take it than it was to leave it, and so I took it.--I was

not scared, but I was considerably agitated.

When I reached home, they whipped me, but I enjoyed it. It seemed

perfectly delightful. That man had been stabbed near the office that

afternoon, and they carried him in there to doctor him, but he only lived

an hour. I have slept in the same room with him often since then--in my

dreams.

Now we will descend into the crypt, under the grand altar of Milan

Cathedral, and receive an impressive sermon from lips that have been

silent and hands that have been gestureless for three hundred years.

The priest stopped in a small dungeon and held up his candle. This was

the last resting-place of a good man, a warm-hearted, unselfish man; a

man whose whole life was given to succoring the poor, encouraging the

faint-hearted, visiting the sick; in relieving distress, whenever and

wherever he found it. His heart, his hand, and his purse were always

open. With his story in one's mind he can almost see his benignant

countenance moving calmly among the haggard faces of Milan in the days

when the plague swept the city, brave where all others were cowards, full

of compassion where pity had been crushed out of all other breasts by the

instinct of self-preservation gone mad with terror, cheering all, praying

with all, helping all, with hand and brain and purse, at a time when

parents forsook their children, the friend deserted the friend, and the

brother turned away from the sister while her pleadings were still

wailing in his ears.

This was good St. Charles Borromeo, Bishop of Milan. The people idolized

him; princes lavished uncounted treasures upon him. We stood in his

tomb. Near by was the sarcophagus, lighted by the dripping candles. The

walls were faced with bas-reliefs representing scenes in his life done in

massive silver. The priest put on a short white lace garment over his

black robe, crossed himself, bowed reverently, and began to turn a

windlass slowly. The sarcophagus separated in two parts, lengthwise, and

the lower part sank down and disclosed a coffin of rock crystal as clear

as the atmosphere. Within lay the body, robed in costly habiliments

covered with gold embroidery and starred with scintillating gems. The

decaying head was black with age, the dry skin was drawn tight to the

bones, the eyes were gone, there was a hole in the temple and another in

the cheek, and the skinny lips were parted as in a ghastly smile! Over

this dreadful face, its dust and decay and its mocking grin, hung a crown

sown thick with flashing brilliants; and upon the breast lay crosses and

croziers of solid gold that were splendid with emeralds and diamonds.

How poor, and cheap, and trivial these gew-gaws seemed in presence of the

solemnity, the grandeur, the awful majesty of Death! Think of Milton,

Shakespeare, Washington, standing before a reverent world tricked out in

the glass beads, the brass ear-rings and tin trumpery of the savages of

the plains!

Dead Bartolomeo preached his pregnant sermon, and its burden was: You

that worship the vanities of earth--you that long for worldly honor,

worldly wealth, worldly fame--behold their worth!

To us it seemed that so good a man, so kind a heart, so simple a nature,

deserved rest and peace in a grave sacred from the intrusion of prying

eyes, and believed that he himself would have preferred to have it so,

but peradventure our wisdom was at fault in this regard.

As we came out upon the floor of the church again, another priest

volunteered to show us the treasures of the church.

What, more? The furniture of the narrow chamber of death we had just

visited weighed six millions of francs in ounces and carats alone,

without a penny thrown into the account for the costly workmanship

bestowed upon them! But we followed into a large room filled with tall

wooden presses like wardrobes. He threw them open, and behold, the

cargoes of "crude bullion" of the assay offices of Nevada faded out of my

memory. There were Virgins and bishops there, above their natural size,

made of solid silver, each worth, by weight, from eight hundred thousand

to two millions of francs, and bearing gemmed books in their hands worth

eighty thousand; there were bas-reliefs that weighed six hundred pounds,

carved in solid silver; croziers and crosses, and candlesticks six and

eight feet high, all of virgin gold, and brilliant with precious stones;

and beside these were all manner of cups and vases, and such things, rich

in proportion. It was an Aladdin's palace. The treasures here, by

simple weight, without counting workmanship, were valued at fifty

millions of francs! If I could get the custody of them for a while, I

fear me the market price of silver bishops would advance shortly, on

account of their exceeding scarcity in the Cathedral of Milan.

The priests showed us two of St. Paul's fingers, and one of St. Peter's;

a bone of Judas Iscariot, (it was black,) and also bones of all the other

disciples; a handkerchief in which the Saviour had left the impression of

his face. Among the most precious of the relics were a stone from the

Holy Sepulchre, part of the crown of thorns, (they have a whole one at

Notre Dame,) a fragment of the purple robe worn by the Saviour, a nail

from the Cross, and a picture of the Virgin and Child painted by the

veritable hand of St. Luke. This is the second of St. Luke's Virgins we

have seen. Once a year all these holy relics are carried in procession

through the streets of Milan.

I like to revel in the dryest details of the great cathedral. The

building is five hundred feet long by one hundred and eighty wide, and

the principal steeple is in the neighborhood of four hundred feet high.

It has 7,148 marble statues, and will have upwards of three thousand more

when it is finished. In addition it has one thousand five hundred

bas-reliefs. It has one hundred and thirty-six spires--twenty-one more

are to be added. Each spire is surmounted by a statue six and a half

feet high. Every thing about the church is marble, and all from the

same quarry; it was bequeathed to the Archbishopric for this purpose

centuries ago. So nothing but the mere workmanship costs; still that is

expensive--the bill foots up six hundred and eighty-four millions of

francs thus far (considerably over a hundred millions of dollars,) and

it is estimated that it will take a hundred and twenty years yet to

finish the cathedral. It looks complete, but is far from being so. We

saw a new statue put in its niche yesterday, alongside of one which had

been standing these four hundred years, they said. There are four

staircases leading up to the main steeple, each of which cost a hundred

thousand dollars, with the four hundred and eight statues which adorn

them. Marco Compioni was the architect who designed the wonderful

structure more than five hundred years ago, and it took him forty-six

years to work out the plan and get it ready to hand over to the

builders. He is dead now. The building was begun a little less than

five hundred years ago, and the third generation hence will not see it

completed.

The building looks best by moonlight, because the older portions of it,

being stained with age, contrast unpleasantly with the newer and whiter

portions. It seems somewhat too broad for its height, but may be

familiarity with it might dissipate this impression.

They say that the Cathedral of Milan is second only to St. Peter's at

Rome. I cannot understand how it can be second to anything made by human

hands.

We bid it good-bye, now--possibly for all time. How surely, in some

future day, when the memory of it shall have lost its vividness, shall we

half believe we have seen it in a wonderful dream, but never with waking

eyes!

CHAPTER XIX.

"Do you wis zo haut can be?"

That was what the guide asked when we were looking up at the bronze

horses on the Arch of Peace. It meant, do you wish to go up there?

I give it as a specimen of guide-English. These are the people that make

life a burthen to the tourist. Their tongues are never still. They talk

forever and forever, and that is the kind of billingsgate they use.

Inspiration itself could hardly comprehend them. If they would only show

you a masterpiece of art, or a venerable tomb, or a prison-house, or a

battle-field, hallowed by touching memories or historical reminiscences,

or grand traditions, and then step aside and hold still for ten minutes

and let you think, it would not be so bad. But they interrupt every

dream, every pleasant train of thought, with their tiresome cackling.

Sometimes when I have been standing before some cherished old idol of

mine that I remembered years and years ago in pictures in the geography

at school, I have thought I would give a whole world if the human parrot

at my side would suddenly perish where he stood and leave me to gaze, and

ponder, and worship.

No, we did not "wis zo haut can be." We wished to go to La Scala, the

largest theater in the world, I think they call it. We did so. It was a

large place. Seven separate and distinct masses of humanity--six great

circles and a monster parquette.

We wished to go to the Ambrosian Library, and we did that also. We saw a

manuscript of Virgil, with annotations in the handwriting of Petrarch,

the gentleman who loved another man's Laura, and lavished upon her all

through life a love which was a clear waste of the raw material. It was

sound sentiment, but bad judgment. It brought both parties fame, and

created a fountain of commiseration for them in sentimental breasts that

is running yet. But who says a word in behalf of poor Mr. Laura? (I do

not know his other name.) Who glorifies him? Who bedews him with tears?

Who writes poetry about him? Nobody. How do you suppose he liked the

state of things that has given the world so much pleasure? How did he

enjoy having another man following his wife every where and making her

name a familiar word in every garlic-exterminating mouth in Italy with

his sonnets to her pre-empted eyebrows? They got fame and sympathy--he

got neither. This is a peculiarly felicitous instance of what is called

poetical justice. It is all very fine; but it does not chime with my

notions of right. It is too one-sided--too ungenerous.

Let the world go on fretting about Laura and Petrarch if it will; but as

for me, my tears and my lamentations shall be lavished upon the unsung

defendant.

We saw also an autograph letter of Lucrezia Borgia, a lady for whom I

have always entertained the highest respect, on account of her rare

histrionic capabilities, her opulence in solid gold goblets made of

gilded wood, her high distinction as an operatic screamer, and the

facility with which she could order a sextuple funeral and get the

corpses ready for it. We saw one single coarse yellow hair from

Lucrezia's head, likewise. It awoke emotions, but we still live. In

this same library we saw some drawings by Michael Angelo (these Italians

call him Mickel Angelo,) and Leonardo da Vinci. (They spell it Vinci and

pronounce it Vinchy; foreigners always spell better than they pronounce.)

We reserve our opinion of these sketches.

In another building they showed us a fresco representing some lions and

other beasts drawing chariots; and they seemed to project so far from the

wall that we took them to be sculptures. The artist had shrewdly

heightened the delusion by painting dust on the creatures' backs, as if

it had fallen there naturally and properly. Smart fellow--if it be smart

to deceive strangers.

Elsewhere we saw a huge Roman amphitheatre, with its stone seats still in

good preservation. Modernized, it is now the scene of more peaceful

recreations than the exhibition of a party of wild beasts with Christians

for dinner. Part of the time, the Milanese use it for a race track, and

at other seasons they flood it with water and have spirited yachting

regattas there. The guide told us these things, and he would hardly try

so hazardous an experiment as the telling of a falsehood, when it is all

he can do to speak the truth in English without getting the lock-jaw.

In another place we were shown a sort of summer arbor, with a fence

before it. We said that was nothing. We looked again, and saw, through

the arbor, an endless stretch of garden, and shrubbery, and grassy lawn.

We were perfectly willing to go in there and rest, but it could not be

done. It was only another delusion--a painting by some ingenious artist

with little charity in his heart for tired folk. The deception was

perfect. No one could have imagined the park was not real. We even

thought we smelled the flowers at first.

We got a carriage at twilight and drove in the shaded avenues with the

other nobility, and after dinner we took wine and ices in a fine garden

with the great public. The music was excellent, the flowers and

shrubbery were pleasant to the eye, the scene was vivacious, everybody

was genteel and well-behaved, and the ladies were slightly moustached,

and handsomely dressed, but very homely.

We adjourned to a cafe and played billiards an hour, and I made six or

seven points by the doctor pocketing his ball, and he made as many by my

pocketing my ball. We came near making a carom sometimes, but not the

one we were trying to make. The table was of the usual European style

--cushions dead and twice as high as the balls; the cues in bad repair.

The natives play only a sort of pool on them. We have never seen any

body playing the French three-ball game yet, and I doubt if there is any

such game known in France, or that there lives any man mad enough to try

to play it on one of these European tables. We had to stop playing

finally because Dan got to sleeping fifteen minutes between the counts

and paying no attention to his marking.

Afterward we walked up and down one of the most popular streets for some

time, enjoying other people's comfort and wishing we could export some of

it to our restless, driving, vitality-consuming marts at home. Just in

this one matter lies the main charm of life in Europe--comfort. In

America, we hurry--which is well; but when the day's work is done, we go

on thinking of losses and gains, we plan for the morrow, we even carry

our business cares to bed with us, and toss and worry over them when we

ought to be restoring our racked bodies and brains with sleep. We burn

up our energies with these excitements, and either die early or drop into

a lean and mean old age at a time of life which they call a man's prime

in Europe. When an acre of ground has produced long and well, we let it

lie fallow and rest for a season; we take no man clear across the

continent in the same coach he started in--the coach is stabled somewhere

on the plains and its heated machinery allowed to cool for a few days;

when a razor has seen long service and refuses to hold an edge, the

barber lays it away for a few weeks, and the edge comes back of its own

accord. We bestow thoughtful care upon inanimate objects, but none upon

ourselves. What a robust people, what a nation of thinkers we might be,

if we would only lay ourselves on the shelf occasionally and renew our

edges!

I do envy these Europeans the comfort they take. When the work of the

day is done, they forget it. Some of them go, with wife and children, to

a beer hall and sit quietly and genteelly drinking a mug or two of ale

and listening to music; others walk the streets, others drive in the

avenues; others assemble in the great ornamental squares in the early

evening to enjoy the sight and the fragrance of flowers and to hear the

military bands play--no European city being without its fine military

music at eventide; and yet others of the populace sit in the open air in

front of the refreshment houses and eat ices and drink mild beverages

that could not harm a child. They go to bed moderately early, and sleep

well. They are always quiet, always orderly, always cheerful,

comfortable, and appreciative of life and its manifold blessings. One

never sees a drunken man among them. The change that has come over our

little party is surprising. Day by day we lose some of our restlessness

and absorb some of the spirit of quietude and ease that is in the

tranquil atmosphere about us and in the demeanor of the people. We grow

wise apace. We begin to comprehend what life is for.

We have had a bath in Milan, in a public bath-house. They were going to

put all three of us in one bath-tub, but we objected. Each of us had an

Italian farm on his back. We could have felt affluent if we had been

officially surveyed and fenced in. We chose to have three bathtubs, and

large ones--tubs suited to the dignity of aristocrats who had real

estate, and brought it with them. After we were stripped and had taken

the first chilly dash, we discovered that haunting atrocity that has

embittered our lives in so many cities and villages of Italy and France

--there was no soap. I called. A woman answered, and I barely had time to

throw myself against the door--she would have been in, in another second.

I said:

"Beware, woman! Go away from here--go away, now, or it will be the worse

for you. I am an unprotected male, but I will preserve my honor at the

peril of my life!"

These words must have frightened her, for she skurried away very fast.

Dan's voice rose on the air:

"Oh, bring some soap, why don't you!"

The reply was Italian. Dan resumed:

"Soap, you know--soap. That is what I want--soap. S-o-a-p, soap;

s-o-p-e, soap; s-o-u-p, soap. Hurry up! I don't know how you Irish

spell it, but I want it. Spell it to suit yourself, but fetch it.

I'm freezing."

I heard the doctor say impressively:

"Dan, how often have we told you that these foreigners cannot understand

English? Why will you not depend upon us? Why will you not tell us what

you want, and let us ask for it in the language of the country? It would

save us a great deal of the humiliation your reprehensible ignorance

causes us. I will address this person in his mother tongue: 'Here,

cospetto! corpo di Bacco! Sacramento! Solferino!--Soap, you son of a

gun!' Dan, if you would let us talk for you, you would never expose your

ignorant vulgarity."

Even this fluent discharge of Italian did not bring the soap at once, but

there was a good reason for it. There was not such an article about the

establishment. It is my belief that there never had been. They had to

send far up town, and to several different places before they finally got

it, so they said. We had to wait twenty or thirty minutes. The same

thing had occurred the evening before, at the hotel. I think I have

divined the reason for this state of things at last. The English know

how to travel comfortably, and they carry soap with them; other

foreigners do not use the article.

At every hotel we stop at we always have to send out for soap, at the

last moment, when we are grooming ourselves for dinner, and they put it

in the bill along with the candles and other nonsense. In Marseilles

they make half the fancy toilet soap we consume in America, but the

Marseillaise only have a vague theoretical idea of its use, which they

have obtained from books of travel, just as they have acquired an

uncertain notion of clean shirts, and the peculiarities of the gorilla,

and other curious matters. This reminds me of poor Blucher's note to the

landlord in Paris:

PARIS, le 7 Juillet. Monsieur le Landlord--Sir: Pourquoi don't you

mettez some savon in your bed-chambers? Est-ce que vous pensez I

will steal it? La nuit passee you charged me pour deux chandelles

when I only had one; hier vous avez charged me avec glace when I had

none at all; tout les jours you are coming some fresh game or other

on me, mais vous ne pouvez pas play this savon dodge on me twice.

Savon is a necessary de la vie to any body but a Frenchman, et je

l'aurai hors de cet hotel or make trouble. You hear me. Allons.

BLUCHER.

I remonstrated against the sending of this note, because it was so mixed

up that the landlord would never be able to make head or tail of it; but

Blucher said he guessed the old man could read the French of it and

average the rest.

Blucher's French is bad enough, but it is not much worse than the English

one finds in advertisements all over Italy every day. For instance,

observe the printed card of the hotel we shall probably stop at on the

shores of Lake Como:

"NOTISH."

"This hotel which the best it is in Italy and most superb, is

handsome locate on the best situation of the lake, with the most

splendid view near the Villas Melzy, to the King of Belgian, and

Serbelloni. This hotel have recently enlarge, do offer all

commodities on moderate price, at the strangers gentlemen who whish

spend the seasons on the Lake Come."

How is that, for a specimen? In the hotel is a handsome little chapel

where an English clergyman is employed to preach to such of the guests of

the house as hail from England and America, and this fact is also set

forth in barbarous English in the same advertisement. Wouldn't you have

supposed that the adventurous linguist who framed the card would have

known enough to submit it to that clergyman before he sent it to the

printer?

Here in Milan, in an ancient tumble-down ruin of a church, is the

mournful wreck of the most celebrated painting in the world--"The Last

Supper," by Leonardo da Vinci. We are not infallible judges of pictures,

but of course we went there to see this wonderful painting, once so

beautiful, always so worshipped by masters in art, and forever to be

famous in song and story. And the first thing that occurred was the

infliction on us of a placard fairly reeking with wretched English. Take

a morsel of it: "Bartholomew (that is the first figure on the left hand

side at the spectator,) uncertain and doubtful about what he thinks to

have heard, and upon which he wants to be assured by himself at Christ

and by no others."

Good, isn't it? And then Peter is described as "argumenting in a

threatening and angrily condition at Judas Iscariot."

This paragraph recalls the picture. "The Last Supper" is painted on the

dilapidated wall of what was a little chapel attached to the main church

in ancient times, I suppose. It is battered and scarred in every

direction, and stained and discolored by time, and Napoleon's horses

kicked the legs off most the disciples when they (the horses, not the

disciples,) were stabled there more than half a century ago.

I recognized the old picture in a moment--the Saviour with bowed head

seated at the centre of a long, rough table with scattering fruits and

dishes upon it, and six disciples on either side in their long robes,

talking to each other--the picture from which all engravings and all

copies have been made for three centuries. Perhaps no living man has

ever known an attempt to paint the Lord's Supper differently. The world

seems to have become settled in the belief, long ago, that it is not

possible for human genius to outdo this creation of da Vinci's. I

suppose painters will go on copying it as long as any of the original is

left visible to the eye. There were a dozen easels in the room, and as

many artists transferring the great picture to their canvases. Fifty

proofs of steel engravings and lithographs were scattered around, too.

And as usual, I could not help noticing how superior the copies were to

the original, that is, to my inexperienced eye. Wherever you find a

Raphael, a Rubens, a Michelangelo, a Carracci, or a da Vinci (and we see

them every day,) you find artists copying them, and the copies are always

the handsomest. Maybe the originals were handsome when they were new,

but they are not now.

This picture is about thirty feet long, and ten or twelve high, I should

think, and the figures are at least life size. It is one of the largest

paintings in Europe.

The colors are dimmed with age; the countenances are scaled and marred,

and nearly all expression is gone from them; the hair is a dead blur upon

the wall, and there is no life in the eyes. Only the attitudes are

certain.

People come here from all parts of the world, and glorify this

masterpiece. They stand entranced before it with bated breath and parted

lips, and when they speak, it is only in the catchy ejaculations of

rapture:

"Oh, wonderful!"

"Such expression!"

"Such grace of attitude!"

"Such dignity!"

"Such faultless drawing!"

"Such matchless coloring!"

"Such feeling!"

"What delicacy of touch!"

"What sublimity of conception!"

"A vision! A vision!"

I only envy these people; I envy them their honest admiration, if it be

honest--their delight, if they feel delight. I harbor no animosity

toward any of them. But at the same time the thought will intrude itself

upon me, How can they see what is not visible? What would you think of a

man who looked at some decayed, blind, toothless, pock-marked Cleopatra,

and said: "What matchless beauty! What soul! What expression!" What

would you think of a man who gazed upon a dingy, foggy sunset, and said:

"What sublimity! What feeling! What richness of coloring!" What would

you think of a man who stared in ecstasy upon a desert of stumps and

said: "Oh, my soul, my beating heart, what a noble forest is here!"

You would think that those men had an astonishing talent for seeing

things that had already passed away. It was what I thought when I stood

before "The Last Supper" and heard men apostrophizing wonders, and

beauties and perfections which had faded out of the picture and gone, a

hundred years before they were born. We can imagine the beauty that was

once in an aged face; we can imagine the forest if we see the stumps; but

we can not absolutely see these things when they are not there. I am

willing to believe that the eye of the practiced artist can rest upon the

Last Supper and renew a lustre where only a hint of it is left, supply a

tint that has faded away, restore an expression that is gone; patch, and

color, and add, to the dull canvas until at last its figures shall stand

before him aglow with the life, the feeling, the freshness, yea, with all

the noble beauty that was theirs when first they came from the hand of

the master. But I can not work this miracle. Can those other uninspired

visitors do it, or do they only happily imagine they do?

After reading so much about it, I am satisfied that the Last Supper was a

very miracle of art once. But it was three hundred years ago.

It vexes me to hear people talk so glibly of "feeling," "expression,"

"tone," and those other easily acquired and inexpensive technicalities of

art that make such a fine show in conversations concerning pictures.

There is not one man in seventy-five hundred that can tell what a

pictured face is intended to express. There is not one man in five

hundred that can go into a court-room and be sure that he will not

mistake some harmless innocent of a juryman for the black-hearted

assassin on trial. Yet such people talk of "character" and presume to

interpret "expression" in pictures. There is an old story that Matthews,

the actor, was once lauding the ability of the human face to express the

passions and emotions hidden in the breast. He said the countenance

could disclose what was passing in the heart plainer than the tongue

could.

"Now," he said, "observe my face--what does it express?"

"Despair!"

"Bah, it expresses peaceful resignation! What does this express?"

"Rage!"

"Stuff! It means terror! This!"

"Imbecility!"

"Fool! It is smothered ferocity! Now this!"

"Joy!"

"Oh, perdition! Any ass can see it means insanity!"

Expression! People coolly pretend to read it who would think themselves

presumptuous if they pretended to interpret the hieroglyphics on the

obelisks of Luxor--yet they are fully as competent to do the one thing as

the other. I have heard two very intelligent critics speak of Murillo's

Immaculate Conception (now in the museum at Seville,) within the past few

days. One said:

"Oh, the Virgin's face is full of the ecstasy of a joy that is complete

--that leaves nothing more to be desired on earth!"

The other said:

"Ah, that wonderful face is so humble, so pleading--it says as plainly as

words could say it: 'I fear; I tremble; I am unworthy. But Thy will be

done; sustain Thou Thy servant!'"

The reader can see the picture in any drawing-room; it can be easily

recognized: the Virgin (the only young and really beautiful Virgin that

was ever painted by one of the old masters, some of us think,) stands in

the crescent of the new moon, with a multitude of cherubs hovering about

her, and more coming; her hands are crossed upon her breast, and upon her

uplifted countenance falls a glory out of the heavens. The reader may

amuse himself, if he chooses, in trying to determine which of these

gentlemen read the Virgin's "expression" aright, or if either of them did

it.

Any one who is acquainted with the old masters will comprehend how much

"The Last Supper" is damaged when I say that the spectator can not really

tell, now, whether the disciples are Hebrews or Italians. These ancient

painters never succeeded in denationalizing themselves. The Italian

artists painted Italian Virgins, the Dutch painted Dutch Virgins, the

Virgins of the French painters were Frenchwomen--none of them ever put

into the face of the Madonna that indescribable something which proclaims

the Jewess, whether you find her in New York, in Constantinople, in

Paris, Jerusalem, or in the empire of Morocco. I saw in the Sandwich

Islands, once, a picture copied by a talented German artist from an

engraving in one of the American illustrated papers. It was an allegory,

representing Mr. Davis in the act of signing a secession act or some such

document. Over him hovered the ghost of Washington in warning attitude,

and in the background a troop of shadowy soldiers in Continental uniform

were limping with shoeless, bandaged feet through a driving snow-storm.

Valley Forge was suggested, of course. The copy seemed accurate, and yet

there was a discrepancy somewhere. After a long examination I discovered

what it was--the shadowy soldiers were all Germans! Jeff Davis was a

German! even the hovering ghost was a German ghost! The artist had

unconsciously worked his nationality into the picture. To tell the

truth, I am getting a little perplexed about John the Baptist and his

portraits. In France I finally grew reconciled to him as a Frenchman;

here he is unquestionably an Italian. What next? Can it be possible

that the painters make John the Baptist a Spaniard in Madrid and an

Irishman in Dublin?

We took an open barouche and drove two miles out of Milan to "see ze

echo," as the guide expressed it. The road was smooth, it was bordered

by trees, fields, and grassy meadows, and the soft air was filled with

the odor of flowers. Troops of picturesque peasant girls, coming from

work, hooted at us, shouted at us, made all manner of game of us, and

entirely delighted me. My long-cherished judgment was confirmed. I

always did think those frowsy, romantic, unwashed peasant girls I had

read so much about in poetry were a glaring fraud.

We enjoyed our jaunt. It was an exhilarating relief from tiresome

sight-seeing.

We distressed ourselves very little about the astonishing echo the guide

talked so much about. We were growing accustomed to encomiums on wonders

that too often proved no wonders at all. And so we were most happily

disappointed to find in the sequel that the guide had even failed to rise

to the magnitude of his subject.

We arrived at a tumble-down old rookery called the Palazzo Simonetti--a

massive hewn-stone affair occupied by a family of ragged Italians.

A good-looking young girl conducted us to a window on the second floor

which looked out on a court walled on three sides by tall buildings. She

put her head out at the window and shouted. The echo answered more times

than we could count. She took a speaking trumpet and through it she

shouted, sharp and quick, a single "Ha!" The echo answered:

"Ha!--ha!----ha!--ha!--ha!-ha! ha! h-a-a-a-a-a!" and finally went off

into a rollicking convulsion of the jolliest laughter that could be

imagined. It was so joyful--so long continued--so perfectly cordial and

hearty, that every body was forced to join in. There was no resisting

it.

Then the girl took a gun and fired it. We stood ready to count the

astonishing clatter of reverberations. We could not say one, two, three,

fast enough, but we could dot our notebooks with our pencil points almost

rapidly enough to take down a sort of short-hand report of the result.

My page revealed the following account. I could not keep up, but I did

as well as I could.

I set down fifty-two distinct repetitions, and then the echo got the

advantage of me. The doctor set down sixty-four, and thenceforth the

echo moved too fast for him, also. After the separate concussions could

no longer be noted, the reverberations dwindled to a wild, long-sustained

clatter of sounds such as a watchman's rattle produces. It is likely

that this is the most remarkable echo in the world.

The doctor, in jest, offered to kiss the young girl, and was taken a

little aback when she said he might for a franc! The commonest gallantry

compelled him to stand by his offer, and so he paid the franc and took

the kiss. She was a philosopher. She said a franc was a good thing to

have, and she did not care any thing for one paltry kiss, because she had

a million left. Then our comrade, always a shrewd businessman, offered

to take the whole cargo at thirty days, but that little financial scheme

was a failure.

CHAPTER XX.

We left Milan by rail. The Cathedral six or seven miles behind us; vast,

dreamy, bluish, snow-clad mountains twenty miles in front of us,--these

were the accented points in the scenery. The more immediate scenery

consisted of fields and farm-houses outside the car and a monster-headed

dwarf and a moustached woman inside it. These latter were not

show-people. Alas, deformity and female beards are too common in Italy

to attract attention.

We passed through a range of wild, picturesque hills, steep, wooded,

cone-shaped, with rugged crags projecting here and there, and with

dwellings and ruinous castles perched away up toward the drifting clouds.

We lunched at the curious old town of Como, at the foot of the lake, and

then took the small steamer and had an afternoon's pleasure excursion to

this place,--Bellaggio.

When we walked ashore, a party of policemen (people whose cocked hats and

showy uniforms would shame the finest uniform in the military service of

the United States,) put us into a little stone cell and locked us in. We

had the whole passenger list for company, but their room would have been

preferable, for there was no light, there were no windows, no

ventilation. It was close and hot. We were much crowded. It was the

Black Hole of Calcutta on a small scale. Presently a smoke rose about

our feet--a smoke that smelled of all the dead things of earth, of all

the putrefaction and corruption imaginable.

We were there five minutes, and when we got out it was hard to tell which

of us carried the vilest fragrance.

These miserable outcasts called that "fumigating" us, and the term was a

tame one indeed. They fumigated us to guard themselves against the

cholera, though we hailed from no infected port. We had left the cholera

far behind us all the time. However, they must keep epidemics away

somehow or other, and fumigation is cheaper than soap. They must either

wash themselves or fumigate other people. Some of the lower classes had

rather die than wash, but the fumigation of strangers causes them no

pangs. They need no fumigation themselves. Their habits make it

unnecessary. They carry their preventive with them; they sweat and

fumigate all the day long. I trust I am a humble and a consistent

Christian. I try to do what is right. I know it is my duty to "pray for

them that despitefully use me;" and therefore, hard as it is, I shall

still try to pray for these fumigating, maccaroni-stuffing

organ-grinders.

Our hotel sits at the water's edge--at least its front garden does--and

we walk among the shrubbery and smoke at twilight; we look afar off at

Switzerland and the Alps, and feel an indolent willingness to look no

closer; we go down the steps and swim in the lake; we take a shapely

little boat and sail abroad among the reflections of the stars; lie on

the thwarts and listen to the distant laughter, the singing, the soft

melody of flutes and guitars that comes floating across the water from

pleasuring gondolas; we close the evening with exasperating billiards on

one of those same old execrable tables. A midnight luncheon in our ample

bed-chamber; a final smoke in its contracted veranda facing the water,

the gardens, and the mountains; a summing up of the day's events. Then

to bed, with drowsy brains harassed with a mad panorama that mixes up

pictures of France, of Italy, of the ship, of the ocean, of home, in

grotesque and bewildering disorder. Then a melting away of familiar

faces, of cities, and of tossing waves, into a great calm of

forgetfulness and peace.

After which, the nightmare.

Breakfast in the morning, and then the lake.

I did not like it yesterday. I thought Lake Tahoe was much finer.

I have to confess now, however, that my judgment erred somewhat, though

not extravagantly. I always had an idea that Como was a vast basin of

water, like Tahoe, shut in by great mountains. Well, the border of huge

mountains is here, but the lake itself is not a basin. It is as crooked

as any brook, and only from one-quarter to two-thirds as wide as the

Mississippi. There is not a yard of low ground on either side of it

--nothing but endless chains of mountains that spring abruptly from the

water's edge and tower to altitudes varying from a thousand to two

thousand feet. Their craggy sides are clothed with vegetation, and white

specks of houses peep out from the luxuriant foliage everywhere; they are

even perched upon jutting and picturesque pinnacles a thousand feet above

your head.

Again, for miles along the shores, handsome country seats, surrounded by

gardens and groves, sit fairly in the water, sometimes in nooks carved by

Nature out of the vine-hung precipices, and with no ingress or egress

save by boats. Some have great broad stone staircases leading down to

the water, with heavy stone balustrades ornamented with statuary and

fancifully adorned with creeping vines and bright-colored flowers--for

all the world like a drop curtain in a theatre, and lacking nothing but

long-waisted, high-heeled women and plumed gallants in silken tights

coming down to go serenading in the splendid gondola in waiting.

A great feature of Como's attractiveness is the multitude of pretty

houses and gardens that cluster upon its shores and on its mountain

sides. They look so snug and so homelike, and at eventide when every

thing seems to slumber, and the music of the vesper bells comes stealing

over the water, one almost believes that nowhere else than on the lake of

Como can there be found such a paradise of tranquil repose.

From my window here in Bellaggio, I have a view of the other side of the

lake now, which is as beautiful as a picture. A scarred and wrinkled

precipice rises to a height of eighteen hundred feet; on a tiny bench

half way up its vast wall, sits a little snowflake of a church, no bigger

than a martin-box, apparently; skirting the base of the cliff are a

hundred orange groves and gardens, flecked with glimpses of the white

dwellings that are buried in them; in front, three or four gondolas lie

idle upon the water--and in the burnished mirror of the lake, mountain,

chapel, houses, groves and boats are counterfeited so brightly and so

clearly that one scarce knows where the reality leaves off and the

reflection begins!

The surroundings of this picture are fine. A mile away, a grove-plumed

promontory juts far into the lake and glasses its palace in the blue

depths; in midstream a boat is cutting the shining surface and leaving a

long track behind, like a ray of light; the mountains beyond are veiled

in a dreamy purple haze; far in the opposite direction a tumbled mass of

domes and verdant slopes and valleys bars the lake, and here indeed does

distance lend enchantment to the view--for on this broad canvas, sun and

clouds and the richest of atmospheres have blended a thousand tints

together, and over its surface the filmy lights and shadows drift, hour

after hour, and glorify it with a beauty that seems reflected out of

Heaven itself. Beyond all question, this is the most voluptuous scene we

have yet looked upon.

Last night the scenery was striking and picturesque. On the other side

crags and trees and snowy houses were reflected in the lake with a

wonderful distinctness, and streams of light from many a distant window

shot far abroad over the still waters. On this side, near at hand, great

mansions, white with moonlight, glared out from the midst of masses of

foliage that lay black and shapeless in the shadows that fell from the

cliff above--and down in the margin of the lake every feature of the

weird vision was faithfully repeated.

Today we have idled through a wonder of a garden attached to a ducal

estate--but enough of description is enough, I judge.

I suspect that this was the same place the gardener's son deceived the

Lady of Lyons with, but I do not know. You may have heard of the passage

somewhere:

"A deep vale,

Shut out by Alpine hills from the rude world,

Near a clear lake margined by fruits of gold

And whispering myrtles:

Glassing softest skies, cloudless,

Save with rare and roseate shadows;

A palace, lifting to eternal heaven its marbled walls,

From out a glossy bower of coolest foliage musical with birds."

That is all very well, except the "clear" part of the lake. It certainly

is clearer than a great many lakes, but how dull its waters are compared

with the wonderful transparence of Lake Tahoe! I speak of the north

shore of Tahoe, where one can count the scales on a trout at a depth of a

hundred and eighty feet. I have tried to get this statement off at par

here, but with no success; so I have been obliged to negotiate it at

fifty percent discount. At this rate I find some takers; perhaps the

reader will receive it on the same terms--ninety feet instead of one

hundred and eighty. But let it be remembered that those are forced

terms--Sheriff's sale prices. As far as I am privately concerned, I

abate not a jot of the original assertion that in those strangely

magnifying waters one may count the scales on a trout (a trout of the

large kind,) at a depth of a hundred and eighty feet--may see every

pebble on the bottom--might even count a paper of dray-pins. People talk

of the transparent waters of the Mexican Bay of Acapulco, but in my own

experience I know they cannot compare with those I am speaking of. I

have fished for trout, in Tahoe, and at a measured depth of eighty-four

feet I have seen them put their noses to the bait and I could see their

gills open and shut. I could hardly have seen the trout themselves at

that distance in the open air.

As I go back in spirit and recall that noble sea, reposing among the

snow-peaks six thousand feet above the ocean, the conviction comes strong

upon me again that Como would only seem a bedizened little courtier in

that august presence.

Sorrow and misfortune overtake the legislature that still from year to

year permits Tahoe to retain its unmusical cognomen! Tahoe! It suggests

no crystal waters, no picturesque shores, no sublimity. Tahoe for a sea

in the clouds: a sea that has character and asserts it in solemn calms at

times, at times in savage storms; a sea whose royal seclusion is guarded

by a cordon of sentinel peaks that lift their frosty fronts nine thousand

feet above the level world; a sea whose every aspect is impressive, whose

belongings are all beautiful, whose lonely majesty types the Deity!

Tahoe means grasshoppers. It means grasshopper soup. It is Indian, and

suggestive of Indians. They say it is Pi-ute--possibly it is Digger.

I am satisfied it was named by the Diggers--those degraded savages who

roast their dead relatives, then mix the human grease and ashes of bones

with tar, and "gaum" it thick all over their heads and foreheads and

ears, and go caterwauling about the hills and call it mourning. These

are the gentry that named the Lake.

People say that Tahoe means "Silver Lake"--"Limpid Water"--"Falling

Leaf." Bosh. It means grasshopper soup, the favorite dish of the Digger

tribe,--and of the Pi-utes as well. It isn't worth while, in these

practical times, for people to talk about Indian poetry--there never was

any in them--except in the Fenimore Cooper Indians. But they are an

extinct tribe that never existed. I know the Noble Red Man. I have

camped with the Indians; I have been on the warpath with them, taken part

in the chase with them--for grasshoppers; helped them steal cattle; I

have roamed with them, scalped them, had them for breakfast. I would

gladly eat the whole race if I had a chance.

But I am growing unreliable. I will return to my comparison of the

lakes. Como is a little deeper than Tahoe, if people here tell the

truth. They say it is eighteen hundred feet deep at this point, but it

does not look a dead enough blue for that. Tahoe is one thousand five

hundred and twenty-five feet deep in the centre, by the state geologist's

measurement. They say the great peak opposite this town is five thousand

feet high: but I feel sure that three thousand feet of that statement is

a good honest lie. The lake is a mile wide, here, and maintains about

that width from this point to its northern extremity--which is distant

sixteen miles: from here to its southern extremity--say fifteen miles--it

is not over half a mile wide in any place, I should think. Its snow-clad

mountains one hears so much about are only seen occasionally, and then in

the distance, the Alps. Tahoe is from ten to eighteen miles wide, and

its mountains shut it in like a wall. Their summits are never free from

snow the year round. One thing about it is very strange: it never has

even a skim of ice upon its surface, although lakes in the same range of

mountains, lying in a lower and warmer temperature, freeze over in

winter.

It is cheerful to meet a shipmate in these out-of-the-way places and

compare notes with him. We have found one of ours here--an old soldier

of the war, who is seeking bloodless adventures and rest from his

campaigns in these sunny lands.--[Colonel J. HERON FOSTER, editor of a

Pittsburgh journal, and a most estimable gentleman. As these sheets are

being prepared for the press I am pained to learn of his decease shortly

after his return home--M.T.]

CHAPTER XXI.

We voyaged by steamer down the Lago di Lecco, through wild mountain

scenery, and by hamlets and villas, and disembarked at the town of Lecco.

They said it was two hours, by carriage to the ancient city of Bergamo,

and that we would arrive there in good season for the railway train. We

got an open barouche and a wild, boisterous driver, and set out. It was

delightful. We had a fast team and a perfectly smooth road. There were

towering cliffs on our left, and the pretty Lago di Lecco on our right,

and every now and then it rained on us. Just before starting, the driver

picked up, in the street, a stump of a cigar an inch long, and put it in

his mouth. When he had carried it thus about an hour, I thought it would

be only Christian charity to give him a light. I handed him my cigar,

which I had just lit, and he put it in his mouth and returned his stump

to his pocket! I never saw a more sociable man. At least I never saw a

man who was more sociable on a short acquaintance.

We saw interior Italy, now. The houses were of solid stone, and not

often in good repair. The peasants and their children were idle, as a

general thing, and the donkeys and chickens made themselves at home in

drawing-room and bed-chamber and were not molested. The drivers of each

and every one of the slow-moving market-carts we met were stretched in

the sun upon their merchandise, sound a sleep. Every three or four

hundred yards, it seemed to me, we came upon the shrine of some saint or

other--a rude picture of him built into a huge cross or a stone pillar by

the road-side.--Some of the pictures of the Saviour were curiosities in

their way. They represented him stretched upon the cross, his

countenance distorted with agony. From the wounds of the crown of

thorns; from the pierced side; from the mutilated hands and feet; from

the scourged body--from every hand-breadth of his person streams of blood

were flowing! Such a gory, ghastly spectacle would frighten the children

out of their senses, I should think. There were some unique auxiliaries

to the painting which added to its spirited effect. These were genuine

wooden and iron implements, and were prominently disposed round about the

figure: a bundle of nails; the hammer to drive them; the sponge; the reed

that supported it; the cup of vinegar; the ladder for the ascent of the

cross; the spear that pierced the Saviour's side. The crown of thorns

was made of real thorns, and was nailed to the sacred head. In some

Italian church-paintings, even by the old masters, the Saviour and the

Virgin wear silver or gilded crowns that are fastened to the pictured

head with nails. The effect is as grotesque as it is incongruous.

Here and there, on the fronts of roadside inns, we found huge, coarse

frescoes of suffering martyrs like those in the shrines. It could not

have diminished their sufferings any to be so uncouthly represented.

We were in the heart and home of priest craft--of a happy, cheerful,

contented ignorance, superstition, degradation, poverty, indolence, and

everlasting unaspiring worthlessness. And we said fervently: it suits

these people precisely; let them enjoy it, along with the other animals,

and Heaven forbid that they be molested. We feel no malice toward these

fumigators.

We passed through the strangest, funniest, undreampt-of old towns, wedded

to the customs and steeped in the dreams of the elder ages, and perfectly

unaware that the world turns round! And perfectly indifferent, too, as

to whether it turns around or stands still. They have nothing to do but

eat and sleep and sleep and eat, and toil a little when they can get a

friend to stand by and keep them awake. They are not paid for thinking

--they are not paid to fret about the world's concerns. They were not

respectable people--they were not worthy people--they were not learned

and wise and brilliant people--but in their breasts, all their stupid

lives long, resteth a peace that passeth understanding! How can men,

calling themselves men, consent to be so degraded and happy.

We whisked by many a gray old medieval castle, clad thick with ivy that

swung its green banners down from towers and turrets where once some old

Crusader's flag had floated. The driver pointed to one of these ancient

fortresses, and said, (I translate):

"Do you see that great iron hook that projects from the wall just under

the highest window in the ruined tower?"

We said we could not see it at such a distance, but had no doubt it was

there.

"Well," he said; "there is a legend connected with that iron hook.

Nearly seven hundred years ago, that castle was the property of the noble

Count Luigi Gennaro Guido Alphonso di Genova----"

"What was his other name?" said Dan.

"He had no other name. The name I have spoken was all the name he had.

He was the son of----"

"Poor but honest parents--that is all right--never mind the particulars

--go on with the legend."

THE LEGEND.

Well, then, all the world, at that time, was in a wild excitement about

the Holy Sepulchre. All the great feudal lords in Europe were pledging

their lands and pawning their plate to fit out men-at-arms so that they

might join the grand armies of Christendom and win renown in the Holy

Wars. The Count Luigi raised money, like the rest, and one mild

September morning, armed with battle-ax, portcullis and thundering

culverin, he rode through the greaves and bucklers of his donjon-keep

with as gallant a troop of Christian bandits as ever stepped in Italy.

He had his sword, Excalibur, with him. His beautiful countess and her

young daughter waved him a tearful adieu from the battering-rams and

buttresses of the fortress, and he galloped away with a happy heart.

He made a raid on a neighboring baron and completed his outfit with the

booty secured. He then razed the castle to the ground, massacred the

family and moved on. They were hardy fellows in the grand old days of

chivalry. Alas! Those days will never come again.

Count Luigi grew high in fame in Holy Land. He plunged into the carnage

of a hundred battles, but his good Excalibur always brought him out

alive, albeit often sorely wounded. His face became browned by exposure

to the Syrian sun in long marches; he suffered hunger and thirst; he

pined in prisons, he languished in loathsome plague-hospitals. And many

and many a time he thought of his loved ones at home, and wondered if all

was well with them. But his heart said, Peace, is not thy brother

watching over thy household?

\* \* \* \* \* \* \*

Forty-two years waxed and waned; the good fight was won; Godfrey reigned

in Jerusalem--the Christian hosts reared the banner of the cross above

the Holy Sepulchre!

Twilight was approaching. Fifty harlequins, in flowing robes, approached

this castle wearily, for they were on foot, and the dust upon their

garments betokened that they had traveled far. They overtook a peasant,

and asked him if it were likely they could get food and a hospitable bed

there, for love of Christian charity, and if perchance, a moral parlor

entertainment might meet with generous countenance--"for," said they,

"this exhibition hath no feature that could offend the most fastidious

taste."

"Marry," quoth the peasant, "an' it please your worships, ye had better

journey many a good rood hence with your juggling circus than trust your

bones in yonder castle."

"How now, sirrah!" exclaimed the chief monk, "explain thy ribald speech,

or by'r Lady it shall go hard with thee."

"Peace, good mountebank, I did but utter the truth that was in my heart.

San Paolo be my witness that did ye but find the stout Count Leonardo in

his cups, sheer from the castle's topmost battlements would he hurl ye

all! Alack-a-day, the good Lord Luigi reigns not here in these sad

times."

"The good Lord Luigi?"

"Aye, none other, please your worship. In his day, the poor rejoiced in

plenty and the rich he did oppress; taxes were not known, the fathers of

the church waxed fat upon his bounty; travelers went and came, with none

to interfere; and whosoever would, might tarry in his halls in cordial

welcome, and eat his bread and drink his wine, withal. But woe is me!

some two and forty years agone the good count rode hence to fight for

Holy Cross, and many a year hath flown since word or token have we had of

him. Men say his bones lie bleaching in the fields of Palestine."

"And now?"

"Now! God 'a mercy, the cruel Leonardo lords it in the castle. He

wrings taxes from the poor; he robs all travelers that journey by his

gates; he spends his days in feuds and murders, and his nights in revel

and debauch; he roasts the fathers of the church upon his kitchen spits,

and enjoyeth the same, calling it pastime. These thirty years Luigi's

countess hath not been seen by any in all this land, and many

whisper that she pines in the dungeons of the castle for that she will

not wed with Leonardo, saying her dear lord still liveth and that she

will die ere she prove false to him. They whisper likewise that her

daughter is a prisoner as well. Nay, good jugglers, seek ye refreshment

other wheres. 'Twere better that ye perished in a Christian way than

that ye plunged from off yon dizzy tower. Give ye good-day."

"God keep ye, gentle knave--farewell."

But heedless of the peasant's warning, the players moved straightway

toward the castle.

Word was brought to Count Leonardo that a company of mountebanks besought

his hospitality.

"'Tis well. Dispose of them in the customary manner. Yet stay! I have

need of them. Let them come hither. Later, cast them from the

battlements--or--how many priests have ye on hand?"

"The day's results are meagre, good my lord. An abbot and a dozen

beggarly friars is all we have."

"Hell and furies! Is the estate going to seed? Send hither the

mountebanks. Afterward, broil them with the priests."

The robed and close-cowled harlequins entered. The grim Leonardo sate in

state at the head of his council board. Ranged up and down the hall on

either hand stood near a hundred men-at-arms.

"Ha, villains!" quoth the count, "What can ye do to earn the hospitality

ye crave."

"Dread lord and mighty, crowded audiences have greeted our humble efforts

with rapturous applause. Among our body count we the versatile and

talented Ugolino; the justly celebrated Rodolpho; the gifted and

accomplished Roderigo; the management have spared neither pains nor

expense--"

"S'death! What can ye do? Curb thy prating tongue."

"Good my lord, in acrobatic feats, in practice with the dumb-bells, in

balancing and ground and lofty tumbling are we versed--and sith your

highness asketh me, I venture here to publish that in the truly marvelous

and entertaining Zampillaerostation--"

"Gag him! throttle him! Body of Bacchus! am I a dog that I am to be

assailed with polysyllabled blasphemy like to this? But hold! Lucretia,

Isabel, stand forth! Sirrah, behold this dame, this weeping wench. The

first I marry, within the hour; the other shall dry her tears or feed the

vultures. Thou and thy vagabonds shall crown the wedding with thy

merry-makings. Fetch hither the priest!"

The dame sprang toward the chief player.

"O, save me!" she cried; "save me from a fate far worse than death!

Behold these sad eyes, these sunken cheeks, this withered frame! See

thou the wreck this fiend hath made, and let thy heart be moved with

pity! Look upon this damosel; note her wasted form, her halting step,

her bloomless cheeks where youth should blush and happiness exult in

smiles! Hear us and have compassion. This monster was my husband's

brother. He who should have been our shield against all harm, hath kept

us shut within the noisome caverns of his donjon-keep for lo these thirty

years. And for what crime? None other than that I would not belie my

troth, root out my strong love for him who marches with the legions of

the cross in Holy Land, (for O, he is not dead!) and wed with him! Save

us, O, save thy persecuted suppliants!"

She flung herself at his feet and clasped his knees.

"Ha!-ha!-ha!" shouted the brutal Leonardo. "Priest, to thy work!" and

he dragged the weeping dame from her refuge. "Say, once for all, will

you be mine?--for by my halidome, that breath that uttereth thy refusal

shall be thy last on earth!"

"NE-VER?"

"Then die!" and the sword leaped from its scabbard.

Quicker than thought, quicker than the lightning's flash, fifty monkish

habits disappeared, and fifty knights in splendid armor stood revealed!

fifty falchions gleamed in air above the men-at-arms, and brighter,

fiercer than them all, flamed Excalibur aloft, and cleaving downward

struck the brutal Leonardo's weapon from his grasp!

"A Luigi to the rescue! Whoop!"

"A Leonardo! 'tare an ouns!'"

"Oh, God, Oh, God, my husband!"

"Oh, God, Oh, God, my wife!"

"My father!"

"My precious!" [Tableau.]

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Count Luigi bound his usurping brother hand and foot. The practiced

knights from Palestine made holyday sport of carving the awkward

men-at-arms into chops and steaks. The victory was complete. Happiness

reigned. The knights all married the daughter. Joy! wassail! finis!

"But what did they do with the wicked brother?"

"Oh nothing--only hanged him on that iron hook I was speaking of. By the

chin."

"As how?"

"Passed it up through his gills into his mouth."

"Leave him there?"

"Couple of years."

"Ah--is--is he dead?"

"Six hundred and fifty years ago, or such a matter."

"Splendid legend--splendid lie--drive on."

We reached the quaint old fortified city of Bergamo, the renowned in

history, some three-quarters of an hour before the train was ready to

start. The place has thirty or forty thousand inhabitants and is

remarkable for being the birthplace of harlequin. When we discovered

that, that legend of our driver took to itself a new interest in our

eyes.

Rested and refreshed, we took the rail happy and contented. I shall not

tarry to speak of the handsome Lago di Gardi; its stately castle that

holds in its stony bosom the secrets of an age so remote that even

tradition goeth not back to it; the imposing mountain scenery that

ennobles the landscape thereabouts; nor yet of ancient Padua or haughty

Verona; nor of their Montagues and Capulets, their famous balconies and

tombs of Juliet and Romeo et al., but hurry straight to the ancient city

of the sea, the widowed bride of the Adriatic. It was a long, long ride.

But toward evening, as we sat silent and hardly conscious of where we

were--subdued into that meditative calm that comes so surely after a

conversational storm--some one shouted--

"VENICE!"

And sure enough, afloat on the placid sea a league away, lay a great

city, with its towers and domes and steeples drowsing in a golden mist of

sunset.

CHAPTER XXII.

This Venice, which was a haughty, invincible, magnificent Republic for

nearly fourteen hundred years; whose armies compelled the world's

applause whenever and wherever they battled; whose navies well nigh held

dominion of the seas, and whose merchant fleets whitened the remotest

oceans with their sails and loaded these piers with the products of every

clime, is fallen a prey to poverty, neglect and melancholy decay. Six

hundred years ago, Venice was the Autocrat of Commerce; her mart was the

great commercial centre, the distributing-house from whence the enormous

trade of the Orient was spread abroad over the Western world. To-day her

piers are deserted, her warehouses are empty, her merchant fleets are

vanished, her armies and her navies are but memories. Her glory is

departed, and with her crumbling grandeur of wharves and palaces about

her she sits among her stagnant lagoons, forlorn and beggared, forgotten

of the world. She that in her palmy days commanded the commerce of a

hemisphere and made the weal or woe of nations with a beck of her

puissant finger, is become the humblest among the peoples of the earth,

--a peddler of glass beads for women, and trifling toys and trinkets for

school-girls and children.

The venerable Mother of the Republics is scarce a fit subject for

flippant speech or the idle gossipping of tourists. It seems a sort of

sacrilege to disturb the glamour of old romance that pictures her to us

softly from afar off as through a tinted mist, and curtains her ruin and

her desolation from our view. One ought, indeed, to turn away from her

rags, her poverty and her humiliation, and think of her only as she was

when she sunk the fleets of Charlemagne; when she humbled Frederick

Barbarossa or waved her victorious banners above the battlements of

Constantinople.

We reached Venice at eight in the evening, and entered a hearse belonging

to the Grand Hotel d'Europe. At any rate, it was more like a hearse than

any thing else, though to speak by the card, it was a gondola. And this

was the storied gondola of Venice!--the fairy boat in which the princely

cavaliers of the olden time were wont to cleave the waters of the moonlit

canals and look the eloquence of love into the soft eyes of patrician

beauties, while the gay gondolier in silken doublet touched his guitar

and sang as only gondoliers can sing! This the famed gondola and this

the gorgeous gondolier!--the one an inky, rusty old canoe with a sable

hearse-body clapped on to the middle of it, and the other a mangy,

barefooted guttersnipe with a portion of his raiment on exhibition which

should have been sacred from public scrutiny. Presently, as he turned a

corner and shot his hearse into a dismal ditch between two long rows of

towering, untenanted buildings, the gay gondolier began to sing, true to

the traditions of his race. I stood it a little while. Then I said:

"Now, here, Roderigo Gonzales Michael Angelo, I'm a pilgrim, and I'm a

stranger, but I am not going to have my feelings lacerated by any such

caterwauling as that. If that goes on, one of us has got to take water.

It is enough that my cherished dreams of Venice have been blighted

forever as to the romantic gondola and the gorgeous gondolier; this

system of destruction shall go no farther; I will accept the hearse,

under protest, and you may fly your flag of truce in peace, but here I

register a dark and bloody oath that you shan't sing. Another yelp, and

overboard you go."

I began to feel that the old Venice of song and story had departed

forever. But I was too hasty. In a few minutes we swept gracefully out

into the Grand Canal, and under the mellow moonlight the Venice of poetry

and romance stood revealed. Right from the water's edge rose long lines

of stately palaces of marble; gondolas were gliding swiftly hither and

thither and disappearing suddenly through unsuspected gates and alleys;

ponderous stone bridges threw their shadows athwart the glittering waves.

There was life and motion everywhere, and yet everywhere there was a

hush, a stealthy sort of stillness, that was suggestive of secret

enterprises of bravoes and of lovers; and clad half in moonbeams and half

in mysterious shadows, the grim old mansions of the Republic seemed to

have an expression about them of having an eye out for just such

enterprises as these at that same moment. Music came floating over the

waters--Venice was complete.

It was a beautiful picture--very soft and dreamy and beautiful. But what

was this Venice to compare with the Venice of midnight? Nothing. There

was a fete--a grand fete in honor of some saint who had been instrumental

in checking the cholera three hundred years ago, and all Venice was

abroad on the water. It was no common affair, for the Venetians did not

know how soon they might need the saint's services again, now that the

cholera was spreading every where. So in one vast space--say a third of

a mile wide and two miles long--were collected two thousand gondolas, and

every one of them had from two to ten, twenty and even thirty colored

lanterns suspended about it, and from four to a dozen occupants. Just as

far as the eye could reach, these painted lights were massed together

--like a vast garden of many-colored flowers, except that these blossoms

were never still; they were ceaselessly gliding in and out, and mingling

together, and seducing you into bewildering attempts to follow their mazy

evolutions. Here and there a strong red, green, or blue glare from a

rocket that was struggling to get away, splendidly illuminated all the

boats around it. Every gondola that swam by us, with its crescents and

pyramids and circles of colored lamps hung aloft, and lighting up the

faces of the young and the sweet-scented and lovely below, was a picture;

and the reflections of those lights, so long, so slender, so numberless,

so many-colored and so distorted and wrinkled by the waves, was a picture

likewise, and one that was enchantingly beautiful. Many and many a party

of young ladies and gentlemen had their state gondolas handsomely

decorated, and ate supper on board, bringing their swallow-tailed,

white-cravatted varlets to wait upon them, and having their tables

tricked out as if for a bridal supper. They had brought along the

costly globe lamps from their drawing-rooms, and the lace and silken

curtains from the same places, I suppose. And they had also brought

pianos and guitars, and they played and sang operas, while the plebeian

paper-lanterned gondolas from the suburbs and the back alleys crowded

around to stare and listen.

There was music every where--choruses, string bands, brass bands, flutes,

every thing. I was so surrounded, walled in, with music, magnificence

and loveliness, that I became inspired with the spirit of the scene, and

sang one tune myself. However, when I observed that the other gondolas

had sailed away, and my gondolier was preparing to go overboard, I

stopped.

The fete was magnificent. They kept it up the whole night long, and I

never enjoyed myself better than I did while it lasted.

What a funny old city this Queen of the Adriatic is! Narrow streets,

vast, gloomy marble palaces, black with the corroding damps of centuries,

and all partly submerged; no dry land visible any where, and no sidewalks

worth mentioning; if you want to go to church, to the theatre, or to the

restaurant, you must call a gondola. It must be a paradise for cripples,

for verily a man has no use for legs here.

For a day or two the place looked so like an overflowed Arkansas town,

because of its currentless waters laving the very doorsteps of all the

houses, and the cluster of boats made fast under the windows, or skimming

in and out of the alleys and by-ways, that I could not get rid of the

impression that there was nothing the matter here but a spring freshet,

and that the river would fall in a few weeks and leave a dirty high-water

mark on the houses, and the streets full of mud and rubbish.

In the glare of day, there is little poetry about Venice, but under the

charitable moon her stained palaces are white again, their battered

sculptures are hidden in shadows, and the old city seems crowned once

more with the grandeur that was hers five hundred years ago. It is easy,

then, in fancy, to people these silent canals with plumed gallants and

fair ladies--with Shylocks in gaberdine and sandals, venturing loans upon

the rich argosies of Venetian commerce--with Othellos and Desdemonas,

with Iagos and Roderigos--with noble fleets and victorious legions

returning from the wars. In the treacherous sunlight we see Venice

decayed, forlorn, poverty-stricken, and commerceless--forgotten and

utterly insignificant. But in the moonlight, her fourteen centuries of

greatness fling their glories about her, and once more is she the

princeliest among the nations of the earth.

"There is a glorious city in the sea;

The sea is in the broad, the narrow streets,

Ebbing and flowing; and the salt-sea weed

Clings to the marble of her palaces.

No track of men, no footsteps to and fro,

Lead to her gates! The path lies o'er the sea,

Invisible: and from the land we went,

As to a floating city--steering in,

And gliding up her streets, as in a dream,

So smoothly, silently--by many a dome,

Mosque-like, and many a stately portico,

The statues ranged along an azure sky;

By many a pile, in more than Eastern pride,

Of old the residence of merchant kings;

The fronts of some, tho' time had shatter'd them,

Still glowing with the richest hues of art,

As tho' the wealth within them had run o'er."

What would one naturally wish to see first in Venice? The Bridge of

Sighs, of course--and next the Church and the Great Square of St. Mark,

the Bronze Horses, and the famous Lion of St. Mark.

We intended to go to the Bridge of Sighs, but happened into the Ducal

Palace first--a building which necessarily figures largely in Venetian

poetry and tradition. In the Senate Chamber of the ancient Republic we

wearied our eyes with staring at acres of historical paintings by

Tintoretto and Paul Veronese, but nothing struck us forcibly except the

one thing that strikes all strangers forcibly--a black square in the

midst of a gallery of portraits. In one long row, around the great hall,

were painted the portraits of the Doges of Venice (venerable fellows,

with flowing white beards, for of the three hundred Senators eligible to

the office, the oldest was usually chosen Doge,) and each had its

complimentary inscription attached--till you came to the place that

should have had Marino Faliero's picture in it, and that was blank and

black--blank, except that it bore a terse inscription, saying that the

conspirator had died for his crime. It seemed cruel to keep that

pitiless inscription still staring from the walls after the unhappy

wretch had been in his grave five hundred years.

At the head of the Giant's Staircase, where Marino Faliero was beheaded,

and where the Doges were crowned in ancient times, two small slits in the

stone wall were pointed out--two harmless, insignificant orifices that

would never attract a stranger's attention--yet these were the terrible

Lions' Mouths! The heads were gone (knocked off by the French during

their occupation of Venice,) but these were the throats, down which went

the anonymous accusation, thrust in secretly at dead of night by an

enemy, that doomed many an innocent man to walk the Bridge of Sighs and

descend into the dungeon which none entered and hoped to see the sun

again. This was in the old days when the Patricians alone governed

Venice--the common herd had no vote and no voice. There were one

thousand five hundred Patricians; from these, three hundred Senators were

chosen; from the Senators a Doge and a Council of Ten were selected, and

by secret ballot the Ten chose from their own number a Council of Three.

All these were Government spies, then, and every spy was under

surveillance himself--men spoke in whispers in Venice, and no man trusted

his neighbor--not always his own brother. No man knew who the Council of

Three were--not even the Senate, not even the Doge; the members of that

dread tribunal met at night in a chamber to themselves, masked, and robed

from head to foot in scarlet cloaks, and did not even know each other,

unless by voice. It was their duty to judge heinous political crimes,

and from their sentence there was no appeal. A nod to the executioner

was sufficient. The doomed man was marched down a hall and out at a

door-way into the covered Bridge of Sighs, through it and into the

dungeon and unto his death. At no time in his transit was he visible to

any save his conductor. If a man had an enemy in those old days, the

cleverest thing he could do was to slip a note for the Council of Three

into the Lion's mouth, saying "This man is plotting against the

Government." If the awful Three found no proof, ten to one they would

drown him anyhow, because he was a deep rascal, since his plots were

unsolvable. Masked judges and masked executioners, with unlimited power,

and no appeal from their judgements, in that hard, cruel age, were not

likely to be lenient with men they suspected yet could not convict.

We walked through the hall of the Council of Ten, and presently entered

the infernal den of the Council of Three.

The table around which they had sat was there still, and likewise the

stations where the masked inquisitors and executioners formerly stood,

frozen, upright and silent, till they received a bloody order, and then,

without a word, moved off like the inexorable machines they were, to

carry it out. The frescoes on the walls were startlingly suited to the

place. In all the other saloons, the halls, the great state chambers of

the palace, the walls and ceilings were bright with gilding, rich with

elaborate carving, and resplendent with gallant pictures of Venetian

victories in war, and Venetian display in foreign courts, and hallowed

with portraits of the Virgin, the Saviour of men, and the holy saints

that preached the Gospel of Peace upon earth--but here, in dismal

contrast, were none but pictures of death and dreadful suffering!--not a

living figure but was writhing in torture, not a dead one but was smeared

with blood, gashed with wounds, and distorted with the agonies that had

taken away its life!

From the palace to the gloomy prison is but a step--one might almost jump

across the narrow canal that intervenes. The ponderous stone Bridge of

Sighs crosses it at the second story--a bridge that is a covered tunnel

--you can not be seen when you walk in it. It is partitioned lengthwise,

and through one compartment walked such as bore light sentences in

ancient times, and through the other marched sadly the wretches whom the

Three had doomed to lingering misery and utter oblivion in the dungeons,

or to sudden and mysterious death. Down below the level of the water, by

the light of smoking torches, we were shown the damp, thick-walled cells

where many a proud patrician's life was eaten away by the long-drawn

miseries of solitary imprisonment--without light, air, books; naked,

unshaven, uncombed, covered with vermin; his useless tongue forgetting

its office, with none to speak to; the days and nights of his life no

longer marked, but merged into one eternal eventless night; far away from

all cheerful sounds, buried in the silence of a tomb; forgotten by his

helpless friends, and his fate a dark mystery to them forever; losing his

own memory at last, and knowing no more who he was or how he came there;

devouring the loaf of bread and drinking the water that were thrust into

the cell by unseen hands, and troubling his worn spirit no more with

hopes and fears and doubts and longings to be free; ceasing to scratch

vain prayers and complainings on walls where none, not even himself,

could see them, and resigning himself to hopeless apathy, driveling

childishness, lunacy! Many and many a sorrowful story like this these

stony walls could tell if they could but speak.

In a little narrow corridor, near by, they showed us where many a

prisoner, after lying in the dungeons until he was forgotten by all save

his persecutors, was brought by masked executioners and garroted, or

sewed up in a sack, passed through a little window to a boat, at dead of

night, and taken to some remote spot and drowned.

They used to show to visitors the implements of torture wherewith the

Three were wont to worm secrets out of the accused--villainous machines

for crushing thumbs; the stocks where a prisoner sat immovable while

water fell drop by drop upon his head till the torture was more than

humanity could bear; and a devilish contrivance of steel, which inclosed

a prisoner's head like a shell, and crushed it slowly by means of a

screw. It bore the stains of blood that had trickled through its joints

long ago, and on one side it had a projection whereon the torturer rested

his elbow comfortably and bent down his ear to catch the moanings of the

sufferer perishing within.

Of course we went to see the venerable relic of the ancient glory of

Venice, with its pavements worn and broken by the passing feet of a

thousand years of plebeians and patricians--The Cathedral of St. Mark.

It is built entirely of precious marbles, brought from the Orient

--nothing in its composition is domestic. Its hoary traditions make it an

object of absorbing interest to even the most careless stranger, and thus

far it had interest for me; but no further. I could not go into

ecstasies over its coarse mosaics, its unlovely Byzantine architecture,

or its five hundred curious interior columns from as many distant

quarries. Every thing was worn out--every block of stone was smooth and

almost shapeless with the polishing hands and shoulders of loungers who

devoutly idled here in by-gone centuries and have died and gone to the

dev--no, simply died, I mean.

Under the altar repose the ashes of St. Mark--and Matthew, Luke and John,

too, for all I know. Venice reveres those relics above all things

earthly. For fourteen hundred years St. Mark has been her patron saint.

Every thing about the city seems to be named after him or so named as to

refer to him in some way--so named, or some purchase rigged in some way

to scrape a sort of hurrahing acquaintance with him. That seems to be

the idea. To be on good terms with St. Mark, seems to be the very summit

of Venetian ambition. They say St. Mark had a tame lion, and used to

travel with him--and every where that St. Mark went, the lion was sure to

go. It was his protector, his friend, his librarian. And so the Winged

Lion of St. Mark, with the open Bible under his paw, is a favorite emblem

in the grand old city. It casts its shadow from the most ancient pillar

in Venice, in the Grand Square of St. Mark, upon the throngs of free

citizens below, and has so done for many a long century. The winged lion

is found every where--and doubtless here, where the winged lion is, no

harm can come.

St. Mark died at Alexandria, in Egypt. He was martyred, I think.

However, that has nothing to do with my legend. About the founding of

the city of Venice--say four hundred and fifty years after Christ--(for

Venice is much younger than any other Italian city,) a priest dreamed

that an angel told him that until the remains of St. Mark were brought to

Venice, the city could never rise to high distinction among the nations;

that the body must be captured, brought to the city, and a magnificent

church built over it; and that if ever the Venetians allowed the Saint to

be removed from his new resting-place, in that day Venice would perish

from off the face of the earth. The priest proclaimed his dream, and

forthwith Venice set about procuring the corpse of St. Mark. One

expedition after another tried and failed, but the project was never

abandoned during four hundred years. At last it was secured by

stratagem, in the year eight hundred and something. The commander of a

Venetian expedition disguised himself, stole the bones, separated them,

and packed them in vessels filled with lard. The religion of Mahomet

causes its devotees to abhor anything that is in the nature of pork, and

so when the Christian was stopped by the officers at the gates of the

city, they only glanced once into his precious baskets, then turned up

their noses at the unholy lard, and let him go. The bones were buried in

the vaults of the grand cathedral, which had been waiting long years to

receive them, and thus the safety and the greatness of Venice were

secured. And to this day there be those in Venice who believe that if

those holy ashes were stolen away, the ancient city would vanish like a

dream, and its foundations be buried forever in the unremembering sea.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Venetian gondola is as free and graceful, in its gliding movement, as

a serpent. It is twenty or thirty feet long, and is narrow and deep,

like a canoe; its sharp bow and stern sweep upward from the water like

the horns of a crescent with the abruptness of the curve slightly

modified.

The bow is ornamented with a steel comb with a battle-ax attachment which

threatens to cut passing boats in two occasionally, but never does. The

gondola is painted black because in the zenith of Venetian magnificence

the gondolas became too gorgeous altogether, and the Senate decreed that

all such display must cease, and a solemn, unembellished black be

substituted. If the truth were known, it would doubtless appear that

rich plebeians grew too prominent in their affectation of patrician show

on the Grand Canal, and required a wholesome snubbing. Reverence for the

hallowed Past and its traditions keeps the dismal fashion in force now

that the compulsion exists no longer. So let it remain. It is the color

of mourning. Venice mourns. The stern of the boat is decked over and

the gondolier stands there. He uses a single oar--a long blade, of

course, for he stands nearly erect. A wooden peg, a foot and a half

high, with two slight crooks or curves in one side of it and one in the

other, projects above the starboard gunwale. Against that peg the

gondolier takes a purchase with his oar, changing it at intervals to the

other side of the peg or dropping it into another of the crooks, as the

steering of the craft may demand--and how in the world he can back and

fill, shoot straight ahead, or flirt suddenly around a corner, and make

the oar stay in those insignificant notches, is a problem to me and a

never diminishing matter of interest. I am afraid I study the

gondolier's marvelous skill more than I do the sculptured palaces we

glide among. He cuts a corner so closely, now and then, or misses

another gondola by such an imperceptible hair-breadth that I feel myself

"scrooching," as the children say, just as one does when a buggy wheel

grazes his elbow. But he makes all his calculations with the nicest

precision, and goes darting in and out among a Broadway confusion of busy

craft with the easy confidence of the educated hackman. He never makes a

mistake.

Sometimes we go flying down the great canals at such a gait that we can

get only the merest glimpses into front doors, and again, in obscure

alleys in the suburbs, we put on a solemnity suited to the silence, the

mildew, the stagnant waters, the clinging weeds, the deserted houses and

the general lifelessness of the place, and move to the spirit of grave

meditation.

The gondolier is a picturesque rascal for all he wears no satin harness,

no plumed bonnet, no silken tights. His attitude is stately; he is lithe

and supple; all his movements are full of grace. When his long canoe,

and his fine figure, towering from its high perch on the stern, are cut

against the evening sky, they make a picture that is very novel and

striking to a foreign eye.

We sit in the cushioned carriage-body of a cabin, with the curtains

drawn, and smoke, or read, or look out upon the passing boats, the

houses, the bridges, the people, and enjoy ourselves much more than we

could in a buggy jolting over our cobble-stone pavements at home. This

is the gentlest, pleasantest locomotion we have ever known.

But it seems queer--ever so queer--to see a boat doing duty as a private

carriage. We see business men come to the front door, step into a

gondola, instead of a street car, and go off down town to the

counting-room.

We see visiting young ladies stand on the stoop, and laugh, and kiss

good-bye, and flirt their fans and say "Come soon--now do--you've been

just as mean as ever you can be--mother's dying to see you--and we've

moved into the new house, O such a love of a place!--so convenient to the

post office and the church, and the Young Men's Christian Association;

and we do have such fishing, and such carrying on, and such

swimming-matches in the back yard--Oh, you must come--no distance at all,

and if you go down through by St. Mark's and the Bridge of Sighs, and cut

through the alley and come up by the church of Santa Maria dei Frari, and

into the Grand Canal, there isn't a bit of current--now do come, Sally

Maria--by-bye!" and then the little humbug trips down the steps, jumps

into the gondola, says, under her breath, "Disagreeable old thing, I hope

she won't!" goes skimming away, round the corner; and the other girl

slams the street door and says, "Well, that infliction's over, any way,

--but I suppose I've got to go and see her--tiresome stuck-up thing!"

Human nature appears to be just the same, all over the world. We see the

diffident young man, mild of moustache, affluent of hair, indigent of

brain, elegant of costume, drive up to her father's mansion, tell his

hackman to bail out and wait, start fearfully up the steps and meet "the

old gentleman" right on the threshold!--hear him ask what street the new

British Bank is in--as if that were what he came for--and then bounce

into his boat and skurry away with his coward heart in his boots!--see

him come sneaking around the corner again, directly, with a crack of the

curtain open toward the old gentleman's disappearing gondola, and out

scampers his Susan with a flock of little Italian endearments fluttering

from her lips, and goes to drive with him in the watery avenues down

toward the Rialto.

We see the ladies go out shopping, in the most natural way, and flit from

street to street and from store to store, just in the good old fashion,

except that they leave the gondola, instead of a private carriage,

waiting at the curbstone a couple of hours for them,--waiting while they

make the nice young clerks pull down tons and tons of silks and velvets

and moire antiques and those things; and then they buy a paper of pins

and go paddling away to confer the rest of their disastrous patronage on

some other firm. And they always have their purchases sent home just in

the good old way. Human nature is very much the same all over the world;

and it is so like my dear native home to see a Venetian lady go into a

store and buy ten cents' worth of blue ribbon and have it sent home in a

scow. Ah, it is these little touches of nature that move one to tears in

these far-off foreign lands.

We see little girls and boys go out in gondolas with their nurses, for an

airing. We see staid families, with prayer-book and beads, enter the

gondola dressed in their Sunday best, and float away to church. And at

midnight we see the theatre break up and discharge its swarm of hilarious

youth and beauty; we hear the cries of the hackman-gondoliers, and behold

the struggling crowd jump aboard, and the black multitude of boats go

skimming down the moonlit avenues; we see them separate here and there,

and disappear up divergent streets; we hear the faint sounds of laughter

and of shouted farewells floating up out of the distance; and then, the

strange pageant being gone, we have lonely stretches of glittering water

--of stately buildings--of blotting shadows--of weird stone faces

creeping into the moonlight--of deserted bridges--of motionless boats at

anchor. And over all broods that mysterious stillness, that stealthy

quiet, that befits so well this old dreaming Venice.

We have been pretty much every where in our gondola. We have bought

beads and photographs in the stores, and wax matches in the Great Square

of St. Mark. The last remark suggests a digression. Every body goes to

this vast square in the evening. The military bands play in the centre

of it and countless couples of ladies and gentlemen promenade up and down

on either side, and platoons of them are constantly drifting away toward

the old Cathedral, and by the venerable column with the Winged Lion of

St. Mark on its top, and out to where the boats lie moored; and other

platoons are as constantly arriving from the gondolas and joining the

great throng. Between the promenaders and the side-walks are seated

hundreds and hundreds of people at small tables, smoking and taking

granita, (a first cousin to ice-cream;) on the side-walks are more

employing themselves in the same way. The shops in the first floor of

the tall rows of buildings that wall in three sides of the square are

brilliantly lighted, the air is filled with music and merry voices, and

altogether the scene is as bright and spirited and full of cheerfulness

as any man could desire. We enjoy it thoroughly. Very many of the young

women are exceedingly pretty and dress with rare good taste. We are

gradually and laboriously learning the ill-manners of staring them

unflinchingly in the face--not because such conduct is agreeable to us,

but because it is the custom of the country and they say the girls like

it. We wish to learn all the curious, outlandish ways of all the

different countries, so that we can "show off" and astonish people when

we get home. We wish to excite the envy of our untraveled friends with

our strange foreign fashions which we can't shake off. All our

passengers are paying strict attention to this thing, with the end in

view which I have mentioned. The gentle reader will never, never know

what a consummate ass he can become, until he goes abroad. I speak now,

of course, in the supposition that the gentle reader has not been abroad,

and therefore is not already a consummate ass. If the case be otherwise,

I beg his pardon and extend to him the cordial hand of fellowship and

call him brother. I shall always delight to meet an ass after my own

heart when I shall have finished my travels.

On this subject let me remark that there are Americans abroad in Italy

who have actually forgotten their mother tongue in three months--forgot

it in France. They can not even write their address in English in a

hotel register. I append these evidences, which I copied verbatim from

the register of a hotel in a certain Italian city:

"John P. Whitcomb, Etats Unis.

"Wm. L. Ainsworth, travailleur (he meant traveler, I suppose,)

Etats Unis.

"George P. Morton et fils, d'Amerique.

"Lloyd B. Williams, et trois amis, ville de Boston, Amerique.

"J. Ellsworth Baker, tout de suite de France, place de

naissance Amerique, destination la Grand Bretagne."

I love this sort of people. A lady passenger of ours tells of a

fellow-citizen of hers who spent eight weeks in Paris and then returned

home and addressed his dearest old bosom friend Herbert as Mr.

"Er-bare!" He apologized, though, and said, "'Pon my soul it is

aggravating, but I cahn't help it--I have got so used to speaking

nothing but French, my dear Erbare--damme there it goes again!--got so

used to French pronunciation that I cahn't get rid of it--it is

positively annoying, I assure you." This entertaining idiot, whose name

was Gordon, allowed himself to be hailed three times in the street

before he paid any attention, and then begged a thousand pardons and

said he had grown so accustomed to hearing himself addressed as "M'sieu

Gor-r-dong," with a roll to the r, that he had forgotten the legitimate

sound of his name! He wore a rose in his button-hole; he gave the French

salutation--two flips of the hand in front of the face; he called Paris

Pairree in ordinary English conversation; he carried envelopes bearing

foreign postmarks protruding from his breast-pocket; he cultivated a

moustache and imperial, and did what else he could to suggest to the

beholder his pet fancy that he resembled Louis Napoleon--and in a spirit

of thankfulness which is entirely unaccountable, considering the slim

foundation there was for it, he praised his Maker that he was as he was,

and went on enjoying his little life just the same as if he really had

been deliberately designed and erected by the great Architect of the

Universe.

Think of our Whitcombs, and our Ainsworths and our Williamses writing

themselves down in dilapidated French in foreign hotel registers! We

laugh at Englishmen, when we are at home, for sticking so sturdily to

their national ways and customs, but we look back upon it from abroad

very forgivingly. It is not pleasant to see an American thrusting his

nationality forward obtrusively in a foreign land, but Oh, it is pitiable

to see him making of himself a thing that is neither male nor female,

neither fish, flesh, nor fowl--a poor, miserable, hermaphrodite

Frenchman!

Among a long list of churches, art galleries, and such things, visited by

us in Venice, I shall mention only one--the church of Santa Maria dei

Frari. It is about five hundred years old, I believe, and stands on

twelve hundred thousand piles. In it lie the body of Canova and the

heart of Titian, under magnificent monuments. Titian died at the age of

almost one hundred years. A plague which swept away fifty thousand lives

was raging at the time, and there is notable evidence of the reverence in

which the great painter was held, in the fact that to him alone the state

permitted a public funeral in all that season of terror and death.

In this church, also, is a monument to the doge Foscari, whose name a

once resident of Venice, Lord Byron, has made permanently famous.

The monument to the doge Giovanni Pesaro, in this church, is a curiosity

in the way of mortuary adornment. It is eighty feet high and is fronted

like some fantastic pagan temple. Against it stand four colossal

Nubians, as black as night, dressed in white marble garments. The black

legs are bare, and through rents in sleeves and breeches, the skin, of

shiny black marble, shows. The artist was as ingenious as his funeral

designs were absurd. There are two bronze skeletons bearing scrolls, and

two great dragons uphold the sarcophagus. On high, amid all this

grotesqueness, sits the departed doge.

In the conventual buildings attached to this church are the state

archives of Venice. We did not see them, but they are said to number

millions of documents. "They are the records of centuries of the most

watchful, observant and suspicious government that ever existed--in which

every thing was written down and nothing spoken out." They fill nearly

three hundred rooms. Among them are manuscripts from the archives of

nearly two thousand families, monasteries and convents. The secret

history of Venice for a thousand years is here--its plots, its hidden

trials, its assassinations, its commissions of hireling spies and masked

bravoes--food, ready to hand, for a world of dark and mysterious

romances.

Yes, I think we have seen all of Venice. We have seen, in these old

churches, a profusion of costly and elaborate sepulchre ornamentation

such as we never dreampt of before. We have stood in the dim religious

light of these hoary sanctuaries, in the midst of long ranks of dusty

monuments and effigies of the great dead of Venice, until we seemed

drifting back, back, back, into the solemn past, and looking upon the

scenes and mingling with the peoples of a remote antiquity. We have been

in a half-waking sort of dream all the time. I do not know how else to

describe the feeling. A part of our being has remained still in the

nineteenth century, while another part of it has seemed in some

unaccountable way walking among the phantoms of the tenth.

We have seen famous pictures until our eyes are weary with looking at

them and refuse to find interest in them any longer. And what wonder,

when there are twelve hundred pictures by Palma the Younger in Venice and

fifteen hundred by Tintoretto? And behold there are Titians and the

works of other artists in proportion. We have seen Titian's celebrated

Cain and Abel, his David and Goliah, his Abraham's Sacrifice. We have

seen Tintoretto's monster picture, which is seventy-four feet long and I

do not know how many feet high, and thought it a very commodious picture.

We have seen pictures of martyrs enough, and saints enough, to regenerate

the world. I ought not to confess it, but still, since one has no

opportunity in America to acquire a critical judgment in art, and since I

could not hope to become educated in it in Europe in a few short weeks, I

may therefore as well acknowledge with such apologies as may be due, that

to me it seemed that when I had seen one of these martyrs I had seen them

all. They all have a marked family resemblance to each other, they dress

alike, in coarse monkish robes and sandals, they are all bald headed,

they all stand in about the same attitude, and without exception they are

gazing heavenward with countenances which the Ainsworths, the Mortons and

the Williamses, et fils, inform me are full of "expression." To me there

is nothing tangible about these imaginary portraits, nothing that I can

grasp and take a living interest in. If great Titian had only been

gifted with prophecy, and had skipped a martyr, and gone over to England

and painted a portrait of Shakspeare, even as a youth, which we could all

have confidence in now, the world down to the latest generations would

have forgiven him the lost martyr in the rescued seer. I think posterity

could have spared one more martyr for the sake of a great historical

picture of Titian's time and painted by his brush--such as Columbus

returning in chains from the discovery of a world, for instance. The old

masters did paint some Venetian historical pictures, and these we did not

tire of looking at, notwithstanding representations of the formal

introduction of defunct doges to the Virgin Mary in regions beyond the

clouds clashed rather harshly with the proprieties, it seemed to us.

But humble as we are, and unpretending, in the matter of art, our

researches among the painted monks and martyrs have not been wholly in

vain. We have striven hard to learn. We have had some success. We have

mastered some things, possibly of trifling import in the eyes of the

learned, but to us they give pleasure, and we take as much pride in our

little acquirements as do others who have learned far more, and we love

to display them full as well. When we see a monk going about with a lion

and looking tranquilly up to heaven, we know that that is St. Mark. When

we see a monk with a book and a pen, looking tranquilly up to heaven,

trying to think of a word, we know that that is St. Matthew. When we see

a monk sitting on a rock, looking tranquilly up to heaven, with a human

skull beside him, and without other baggage, we know that that is St.

Jerome. Because we know that he always went flying light in the matter

of baggage. When we see a party looking tranquilly up to heaven,

unconscious that his body is shot through and through with arrows, we

know that that is St. Sebastian. When we see other monks looking

tranquilly up to heaven, but having no trade-mark, we always ask who

those parties are. We do this because we humbly wish to learn. We have

seen thirteen thousand St. Jeromes, and twenty-two thousand St. Marks,

and sixteen thousand St. Matthews, and sixty thousand St. Sebastians, and

four millions of assorted monks, undesignated, and we feel encouraged to

believe that when we have seen some more of these various pictures, and

had a larger experience, we shall begin to take an absorbing interest in

them like our cultivated countrymen from Amerique.

Now it does give me real pain to speak in this almost unappreciative way

of the old masters and their martyrs, because good friends of mine in the

ship--friends who do thoroughly and conscientiously appreciate them and

are in every way competent to discriminate between good pictures and

inferior ones--have urged me for my own sake not to make public the fact

that I lack this appreciation and this critical discrimination myself. I

believe that what I have written and may still write about pictures will

give them pain, and I am honestly sorry for it. I even promised that I

would hide my uncouth sentiments in my own breast. But alas! I never

could keep a promise. I do not blame myself for this weakness, because

the fault must lie in my physical organization. It is likely that such a

very liberal amount of space was given to the organ which enables me to

make promises, that the organ which should enable me to keep them was

crowded out. But I grieve not. I like no half-way things. I had rather

have one faculty nobly developed than two faculties of mere ordinary

capacity. I certainly meant to keep that promise, but I find I can not

do it. It is impossible to travel through Italy without speaking of

pictures, and can I see them through others' eyes?

If I did not so delight in the grand pictures that are spread before me

every day of my life by that monarch of all the old masters, Nature, I

should come to believe, sometimes, that I had in me no appreciation of

the beautiful, whatsoever.

It seems to me that whenever I glory to think that for once I have

discovered an ancient painting that is beautiful and worthy of all

praise, the pleasure it gives me is an infallible proof that it is not a

beautiful picture and not in any wise worthy of commendation. This very

thing has occurred more times than I can mention, in Venice. In every

single instance the guide has crushed out my swelling enthusiasm with the

remark:

"It is nothing--it is of the Renaissance."

I did not know what in the mischief the Renaissance was, and so always I

had to simply say,

"Ah! so it is--I had not observed it before."

I could not bear to be ignorant before a cultivated negro, the offspring

of a South Carolina slave. But it occurred too often for even my

self-complacency, did that exasperating "It is nothing--it is of the

Renaissance." I said at last:

"Who is this Renaissance? Where did he come from? Who gave him

permission to cram the Republic with his execrable daubs?"

We learned, then, that Renaissance was not a man; that renaissance was a

term used to signify what was at best but an imperfect rejuvenation of

art. The guide said that after Titian's time and the time of the other

great names we had grown so familiar with, high art declined; then it

partially rose again--an inferior sort of painters sprang up, and these

shabby pictures were the work of their hands. Then I said, in my heat,

that I "wished to goodness high art had declined five hundred years

sooner." The Renaissance pictures suit me very well, though sooth to say

its school were too much given to painting real men and did not indulge

enough in martyrs.

The guide I have spoken of is the only one we have had yet who knew any

thing. He was born in South Carolina, of slave parents. They came to

Venice while he was an infant. He has grown up here. He is well

educated. He reads, writes, and speaks English, Italian, Spanish, and

French, with perfect facility; is a worshipper of art and thoroughly

conversant with it; knows the history of Venice by heart and never tires

of talking of her illustrious career. He dresses better than any of us,

I think, and is daintily polite. Negroes are deemed as good as white

people, in Venice, and so this man feels no desire to go back to his

native land. His judgment is correct.

I have had another shave. I was writing in our front room this afternoon

and trying hard to keep my attention on my work and refrain from looking

out upon the canal. I was resisting the soft influences of the climate

as well as I could, and endeavoring to overcome the desire to be indolent

and happy. The boys sent for a barber. They asked me if I would be

shaved. I reminded them of my tortures in Genoa, Milan, Como; of my

declaration that I would suffer no more on Italian soil. I said "Not any

for me, if you please."

I wrote on. The barber began on the doctor. I heard him say:

"Dan, this is the easiest shave I have had since we left the ship."

He said again, presently:

"Why Dan, a man could go to sleep with this man shaving him."

Dan took the chair. Then he said:

"Why this is Titian. This is one of the old masters."

I wrote on. Directly Dan said:

"Doctor, it is perfect luxury. The ship's barber isn't any thing to

him."

My rough beard wee distressing me beyond measure. The barber was rolling

up his apparatus. The temptation was too strong. I said:

"Hold on, please. Shave me also."

I sat down in the chair and closed my eyes. The barber soaped my face,

and then took his razor and gave me a rake that well nigh threw me into

convulsions. I jumped out of the chair: Dan and the doctor were both

wiping blood off their faces and laughing.

I said it was a mean, disgraceful fraud.

They said that the misery of this shave had gone so far beyond any thing

they had ever experienced before, that they could not bear the idea of

losing such a chance of hearing a cordial opinion from me on the subject.

It was shameful. But there was no help for it. The skinning was begun

and had to be finished. The tears flowed with every rake, and so did the

fervent execrations. The barber grew confused, and brought blood every

time. I think the boys enjoyed it better than any thing they have seen

or heard since they left home.

We have seen the Campanile, and Byron's house and Balbi's the geographer,

and the palaces of all the ancient dukes and doges of Venice, and we have

seen their effeminate descendants airing their nobility in fashionable

French attire in the Grand Square of St. Mark, and eating ices and

drinking cheap wines, instead of wearing gallant coats of mail and

destroying fleets and armies as their great ancestors did in the days of

Venetian glory. We have seen no bravoes with poisoned stilettos, no

masks, no wild carnival; but we have seen the ancient pride of Venice,

the grim Bronze Horses that figure in a thousand legends. Venice may

well cherish them, for they are the only horses she ever had. It is said

there are hundreds of people in this curious city who never have seen a

living horse in their lives. It is entirely true, no doubt.

And so, having satisfied ourselves, we depart to-morrow, and leave the

venerable Queen of the Republics to summon her vanished ships, and

marshal her shadowy armies, and know again in dreams the pride of her old

renown.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Some of the Quaker City's passengers had arrived in Venice from

Switzerland and other lands before we left there, and others were

expected every day. We heard of no casualties among them, and no

sickness.

We were a little fatigued with sight seeing, and so we rattled through a

good deal of country by rail without caring to stop. I took few notes.

I find no mention of Bologna in my memorandum book, except that we

arrived there in good season, but saw none of the sausages for which the

place is so justly celebrated.

Pistoia awoke but a passing interest.

Florence pleased us for a while. I think we appreciated the great figure

of David in the grand square, and the sculptured group they call the Rape

of the Sabines. We wandered through the endless collections of paintings

and statues of the Pitti and Ufizzi galleries, of course. I make that

statement in self-defense; there let it stop. I could not rest under the

imputation that I visited Florence and did not traverse its weary miles

of picture galleries. We tried indolently to recollect something about

the Guelphs and Ghibelines and the other historical cut-throats whose

quarrels and assassinations make up so large a share of Florentine

history, but the subject was not attractive. We had been robbed of all

the fine mountain scenery on our little journey by a system of

railroading that had three miles of tunnel to a hundred yards of

daylight, and we were not inclined to be sociable with Florence. We had

seen the spot, outside the city somewhere, where these people had allowed

the bones of Galileo to rest in unconsecrated ground for an age because

his great discovery that the world turned around was regarded as a

damning heresy by the church; and we know that long after the world had

accepted his theory and raised his name high in the list of its great

men, they had still let him rot there. That we had lived to see his dust

in honored sepulture in the church of Santa Croce we owed to a society of

literati, and not to Florence or her rulers. We saw Dante's tomb in that

church, also, but we were glad to know that his body was not in it; that

the ungrateful city that had exiled him and persecuted him would give

much to have it there, but need not hope to ever secure that high honor

to herself. Medicis are good enough for Florence. Let her plant Medicis

and build grand monuments over them to testify how gratefully she was

wont to lick the hand that scourged her.

Magnanimous Florence! Her jewelry marts are filled with artists in

mosaic. Florentine mosaics are the choicest in all the world. Florence

loves to have that said. Florence is proud of it. Florence would foster

this specialty of hers. She is grateful to the artists that bring to her

this high credit and fill her coffers with foreign money, and so she

encourages them with pensions. With pensions! Think of the lavishness

of it. She knows that people who piece together the beautiful trifles

die early, because the labor is so confining, and so exhausting to hand

and brain, and so she has decreed that all these people who reach the age

of sixty shall have a pension after that! I have not heard that any of

them have called for their dividends yet. One man did fight along till

he was sixty, and started after his pension, but it appeared that there

had been a mistake of a year in his family record, and so he gave it up

and died.

These artists will take particles of stone or glass no larger than a

mustard seed, and piece them together on a sleeve button or a shirt stud,

so smoothly and with such nice adjustment of the delicate shades of color

the pieces bear, as to form a pigmy rose with stem, thorn, leaves, petals

complete, and all as softly and as truthfully tinted as though Nature had

builded it herself. They will counterfeit a fly, or a high-toned bug, or

the ruined Coliseum, within the cramped circle of a breastpin, and do it

so deftly and so neatly that any man might think a master painted it.

I saw a little table in the great mosaic school in Florence--a little

trifle of a centre table--whose top was made of some sort of precious

polished stone, and in the stone was inlaid the figure of a flute, with

bell-mouth and a mazy complication of keys. No painting in the world

could have been softer or richer; no shading out of one tint into another

could have been more perfect; no work of art of any kind could have been

more faultless than this flute, and yet to count the multitude of little

fragments of stone of which they swore it was formed would bankrupt any

man's arithmetic! I do not think one could have seen where two particles

joined each other with eyes of ordinary shrewdness. Certainly we could

detect no such blemish. This table-top cost the labor of one man for ten

long years, so they said, and it was for sale for thirty-five thousand

dollars.

We went to the Church of Santa Croce, from time to time, in Florence, to

weep over the tombs of Michael Angelo, Raphael and Machiavelli,

(I suppose they are buried there, but it may be that they reside

elsewhere and rent their tombs to other parties--such being the fashion

in Italy,) and between times we used to go and stand on the bridges and

admire the Arno. It is popular to admire the Arno. It is a great

historical creek with four feet in the channel and some scows floating

around. It would be a very plausible river if they would pump some water

into it. They all call it a river, and they honestly think it is a

river, do these dark and bloody Florentines. They even help out the

delusion by building bridges over it. I do not see why they are too good

to wade.

How the fatigues and annoyances of travel fill one with bitter prejudices

sometimes! I might enter Florence under happier auspices a month hence

and find it all beautiful, all attractive. But I do not care to think of

it now, at all, nor of its roomy shops filled to the ceiling with snowy

marble and alabaster copies of all the celebrated sculptures in Europe

--copies so enchanting to the eye that I wonder how they can really be

shaped like the dingy petrified nightmares they are the portraits of. I

got lost in Florence at nine o'clock, one night, and staid lost in that

labyrinth of narrow streets and long rows of vast buildings that look all

alike, until toward three o'clock in the morning. It was a pleasant

night and at first there were a good many people abroad, and there were

cheerful lights about. Later, I grew accustomed to prowling about

mysterious drifts and tunnels and astonishing and interesting myself with

coming around corners expecting to find the hotel staring me in the face,

and not finding it doing any thing of the kind. Later still, I felt

tired. I soon felt remarkably tired. But there was no one abroad, now

--not even a policeman. I walked till I was out of all patience, and very

hot and thirsty. At last, somewhere after one o'clock, I came

unexpectedly to one of the city gates. I knew then that I was very far

from the hotel. The soldiers thought I wanted to leave the city, and

they sprang up and barred the way with their muskets. I said:

"Hotel d'Europe!"

It was all the Italian I knew, and I was not certain whether that was

Italian or French. The soldiers looked stupidly at each other and at me,

and shook their heads and took me into custody. I said I wanted to go

home. They did not understand me. They took me into the guard-house and

searched me, but they found no sedition on me. They found a small piece

of soap (we carry soap with us, now,) and I made them a present of it,

seeing that they regarded it as a curiosity. I continued to say Hotel

d'Europe, and they continued to shake their heads, until at last a young

soldier nodding in the corner roused up and said something. He said he

knew where the hotel was, I suppose, for the officer of the guard sent

him away with me. We walked a hundred or a hundred and fifty miles, it

appeared to me, and then he got lost. He turned this way and that, and

finally gave it up and signified that he was going to spend the remainder

of the morning trying to find the city gate again. At that moment it

struck me that there was something familiar about the house over the way.

It was the hotel!

It was a happy thing for me that there happened to be a soldier there

that knew even as much as he did; for they say that the policy of the

government is to change the soldiery from one place to another constantly

and from country to city, so that they can not become acquainted with the

people and grow lax in their duties and enter into plots and conspiracies

with friends. My experiences of Florence were chiefly unpleasant. I

will change the subject.

At Pisa we climbed up to the top of the strangest structure the world has

any knowledge of--the Leaning Tower. As every one knows, it is in the

neighborhood of one hundred and eighty feet high--and I beg to observe

that one hundred and eighty feet reach to about the hight of four

ordinary three-story buildings piled one on top of the other, and is a

very considerable altitude for a tower of uniform thickness to aspire to,

even when it stands upright--yet this one leans more than thirteen feet

out of the perpendicular. It is seven hundred years old, but neither

history or tradition say whether it was built as it is, purposely, or

whether one of its sides has settled. There is no record that it ever

stood straight up. It is built of marble. It is an airy and a beautiful

structure, and each of its eight stories is encircled by fluted columns,

some of marble and some of granite, with Corinthian capitals that were

handsome when they were new. It is a bell tower, and in its top hangs a

chime of ancient bells. The winding staircase within is dark, but one

always knows which side of the tower he is on because of his naturally

gravitating from one side to the other of the staircase with the rise or

dip of the tower. Some of the stone steps are foot-worn only on one end;

others only on the other end; others only in the middle. To look down

into the tower from the top is like looking down into a tilted well. A

rope that hangs from the centre of the top touches the wall before it

reaches the bottom. Standing on the summit, one does not feel altogether

comfortable when he looks down from the high side; but to crawl on your

breast to the verge on the lower side and try to stretch your neck out

far enough to see the base of the tower, makes your flesh creep, and

convinces you for a single moment in spite of all your philosophy, that

the building is falling. You handle yourself very carefully, all the

time, under the silly impression that if it is not falling, your trifling

weight will start it unless you are particular not to "bear down" on it.

The Duomo, close at hand, is one of the finest cathedrals in Europe. It

is eight hundred years old. Its grandeur has outlived the high

commercial prosperity and the political importance that made it a

necessity, or rather a possibility. Surrounded by poverty, decay and

ruin, it conveys to us a more tangible impression of the former greatness

of Pisa than books could give us.

The Baptistery, which is a few years older than the Leaning Tower, is a

stately rotunda, of huge dimensions, and was a costly structure. In it

hangs the lamp whose measured swing suggested to Galileo the pendulum.

It looked an insignificant thing to have conferred upon the world of

science and mechanics such a mighty extension of their dominions as it

has. Pondering, in its suggestive presence, I seemed to see a crazy

universe of swinging disks, the toiling children of this sedate parent.

He appeared to have an intelligent expression about him of knowing that

he was not a lamp at all; that he was a Pendulum; a pendulum disguised,

for prodigious and inscrutable purposes of his own deep devising, and not

a common pendulum either, but the old original patriarchal Pendulum--the

Abraham Pendulum of the world.

This Baptistery is endowed with the most pleasing echo of all the echoes

we have read of. The guide sounded two sonorous notes, about half an

octave apart; the echo answered with the most enchanting, the most

melodious, the richest blending of sweet sounds that one can imagine. It

was like a long-drawn chord of a church organ, infinitely softened by

distance. I may be extravagant in this matter, but if this be the case

my ear is to blame--not my pen. I am describing a memory--and one that

will remain long with me.

The peculiar devotional spirit of the olden time, which placed a higher

confidence in outward forms of worship than in the watchful guarding of

the heart against sinful thoughts and the hands against sinful deeds, and

which believed in the protecting virtues of inanimate objects made holy

by contact with holy things, is illustrated in a striking manner in one

of the cemeteries of Pisa. The tombs are set in soil brought in ships

from the Holy Land ages ago. To be buried in such ground was regarded by

the ancient Pisans as being more potent for salvation than many masses

purchased of the church and the vowing of many candles to the Virgin.

Pisa is believed to be about three thousand years old. It was one of the

twelve great cities of ancient Etruria, that commonwealth which has left

so many monuments in testimony of its extraordinary advancement, and so

little history of itself that is tangible and comprehensible. A Pisan

antiquarian gave me an ancient tear-jug which he averred was full four

thousand years old. It was found among the ruins of one of the oldest of

the Etruscan cities. He said it came from a tomb, and was used by some

bereaved family in that remote age when even the Pyramids of Egypt were

young, Damascus a village, Abraham a prattling infant and ancient Troy

not yet [dreampt] of, to receive the tears wept for some lost idol of a

household. It spoke to us in a language of its own; and with a pathos

more tender than any words might bring, its mute eloquence swept down the

long roll of the centuries with its tale of a vacant chair, a familiar

footstep missed from the threshold, a pleasant voice gone from the

chorus, a vanished form!--a tale which is always so new to us, so

startling, so terrible, so benumbing to the senses, and behold how

threadbare and old it is! No shrewdly-worded history could have brought

the myths and shadows of that old dreamy age before us clothed with human

flesh and warmed with human sympathies so vividly as did this poor little

unsentient vessel of pottery.

Pisa was a republic in the middle ages, with a government of her own,

armies and navies of her own and a great commerce. She was a warlike

power, and inscribed upon her banners many a brilliant fight with Genoese

and Turks. It is said that the city once numbered a population of four

hundred thousand; but her sceptre has passed from her grasp, now, her

ships and her armies are gone, her commerce is dead. Her battle-flags

bear the mold and the dust of centuries, her marts are deserted, she has

shrunken far within her crumbling walls, and her great population has

diminished to twenty thousand souls. She has but one thing left to boast

of, and that is not much, viz: she is the second city of Tuscany.

We reached Leghorn in time to see all we wished to see of it long before

the city gates were closed for the evening, and then came on board the

ship.

We felt as though we had been away from home an age. We never entirely

appreciated, before, what a very pleasant den our state-room is; nor how

jolly it is to sit at dinner in one's own seat in one's own cabin, and

hold familiar conversation with friends in one's own language. Oh, the

rare happiness of comprehending every single word that is said, and

knowing that every word one says in return will be understood as well!

We would talk ourselves to death, now, only there are only about ten

passengers out of the sixty-five to talk to. The others are wandering,

we hardly know where. We shall not go ashore in Leghorn. We are

surfeited with Italian cities for the present, and much prefer to walk

the familiar quarterdeck and view this one from a distance.

The stupid magnates of this Leghorn government can not understand that so

large a steamer as ours could cross the broad Atlantic with no other

purpose than to indulge a party of ladies and gentlemen in a pleasure

excursion. It looks too improbable. It is suspicious, they think.

Something more important must be hidden behind it all. They can not

understand it, and they scorn the evidence of the ship's papers. They

have decided at last that we are a battalion of incendiary, blood-thirsty

Garibaldians in disguise! And in all seriousness they have set a

gun-boat to watch the vessel night and day, with orders to close down on

any revolutionary movement in a twinkling! Police boats are on patrol

duty about us all the time, and it is as much as a sailor's liberty is

worth to show himself in a red shirt. These policemen follow the

executive officer's boat from shore to ship and from ship to shore and

watch his dark maneuvres with a vigilant eye. They will arrest him yet

unless he assumes an expression of countenance that shall have less of

carnage, insurrection and sedition in it. A visit paid in a friendly

way to General Garibaldi yesterday (by cordial invitation,) by some of

our passengers, has gone far to confirm the dread suspicions the

government harbors toward us. It is thought the friendly visit was only

the cloak of a bloody conspiracy. These people draw near and watch us

when we bathe in the sea from the ship's side. Do they think we are

communing with a reserve force of rascals at the bottom?

It is said that we shall probably be quarantined at Naples. Two or three

of us prefer not to run this risk. Therefore, when we are rested, we

propose to go in a French steamer to Civita and from thence to Rome, and

by rail to Naples. They do not quarantine the cars, no matter where they

got their passengers from.

CHAPTER XXV.

There are a good many things about this Italy which I do not understand

--and more especially I can not understand how a bankrupt Government can

have such palatial railroad depots and such marvels of turnpikes. Why,

these latter are as hard as adamant, as straight as a line, as smooth as

a floor, and as white as snow. When it is too dark to see any other

object, one can still see the white turnpikes of France and Italy; and

they are clean enough to eat from, without a table-cloth. And yet no

tolls are charged.

As for the railways--we have none like them. The cars slide as smoothly

along as if they were on runners. The depots are vast palaces of cut

marble, with stately colonnades of the same royal stone traversing them

from end to end, and with ample walls and ceilings richly decorated with

frescoes. The lofty gateways are graced with statues, and the broad

floors are all laid in polished flags of marble.

These things win me more than Italy's hundred galleries of priceless art

treasures, because I can understand the one and am not competent to

appreciate the other. In the turnpikes, the railways, the depots, and

the new boulevards of uniform houses in Florence and other cities here, I

see the genius of Louis Napoleon, or rather, I see the works of that

statesman imitated. But Louis has taken care that in France there shall

be a foundation for these improvements--money. He has always the

wherewithal to back up his projects; they strengthen France and never

weaken her. Her material prosperity is genuine. But here the case is

different. This country is bankrupt. There is no real foundation for

these great works. The prosperity they would seem to indicate is a

pretence. There is no money in the treasury, and so they enfeeble her

instead of strengthening. Italy has achieved the dearest wish of her

heart and become an independent State--and in so doing she has drawn an

elephant in the political lottery. She has nothing to feed it on.

Inexperienced in government, she plunged into all manner of useless

expenditure, and swamped her treasury almost in a day. She squandered

millions of francs on a navy which she did not need, and the first time

she took her new toy into action she got it knocked higher than

Gilderoy's kite--to use the language of the Pilgrims.

But it is an ill-wind that blows nobody good. A year ago, when Italy saw

utter ruin staring her in the face and her greenbacks hardly worth the

paper they were printed on, her Parliament ventured upon a 'coup de main'

that would have appalled the stoutest of her statesmen under less

desperate circumstances. They, in a manner, confiscated the domains of

the Church! This in priest-ridden Italy! This in a land which has

groped in the midnight of priestly superstition for sixteen hundred

years! It was a rare good fortune for Italy, the stress of weather that

drove her to break from this prison-house.

They do not call it confiscating the church property. That would sound

too harshly yet. But it amounts to that. There are thousands of

churches in Italy, each with untold millions of treasures stored away in

its closets, and each with its battalion of priests to be supported.

And then there are the estates of the Church--league on league of the

richest lands and the noblest forests in all Italy--all yielding immense

revenues to the Church, and none paying a cent in taxes to the State.

In some great districts the Church owns all the property--lands,

watercourses, woods, mills and factories. They buy, they sell, they

manufacture, and since they pay no taxes, who can hope to compete with

them?

Well, the Government has seized all this in effect, and will yet seize it

in rigid and unpoetical reality, no doubt. Something must be done to

feed a starving treasury, and there is no other resource in all Italy

--none but the riches of the Church. So the Government intends to take to

itself a great portion of the revenues arising from priestly farms,

factories, etc., and also intends to take possession of the churches and

carry them on, after its own fashion and upon its own responsibility.

In a few instances it will leave the establishments of great pet churches

undisturbed, but in all others only a handful of priests will be retained

to preach and pray, a few will be pensioned, and the balance turned

adrift.

Pray glance at some of these churches and their embellishments, and see

whether the Government is doing a righteous thing or not. In Venice,

today, a city of a hundred thousand inhabitants, there are twelve hundred

priests. Heaven only knows how many there were before the Parliament

reduced their numbers. There was the great Jesuit Church. Under the old

regime it required sixty priests to engineer it--the Government does it

with five, now, and the others are discharged from service. All about

that church wretchedness and poverty abound. At its door a dozen hats

and bonnets were doffed to us, as many heads were humbly bowed, and as

many hands extended, appealing for pennies--appealing with foreign words

we could not understand, but appealing mutely, with sad eyes, and sunken

cheeks, and ragged raiment, that no words were needed to translate. Then

we passed within the great doors, and it seemed that the riches of the

world were before us! Huge columns carved out of single masses of

marble, and inlaid from top to bottom with a hundred intricate figures

wrought in costly verde antique; pulpits of the same rich materials,

whose draperies hung down in many a pictured fold, the stony fabric

counterfeiting the delicate work of the loom; the grand altar brilliant

with polished facings and balustrades of oriental agate, jasper, verde

antique, and other precious stones, whose names, even, we seldom hear

--and slabs of priceless lapis lazuli lavished every where as recklessly as

if the church had owned a quarry of it. In the midst of all this

magnificence, the solid gold and silver furniture of the altar seemed

cheap and trivial. Even the floors and ceilings cost a princely fortune.

Now, where is the use of allowing all those riches to lie idle, while

half of that community hardly know, from day to day, how they are going

to keep body and soul together? And, where is the wisdom in permitting

hundreds upon hundreds of millions of francs to be locked up in the

useless trumpery of churches all over Italy, and the people ground to

death with taxation to uphold a perishing Government?

As far as I can see, Italy, for fifteen hundred years, has turned all her

energies, all her finances, and all her industry to the building up of a

vast array of wonderful church edifices, and starving half her citizens

to accomplish it. She is to-day one vast museum of magnificence and

misery. All the churches in an ordinary American city put together could

hardly buy the jeweled frippery in one of her hundred cathedrals. And

for every beggar in America, Italy can show a hundred--and rags and

vermin to match. It is the wretchedest, princeliest land on earth.

Look at the grand Duomo of Florence--a vast pile that has been sapping

the purses of her citizens for five hundred years, and is not nearly

finished yet. Like all other men, I fell down and worshipped it, but

when the filthy beggars swarmed around me the contrast was too striking,

too suggestive, and I said, "O, sons of classic Italy, is the spirit of

enterprise, of self-reliance, of noble endeavor, utterly dead within ye?

Curse your indolent worthlessness, why don't you rob your church?"

Three hundred happy, comfortable priests are employed in that Cathedral.

And now that my temper is up, I may as well go on and abuse every body I

can think of. They have a grand mausoleum in Florence, which they built

to bury our Lord and Saviour and the Medici family in. It sounds

blasphemous, but it is true, and here they act blasphemy. The dead and

damned Medicis who cruelly tyrannized over Florence and were her curse

for over two hundred years, are salted away in a circle of costly vaults,

and in their midst the Holy Sepulchre was to have been set up. The

expedition sent to Jerusalem to seize it got into trouble and could not

accomplish the burglary, and so the centre of the mausoleum is vacant

now. They say the entire mausoleum was intended for the Holy Sepulchre,

and was only turned into a family burying place after the Jerusalem

expedition failed--but you will excuse me. Some of those Medicis would

have smuggled themselves in sure.--What they had not the effrontery to

do, was not worth doing. Why, they had their trivial, forgotten exploits

on land and sea pictured out in grand frescoes (as did also the ancient

Doges of Venice) with the Saviour and the Virgin throwing bouquets to

them out of the clouds, and the Deity himself applauding from his throne

in Heaven! And who painted these things? Why, Titian, Tintoretto, Paul

Veronese, Raphael--none other than the world's idols, the "old masters."

Andrea del Sarto glorified his princes in pictures that must save them

for ever from the oblivion they merited, and they let him starve. Served

him right. Raphael pictured such infernal villains as Catherine and

Marie de Medicis seated in heaven and conversing familiarly with the

Virgin Mary and the angels, (to say nothing of higher personages,) and

yet my friends abuse me because I am a little prejudiced against the old

masters--because I fail sometimes to see the beauty that is in their

productions. I can not help but see it, now and then, but I keep on

protesting against the groveling spirit that could persuade those masters

to prostitute their noble talents to the adulation of such monsters as

the French, Venetian and Florentine Princes of two and three hundred

years ago, all the same.

I am told that the old masters had to do these shameful things for bread,

the princes and potentates being the only patrons of art. If a grandly

gifted man may drag his pride and his manhood in the dirt for bread

rather than starve with the nobility that is in him untainted, the excuse

is a valid one. It would excuse theft in Washingtons and Wellingtons,

and unchastity in women as well.

But somehow, I can not keep that Medici mausoleum out of my memory. It

is as large as a church; its pavement is rich enough for the pavement of

a King's palace; its great dome is gorgeous with frescoes; its walls are

made of--what? Marble?--plaster?--wood?--paper? No. Red porphyry

--verde antique--jasper--oriental agate--alabaster--mother-of-pearl

--chalcedony--red coral--lapis lazuli! All the vast walls are made wholly

of these precious stones, worked in, and in and in together in elaborate

pattern s and figures, and polished till they glow like great mirrors

with the pictured splendors reflected from the dome overhead. And before

a statue of one of those dead Medicis reposes a crown that blazes with

diamonds and emeralds enough to buy a ship-of-the-line, almost. These

are the things the Government has its evil eye upon, and a happy thing it

will be for Italy when they melt away in the public treasury.

And now----. However, another beggar approaches. I will go out and

destroy him, and then come back and write another chapter of

vituperation.

Having eaten the friendless orphan--having driven away his comrades

--having grown calm and reflective at length--I now feel in a kindlier

mood. I feel that after talking so freely about the priests and the

churches, justice demands that if I know any thing good about either I

ought to say it. I have heard of many things that redound to the credit

of the priesthood, but the most notable matter that occurs to me now is

the devotion one of the mendicant orders showed during the prevalence of

the cholera last year. I speak of the Dominican friars--men who wear a

coarse, heavy brown robe and a cowl, in this hot climate, and go

barefoot. They live on alms altogether, I believe. They must

unquestionably love their religion, to suffer so much for it. When the

cholera was raging in Naples; when the people were dying by hundreds and

hundreds every day; when every concern for the public welfare was

swallowed up in selfish private interest, and every citizen made the

taking care of himself his sole object, these men banded themselves

together and went about nursing the sick and burying the dead. Their

noble efforts cost many of them their lives. They laid them down

cheerfully, and well they might. Creeds mathematically precise, and

hair-splitting niceties of doctrine, are absolutely necessary for the

salvation of some kinds of souls, but surely the charity, the purity, the

unselfishness that are in the hearts of men like these would save their

souls though they were bankrupt in the true religion--which is ours.

One of these fat bare-footed rascals came here to Civita Vecchia with us

in the little French steamer. There were only half a dozen of us in the

cabin. He belonged in the steerage. He was the life of the ship, the

bloody-minded son of the Inquisition! He and the leader of the marine

band of a French man-of-war played on the piano and sang opera turn

about; they sang duets together; they rigged impromptu theatrical

costumes and gave us extravagant farces and pantomimes. We got along

first-rate with the friar, and were excessively conversational, albeit he

could not understand what we said, and certainly he never uttered a word

that we could guess the meaning of.

This Civita Vecchia is the finest nest of dirt, vermin and ignorance we

have found yet, except that African perdition they call Tangier, which is

just like it. The people here live in alleys two yards wide, which have

a smell about them which is peculiar but not entertaining. It is well

the alleys are not wider, because they hold as much smell now as a person

can stand, and of course, if they were wider they would hold more, and

then the people would die. These alleys are paved with stone, and

carpeted with deceased cats, and decayed rags, and decomposed

vegetable-tops, and remnants of old boots, all soaked with dish-water,

and the people sit around on stools and enjoy it. They are indolent, as

a general thing, and yet have few pastimes. They work two or three

hours at a time, but not hard, and then they knock off and catch flies.

This does not require any talent, because they only have to grab--if

they do not get the one they are after, they get another. It is all the

same to them. They have no partialities. Whichever one they get is the

one they want.

They have other kinds of insects, but it does not make them arrogant.

They are very quiet, unpretending people. They have more of these kind

of things than other communities, but they do not boast.

They are very uncleanly--these people--in face, in person and dress.

When they see any body with a clean shirt on, it arouses their scorn.

The women wash clothes, half the day, at the public tanks in the streets,

but they are probably somebody else's. Or may be they keep one set to

wear and another to wash; because they never put on any that have ever

been washed. When they get done washing, they sit in the alleys and

nurse their cubs. They nurse one ash-cat at a time, and the others

scratch their backs against the door-post and are happy.

All this country belongs to the Papal States. They do not appear to have

any schools here, and only one billiard table. Their education is at a

very low stage. One portion of the men go into the military, another

into the priesthood, and the rest into the shoe-making business.

They keep up the passport system here, but so they do in Turkey. This

shows that the Papal States are as far advanced as Turkey. This fact

will be alone sufficient to silence the tongues of malignant

calumniators. I had to get my passport vised for Rome in Florence, and

then they would not let me come ashore here until a policeman had

examined it on the wharf and sent me a permit. They did not even dare to

let me take my passport in my hands for twelve hours, I looked so

formidable. They judged it best to let me cool down. They thought I

wanted to take the town, likely. Little did they know me. I wouldn't

have it. They examined my baggage at the depot. They took one of my

ablest jokes and read it over carefully twice and then read it backwards.

But it was too deep for them. They passed it around, and every body

speculated on it awhile, but it mastered them all.

It was no common joke. At length a veteran officer spelled it over

deliberately and shook his head three or four times and said that in his

opinion it was seditious. That was the first time I felt alarmed. I

immediately said I would explain the document, and they crowded around.

And so I explained and explained and explained, and they took notes of

all I said, but the more I explained the more they could not understand

it, and when they desisted at last, I could not even understand it

myself. They said they believed it was an incendiary document, leveled

at the government. I declared solemnly that it was not, but they only

shook their heads and would not be satisfied. Then they consulted a good

while; and finally they confiscated it. I was very sorry for this,

because I had worked a long time on that joke, and took a good deal of

pride in it, and now I suppose I shall never see it any more. I suppose

it will be sent up and filed away among the criminal archives of Rome,

and will always be regarded as a mysterious infernal machine which would

have blown up like a mine and scattered the good Pope all around, but for

a miraculous providential interference. And I suppose that all the time

I am in Rome the police will dog me about from place to place because

they think I am a dangerous character.

It is fearfully hot in Civita Vecchia. The streets are made very narrow

and the houses built very solid and heavy and high, as a protection

against the heat. This is the first Italian town I have seen which does

not appear to have a patron saint. I suppose no saint but the one that

went up in the chariot of fire could stand the climate.

There is nothing here to see. They have not even a cathedral, with

eleven tons of solid silver archbishops in the back room; and they do not

show you any moldy buildings that are seven thousand years old; nor any

smoke-dried old fire-screens which are chef d'oeuvres of Reubens or

Simpson, or Titian or Ferguson, or any of those parties; and they haven't

any bottled fragments of saints, and not even a nail from the true cross.

We are going to Rome. There is nothing to see here.

CHAPTER XXVI.

What is it that confers the noblest delight? What is that which swells a

man's breast with pride above that which any other experience can bring

to him? Discovery! To know that you are walking where none others have

walked; that you are beholding what human eye has not seen before; that

you are breathing a virgin atmosphere. To give birth to an idea--to

discover a great thought--an intellectual nugget, right under the dust of

a field that many a brain--plow had gone over before. To find a new

planet, to invent a new hinge, to find the way to make the lightnings

carry your messages. To be the first--that is the idea. To do

something, say something, see something, before any body else--these are

the things that confer a pleasure compared with which other pleasures are

tame and commonplace, other ecstasies cheap and trivial. Morse, with his

first message, brought by his servant, the lightning; Fulton, in that

long-drawn century of suspense, when he placed his hand upon the

throttle-valve and lo, the steamboat moved; Jenner, when his patient with

the cow's virus in his blood, walked through the smallpox hospitals

unscathed; Howe, when the idea shot through his brain that for a hundred

and twenty generations the eye had been bored through the wrong end of

the needle; the nameless lord of art who laid down his chisel in some old

age that is forgotten, now, and gloated upon the finished Laocoon;

Daguerre, when he commanded the sun, riding in the zenith, to print the

landscape upon his insignificant silvered plate, and he obeyed; Columbus,

in the Pinta's shrouds, when he swung his hat above a fabled sea and

gazed abroad upon an unknown world! These are the men who have really

lived--who have actually comprehended what pleasure is--who have crowded

long lifetimes of ecstasy into a single moment.

What is there in Rome for me to see that others have not seen before me?

What is there for me to touch that others have not touched? What is

there for me to feel, to learn, to hear, to know, that shall thrill me

before it pass to others? What can I discover?--Nothing. Nothing

whatsoever. One charm of travel dies here. But if I were only a Roman!

--If, added to my own I could be gifted with modern Roman sloth, modern

Roman superstition, and modern Roman boundlessness of ignorance, what

bewildering worlds of unsuspected wonders I would discover! Ah, if I

were only a habitant of the Campagna five and twenty miles from Rome!

Then I would travel.

I would go to America, and see, and learn, and return to the Campagna and

stand before my countrymen an illustrious discoverer. I would say:

"I saw there a country which has no overshadowing Mother Church, and yet

the people survive. I saw a government which never was protected by

foreign soldiers at a cost greater than that required to carry on the

government itself. I saw common men and common women who could read;

I even saw small children of common country people reading from books;

if I dared think you would believe it, I would say they could write,

also.

"In the cities I saw people drinking a delicious beverage made of chalk

and water, but never once saw goats driven through their Broadway or

their Pennsylvania Avenue or their Montgomery street and milked at the

doors of the houses. I saw real glass windows in the houses of even the

commonest people. Some of the houses are not of stone, nor yet of

bricks; I solemnly swear they are made of wood. Houses there will take

fire and burn, sometimes--actually burn entirely down, and not leave a

single vestige behind. I could state that for a truth, upon my

death-bed. And as a proof that the circumstance is not rare, I aver

that they have a thing which they call a fire-engine, which vomits forth

great streams of water, and is kept always in readiness, by night and by

day, to rush to houses that are burning. You would think one engine

would be sufficient, but some great cities have a hundred; they keep men

hired, and pay them by the month to do nothing but put out fires. For a

certain sum of money other men will insure that your house shall not

burn down; and if it burns they will pay you for it. There are hundreds

and thousands of schools, and any body may go and learn to be wise, like

a priest. In that singular country if a rich man dies a sinner, he is

damned; he can not buy salvation with money for masses. There is really

not much use in being rich, there. Not much use as far as the other

world is concerned, but much, very much use, as concerns this; because

there, if a man be rich, he is very greatly honored, and can become a

legislator, a governor, a general, a senator, no matter how ignorant an

ass he is--just as in our beloved Italy the nobles hold all the great

places, even though sometimes they are born noble idiots. There, if a

man be rich, they give him costly presents, they ask him to feasts, they

invite him to drink complicated beverages; but if he be poor and in

debt, they require him to do that which they term to 'settle.' The

women put on a different dress almost every day; the dress is usually

fine, but absurd in shape; the very shape and fashion of it changes

twice in a hundred years; and did I but covet to be called an

extravagant falsifier, I would say it changed even oftener. Hair does

not grow upon the American women's heads; it is made for them by cunning

workmen in the shops, and is curled and frizzled into scandalous and

ungodly forms. Some persons wear eyes of glass which they see through

with facility perhaps, else they would not use them; and in the mouths

of some are teeth made by the sacrilegious hand of man. The dress of

the men is laughably grotesque. They carry no musket in ordinary life,

nor no long-pointed pole; they wear no wide green-lined cloak; they wear

no peaked black felt hat, no leathern gaiters reaching to the knee, no

goat-skin breeches with the hair side out, no hob-nailed shoes, no

prodigious spurs. They wear a conical hat termed a 'nail-keg;' a coat

of saddest black; a shirt which shows dirt so easily that it has to be

changed every month, and is very troublesome; things called pantaloons,

which are held up by shoulder straps, and on their feet they wear boots

which are ridiculous in pattern and can stand no wear. Yet dressed in

this fantastic garb, these people laughed at my costume. In that

country, books are so common that it is really no curiosity to see one.

Newspapers also. They have a great machine which prints such things by

thousands every hour.

"I saw common men, there--men who were neither priests nor princes--who

yet absolutely owned the land they tilled. It was not rented from the

church, nor from the nobles. I am ready to take my oath of this. In

that country you might fall from a third story window three several

times, and not mash either a soldier or a priest.--The scarcity of such

people is astonishing. In the cities you will see a dozen civilians for

every soldier, and as many for every priest or preacher. Jews, there,

are treated just like human beings, instead of dogs. They can work at

any business they please; they can sell brand new goods if they want to;

they can keep drug-stores; they can practice medicine among Christians;

they can even shake hands with Christians if they choose; they can

associate with them, just the same as one human being does with another

human being; they don't have to stay shut up in one corner of the towns;

they can live in any part of a town they like best; it is said they even

have the privilege of buying land and houses, and owning them themselves,

though I doubt that, myself; they never have had to run races naked

through the public streets, against jackasses, to please the people in

carnival time; there they never have been driven by the soldiers into a

church every Sunday for hundreds of years to hear themselves and their

religion especially and particularly cursed; at this very day, in that

curious country, a Jew is allowed to vote, hold office, yea, get up on a

rostrum in the public street and express his opinion of the government if

the government don't suit him! Ah, it is wonderful. The common people

there know a great deal; they even have the effrontery to complain if

they are not properly governed, and to take hold and help conduct the

government themselves; if they had laws like ours, which give one dollar

of every three a crop produces to the government for taxes, they would

have that law altered: instead of paying thirty-three dollars in taxes,

out of every one hundred they receive, they complain if they have to pay

seven. They are curious people. They do not know when they are well

off. Mendicant priests do not prowl among them with baskets begging for

the church and eating up their substance. One hardly ever sees a

minister of the gospel going around there in his bare feet, with a

basket, begging for subsistence. In that country the preachers are not

like our mendicant orders of friars--they have two or three suits of

clothing, and they wash sometimes. In that land are mountains far higher

than the Alban mountains; the vast Roman Campagna, a hundred miles long

and full forty broad, is really small compared to the United States of

America; the Tiber, that celebrated river of ours, which stretches its

mighty course almost two hundred miles, and which a lad can scarcely

throw a stone across at Rome, is not so long, nor yet so wide, as the

American Mississippi--nor yet the Ohio, nor even the Hudson. In America

the people are absolutely wiser and know much more than their

grandfathers did. They do not plow with a sharpened stick, nor yet with

a three-cornered block of wood that merely scratches the top of the

ground. We do that because our fathers did, three thousand years ago, I

suppose. But those people have no holy reverence for their ancestors.

They plow with a plow that is a sharp, curved blade of iron, and it cuts

into the earth full five inches. And this is not all. They cut their

grain with a horrid machine that mows down whole fields in a day. If I

dared, I would say that sometimes they use a blasphemous plow that works

by fire and vapor and tears up an acre of ground in a single hour--but

--but--I see by your looks that you do not believe the things I am telling

you. Alas, my character is ruined, and I am a branded speaker of

untruths!"

Of course we have been to the monster Church of St. Peter, frequently.

I knew its dimensions. I knew it was a prodigious structure. I knew it

was just about the length of the capitol at Washington--say seven hundred

and thirty feet. I knew it was three hundred and sixty-four feet wide,

and consequently wider than the capitol. I knew that the cross on the

top of the dome of the church was four hundred and thirty-eight feet

above the ground, and therefore about a hundred or may be a hundred and

twenty-five feet higher than the dome of the capitol.--Thus I had one

gauge. I wished to come as near forming a correct idea of how it was

going to look, as possible; I had a curiosity to see how much I would

err. I erred considerably. St. Peter's did not look nearly so large as

the capitol, and certainly not a twentieth part as beautiful, from the

outside.

When we reached the door, and stood fairly within the church, it was

impossible to comprehend that it was a very large building. I had to

cipher a comprehension of it. I had to ransack my memory for some more

similes. St. Peter's is bulky. Its height and size would represent two

of the Washington capitol set one on top of the other--if the capitol

were wider; or two blocks or two blocks and a half of ordinary buildings

set one on top of the other. St. Peter's was that large, but it could

and would not look so. The trouble was that every thing in it and about

it was on such a scale of uniform vastness that there were no contrasts

to judge by--none but the people, and I had not noticed them. They were

insects. The statues of children holding vases of holy water were

immense, according to the tables of figures, but so was every thing else

around them. The mosaic pictures in the dome were huge, and were made of

thousands and thousands of cubes of glass as large as the end of my

little finger, but those pictures looked smooth, and gaudy of color, and

in good proportion to the dome. Evidently they would not answer to

measure by. Away down toward the far end of the church (I thought it was

really clear at the far end, but discovered afterward that it was in the

centre, under the dome,) stood the thing they call the baldacchino--a

great bronze pyramidal frame-work like that which upholds a mosquito bar.

It only looked like a considerably magnified bedstead--nothing more. Yet

I knew it was a good deal more than half as high as Niagara Falls. It

was overshadowed by a dome so mighty that its own height was snubbed.

The four great square piers or pillars that stand equidistant from each

other in the church, and support the roof, I could not work up to their

real dimensions by any method of comparison. I knew that the faces of

each were about the width of a very large dwelling-house front, (fifty or

sixty feet,) and that they were twice as high as an ordinary three-story

dwelling, but still they looked small. I tried all the different ways I

could think of to compel myself to understand how large St. Peter's was,

but with small success. The mosaic portrait of an Apostle who was

writing with a pen six feet long seemed only an ordinary Apostle.

But the people attracted my attention after a while. To stand in the

door of St. Peter's and look at men down toward its further extremity,

two blocks away, has a diminishing effect on them; surrounded by the

prodigious pictures and statues, and lost in the vast spaces, they look

very much smaller than they would if they stood two blocks away in the

open air. I "averaged" a man as he passed me and watched him as he

drifted far down by the baldacchino and beyond--watched him dwindle to an

insignificant school-boy, and then, in the midst of the silent throng of

human pigmies gliding about him, I lost him. The church had lately been

decorated, on the occasion of a great ceremony in honor of St. Peter, and

men were engaged, now, in removing the flowers and gilt paper from the

walls and pillars. As no ladders could reach the great heights, the men

swung themselves down from balustrades and the capitals of pilasters by

ropes, to do this work. The upper gallery which encircles the inner

sweep of the dome is two hundred and forty feet above the floor of the

church--very few steeples in America could reach up to it. Visitors

always go up there to look down into the church because one gets the best

idea of some of the heights and distances from that point. While we

stood on the floor one of the workmen swung loose from that gallery at

the end of a long rope. I had not supposed, before, that a man could

look so much like a spider. He was insignificant in size, and his rope

seemed only a thread. Seeing that he took up so little space, I could

believe the story, then, that ten thousand troops went to St. Peter's,

once, to hear mass, and their commanding officer came afterward, and not

finding them, supposed they had not yet arrived. But they were in the

church, nevertheless--they were in one of the transepts. Nearly fifty

thousand persons assembled in St. Peter's to hear the publishing of the

dogma of the Immaculate Conception. It is estimated that the floor of

the church affords standing room for--for a large number of people; I

have forgotten the exact figures. But it is no matter--it is near

enough.

They have twelve small pillars, in St. Peter's, which came from Solomon's

Temple. They have, also--which was far more interesting to me--a piece

of the true cross, and some nails, and a part of the crown of thorns.

Of course we ascended to the summit of the dome, and of course we also

went up into the gilt copper ball which is above it.--There was room

there for a dozen persons, with a little crowding, and it was as close

and hot as an oven. Some of those people who are so fond of writing

their names in prominent places had been there before us--a million or

two, I should think. From the dome of St. Peter's one can see every

notable object in Rome, from the Castle of St. Angelo to the Coliseum.

He can discern the seven hills upon which Rome is built. He can see the

Tiber, and the locality of the bridge which Horatius kept "in the brave

days of old" when Lars Porsena attempted to cross it with his invading

host. He can see the spot where the Horatii and the Curatii fought their

famous battle. He can see the broad green Campagna, stretching away

toward the mountains, with its scattered arches and broken aqueducts of

the olden time, so picturesque in their gray ruin, and so daintily

festooned with vines. He can see the Alban Mountains, the Appenines, the

Sabine Hills, and the blue Mediterranean. He can see a panorama that is

varied, extensive, beautiful to the eye, and more illustrious in history

than any other in Europe.--About his feet is spread the remnant of a

city that once had a population of four million souls; and among its

massed edifices stand the ruins of temples, columns, and triumphal arches

that knew the Caesars, and the noonday of Roman splendor; and close by

them, in unimpaired strength, is a drain of arched and heavy masonry that

belonged to that older city which stood here before Romulus and Remus

were born or Rome thought of. The Appian Way is here yet, and looking

much as it did, perhaps, when the triumphal processions of the Emperors

moved over it in other days bringing fettered princes from the confines

of the earth. We can not see the long array of chariots and mail-clad

men laden with the spoils of conquest, but we can imagine the pageant,

after a fashion. We look out upon many objects of interest from the dome

of St. Peter's; and last of all, almost at our feet, our eyes rest upon

the building which was once the Inquisition. How times changed, between

the older ages and the new! Some seventeen or eighteen centuries ago,

the ignorant men of Rome were wont to put Christians in the arena of the

Coliseum yonder, and turn the wild beasts in upon them for a show. It

was for a lesson as well. It was to teach the people to abhor and fear

the new doctrine the followers of Christ were teaching. The beasts tore

the victims limb from limb and made poor mangled corpses of them in the

twinkling of an eye. But when the Christians came into power, when the

holy Mother Church became mistress of the barbarians, she taught them the

error of their ways by no such means. No, she put them in this pleasant

Inquisition and pointed to the Blessed Redeemer, who was so gentle and so

merciful toward all men, and they urged the barbarians to love him; and

they did all they could to persuade them to love and honor him--first by

twisting their thumbs out of joint with a screw; then by nipping their

flesh with pincers--red-hot ones, because they are the most comfortable

in cold weather; then by skinning them alive a little, and finally by

roasting them in public. They always convinced those barbarians. The

true religion, properly administered, as the good Mother Church used to

administer it, is very, very soothing. It is wonderfully persuasive,

also. There is a great difference between feeding parties to wild beasts

and stirring up their finer feelings in an Inquisition. One is the

system of degraded barbarians, the other of enlightened, civilized

people. It is a great pity the playful Inquisition is no more.

I prefer not to describe St. Peter's. It has been done before. The

ashes of Peter, the disciple of the Saviour, repose in a crypt under the

baldacchino. We stood reverently in that place; so did we also in the

Mamertine Prison, where he was confined, where he converted the soldiers,

and where tradition says he caused a spring of water to flow in order

that he might baptize them. But when they showed us the print of Peter's

face in the hard stone of the prison wall and said he made that by

falling up against it, we doubted. And when, also, the monk at the

church of San Sebastian showed us a paving-stone with two great

footprints in it and said that Peter's feet made those, we lacked

confidence again. Such things do not impress one. The monk said that

angels came and liberated Peter from prison by night, and he started away

from Rome by the Appian Way. The Saviour met him and told him to go

back, which he did. Peter left those footprints in the stone upon which

he stood at the time. It was not stated how it was ever discovered whose

footprints they were, seeing the interview occurred secretly and at

night. The print of the face in the prison was that of a man of common

size; the footprints were those of a man ten or twelve feet high. The

discrepancy confirmed our unbelief.

We necessarily visited the Forum, where Caesar was assassinated, and also

the Tarpeian Rock. We saw the Dying Gladiator at the Capitol, and I

think that even we appreciated that wonder of art; as much, perhaps, as

we did that fearful story wrought in marble, in the Vatican--the Laocoon.

And then the Coliseum.

Every body knows the picture of the Coliseum; every body recognizes at

once that "looped and windowed" band-box with a side bitten out. Being

rather isolated, it shows to better advantage than any other of the

monuments of ancient Rome. Even the beautiful Pantheon, whose pagan

altars uphold the cross, now, and whose Venus, tricked out in consecrated

gimcracks, does reluctant duty as a Virgin Mary to-day, is built about

with shabby houses and its stateliness sadly marred. But the monarch of

all European ruins, the Coliseum, maintains that reserve and that royal

seclusion which is proper to majesty. Weeds and flowers spring from its

massy arches and its circling seats, and vines hang their fringes from

its lofty walls. An impressive silence broods over the monstrous

structure where such multitudes of men and women were wont to assemble in

other days. The butterflies have taken the places of the queens of

fashion and beauty of eighteen centuries ago, and the lizards sun

themselves in the sacred seat of the Emperor. More vividly than all the

written histories, the Coliseum tells the story of Rome's grandeur and

Rome's decay. It is the worthiest type of both that exists. Moving

about the Rome of to-day, we might find it hard to believe in her old

magnificence and her millions of population; but with this stubborn

evidence before us that she was obliged to have a theatre with sitting

room for eighty thousand persons and standing room for twenty thousand

more, to accommodate such of her citizens as required amusement, we find

belief less difficult. The Coliseum is over one thousand six hundred

feet long, seven hundred and fifty wide, and one hundred and sixty-five

high. Its shape is oval.

In America we make convicts useful at the same time that we punish them

for their crimes. We farm them out and compel them to earn money for the

State by making barrels and building roads. Thus we combine business

with retribution, and all things are lovely. But in ancient Rome they

combined religious duty with pleasure. Since it was necessary that the

new sect called Christians should be exterminated, the people judged it

wise to make this work profitable to the State at the same time, and

entertaining to the public. In addition to the gladiatorial combats and

other shows, they sometimes threw members of the hated sect into the

arena of the Coliseum and turned wild beasts in upon them. It is

estimated that seventy thousand Christians suffered martyrdom in this

place. This has made the Coliseum holy ground, in the eyes of the

followers of the Saviour. And well it might; for if the chain that bound

a saint, and the footprints a saint has left upon a stone he chanced to

stand upon, be holy, surely the spot where a man gave up his life for his

faith is holy.

Seventeen or eighteen centuries ago this Coliseum was the theatre of

Rome, and Rome was mistress of the world. Splendid pageants were

exhibited here, in presence of the Emperor, the great ministers of State,

the nobles, and vast audiences of citizens of smaller consequence.

Gladiators fought with gladiators and at times with warrior prisoners

from many a distant land. It was the theatre of Rome--of the world--and

the man of fashion who could not let fall in a casual and unintentional

manner something about "my private box at the Coliseum" could not move in

the first circles. When the clothing-store merchant wished to consume

the corner grocery man with envy, he bought secured seats in the front

row and let the thing be known. When the irresistible dry goods clerk

wished to blight and destroy, according to his native instinct, he got

himself up regardless of expense and took some other fellow's young lady

to the Coliseum, and then accented the affront by cramming her with ice

cream between the acts, or by approaching the cage and stirring up the

martyrs with his whalebone cane for her edification. The Roman swell was

in his true element only when he stood up against a pillar and fingered

his moustache unconscious of the ladies; when he viewed the bloody

combats through an opera-glass two inches long; when he excited the envy

of provincials by criticisms which showed that he had been to the

Coliseum many and many a time and was long ago over the novelty of it;

when he turned away with a yawn at last and said,

"He a star! handles his sword like an apprentice brigand! he'll do for

the country, may be, but he don't answer for the metropolis!"

Glad was the contraband that had a seat in the pit at the Saturday

matinee, and happy the Roman street-boy who ate his peanuts and guyed the

gladiators from the dizzy gallery.

For me was reserved the high honor of discovering among the rubbish of

the ruined Coliseum the only playbill of that establishment now extant.

There was a suggestive smell of mint-drops about it still, a corner of it

had evidently been chewed, and on the margin, in choice Latin, these

words were written in a delicate female hand:

"Meet me on the Tarpeian Rock tomorrow evening, dear, at sharp

seven. Mother will be absent on a visit to her friends in the

Sabine Hills. CLAUDIA."

Ah, where is that lucky youth to-day, and where the little hand that

wrote those dainty lines? Dust and ashes these seventeen hundred years!

Thus reads the bill:

ROMAN COLISEUM.

UNPARALLELED ATTRACTION!

NEW PROPERTIES! NEW LIONS! NEW GLADIATORS!

Engagement of the renowned

MARCUS MARCELLUS VALERIAN!

FOR SIX NIGHTS ONLY!

The management beg leave to offer to the public an entertainment

surpassing in magnificence any thing that has heretofore been attempted

on any stage. No expense has been spared to make the opening season one

which shall be worthy the generous patronage which the management feel

sure will crown their efforts. The management beg leave to state that

they have succeeded in securing the services of a

GALAXY OF TALENT!

such as has not been beheld in Rome before.

The performance will commence this evening with a

GRAND BROADSWORD COMBAT!

between two young and promising amateurs and a celebrated Parthian

gladiator who has just arrived a prisoner from the Camp of Verus.

This will be followed by a grand moral

BATTLE-AX ENGAGEMENT!

between the renowned Valerian (with one hand tied behind him,) and two

gigantic savages from Britain.

After which the renowned Valerian (if he survive,) will fight with the

broad-sword,

LEFT HANDED!

against six Sophomores and a Freshman from the Gladiatorial College!

A long series of brilliant engagements will follow, in which the finest

talent of the Empire will take part

After which the celebrated Infant Prodigy known as

"THE YOUNG ACHILLES,"

will engage four tiger whelps in combat, armed with no other weapon than

his little spear!

The whole to conclude with a chaste and elegant

GENERAL SLAUGHTER!

In which thirteen African Lions and twenty-two Barbarian Prisoners will

war with each other until all are exterminated.

BOX OFFICE NOW OPEN.

Dress Circle One Dollar; Children and Servants half price.

An efficient police force will be on hand to preserve order and keep the

wild beasts from leaping the railings and discommoding the audience.

Doors open at 7; performance begins at 8.

POSITIVELY NO FREE LIST.

Diodorus Job Press.

It was as singular as it was gratifying that I was also so fortunate as

to find among the rubbish of the arena, a stained and mutilated copy of

the Roman Daily Battle-Ax, containing a critique upon this very

performance. It comes to hand too late by many centuries to rank as

news, and therefore I translate and publish it simply to show how very

little the general style and phraseology of dramatic criticism has

altered in the ages that have dragged their slow length along since the

carriers laid this one damp and fresh before their Roman patrons:

"THE OPENING SEASON.--COLISEUM.--Notwithstanding the inclemency of

the weather, quite a respectable number of the rank and fashion of

the city assembled last night to witness the debut upon metropolitan

boards of the young tragedian who has of late been winning such

golden opinions in the amphitheatres of the provinces. Some sixty

thousand persons were present, and but for the fact that the streets

were almost impassable, it is fair to presume that the house would

have been full. His august Majesty, the Emperor Aurelius, occupied

the imperial box, and was the cynosure of all eyes. Many

illustrious nobles and generals of the Empire graced the occasion

with their presence, and not the least among them was the young

patrician lieutenant whose laurels, won in the ranks of the

"Thundering Legion," are still so green upon his brow. The cheer

which greeted his entrance was heard beyond the Tiber!

"The late repairs and decorations add both to the comeliness and the

comfort of the Coliseum. The new cushions are a great improvement

upon the hard marble seats we have been so long accustomed to. The

present management deserve well of the public. They have restored

to the Coliseum the gilding, the rich upholstery and the uniform

magnificence which old Coliseum frequenters tell us Rome was so

proud of fifty years ago.

"The opening scene last night--the broadsword combat between two

young amateurs and a famous Parthian gladiator who was sent here a

prisoner--was very fine. The elder of the two young gentlemen

handled his weapon with a grace that marked the possession of

extraordinary talent. His feint of thrusting, followed instantly by

a happily delivered blow which unhelmeted the Parthian, was received

with hearty applause. He was not thoroughly up in the backhanded

stroke, but it was very gratifying to his numerous friends to know

that, in time, practice would have overcome this defect. However,

he was killed. His sisters, who were present, expressed

considerable regret. His mother left the Coliseum. The other youth

maintained the contest with such spirit as to call forth

enthusiastic bursts of applause. When at last he fell a corpse, his

aged mother ran screaming, with hair disheveled and tears streaming

from her eyes, and swooned away just as her hands were clutching at

the railings of the arena. She was promptly removed by the police.

Under the circumstances the woman's conduct was pardonable, perhaps,

but we suggest that such exhibitions interfere with the decorum

which should be preserved during the performances, and are highly

improper in the presence of the Emperor. The Parthian prisoner

fought bravely and well; and well he might, for he was fighting for

both life and liberty. His wife and children were there to nerve

his arm with their love, and to remind him of the old home he should

see again if he conquered. When his second assailant fell, the

woman clasped her children to her breast and wept for joy. But it

was only a transient happiness. The captive staggered toward her

and she saw that the liberty he had earned was earned too late. He

was wounded unto death. Thus the first act closed in a manner which

was entirely satisfactory. The manager was called before the

curtain and returned his thanks for the honor done him, in a speech

which was replete with wit and humor, and closed by hoping that his

humble efforts to afford cheerful and instructive entertainment

would continue to meet with the approbation of the Roman public

"The star now appeared, and was received with vociferous applause

and the simultaneous waving of sixty thousand handkerchiefs. Marcus

Marcellus Valerian (stage name--his real name is Smith,) is a

splendid specimen of physical development, and an artist of rare

merit. His management of the battle-ax is wonderful. His gayety

and his playfulness are irresistible, in his comic parts, and yet

they are inferior to his sublime conceptions in the grave realm of

tragedy. When his ax was describing fiery circles about the heads

of the bewildered barbarians, in exact time with his springing body

and his prancing legs, the audience gave way to uncontrollable

bursts of laughter; but when the back of his weapon broke the skull

of one and almost in the same instant its edge clove the other's

body in twain, the howl of enthusiastic applause that shook the

building, was the acknowledgment of a critical assemblage that he

was a master of the noblest department of his profession. If he has

a fault, (and we are sorry to even intimate that he has,) it is that

of glancing at the audience, in the midst of the most exciting

moments of the performance, as if seeking admiration. The pausing

in a fight to bow when bouquets are thrown to him is also in bad

taste. In the great left-handed combat he appeared to be looking at

the audience half the time, instead of carving his adversaries; and

when he had slain all the sophomores and was dallying with the

freshman, he stooped and snatched a bouquet as it fell, and offered

it to his adversary at a time when a blow was descending which

promised favorably to be his death-warrant. Such levity is proper

enough in the provinces, we make no doubt, but it ill suits the

dignity of the metropolis. We trust our young friend will take

these remarks in good part, for we mean them solely for his benefit.

All who know us are aware that although we are at times justly

severe upon tigers and martyrs, we never intentionally offend

gladiators.

"The Infant Prodigy performed wonders. He overcame his four tiger

whelps with ease, and with no other hurt than the loss of a portion

of his scalp. The General Slaughter was rendered with a

faithfulness to details which reflects the highest credit upon the

late participants in it.

"Upon the whole, last night's performances shed honor not only upon

the management but upon the city that encourages and sustains such

wholesome and instructive entertainments. We would simply suggest

that the practice of vulgar young boys in the gallery of shying

peanuts and paper pellets at the tigers, and saying "Hi-yi!" and

manifesting approbation or dissatisfaction by such observations as

"Bully for the lion!" "Go it, Gladdy!" "Boots!" "Speech!" "Take

a walk round the block!" and so on, are extremely reprehensible,

when the Emperor is present, and ought to be stopped by the police.

Several times last night, when the supernumeraries entered the arena

to drag out the bodies, the young ruffians in the gallery shouted,

"Supe! supe!" and also, "Oh, what a coat!" and "Why don't you pad

them shanks?" and made use of various other remarks expressive of

derision. These things are very annoying to the audience.

"A matinee for the little folks is promised for this afternoon, on

which occasion several martyrs will be eaten by the tigers. The

regular performance will continue every night till further notice.

Material change of programme every evening. Benefit of Valerian,

Tuesday, 29th, if he lives."

I have been a dramatic critic myself, in my time, and I was often

surprised to notice how much more I knew about Hamlet than Forrest did;

and it gratifies me to observe, now, how much better my brethren of

ancient times knew how a broad sword battle ought to be fought than the

gladiators.

CHAPTER XXVII.

So far, good. If any man has a right to feel proud of himself, and

satisfied, surely it is I. For I have written about the Coliseum, and

the gladiators, the martyrs, and the lions, and yet have never once used

the phrase "butchered to make a Roman holiday." I am the only free white

man of mature age, who has accomplished this since Byron originated the

expression.

Butchered to make a Roman holiday sounds well for the first seventeen or

eighteen hundred thousand times one sees it in print, but after that it

begins to grow tiresome. I find it in all the books concerning Rome--and

here latterly it reminds me of Judge Oliver. Oliver was a young lawyer,

fresh from the schools, who had gone out to the deserts of Nevada to

begin life. He found that country, and our ways of life, there, in those

early days, different from life in New England or Paris. But he put on a

woollen shirt and strapped a navy revolver to his person, took to the

bacon and beans of the country, and determined to do in Nevada as Nevada

did. Oliver accepted the situation so completely that although he must

have sorrowed over many of his trials, he never complained--that is, he

never complained but once. He, two others, and myself, started to the

new silver mines in the Humboldt mountains--he to be Probate Judge of

Humboldt county, and we to mine. The distance was two hundred miles. It

was dead of winter. We bought a two-horse wagon and put eighteen hundred

pounds of bacon, flour, beans, blasting-powder, picks and shovels in it;

we bought two sorry-looking Mexican "plugs," with the hair turned the

wrong way and more corners on their bodies than there are on the mosque

of Omar; we hitched up and started. It was a dreadful trip. But Oliver

did not complain. The horses dragged the wagon two miles from town and

then gave out. Then we three pushed the wagon seven miles, and Oliver

moved ahead and pulled the horses after him by the bits. We complained,

but Oliver did not. The ground was frozen, and it froze our backs while

we slept; the wind swept across our faces and froze our noses. Oliver

did not complain. Five days of pushing the wagon by day and freezing by

night brought us to the bad part of the journey--the Forty Mile Desert,

or the Great American Desert, if you please. Still, this

mildest-mannered man that ever was, had not complained. We started across

at eight in the morning, pushing through sand that had no bottom; toiling

all day long by the wrecks of a thousand wagons, the skeletons of ten

thousand oxen; by wagon-tires enough to hoop the Washington Monument to

the top, and ox-chains enough to girdle Long Island; by human graves;

with our throats parched always, with thirst; lips bleeding from the

alkali dust; hungry, perspiring, and very, very weary--so weary that when

we dropped in the sand every fifty yards to rest the horses, we could

hardly keep from going to sleep--no complaints from Oliver: none the next

morning at three o'clock, when we got across, tired to death.

Awakened two or three nights afterward at midnight, in a narrow canon, by

the snow falling on our faces, and appalled at the imminent danger of

being "snowed in," we harnessed up and pushed on till eight in the

morning, passed the "Divide" and knew we were saved. No complaints.

Fifteen days of hardship and fatigue brought us to the end of the two

hundred miles, and the Judge had not complained. We wondered if any

thing could exasperate him. We built a Humboldt house. It is done in

this way. You dig a square in the steep base of the mountain, and set up

two uprights and top them with two joists. Then you stretch a great

sheet of "cotton domestic" from the point where the joists join the

hill-side down over the joists to the ground; this makes the roof and the

front of the mansion; the sides and back are the dirt walls your digging

has left. A chimney is easily made by turning up one corner of the roof.

Oliver was sitting alone in this dismal den, one night, by a sage-brush

fire, writing poetry; he was very fond of digging poetry out of himself

--or blasting it out when it came hard. He heard an animal's footsteps

close to the roof; a stone or two and some dirt came through and fell by

him. He grew uneasy and said "Hi!--clear out from there, can't you!"

--from time to time. But by and by he fell asleep where he sat, and pretty

soon a mule fell down the chimney! The fire flew in every direction, and

Oliver went over backwards. About ten nights after that, he recovered

confidence enough to go to writing poetry again. Again he dozed off to

sleep, and again a mule fell down the chimney. This time, about half of

that side of the house came in with the mule. Struggling to get up, the

mule kicked the candle out and smashed most of the kitchen furniture, and

raised considerable dust. These violent awakenings must have been

annoying to Oliver, but he never complained. He moved to a mansion on

the opposite side of the canon, because he had noticed the mules did not

go there. One night about eight o'clock he was endeavoring to finish his

poem, when a stone rolled in--then a hoof appeared below the canvas--then

part of a cow--the after part. He leaned back in dread, and shouted

"Hooy! hooy! get out of this!" and the cow struggled manfully--lost

ground steadily--dirt and dust streamed down, and before Oliver could get

well away, the entire cow crashed through on to the table and made a

shapeless wreck of every thing!

Then, for the first time in his life, I think, Oliver complained. He

said,

"This thing is growing monotonous!"

Then he resigned his judgeship and left Humboldt county. "Butchered to

make a Roman holyday" has grown monotonous to me.

In this connection I wish to say one word about Michael Angelo

Buonarotti. I used to worship the mighty genius of Michael Angelo--that

man who was great in poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture--great in

every thing he undertook. But I do not want Michael Angelo for

breakfast--for luncheon--for dinner--for tea--for supper--for between

meals. I like a change, occasionally. In Genoa, he designed every

thing; in Milan he or his pupils designed every thing; he designed the

Lake of Como; in Padua, Verona, Venice, Bologna, who did we ever hear of,

from guides, but Michael Angelo? In Florence, he painted every thing,

designed every thing, nearly, and what he did not design he used to sit

on a favorite stone and look at, and they showed us the stone. In Pisa

he designed every thing but the old shot-tower, and they would have

attributed that to him if it had not been so awfully out of the

perpendicular. He designed the piers of Leghorn and the custom house

regulations of Civita Vecchia. But, here--here it is frightful. He

designed St. Peter's; he designed the Pope; he designed the Pantheon, the

uniform of the Pope's soldiers, the Tiber, the Vatican, the Coliseum, the

Capitol, the Tarpeian Rock, the Barberini Palace, St. John Lateran, the

Campagna, the Appian Way, the Seven Hills, the Baths of Caracalla, the

Claudian Aqueduct, the Cloaca Maxima--the eternal bore designed the

Eternal City, and unless all men and books do lie, he painted every thing

in it! Dan said the other day to the guide, "Enough, enough, enough!

Say no more! Lump the whole thing! say that the Creator made Italy from

designs by Michael Angelo!"

I never felt so fervently thankful, so soothed, so tranquil, so filled

with a blessed peace, as I did yesterday when I learned that Michael

Angelo was dead.

But we have taken it out of this guide. He has marched us through miles

of pictures and sculpture in the vast corridors of the Vatican; and

through miles of pictures and sculpture in twenty other palaces; he has

shown us the great picture in the Sistine Chapel, and frescoes enough to

frescoe the heavens--pretty much all done by Michael Angelo. So with him

we have played that game which has vanquished so many guides for us

--imbecility and idiotic questions. These creatures never suspect--they

have no idea of a sarcasm.

He shows us a figure and says: "Statoo brunzo." (Bronze statue.)

We look at it indifferently and the doctor asks: "By Michael Angelo?"

"No--not know who."

Then he shows us the ancient Roman Forum. The doctor asks: "Michael

Angelo?"

A stare from the guide. "No--thousan' year before he is born."

Then an Egyptian obelisk. Again: "Michael Angelo?"

"Oh, mon dieu, genteelmen! Zis is two thousan' year before he is born!"

He grows so tired of that unceasing question sometimes, that he dreads to

show us any thing at all. The wretch has tried all the ways he can think

of to make us comprehend that Michael Angelo is only responsible for the

creation of a part of the world, but somehow he has not succeeded yet.

Relief for overtasked eyes and brain from study and sightseeing is

necessary, or we shall become idiotic sure enough. Therefore this guide

must continue to suffer. If he does not enjoy it, so much the worse for

him. We do.

In this place I may as well jot down a chapter concerning those necessary

nuisances, European guides. Many a man has wished in his heart he could

do without his guide; but knowing he could not, has wished he could get

some amusement out of him as a remuneration for the affliction of his

society. We accomplished this latter matter, and if our experience can

be made useful to others they are welcome to it.

Guides know about enough English to tangle every thing up so that a man

can make neither head or tail of it. They know their story by heart--the

history of every statue, painting, cathedral or other wonder they show

you. They know it and tell it as a parrot would--and if you interrupt,

and throw them off the track, they have to go back and begin over again.

All their lives long, they are employed in showing strange things to

foreigners and listening to their bursts of admiration. It is human

nature to take delight in exciting admiration. It is what prompts

children to say "smart" things, and do absurd ones, and in other ways

"show off" when company is present. It is what makes gossips turn out in

rain and storm to go and be the first to tell a startling bit of news.

Think, then, what a passion it becomes with a guide, whose privilege it

is, every day, to show to strangers wonders that throw them into perfect

ecstasies of admiration! He gets so that he could not by any possibility

live in a soberer atmosphere. After we discovered this, we never went

into ecstasies any more--we never admired any thing--we never showed any

but impassible faces and stupid indifference in the presence of the

sublimest wonders a guide had to display. We had found their weak point.

We have made good use of it ever since. We have made some of those

people savage, at times, but we have never lost our own serenity.

The doctor asks the questions, generally, because he can keep his

countenance, and look more like an inspired idiot, and throw more

imbecility into the tone of his voice than any man that lives. It comes

natural to him.

The guides in Genoa are delighted to secure an American party, because

Americans so much wonder, and deal so much in sentiment and emotion

before any relic of Columbus. Our guide there fidgeted about as if he

had swallowed a spring mattress. He was full of animation--full of

impatience. He said:

"Come wis me, genteelmen!--come! I show you ze letter writing by

Christopher Colombo!--write it himself!--write it wis his own hand!

--come!"

He took us to the municipal palace. After much impressive fumbling of

keys and opening of locks, the stained and aged document was spread

before us. The guide's eyes sparkled. He danced about us and tapped the

parchment with his finger:

"What I tell you, genteelmen! Is it not so? See! handwriting

Christopher Colombo!--write it himself!"

We looked indifferent--unconcerned. The doctor examined the document

very deliberately, during a painful pause.--Then he said, without any

show of interest:

"Ah--Ferguson--what--what did you say was the name of the party who wrote

this?"

"Christopher Colombo! ze great Christopher Colombo!"

Another deliberate examination.

"Ah--did he write it himself; or--or how?"

"He write it himself!--Christopher Colombo! He's own hand-writing, write

by himself!"

Then the doctor laid the document down and said:

"Why, I have seen boys in America only fourteen years old that could

write better than that."

"But zis is ze great Christo--"

"I don't care who it is! It's the worst writing I ever saw. Now you

musn't think you can impose on us because we are strangers. We are not

fools, by a good deal. If you have got any specimens of penmanship of

real merit, trot them out!--and if you haven't, drive on!"

We drove on. The guide was considerably shaken up, but he made one more

venture. He had something which he thought would overcome us. He said:

"Ah, genteelmen, you come wis me! I show you beautiful, O, magnificent

bust Christopher Colombo!--splendid, grand, magnificent!"

He brought us before the beautiful bust--for it was beautiful--and sprang

back and struck an attitude:

"Ah, look, genteelmen!--beautiful, grand,--bust Christopher Colombo!

--beautiful bust, beautiful pedestal!"

The doctor put up his eye-glass--procured for such occasions:

"Ah--what did you say this gentleman's name was?"

"Christopher Colombo!--ze great Christopher Colombo!"

"Christopher Colombo--the great Christopher Colombo. Well, what did he

do?"

"Discover America!--discover America, Oh, ze devil!"

"Discover America. No--that statement will hardly wash. We are just

from America ourselves. We heard nothing about it. Christopher Colombo

--pleasant name--is--is he dead?"

"Oh, corpo di Baccho!--three hundred year!"

"What did he die of?"

"I do not know!--I can not tell."

"Small-pox, think?"

"I do not know, genteelmen!--I do not know what he die of!"

"Measles, likely?"

"May be--may be--I do not know--I think he die of somethings."

"Parents living?"

"Im-poseeeble!"

"Ah--which is the bust and which is the pedestal?"

"Santa Maria!--zis ze bust!--zis ze pedestal!"

"Ah, I see, I see--happy combination--very happy combination, indeed.

Is--is this the first time this gentleman was ever on a bust?"

That joke was lost on the foreigner--guides can not master the subtleties

of the American joke.

We have made it interesting for this Roman guide. Yesterday we spent

three or four hours in the Vatican, again, that wonderful world of

curiosities. We came very near expressing interest, sometimes--even

admiration--it was very hard to keep from it. We succeeded though.

Nobody else ever did, in the Vatican museums. The guide was bewildered

--non-plussed. He walked his legs off, nearly, hunting up extraordinary

things, and exhausted all his ingenuity on us, but it was a failure; we

never showed any interest in any thing. He had reserved what he

considered to be his greatest wonder till the last--a royal Egyptian

mummy, the best preserved in the world, perhaps. He took us there. He

felt so sure, this time, that some of his old enthusiasm came back to

him:

"See, genteelmen!--Mummy! Mummy!"

The eye-glass came up as calmly, as deliberately as ever.

"Ah,--Ferguson--what did I understand you to say the gentleman's name

was?"

"Name?--he got no name!--Mummy!--'Gyptian mummy!"

"Yes, yes. Born here?"

"No! 'Gyptian mummy!"

"Ah, just so. Frenchman, I presume?"

"No!--not Frenchman, not Roman!--born in Egypta!"

"Born in Egypta. Never heard of Egypta before. Foreign locality,

likely. Mummy--mummy. How calm he is--how self-possessed. Is, ah--is

he dead?"

"Oh, sacre bleu, been dead three thousan' year!"

The doctor turned on him savagely:

"Here, now, what do you mean by such conduct as this! Playing us for

Chinamen because we are strangers and trying to learn! Trying to impose

your vile second-hand carcasses on us!--thunder and lightning, I've a

notion to--to--if you've got a nice fresh corpse, fetch him out!--or by

George we'll brain you!"

We make it exceedingly interesting for this Frenchman. However, he has

paid us back, partly, without knowing it. He came to the hotel this

morning to ask if we were up, and he endeavored as well as he could to

describe us, so that the landlord would know which persons he meant. He

finished with the casual remark that we were lunatics. The observation

was so innocent and so honest that it amounted to a very good thing for a

guide to say.

There is one remark (already mentioned,) which never yet has failed to

disgust these guides. We use it always, when we can think of nothing

else to say. After they have exhausted their enthusiasm pointing out

to us and praising the beauties of some ancient bronze image or

broken-legged statue, we look at it stupidly and in silence for five,

ten, fifteen minutes--as long as we can hold out, in fact--and then ask:

"Is--is he dead?"

That conquers the serenest of them. It is not what they are looking for

--especially a new guide. Our Roman Ferguson is the most patient,

unsuspecting, long-suffering subject we have had yet. We shall be sorry

to part with him. We have enjoyed his society very much. We trust he

has enjoyed ours, but we are harassed with doubts.

We have been in the catacombs. It was like going down into a very deep

cellar, only it was a cellar which had no end to it. The narrow passages

are roughly hewn in the rock, and on each hand as you pass along, the

hollowed shelves are carved out, from three to fourteen deep; each held a

corpse once. There are names, and Christian symbols, and prayers, or

sentences expressive of Christian hopes, carved upon nearly every

sarcophagus. The dates belong away back in the dawn of the Christian

era, of course. Here, in these holes in the ground, the first Christians

sometimes burrowed to escape persecution. They crawled out at night to

get food, but remained under cover in the day time. The priest told us

that St. Sebastian lived under ground for some time while he was being

hunted; he went out one day, and the soldiery discovered and shot him to

death with arrows. Five or six of the early Popes--those who reigned

about sixteen hundred years ago--held their papal courts and advised with

their clergy in the bowels of the earth. During seventeen years--from

A.D. 235 to A.D. 252--the Popes did not appear above ground. Four were

raised to the great office during that period. Four years apiece, or

thereabouts. It is very suggestive of the unhealthiness of underground

graveyards as places of residence. One Pope afterward spent his entire

pontificate in the catacombs--eight years. Another was discovered in

them and murdered in the episcopal chair. There was no satisfaction in

being a Pope in those days. There were too many annoyances. There are

one hundred and sixty catacombs under Rome, each with its maze of narrow

passages crossing and recrossing each other and each passage walled to

the top with scooped graves its entire length. A careful estimate makes

the length of the passages of all the catacombs combined foot up nine

hundred miles, and their graves number seven millions. We did not go

through all the passages of all the catacombs. We were very anxious to

do it, and made the necessary arrangements, but our too limited time

obliged us to give up the idea. So we only groped through the dismal

labyrinth of St. Callixtus, under the Church of St. Sebastian. In the

various catacombs are small chapels rudely hewn in the stones, and here

the early Christians often held their religious services by dim, ghostly

lights. Think of mass and a sermon away down in those tangled caverns

under ground!

In the catacombs were buried St. Cecilia, St. Agnes, and several other of

the most celebrated of the saints. In the catacomb of St. Callixtus, St.

Bridget used to remain long hours in holy contemplation, and St. Charles

Borromeo was wont to spend whole nights in prayer there. It was also the

scene of a very marvelous thing.

"Here the heart of St. Philip Neri was so inflamed with divine love

as to burst his ribs."

I find that grave statement in a book published in New York in 1808, and

written by "Rev. William H. Neligan, LL.D., M. A., Trinity College,

Dublin; Member of the Archaeological Society of Great Britain."

Therefore, I believe it. Otherwise, I could not. Under other

circumstances I should have felt a curiosity to know what Philip had for

dinner.

This author puts my credulity on its mettle every now and then. He tells

of one St. Joseph Calasanctius whose house in Rome he visited; he visited

only the house--the priest has been dead two hundred years. He says the

Virgin Mary appeared to this saint. Then he continues:

"His tongue and his heart, which were found after nearly a century

to be whole, when the body was disinterred before his canonization,

are still preserved in a glass case, and after two centuries the

heart is still whole. When the French troops came to Rome, and when

Pius VII. was carried away prisoner, blood dropped from it."

To read that in a book written by a monk far back in the Middle Ages,

would surprise no one; it would sound natural and proper; but when it is

seriously stated in the middle of the nineteenth century, by a man of

finished education, an LL.D., M. A., and an Archaeological magnate, it

sounds strangely enough. Still, I would gladly change my unbelief for

Neligan's faith, and let him make the conditions as hard as he pleased.

The old gentleman's undoubting, unquestioning simplicity has a rare

freshness about it in these matter-of-fact railroading and telegraphing

days. Hear him, concerning the church of Ara Coeli:

"In the roof of the church, directly above the high altar, is

engraved, 'Regina Coeli laetare Alleluia.' In the sixth century

Rome was visited by a fearful pestilence. Gregory the Great urged

the people to do penance, and a general procession was formed. It

was to proceed from Ara Coeli to St. Peter's. As it passed before

the mole of Adrian, now the Castle of St. Angelo, the sound of

heavenly voices was heard singing (it was Easter morn,) 'Regina

Coeli, laetare! alleluia! quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia!

resurrexit sicut dixit; alleluia!' The Pontiff, carrying in his

hands the portrait of the Virgin, (which is over the high altar and

is said to have been painted by St. Luke,) answered, with the

astonished people, 'Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia!' At the same time

an angel was seen to put up a sword in a scabbard, and the

pestilence ceased on the same day. There are four circumstances

which 'CONFIRM'--[The italics are mine--M. T.]--this miracle: the

annual procession which takes place in the western church on the

feast of St Mark; the statue of St. Michael, placed on the mole of

Adrian, which has since that time been called the Castle of St.

Angelo; the antiphon Regina Coeli which the Catholic church sings

during paschal time; and the inscription in the church."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

From the sanguinary sports of the Holy Inquisition; the slaughter of the

Coliseum; and the dismal tombs of the Catacombs, I naturally pass to the

picturesque horrors of the Capuchin Convent. We stopped a moment in a

small chapel in the church to admire a picture of St. Michael vanquishing

Satan--a picture which is so beautiful that I can not but think it

belongs to the reviled "Renaissance," notwithstanding I believe they told

us one of the ancient old masters painted it--and then we descended into

the vast vault underneath.

Here was a spectacle for sensitive nerves! Evidently the old masters had

been at work in this place. There were six divisions in the apartment,

and each division was ornamented with a style of decoration peculiar to

itself--and these decorations were in every instance formed of human

bones! There were shapely arches, built wholly of thigh bones; there

were startling pyramids, built wholly of grinning skulls; there were

quaint architectural structures of various kinds, built of shin bones and

the bones of the arm; on the wall were elaborate frescoes, whose curving

vines were made of knotted human vertebrae; whose delicate tendrils were

made of sinews and tendons; whose flowers were formed of knee-caps and

toe-nails. Every lasting portion of the human frame was represented in

these intricate designs (they were by Michael Angelo, I think,) and there

was a careful finish about the work, and an attention to details that

betrayed the artist's love of his labors as well as his schooled ability.

I asked the good-natured monk who accompanied us, who did this? And he

said, "We did it"--meaning himself and his brethren up stairs. I could

see that the old friar took a high pride in his curious show. We made

him talkative by exhibiting an interest we never betrayed to guides.

"Who were these people?"

"We--up stairs--Monks of the Capuchin order--my brethren."

"How many departed monks were required to upholster these six parlors?"

"These are the bones of four thousand."

"It took a long time to get enough?"

"Many, many centuries."

"Their different parts are well separated--skulls in one room, legs in

another, ribs in another--there would be stirring times here for a while

if the last trump should blow. Some of the brethren might get hold of

the wrong leg, in the confusion, and the wrong skull, and find themselves

limping, and looking through eyes that were wider apart or closer

together than they were used to. You can not tell any of these parties

apart, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, I know many of them."

He put his finger on a skull. "This was Brother Anselmo--dead three

hundred years--a good man."

He touched another. "This was Brother Alexander--dead two hundred and

eighty years. This was Brother Carlo--dead about as long."

Then he took a skull and held it in his hand, and looked reflectively

upon it, after the manner of the grave-digger when he discourses of

Yorick.

"This," he said, "was Brother Thomas. He was a young prince, the scion

of a proud house that traced its lineage back to the grand old days of

Rome well nigh two thousand years ago. He loved beneath his estate. His

family persecuted him; persecuted the girl, as well. They drove her from

Rome; he followed; he sought her far and wide; he found no trace of her.

He came back and offered his broken heart at our altar and his weary life

to the service of God. But look you. Shortly his father died, and

likewise his mother. The girl returned, rejoicing. She sought every

where for him whose eyes had used to look tenderly into hers out of this

poor skull, but she could not find him. At last, in this coarse garb we

wear, she recognized him in the street. He knew her. It was too late.

He fell where he stood. They took him up and brought him here. He never

spoke afterward. Within the week he died. You can see the color of his

hair--faded, somewhat--by this thin shred that clings still to the

temple. This, [taking up a thigh bone,] was his. The veins of this

leaf in the decorations over your head, were his finger-joints, a hundred

and fifty years ago."

This business-like way of illustrating a touching story of the heart by

laying the several fragments of the lover before us and naming them, was

as grotesque a performance, and as ghastly, as any I ever witnessed. I

hardly knew whether to smile or shudder. There are nerves and muscles in

our frames whose functions and whose methods of working it seems a sort

of sacrilege to describe by cold physiological names and surgical

technicalities, and the monk's talk suggested to me something of this

kind. Fancy a surgeon, with his nippers lifting tendons, muscles and

such things into view, out of the complex machinery of a corpse, and

observing, "Now this little nerve quivers--the vibration is imparted to

this muscle--from here it is passed to this fibrous substance; here its

ingredients are separated by the chemical action of the blood--one part

goes to the heart and thrills it with what is popularly termed emotion,

another part follows this nerve to the brain and communicates

intelligence of a startling character--the third part glides along this

passage and touches the spring connected with the fluid receptacles that

lie in the rear of the eye. Thus, by this simple and beautiful process,

the party is informed that his mother is dead, and he weeps." Horrible!

I asked the monk if all the brethren up stairs expected to be put in this

place when they died. He answered quietly:

"We must all lie here at last."

See what one can accustom himself to.--The reflection that he must some

day be taken apart like an engine or a clock, or like a house whose owner

is gone, and worked up into arches and pyramids and hideous frescoes, did

not distress this monk in the least. I thought he even looked as if he

were thinking, with complacent vanity, that his own skull would look well

on top of the heap and his own ribs add a charm to the frescoes which

possibly they lacked at present.

Here and there, in ornamental alcoves, stretched upon beds of bones, lay

dead and dried-up monks, with lank frames dressed in the black robes one

sees ordinarily upon priests. We examined one closely. The skinny hands

were clasped upon the breast; two lustreless tufts of hair stuck to the

skull; the skin was brown and sunken; it stretched tightly over the cheek

bones and made them stand out sharply; the crisp dead eyes were deep in

the sockets; the nostrils were painfully prominent, the end of the nose

being gone; the lips had shriveled away from the yellow teeth: and

brought down to us through the circling years, and petrified there, was a

weird laugh a full century old!

It was the jolliest laugh, but yet the most dreadful, that one can

imagine. Surely, I thought, it must have been a most extraordinary joke

this veteran produced with his latest breath, that he has not got done

laughing at it yet. At this moment I saw that the old instinct was

strong upon the boys, and I said we had better hurry to St. Peter's.

They were trying to keep from asking, "Is--is he dead?"

It makes me dizzy, to think of the Vatican--of its wilderness of statues,

paintings, and curiosities of every description and every age. The "old

masters" (especially in sculpture,) fairly swarm, there. I can not write

about the Vatican. I think I shall never remember any thing I saw there

distinctly but the mummies, and the Transfiguration, by Raphael, and some

other things it is not necessary to mention now. I shall remember the

Transfiguration partly because it was placed in a room almost by itself;

partly because it is acknowledged by all to be the first oil painting in

the world; and partly because it was wonderfully beautiful. The colors

are fresh and rich, the "expression," I am told, is fine, the "feeling"

is lively, the "tone" is good, the "depth" is profound, and the width is

about four and a half feet, I should judge. It is a picture that really

holds one's attention; its beauty is fascinating. It is fine enough to

be a Renaissance. A remark I made a while ago suggests a thought--and a

hope. Is it not possible that the reason I find such charms in this

picture is because it is out of the crazy chaos of the galleries? If

some of the others were set apart, might not they be beautiful? If this

were set in the midst of the tempest of pictures one finds in the vast

galleries of the Roman palaces, would I think it so handsome? If, up to

this time, I had seen only one "old master" in each palace, instead of

acres and acres of walls and ceilings fairly papered with them, might I

not have a more civilized opinion of the old masters than I have now? I

think so. When I was a school-boy and was to have a new knife, I could

not make up my mind as to which was the prettiest in the show-case, and I

did not think any of them were particularly pretty; and so I chose with a

heavy heart. But when I looked at my purchase, at home, where no

glittering blades came into competition with it, I was astonished to see

how handsome it was. To this day my new hats look better out of the shop

than they did in it with other new hats. It begins to dawn upon me, now,

that possibly, what I have been taking for uniform ugliness in the

galleries may be uniform beauty after all. I honestly hope it is, to

others, but certainly it is not to me. Perhaps the reason I used to

enjoy going to the Academy of Fine Arts in New York was because there

were but a few hundred paintings in it, and it did not surfeit me to go

through the list. I suppose the Academy was bacon and beans in the

Forty-Mile Desert, and a European gallery is a state dinner of thirteen

courses. One leaves no sign after him of the one dish, but the thirteen

frighten away his appetite and give him no satisfaction.

There is one thing I am certain of, though. With all the Michael

Angelos, the Raphaels, the Guidos and the other old masters, the sublime

history of Rome remains unpainted! They painted Virgins enough, and

popes enough and saintly scarecrows enough, to people Paradise, almost,

and these things are all they did paint. "Nero fiddling o'er burning

Rome," the assassination of Caesar, the stirring spectacle of a hundred

thousand people bending forward with rapt interest, in the coliseum, to

see two skillful gladiators hacking away each others' lives, a tiger

springing upon a kneeling martyr--these and a thousand other matters

which we read of with a living interest, must be sought for only in

books--not among the rubbish left by the old masters--who are no more, I

have the satisfaction of informing the public.

They did paint, and they did carve in marble, one historical scene, and

one only, (of any great historical consequence.) And what was it and why

did they choose it, particularly? It was the Rape of the Sabines, and

they chose it for the legs and busts.

I like to look at statues, however, and I like to look at pictures, also

--even of monks looking up in sacred ecstacy, and monks looking down in

meditation, and monks skirmishing for something to eat--and therefore I

drop ill nature to thank the papal government for so jealously guarding

and so industriously gathering up these things; and for permitting me, a

stranger and not an entirely friendly one, to roam at will and unmolested

among them, charging me nothing, and only requiring that I shall behave

myself simply as well as I ought to behave in any other man's house. I

thank the Holy Father right heartily, and I wish him long life and plenty

of happiness.

The Popes have long been the patrons and preservers of art, just as our

new, practical Republic is the encourager and upholder of mechanics. In

their Vatican is stored up all that is curious and beautiful in art; in

our Patent Office is hoarded all that is curious or useful in mechanics.

When a man invents a new style of horse-collar or discovers a new and

superior method of telegraphing, our government issues a patent to him

that is worth a fortune; when a man digs up an ancient statue in the

Campagna, the Pope gives him a fortune in gold coin. We can make

something of a guess at a man's character by the style of nose he carries

on his face. The Vatican and the Patent Office are governmental noses,

and they bear a deal of character about them.

The guide showed us a colossal statue of Jupiter, in the Vatican, which

he said looked so damaged and rusty--so like the God of the Vagabonds

--because it had but recently been dug up in the Campagna. He asked how

much we supposed this Jupiter was worth? I replied, with intelligent

promptness, that he was probably worth about four dollars--may be four

and a half. "A hundred thousand dollars!" Ferguson said. Ferguson

said, further, that the Pope permits no ancient work of this kind to

leave his dominions. He appoints a commission to examine discoveries

like this and report upon the value; then the Pope pays the discoverer

one-half of that assessed value and takes the statue. He said this

Jupiter was dug from a field which had just been bought for thirty-six

thousand dollars, so the first crop was a good one for the new farmer.

I do not know whether Ferguson always tells the truth or not, but I

suppose he does. I know that an exorbitant export duty is exacted upon

all pictures painted by the old masters, in order to discourage the sale

of those in the private collections. I am satisfied, also, that genuine

old masters hardly exist at all, in America, because the cheapest and

most insignificant of them are valued at the price of a fine farm. I

proposed to buy a small trifle of a Raphael, myself, but the price of it

was eighty thousand dollars, the export duty would have made it

considerably over a hundred, and so I studied on it awhile and concluded

not to take it.

I wish here to mention an inscription I have seen, before I forget it:

"Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth TO MEN OF GOOD WILL!" It is

not good scripture, but it is sound Catholic and human nature.

This is in letters of gold around the apsis of a mosaic group at the side

of the 'scala santa', church of St. John Lateran, the Mother and Mistress

of all the Catholic churches of the world. The group represents the

Saviour, St. Peter, Pope Leo, St. Silvester, Constantine and Charlemagne.

Peter is giving the pallium to the Pope, and a standard to Charlemagne.

The Saviour is giving the keys to St. Silvester, and a standard to

Constantine. No prayer is offered to the Saviour, who seems to be of

little importance any where in Rome; but an inscription below says,

"Blessed Peter, give life to Pope Leo and victory to king Charles." It

does not say, "Intercede for us, through the Saviour, with the Father,

for this boon," but "Blessed Peter, give it us."

In all seriousness--without meaning to be frivolous--without meaning to

be irreverent, and more than all, without meaning to be blasphemous,--I

state as my simple deduction from the things I have seen and the things I

have heard, that the Holy Personages rank thus in Rome:

First--"The Mother of God"--otherwise the Virgin Mary.

Second--The Deity.

Third--Peter.

Fourth--Some twelve or fifteen canonized Popes and martyrs.

Fifth--Jesus Christ the Saviour--(but always as an infant in arms.)

I may be wrong in this--my judgment errs often, just as is the case with

other men's--but it is my judgment, be it good or bad.

Just here I will mention something that seems curious to me. There are

no "Christ's Churches" in Rome, and no "Churches of the Holy Ghost," that

I can discover. There are some four hundred churches, but about a fourth

of them seem to be named for the Madonna and St. Peter. There are so

many named for Mary that they have to be distinguished by all sorts of

affixes, if I understand the matter rightly. Then we have churches of

St. Louis; St. Augustine; St. Agnes; St. Calixtus; St. Lorenzo in Lucina;

St. Lorenzo in Damaso; St. Cecilia; St. Athanasius; St. Philip Neri; St.

Catherine, St. Dominico, and a multitude of lesser saints whose names are

not familiar in the world--and away down, clear out of the list of the

churches, comes a couple of hospitals: one of them is named for the

Saviour and the other for the Holy Ghost!

Day after day and night after night we have wandered among the crumbling

wonders of Rome; day after day and night after night we have fed upon the

dust and decay of five-and-twenty centuries--have brooded over them by

day and dreampt of them by night till sometimes we seemed moldering away

ourselves, and growing defaced and cornerless, and liable at any moment

to fall a prey to some antiquary and be patched in the legs, and

"restored" with an unseemly nose, and labeled wrong and dated wrong, and

set up in the Vatican for poets to drivel about and vandals to scribble

their names on forever and forevermore.

But the surest way to stop writing about Rome is to stop. I wished to

write a real "guide-book" chapter on this fascinating city, but I could

not do it, because I have felt all the time like a boy in a candy-shop

--there was every thing to choose from, and yet no choice. I have drifted

along hopelessly for a hundred pages of manuscript without knowing where

to commence. I will not commence at all. Our passports have been

examined. We will go to Naples.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The ship is lying here in the harbor of Naples--quarantined. She has

been here several days and will remain several more. We that came by

rail from Rome have escaped this misfortune. Of course no one is allowed

to go on board the ship, or come ashore from her. She is a prison, now.

The passengers probably spend the long, blazing days looking out from

under the awnings at Vesuvius and the beautiful city--and in swearing.

Think of ten days of this sort of pastime!--We go out every day in a boat

and request them to come ashore. It soothes them. We lie ten steps from

the ship and tell them how splendid the city is; and how much better the

hotel fare is here than any where else in Europe; and how cool it is; and

what frozen continents of ice cream there are; and what a time we are

having cavorting about the country and sailing to the islands in the Bay.

This tranquilizes them.

ASCENT OF VESUVIUS.

I shall remember our trip to Vesuvius for many a day--partly because of

its sight-seeing experiences, but chiefly on account of the fatigue of

the journey. Two or three of us had been resting ourselves among the

tranquil and beautiful scenery of the island of Ischia, eighteen miles

out in the harbor, for two days; we called it "resting," but I do not

remember now what the resting consisted of, for when we got back to

Naples we had not slept for forty-eight hours. We were just about to go

to bed early in the evening, and catch up on some of the sleep we had

lost, when we heard of this Vesuvius expedition. There was to be eight

of us in the party, and we were to leave Naples at midnight. We laid in

some provisions for the trip, engaged carriages to take us to

Annunciation, and then moved about the city, to keep awake, till twelve.

We got away punctually, and in the course of an hour and a half arrived

at the town of Annunciation. Annunciation is the very last place under

the sun. In other towns in Italy the people lie around quietly and wait

for you to ask them a question or do some overt act that can be charged

for--but in Annunciation they have lost even that fragment of delicacy;

they seize a lady's shawl from a chair and hand it to her and charge a

penny; they open a carriage door, and charge for it--shut it when you get

out, and charge for it; they help you to take off a duster--two cents;

brush your clothes and make them worse than they were before--two cents;

smile upon you--two cents; bow, with a lick-spittle smirk, hat in hand

--two cents; they volunteer all information, such as that the mules will

arrive presently--two cents--warm day, sir--two cents--take you four

hours to make the ascent--two cents. And so they go. They crowd you

--infest you--swarm about you, and sweat and smell offensively, and look

sneaking and mean, and obsequious. There is no office too degrading for

them to perform, for money. I have had no opportunity to find out any

thing about the upper classes by my own observation, but from what I hear

said about them I judge that what they lack in one or two of the bad

traits the canaille have, they make up in one or two others that are

worse. How the people beg!--many of them very well dressed, too.

I said I knew nothing against the upper classes by personal observation.

I must recall it! I had forgotten. What I saw their bravest and their

fairest do last night, the lowest multitude that could be scraped up out

of the purlieus of Christendom would blush to do, I think. They

assembled by hundreds, and even thousands, in the great Theatre of San

Carlo, to do--what? Why, simply, to make fun of an old woman--to deride,

to hiss, to jeer at an actress they once worshipped, but whose beauty is

faded now and whose voice has lost its former richness. Every body spoke

of the rare sport there was to be. They said the theatre would be

crammed, because Frezzolini was going to sing. It was said she could not

sing well, now, but then the people liked to see her, anyhow. And so we

went. And every time the woman sang they hissed and laughed--the whole

magnificent house--and as soon as she left the stage they called her on

again with applause. Once or twice she was encored five and six times in

succession, and received with hisses when she appeared, and discharged

with hisses and laughter when she had finished--then instantly encored

and insulted again! And how the high-born knaves enjoyed it!

White-kidded gentlemen and ladies laughed till the tears came, and

clapped their hands in very ecstacy when that unhappy old woman would

come meekly out for the sixth time, with uncomplaining patience, to meet

a storm of hisses! It was the cruelest exhibition--the most wanton, the

most unfeeling. The singer would have conquered an audience of American

rowdies by her brave, unflinching tranquillity (for she answered encore

after encore, and smiled and bowed pleasantly, and sang the best she

possibly could, and went bowing off, through all the jeers and hisses,

without ever losing countenance or temper:) and surely in any other land

than Italy her sex and her helplessness must have been an ample

protection to her--she could have needed no other. Think what a

multitude of small souls were crowded into that theatre last night. If

the manager could have filled his theatre with Neapolitan souls alone,

without the bodies, he could not have cleared less than ninety millions

of dollars. What traits of character must a man have to enable him to

help three thousand miscreants to hiss, and jeer, and laugh at one

friendless old woman, and shamefully humiliate her? He must have all

the vile, mean traits there are. My observation persuades me (I do not

like to venture beyond my own personal observation,) that the upper

classes of Naples possess those traits of character. Otherwise they may

be very good people; I can not say.

ASCENT OF VESUVIUS--CONTINUED.

In this city of Naples, they believe in and support one of the

wretchedest of all the religious impostures one can find in Italy--the

miraculous liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius. Twice a year the

priests assemble all the people at the Cathedral, and get out this vial

of clotted blood and let them see it slowly dissolve and become liquid

--and every day for eight days, this dismal farce is repeated, while the

priests go among the crowd and collect money for the exhibition. The

first day, the blood liquefies in forty-seven minutes--the church is

crammed, then, and time must be allowed the collectors to get around:

after that it liquefies a little quicker and a little quicker, every day,

as the houses grow smaller, till on the eighth day, with only a few

dozens present to see the miracle, it liquefies in four minutes.

And here, also, they used to have a grand procession, of priests,

citizens, soldiers, sailors, and the high dignitaries of the City

Government, once a year, to shave the head of a made-up Madonna--a

stuffed and painted image, like a milliner's dummy--whose hair

miraculously grew and restored itself every twelve months. They still

kept up this shaving procession as late as four or five years ago. It

was a source of great profit to the church that possessed the remarkable

effigy, and the ceremony of the public barbering of her was always

carried out with the greatest possible eclat and display--the more the

better, because the more excitement there was about it the larger the

crowds it drew and the heavier the revenues it produced--but at last a

day came when the Pope and his servants were unpopular in Naples, and the

City Government stopped the Madonna's annual show.

There we have two specimens of these Neapolitans--two of the silliest

possible frauds, which half the population religiously and faithfully

believed, and the other half either believed also or else said nothing

about, and thus lent themselves to the support of the imposture. I am

very well satisfied to think the whole population believed in those poor,

cheap miracles--a people who want two cents every time they bow to you,

and who abuse a woman, are capable of it, I think.

ASCENT OF VESUVIUS--CONTINUED.

These Neapolitans always ask four times as much money as they intend to

take, but if you give them what they first demand, they feel ashamed of

themselves for aiming so low, and immediately ask more. When money is to

be paid and received, there is always some vehement jawing and

gesticulating about it. One can not buy and pay for two cents' worth of

clams without trouble and a quarrel. One "course," in a two-horse

carriage, costs a franc--that is law--but the hackman always demands

more, on some pretence or other, and if he gets it he makes a new demand.

It is said that a stranger took a one-horse carriage for a course

--tariff, half a franc. He gave the man five francs, by way of experiment.

He demanded more, and received another franc. Again he demanded more,

and got a franc--demanded more, and it was refused. He grew vehement

--was again refused, and became noisy. The stranger said, "Well, give me

the seven francs again, and I will see what I can do"--and when he got

them, he handed the hackman half a franc, and he immediately asked for

two cents to buy a drink with. It may be thought that I am prejudiced.

Perhaps I am. I would be ashamed of myself if I were not.

ASCENT OF VESUVIUS--CONTINUED.

Well, as I was saying, we got our mules and horses, after an hour and a

half of bargaining with the population of Annunciation, and started

sleepily up the mountain, with a vagrant at each mule's tail who

pretended to be driving the brute along, but was really holding on and

getting himself dragged up instead. I made slow headway at first, but I

began to get dissatisfied at the idea of paying my minion five francs to

hold my mule back by the tail and keep him from going up the hill, and so

I discharged him. I got along faster then.

We had one magnificent picture of Naples from a high point on the

mountain side. We saw nothing but the gas lamps, of course--two-thirds

of a circle, skirting the great Bay--a necklace of diamonds glinting up

through the darkness from the remote distance--less brilliant than the

stars overhead, but more softly, richly beautiful--and over all the great

city the lights crossed and recrossed each other in many and many a

sparkling line and curve. And back of the town, far around and abroad

over the miles of level campagna, were scattered rows, and circles, and

clusters of lights, all glowing like so many gems, and marking where a

score of villages were sleeping. About this time, the fellow who was

hanging on to the tail of the horse in front of me and practicing all

sorts of unnecessary cruelty upon the animal, got kicked some fourteen

rods, and this incident, together with the fairy spectacle of the lights

far in the distance, made me serenely happy, and I was glad I started to

Vesuvius.

ASCENT OF MOUNT VESUVIUS--CONTINUED.

This subject will be excellent matter for a chapter, and tomorrow or next

day I will write it.

CHAPTER XXX.

ASCENT OF VESUVIUS--CONTINUED.

"See Naples and die." Well, I do not know that one would necessarily die

after merely seeing it, but to attempt to live there might turn out a

little differently. To see Naples as we saw it in the early dawn from

far up on the side of Vesuvius, is to see a picture of wonderful beauty.

At that distance its dingy buildings looked white--and so, rank on rank

of balconies, windows and roofs, they piled themselves up from the blue

ocean till the colossal castle of St. Elmo topped the grand white pyramid

and gave the picture symmetry, emphasis and completeness. And when its

lilies turned to roses--when it blushed under the sun's first kiss--it

was beautiful beyond all description. One might well say, then, "See

Naples and die." The frame of the picture was charming, itself. In

front, the smooth sea--a vast mosaic of many colors; the lofty islands

swimming in a dreamy haze in the distance; at our end of the city the

stately double peak of Vesuvius, and its strong black ribs and seams of

lava stretching down to the limitless level campagna--a green carpet that

enchants the eye and leads it on and on, past clusters of trees, and

isolated houses, and snowy villages, until it shreds out in a fringe of

mist and general vagueness far away. It is from the Hermitage, there on

the side of Vesuvius, that one should "see Naples and die."

But do not go within the walls and look at it in detail. That takes away

some of the romance of the thing. The people are filthy in their habits,

and this makes filthy streets and breeds disagreeable sights and smells.

There never was a community so prejudiced against the cholera as these

Neapolitans are. But they have good reason to be. The cholera generally

vanquishes a Neapolitan when it seizes him, because, you understand,

before the doctor can dig through the dirt and get at the disease the man

dies. The upper classes take a sea-bath every day, and are pretty

decent.

The streets are generally about wide enough for one wagon, and how they

do swarm with people! It is Broadway repeated in every street, in every

court, in every alley! Such masses, such throngs, such multitudes of

hurrying, bustling, struggling humanity! We never saw the like of it,

hardly even in New York, I think. There are seldom any sidewalks, and

when there are, they are not often wide enough to pass a man on without

caroming on him. So everybody walks in the street--and where the street

is wide enough, carriages are forever dashing along. Why a thousand

people are not run over and crippled every day is a mystery that no man

can solve. But if there is an eighth wonder in the world, it must be the

dwelling-houses of Naples. I honestly believe a good majority of them

are a hundred feet high! And the solid brick walls are seven feet

through. You go up nine flights of stairs before you get to the "first"

floor. No, not nine, but there or thereabouts. There is a little

bird-cage of an iron railing in front of every window clear away up, up,

up, among the eternal clouds, where the roof is, and there is always

somebody looking out of every window--people of ordinary size looking

out from the first floor, people a shade smaller from the second, people

that look a little smaller yet from the third--and from thence upward

they grow smaller and smaller by a regularly graduated diminution, till

the folks in the topmost windows seem more like birds in an uncommonly

tall martin-box than any thing else. The perspective of one of these

narrow cracks of streets, with its rows of tall houses stretching away

till they come together in the distance like railway tracks; its

clothes-lines crossing over at all altitudes and waving their bannered

raggedness over the swarms of people below; and the white-dressed women

perched in balcony railings all the way from the pavement up to the

heavens--a perspective like that is really worth going into Neapolitan

details to see.

ASCENT OF VESUVIUS--CONTINUED.

Naples, with its immediate suburbs, contains six hundred and twenty-five

thousand inhabitants, but I am satisfied it covers no more ground than an

American city of one hundred and fifty thousand. It reaches up into the

air infinitely higher than three American cities, though, and there is

where the secret of it lies. I will observe here, in passing, that the

contrasts between opulence and poverty, and magnificence and misery, are

more frequent and more striking in Naples than in Paris even. One must

go to the Bois de Boulogne to see fashionable dressing, splendid

equipages and stunning liveries, and to the Faubourg St. Antoine to see

vice, misery, hunger, rags, dirt--but in the thoroughfares of Naples

these things are all mixed together. Naked boys of nine years and the

fancy-dressed children of luxury; shreds and tatters, and brilliant

uniforms; jackass-carts and state-carriages; beggars, Princes and

Bishops, jostle each other in every street. At six o'clock every

evening, all Naples turns out to drive on the 'Riviere di Chiaja',

(whatever that may mean;) and for two hours one may stand there and see

the motliest and the worst mixed procession go by that ever eyes beheld.

Princes (there are more Princes than policemen in Naples--the city is

infested with them)--Princes who live up seven flights of stairs and

don't own any principalities, will keep a carriage and go hungry; and

clerks, mechanics, milliners and strumpets will go without their dinners

and squander the money on a hack-ride in the Chiaja; the rag-tag and

rubbish of the city stack themselves up, to the number of twenty or

thirty, on a rickety little go-cart hauled by a donkey not much bigger

than a cat, and they drive in the Chiaja; Dukes and bankers, in sumptuous

carriages and with gorgeous drivers and footmen, turn out, also, and so

the furious procession goes. For two hours rank and wealth, and

obscurity and poverty clatter along side by side in the wild procession,

and then go home serene, happy, covered with glory!

I was looking at a magnificent marble staircase in the King's palace, the

other day, which, it was said, cost five million francs, and I suppose it

did cost half a million, may be. I felt as if it must be a fine thing to

live in a country where there was such comfort and such luxury as this.

And then I stepped out musing, and almost walked over a vagabond who was

eating his dinner on the curbstone--a piece of bread and a bunch of

grapes. When I found that this mustang was clerking in a fruit

establishment (he had the establishment along with him in a basket,) at

two cents a day, and that he had no palace at home where he lived, I lost

some of my enthusiasm concerning the happiness of living in Italy.

This naturally suggests to me a thought about wages here. Lieutenants in

the army get about a dollar a day, and common soldiers a couple of cents.

I only know one clerk--he gets four dollars a month. Printers get six

dollars and a half a month, but I have heard of a foreman who gets

thirteen.

To be growing suddenly and violently rich, as this man is, naturally

makes him a bloated aristocrat. The airs he puts on are insufferable.

And, speaking of wages, reminds me of prices of merchandise. In Paris

you pay twelve dollars a dozen for Jouvin's best kid gloves; gloves of

about as good quality sell here at three or four dollars a dozen. You

pay five and six dollars apiece for fine linen shirts in Paris; here and

in Leghorn you pay two and a half. In Marseilles you pay forty dollars

for a first-class dress coat made by a good tailor, but in Leghorn you

can get a full dress suit for the same money. Here you get handsome

business suits at from ten to twenty dollars, and in Leghorn you can get

an overcoat for fifteen dollars that would cost you seventy in New York.

Fine kid boots are worth eight dollars in Marseilles and four dollars

here. Lyons velvets rank higher in America than those of Genoa. Yet the

bulk of Lyons velvets you buy in the States are made in Genoa and

imported into Lyons, where they receive the Lyons stamp and are then

exported to America. You can buy enough velvet in Genoa for twenty-five

dollars to make a five hundred dollar cloak in New York--so the ladies

tell me. Of course these things bring me back, by a natural and easy

transition, to the

ASCENT OF VESUVIUS--CONTINUED.

And thus the wonderful Blue Grotto is suggested to me. It is situated on

the Island of Capri, twenty-two miles from Naples. We chartered a little

steamer and went out there. Of course, the police boarded us and put us

through a health examination, and inquired into our politics, before they

would let us land. The airs these little insect Governments put on are

in the last degree ridiculous. They even put a policeman on board of our

boat to keep an eye on us as long as we were in the Capri dominions.

They thought we wanted to steal the grotto, I suppose. It was worth

stealing. The entrance to the cave is four feet high and four feet wide,

and is in the face of a lofty perpendicular cliff--the sea-wall. You

enter in small boats--and a tight squeeze it is, too. You can not go in

at all when the tide is up. Once within, you find yourself in an arched

cavern about one hundred and sixty feet long, one hundred and twenty

wide, and about seventy high. How deep it is no man knows. It goes down

to the bottom of the ocean. The waters of this placid subterranean lake

are the brightest, loveliest blue that can be imagined. They are as

transparent as plate glass, and their coloring would shame the richest

sky that ever bent over Italy. No tint could be more ravishing, no

lustre more superb. Throw a stone into the water, and the myriad of tiny

bubbles that are created flash out a brilliant glare like blue theatrical

fires. Dip an oar, and its blade turns to splendid frosted silver,

tinted with blue. Let a man jump in, and instantly he is cased in an

armor more gorgeous than ever kingly Crusader wore.

Then we went to Ischia, but I had already been to that island and tired

myself to death "resting" a couple of days and studying human villainy,

with the landlord of the Grande Sentinelle for a model. So we went to

Procida, and from thence to Pozzuoli, where St. Paul landed after he

sailed from Samos. I landed at precisely the same spot where St. Paul

landed, and so did Dan and the others. It was a remarkable coincidence.

St. Paul preached to these people seven days before he started to Rome.

Nero's Baths, the ruins of Baiae, the Temple of Serapis; Cumae, where the

Cumaen Sybil interpreted the oracles, the Lake Agnano, with its ancient

submerged city still visible far down in its depths--these and a hundred

other points of interest we examined with critical imbecility, but the

Grotto of the Dog claimed our chief attention, because we had heard and

read so much about it. Every body has written about the Grotto del Cane

and its poisonous vapors, from Pliny down to Smith, and every tourist has

held a dog over its floor by the legs to test the capabilities of the

place. The dog dies in a minute and a half--a chicken instantly. As a

general thing, strangers who crawl in there to sleep do not get up until

they are called. And then they don't either. The stranger that ventures

to sleep there takes a permanent contract. I longed to see this grotto.

I resolved to take a dog and hold him myself; suffocate him a little, and

time him; suffocate him some more and then finish him. We reached the

grotto at about three in the afternoon, and proceeded at once to make the

experiments. But now, an important difficulty presented itself. We had

no dog.

ASCENT OF VESUVIUS--CONTINUED.

At the Hermitage we were about fifteen or eighteen hundred feet above the

sea, and thus far a portion of the ascent had been pretty abrupt. For

the next two miles the road was a mixture--sometimes the ascent was

abrupt and sometimes it was not: but one characteristic it possessed all

the time, without failure--without modification--it was all

uncompromisingly and unspeakably infamous. It was a rough, narrow trail,

and led over an old lava flow--a black ocean which was tumbled into a

thousand fantastic shapes--a wild chaos of ruin, desolation, and

barrenness--a wilderness of billowy upheavals, of furious whirlpools, of

miniature mountains rent asunder--of gnarled and knotted, wrinkled and

twisted masses of blackness that mimicked branching roots, great vines,

trunks of trees, all interlaced and mingled together: and all these weird

shapes, all this turbulent panorama, all this stormy, far-stretching

waste of blackness, with its thrilling suggestiveness of life, of action,

of boiling, surging, furious motion, was petrified!--all stricken dead

and cold in the instant of its maddest rioting!--fettered, paralyzed, and

left to glower at heaven in impotent rage for evermore!

Finally we stood in a level, narrow valley (a valley that had been

created by the terrific march of some old time irruption) and on either

hand towered the two steep peaks of Vesuvius. The one we had to climb

--the one that contains the active volcano--seemed about eight hundred or

one thousand feet high, and looked almost too straight-up-and-down for

any man to climb, and certainly no mule could climb it with a man on his

back. Four of these native pirates will carry you to the top in a sedan

chair, if you wish it, but suppose they were to slip and let you fall,

--is it likely that you would ever stop rolling? Not this side of

eternity, perhaps. We left the mules, sharpened our finger-nails, and

began the ascent I have been writing about so long, at twenty minutes to

six in the morning. The path led straight up a rugged sweep of loose

chunks of pumice-stone, and for about every two steps forward we took, we

slid back one. It was so excessively steep that we had to stop, every

fifty or sixty steps, and rest a moment. To see our comrades, we had to

look very nearly straight up at those above us, and very nearly straight

down at those below. We stood on the summit at last--it had taken an

hour and fifteen minutes to make the trip.

What we saw there was simply a circular crater--a circular ditch, if you

please--about two hundred feet deep, and four or five hundred feet wide,

whose inner wall was about half a mile in circumference. In the centre

of the great circus ring thus formed, was a torn and ragged upheaval a

hundred feet high, all snowed over with a sulphur crust of many and many

a brilliant and beautiful color, and the ditch inclosed this like the

moat of a castle, or surrounded it as a little river does a little

island, if the simile is better. The sulphur coating of that island was

gaudy in the extreme--all mingled together in the richest confusion were

red, blue, brown, black, yellow, white--I do not know that there was a

color, or shade of a color, or combination of colors, unrepresented--and

when the sun burst through the morning mists and fired this tinted

magnificence, it topped imperial Vesuvius like a jeweled crown!

The crater itself--the ditch--was not so variegated in coloring, but yet,

in its softness, richness, and unpretentious elegance, it was more

charming, more fascinating to the eye. There was nothing "loud" about

its well-bred and well-creased look. Beautiful? One could stand and

look down upon it for a week without getting tired of it. It had the

semblance of a pleasant meadow, whose slender grasses and whose velvety

mosses were frosted with a shining dust, and tinted with palest green

that deepened gradually to the darkest hue of the orange leaf, and

deepened yet again into gravest brown, then faded into orange, then into

brightest gold, and culminated in the delicate pink of a new-blown rose.

Where portions of the meadow had sunk, and where other portions had been

broken up like an ice-floe, the cavernous openings of the one, and the

ragged upturned edges exposed by the other, were hung with a lace-work of

soft-tinted crystals of sulphur that changed their deformities into

quaint shapes and figures that were full of grace and beauty.

The walls of the ditch were brilliant with yellow banks of sulphur and

with lava and pumice-stone of many colors. No fire was visible any

where, but gusts of sulphurous steam issued silently and invisibly from a

thousand little cracks and fissures in the crater, and were wafted to our

noses with every breeze. But so long as we kept our nostrils buried in

our handkerchiefs, there was small danger of suffocation.

Some of the boys thrust long slips of paper down into holes and set them

on fire, and so achieved the glory of lighting their cigars by the flames

of Vesuvius, and others cooked eggs over fissures in the rocks and were

happy.

The view from the summit would have been superb but for the fact that the

sun could only pierce the mists at long intervals. Thus the glimpses we

had of the grand panorama below were only fitful and unsatisfactory.

THE DESCENT.

The descent of the mountain was a labor of only four minutes. Instead of

stalking down the rugged path we ascended, we chose one which was bedded

knee-deep in loose ashes, and ploughed our way with prodigious strides

that would almost have shamed the performance of him of the seven-league

boots.

The Vesuvius of today is a very poor affair compared to the mighty

volcano of Kilauea, in the Sandwich Islands, but I am glad I visited it.

It was well worth it.

It is said that during one of the grand eruptions of Vesuvius it

discharged massy rocks weighing many tons a thousand feet into the air,

its vast jets of smoke and steam ascended thirty miles toward the

firmament, and clouds of its ashes were wafted abroad and fell upon the

decks of ships seven hundred and fifty miles at sea! I will take the

ashes at a moderate discount, if any one will take the thirty miles of

smoke, but I do not feel able to take a commanding interest in the whole

story by myself.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE BURIED CITY OF POMPEII

They pronounce it Pom-pay-e. I always had an idea that you went down

into Pompeii with torches, by the way of damp, dark stairways, just as

you do in silver mines, and traversed gloomy tunnels with lava overhead

and something on either hand like dilapidated prisons gouged out of the

solid earth, that faintly resembled houses. But you do nothing the kind.

Fully one-half of the buried city, perhaps, is completely exhumed and

thrown open freely to the light of day; and there stand the long rows of

solidly-built brick houses (roofless) just as they stood eighteen hundred

years ago, hot with the flaming sun; and there lie their floors,

clean-swept, and not a bright fragment tarnished or waiting of the

labored mosaics that pictured them with the beasts, and birds, and

flowers which we copy in perishable carpets to-day; and here are the

Venuses, and Bacchuses, and Adonises, making love and getting drunk in

many-hued frescoes on the walls of saloon and bed-chamber; and there are

the narrow streets and narrower sidewalks, paved with flags of good hard

lava, the one deeply rutted with the chariot-wheels, and the other with

the passing feet of the Pompeiians of by-gone centuries; and there are

the bake-shops, the temples, the halls of justice, the baths, the

theatres--all clean-scraped and neat, and suggesting nothing of the

nature of a silver mine away down in the bowels of the earth. The

broken pillars lying about, the doorless doorways and the crumbled tops

of the wilderness of walls, were wonderfully suggestive of the "burnt

district" in one of our cities, and if there had been any charred

timbers, shattered windows, heaps of debris, and general blackness and

smokiness about the place, the resemblance would have been perfect. But

no--the sun shines as brightly down on old Pompeii to-day as it did when

Christ was born in Bethlehem, and its streets are cleaner a hundred

times than ever Pompeiian saw them in her prime. I know whereof I

speak--for in the great, chief thoroughfares (Merchant street and the

Street of Fortune) have I not seen with my own eyes how for two hundred

years at least the pavements were not repaired!--how ruts five and even

ten inches deep were worn into the thick flagstones by the

chariot-wheels of generations of swindled tax-payers? And do I not know

by these signs that Street Commissioners of Pompeii never attended to

their business, and that if they never mended the pavements they never

cleaned them? And, besides, is it not the inborn nature of Street

Commissioners to avoid their duty whenever they get a chance? I wish I

knew the name of the last one that held office in Pompeii so that I

could give him a blast. I speak with feeling on this subject, because I

caught my foot in one of those ruts, and the sadness that came over me

when I saw the first poor skeleton, with ashes and lava sticking to it,

was tempered by the reflection that may be that party was the Street

Commissioner.

No--Pompeii is no longer a buried city. It is a city of hundreds and

hundreds of roofless houses, and a tangled maze of streets where one

could easily get lost, without a guide, and have to sleep in some ghostly

palace that had known no living tenant since that awful November night of

eighteen centuries ago.

We passed through the gate which faces the Mediterranean, (called the

"Marine Gate,") and by the rusty, broken image of Minerva, still keeping

tireless watch and ward over the possessions it was powerless to save,

and went up a long street and stood in the broad court of the Forum of

Justice. The floor was level and clean, and up and down either side was

a noble colonnade of broken pillars, with their beautiful Ionic and

Corinthian columns scattered about them. At the upper end were the

vacant seats of the Judges, and behind them we descended into a dungeon

where the ashes and cinders had found two prisoners chained on that

memorable November night, and tortured them to death. How they must have

tugged at the pitiless fetters as the fierce fires surged around them!

Then we lounged through many and many a sumptuous private mansion which

we could not have entered without a formal invitation in incomprehensible

Latin, in the olden time, when the owners lived there--and we probably

wouldn't have got it. These people built their houses a good deal alike.

The floors were laid in fanciful figures wrought in mosaics of

many-colored marbles. At the threshold your eyes fall upon a Latin

sentence of welcome, sometimes, or a picture of a dog, with the legend

"Beware of the Dog," and sometimes a picture of a bear or a faun with no

inscription at all. Then you enter a sort of vestibule, where they used

to keep the hat-rack, I suppose; next a room with a large marble basin

in the midst and the pipes of a fountain; on either side are bedrooms;

beyond the fountain is a reception-room, then a little garden,

dining-room, and so forth and so on. The floors were all mosaic, the

walls were stuccoed, or frescoed, or ornamented with bas-reliefs, and

here and there were statues, large and small, and little fish-pools, and

cascades of sparkling water that sprang from secret places in the

colonnade of handsome pillars that surrounded the court, and kept the

flower-beds fresh and the air cool. Those Pompeiians were very

luxurious in their tastes and habits. The most exquisite bronzes we

have seen in Europe, came from the exhumed cities of Herculaneum and

Pompeii, and also the finest cameos and the most delicate engravings on

precious stones; their pictures, eighteen or nineteen centuries old, are

often much more pleasing than the celebrated rubbish of the old masters

of three centuries ago. They were well up in art. From the creation of

these works of the first, clear up to the eleventh century, art seems

hardly to have existed at all--at least no remnants of it are left--and

it was curious to see how far (in some things, at any rate,) these old

time pagans excelled the remote generations of masters that came after

them. The pride of the world in sculptures seem to be the Laocoon and

the Dying Gladiator, in Rome. They are as old as Pompeii, were dug from

the earth like Pompeii; but their exact age or who made them can only be

conjectured. But worn, and cracked, without a history, and with the

blemishing stains of numberless centuries upon them, they still mutely

mock at all efforts to rival their perfections.

It was a quaint and curious pastime, wandering through this old silent

city of the dead--lounging through utterly deserted streets where

thousands and thousands of human beings once bought and sold, and walked

and rode, and made the place resound with the noise and confusion of

traffic and pleasure. They were not lazy. They hurried in those days.

We had evidence of that. There was a temple on one corner, and it was a

shorter cut to go between the columns of that temple from one street to

the other than to go around--and behold that pathway had been worn deep

into the heavy flagstone floor of the building by generations of

time-saving feet! They would not go around when it was quicker to go

through. We do that way in our cities.

Every where, you see things that make you wonder how old these old houses

were before the night of destruction came--things, too, which bring back

those long dead inhabitants and place the living before your eyes. For

instance: The steps (two feet thick--lava blocks) that lead up out of the

school, and the same kind of steps that lead up into the dress circle of

the principal theatre, are almost worn through! For ages the boys

hurried out of that school, and for ages their parents hurried into that

theatre, and the nervous feet that have been dust and ashes for eighteen

centuries have left their record for us to read to-day. I imagined I

could see crowds of gentlemen and ladies thronging into the theatre, with

tickets for secured seats in their hands, and on the wall, I read the

imaginary placard, in infamous grammar, "POSITIVELY NO FREE LIST, EXCEPT

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS!" Hanging about the doorway (I fancied,) were

slouchy Pompeiian street-boys uttering slang and profanity, and keeping a

wary eye out for checks. I entered the theatre, and sat down in one of

the long rows of stone benches in the dress circle, and looked at the

place for the orchestra, and the ruined stage, and around at the wide

sweep of empty boxes, and thought to myself, "This house won't pay." I

tried to imagine the music in full blast, the leader of the orchestra

beating time, and the "versatile" So-and-So (who had "just returned from

a most successful tour in the provinces to play his last and farewell

engagement of positively six nights only, in Pompeii, previous to his

departure for Herculaneum,") charging around the stage and piling the

agony mountains high--but I could not do it with such a "house" as that;

those empty benches tied my fancy down to dull reality. I said, these

people that ought to be here have been dead, and still, and moldering to

dust for ages and ages, and will never care for the trifles and follies

of life any more for ever--"Owing to circumstances, etc., etc., there

will not be any performance to-night." Close down the curtain. Put out

the lights.

And so I turned away and went through shop after shop and store after

store, far down the long street of the merchants, and called for the

wares of Rome and the East, but the tradesmen were gone, the marts were

silent, and nothing was left but the broken jars all set in cement of

cinders and ashes: the wine and the oil that once had filled them were

gone with their owners.

In a bake-shop was a mill for grinding the grain, and the furnaces for

baking the bread: and they say that here, in the same furnaces, the

exhumers of Pompeii found nice, well baked loaves which the baker had not

found time to remove from the ovens the last time he left his shop,

because circumstances compelled him to leave in such a hurry.

In one house (the only building in Pompeii which no woman is now allowed

to enter,) were the small rooms and short beds of solid masonry, just as

they were in the old times, and on the walls were pictures which looked

almost as fresh as if they were painted yesterday, but which no pen could

have the hardihood to describe; and here and there were Latin

inscriptions--obscene scintillations of wit, scratched by hands that

possibly were uplifted to Heaven for succor in the midst of a driving

storm of fire before the night was done.

In one of the principal streets was a ponderous stone tank, and a

water-spout that supplied it, and where the tired, heated toilers from the

Campagna used to rest their right hands when they bent over to put their

lips to the spout, the thick stone was worn down to a broad groove an

inch or two deep. Think of the countless thousands of hands that had

pressed that spot in the ages that are gone, to so reduce a stone that

is as hard as iron!

They had a great public bulletin board in Pompeii--a place where

announcements for gladiatorial combats, elections, and such things, were

posted--not on perishable paper, but carved in enduring stone. One lady,

who, I take it, was rich and well brought up, advertised a dwelling or so

to rent, with baths and all the modern improvements, and several hundred

shops, stipulating that the dwellings should not be put to immoral

purposes. You can find out who lived in many a house in Pompeii by the

carved stone door-plates affixed to them: and in the same way you can

tell who they were that occupy the tombs. Every where around are things

that reveal to you something of the customs and history of this forgotten

people. But what would a volcano leave of an American city, if it once

rained its cinders on it? Hardly a sign or a symbol to tell its story.

In one of these long Pompeiian halls the skeleton of a man was found,

with ten pieces of gold in one hand and a large key in the other. He had

seized his money and started toward the door, but the fiery tempest

caught him at the very threshold, and he sank down and died. One more

minute of precious time would have saved him. I saw the skeletons of a

man, a woman, and two young girls. The woman had her hands spread wide

apart, as if in mortal terror, and I imagined I could still trace upon

her shapeless face something of the expression of wild despair that

distorted it when the heavens rained fire in these streets, so many ages

ago. The girls and the man lay with their faces upon their arms, as if

they had tried to shield them from the enveloping cinders. In one

apartment eighteen skeletons were found, all in sitting postures, and

blackened places on the walls still mark their shapes and show their

attitudes, like shadows. One of them, a woman, still wore upon her

skeleton throat a necklace, with her name engraved upon it--JULIE DI

DIOMEDE.

But perhaps the most poetical thing Pompeii has yielded to modern

research, was that grand figure of a Roman soldier, clad in complete

armor; who, true to his duty, true to his proud name of a soldier of

Rome, and full of the stern courage which had given to that name its

glory, stood to his post by the city gate, erect and unflinching, till

the hell that raged around him burned out the dauntless spirit it could

not conquer.

We never read of Pompeii but we think of that soldier; we can not write

of Pompeii without the natural impulse to grant to him the mention he so

well deserves. Let us remember that he was a soldier--not a policeman

--and so, praise him. Being a soldier, he staid,--because the warrior

instinct forbade him to fly. Had he been a policeman he would have

staid, also--because he would have been asleep.

There are not half a dozen flights of stairs in Pompeii, and no other

evidences that the houses were more than one story high. The people did

not live in the clouds, as do the Venetians, the Genoese and Neapolitans

of to-day.

We came out from under the solemn mysteries of this city of the Venerable

Past--this city which perished, with all its old ways and its quaint old

fashions about it, remote centuries ago, when the Disciples were

preaching the new religion, which is as old as the hills to us now--and

went dreaming among the trees that grow over acres and acres of its still

buried streets and squares, till a shrill whistle and the cry of "All

aboard--last train for Naples!" woke me up and reminded me that I

belonged in the nineteenth century, and was not a dusty mummy, caked with

ashes and cinders, eighteen hundred years old. The transition was

startling. The idea of a railroad train actually running to old dead

Pompeii, and whistling irreverently, and calling for passengers in the

most bustling and business-like way, was as strange a thing as one could

imagine, and as unpoetical and disagreeable as it was strange.

Compare the cheerful life and the sunshine of this day with the horrors

the younger Pliny saw here, the 9th of November, A.D. 79, when he was so

bravely striving to remove his mother out of reach of harm, while she

begged him, with all a mother's unselfishness, to leave her to perish and

save himself.

'By this time the murky darkness had so increased that one might

have believed himself abroad in a black and moonless night, or in a

chamber where all the lights had been extinguished. On every hand

was heard the complaints of women, the wailing of children, and the

cries of men. One called his father, another his son, and another

his wife, and only by their voices could they know each other. Many

in their despair begged that death would come and end their

distress.

"Some implored the gods to succor them, and some believed that this

night was the last, the eternal night which should engulf the

universe!

"Even so it seemed to me--and I consoled myself for the coming death

with the reflection: BEHOLD, THE WORLD IS PASSING AWAY!"

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

After browsing among the stately ruins of Rome, of Baiae, of Pompeii, and

after glancing down the long marble ranks of battered and nameless

imperial heads that stretch down the corridors of the Vatican, one thing

strikes me with a force it never had before: the unsubstantial, unlasting

character of fame. Men lived long lives, in the olden time, and

struggled feverishly through them, toiling like slaves, in oratory, in

generalship, or in literature, and then laid them down and died, happy in

the possession of an enduring history and a deathless name. Well, twenty

little centuries flutter away, and what is left of these things? A crazy

inscription on a block of stone, which snuffy antiquaries bother over and

tangle up and make nothing out of but a bare name (which they spell

wrong)--no history, no tradition, no poetry--nothing that can give it

even a passing interest. What may be left of General Grant's great name

forty centuries hence? This--in the Encyclopedia for A. D. 5868,

possibly:

"URIAH S. (or Z.) GRAUNT--popular poet of ancient times in the Aztec

provinces of the United States of British America. Some authors say

flourished about A. D. 742; but the learned Ah-ah Foo-foo states

that he was a cotemporary of Scharkspyre, the English poet, and

flourished about A. D. 1328, some three centuries after the Trojan

war instead of before it. He wrote 'Rock me to Sleep, Mother.'"

These thoughts sadden me. I will to bed.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Home, again! For the first time, in many weeks, the ship's entire family

met and shook hands on the quarter-deck. They had gathered from many

points of the compass and from many lands, but not one was missing; there

was no tale of sickness or death among the flock to dampen the pleasure

of the reunion. Once more there was a full audience on deck to listen to

the sailors' chorus as they got the anchor up, and to wave an adieu to

the land as we sped away from Naples. The seats were full at dinner

again, the domino parties were complete, and the life and bustle on the

upper deck in the fine moonlight at night was like old times--old times

that had been gone weeks only, but yet they were weeks so crowded with

incident, adventure and excitement, that they seemed almost like years.

There was no lack of cheerfulness on board the Quaker City. For once,

her title was a misnomer.

At seven in the evening, with the western horizon all golden from the

sunken sun, and specked with distant ships, the full moon sailing high

over head, the dark blue of the sea under foot, and a strange sort of

twilight affected by all these different lights and colors around us and

about us, we sighted superb Stromboli. With what majesty the monarch

held his lonely state above the level sea! Distance clothed him in a

purple gloom, and added a veil of shimmering mist that so softened his

rugged features that we seemed to see him through a web of silver gauze.

His torch was out; his fires were smoldering; a tall column of smoke that

rose up and lost itself in the growing moonlight was all the sign he gave

that he was a living Autocrat of the Sea and not the spectre of a dead

one.

At two in the morning we swept through the Straits of Messina, and so

bright was the moonlight that Italy on the one hand and Sicily on the

other seemed almost as distinctly visible as though we looked at them

from the middle of a street we were traversing. The city of Messina,

milk-white, and starred and spangled all over with gaslights, was a fairy

spectacle. A great party of us were on deck smoking and making a noise,

and waiting to see famous Scylla and Charybdis. And presently the Oracle

stepped out with his eternal spy-glass and squared himself on the deck

like another Colossus of Rhodes. It was a surprise to see him abroad at

such an hour. Nobody supposed he cared anything about an old fable like

that of Scylla and Charybdis. One of the boys said:

"Hello, doctor, what are you doing up here at this time of night?--What

do you want to see this place for?"

"What do I want to see this place for? Young man, little do you know me,

or you wouldn't ask such a question. I wish to see all the places that's

mentioned in the Bible."

"Stuff--this place isn't mentioned in the Bible."

"It ain't mentioned in the Bible!--this place ain't--well now, what place

is this, since you know so much about it?"

"Why it's Scylla and Charybdis."

"Scylla and Cha--confound it, I thought it was Sodom and Gomorrah!"

And he closed up his glass and went below. The above is the ship story.

Its plausibility is marred a little by the fact that the Oracle was not a

biblical student, and did not spend much of his time instructing himself

about Scriptural localities.--They say the Oracle complains, in this hot

weather, lately, that the only beverage in the ship that is passable, is

the butter. He did not mean butter, of course, but inasmuch as that

article remains in a melted state now since we are out of ice, it is fair

to give him the credit of getting one long word in the right place,

anyhow, for once in his life. He said, in Rome, that the Pope was a

noble-looking old man, but he never did think much of his Iliad.

We spent one pleasant day skirting along the Isles of Greece. They are

very mountainous. Their prevailing tints are gray and brown, approaching

to red. Little white villages surrounded by trees, nestle in the valleys

or roost upon the lofty perpendicular sea-walls.

We had one fine sunset--a rich carmine flush that suffused the western

sky and cast a ruddy glow far over the sea.--Fine sunsets seem to be

rare in this part of the world--or at least, striking ones. They are

soft, sensuous, lovely--they are exquisite refined, effeminate, but we

have seen no sunsets here yet like the gorgeous conflagrations that flame

in the track of the sinking sun in our high northern latitudes.

But what were sunsets to us, with the wild excitement upon us of

approaching the most renowned of cities! What cared we for outward

visions, when Agamemnon, Achilles, and a thousand other heroes of the

great Past were marching in ghostly procession through our fancies? What

were sunsets to us, who were about to live and breathe and walk in actual

Athens; yea, and go far down into the dead centuries and bid in person

for the slaves, Diogenes and Plato, in the public market-place, or gossip

with the neighbors about the siege of Troy or the splendid deeds of

Marathon? We scorned to consider sunsets.

We arrived, and entered the ancient harbor of the Piraeus at last. We

dropped anchor within half a mile of the village. Away off, across the

undulating Plain of Attica, could be seen a little square-topped hill

with a something on it, which our glasses soon discovered to be the

ruined edifices of the citadel of the Athenians, and most prominent among

them loomed the venerable Parthenon. So exquisitely clear and pure is

this wonderful atmosphere that every column of the noble structure was

discernible through the telescope, and even the smaller ruins about it

assumed some semblance of shape. This at a distance of five or six

miles. In the valley, near the Acropolis, (the square-topped hill before

spoken of,) Athens itself could be vaguely made out with an ordinary

lorgnette. Every body was anxious to get ashore and visit these classic

localities as quickly as possible. No land we had yet seen had aroused

such universal interest among the passengers.

But bad news came. The commandant of the Piraeus came in his boat, and

said we must either depart or else get outside the harbor and remain

imprisoned in our ship, under rigid quarantine, for eleven days! So we

took up the anchor and moved outside, to lie a dozen hours or so, taking

in supplies, and then sail for Constantinople. It was the bitterest

disappointment we had yet experienced. To lie a whole day in sight of

the Acropolis, and yet be obliged to go away without visiting Athens!

Disappointment was hardly a strong enough word to describe the

circumstances.

All hands were on deck, all the afternoon, with books and maps and

glasses, trying to determine which "narrow rocky ridge" was the

Areopagus, which sloping hill the Pnyx, which elevation the Museum Hill,

and so on. And we got things confused. Discussion became heated, and

party spirit ran high. Church members were gazing with emotion upon a

hill which they said was the one St. Paul preached from, and another

faction claimed that that hill was Hymettus, and another that it was

Pentelicon! After all the trouble, we could be certain of only one

thing--the square-topped hill was the Acropolis, and the grand ruin that

crowned it was the Parthenon, whose picture we knew in infancy in the

school books.

We inquired of every body who came near the ship, whether there were

guards in the Piraeus, whether they were strict, what the chances were of

capture should any of us slip ashore, and in case any of us made the

venture and were caught, what would be probably done to us? The answers

were discouraging: There was a strong guard or police force; the Piraeus

was a small town, and any stranger seen in it would surely attract

attention--capture would be certain. The commandant said the punishment

would be "heavy;" when asked "how heavy?" he said it would be "very

severe"--that was all we could get out of him.

At eleven o'clock at night, when most of the ship's company were abed,

four of us stole softly ashore in a small boat, a clouded moon favoring

the enterprise, and started two and two, and far apart, over a low hill,

intending to go clear around the Piraeus, out of the range of its police.

Picking our way so stealthily over that rocky, nettle-grown eminence,

made me feel a good deal as if I were on my way somewhere to steal

something. My immediate comrade and I talked in an undertone about

quarantine laws and their penalties, but we found nothing cheering in the

subject. I was posted. Only a few days before, I was talking with our

captain, and he mentioned the case of a man who swam ashore from a

quarantined ship somewhere, and got imprisoned six months for it; and

when he was in Genoa a few years ago, a captain of a quarantined ship

went in his boat to a departing ship, which was already outside of the

harbor, and put a letter on board to be taken to his family, and the

authorities imprisoned him three months for it, and then conducted him

and his ship fairly to sea, and warned him never to show himself in that

port again while he lived. This kind of conversation did no good,

further than to give a sort of dismal interest to our quarantine-breaking

expedition, and so we dropped it. We made the entire circuit of the town

without seeing any body but one man, who stared at us curiously, but said

nothing, and a dozen persons asleep on the ground before their doors,

whom we walked among and never woke--but we woke up dogs enough, in all

conscience--we always had one or two barking at our heels, and several

times we had as many as ten and twelve at once. They made such a

preposterous din that persons aboard our ship said they could tell how we

were progressing for a long time, and where we were, by the barking of

the dogs. The clouded moon still favored us. When we had made the whole

circuit, and were passing among the houses on the further side of the

town, the moon came out splendidly, but we no longer feared the light.

As we approached a well, near a house, to get a drink, the owner merely

glanced at us and went within. He left the quiet, slumbering town at our

mercy. I record it here proudly, that we didn't do any thing to it.

Seeing no road, we took a tall hill to the left of the distant Acropolis

for a mark, and steered straight for it over all obstructions, and over a

little rougher piece of country than exists any where else outside of the

State of Nevada, perhaps. Part of the way it was covered with small,

loose stones--we trod on six at a time, and they all rolled. Another

part of it was dry, loose, newly-ploughed ground. Still another part of

it was a long stretch of low grape-vines, which were tanglesome and

troublesome, and which we took to be brambles. The Attic Plain, barring

the grape-vines, was a barren, desolate, unpoetical waste--I wonder what

it was in Greece's Age of Glory, five hundred years before Christ?

In the neighborhood of one o'clock in the morning, when we were heated

with fast walking and parched with thirst, Denny exclaimed, "Why, these

weeds are grape-vines!" and in five minutes we had a score of bunches of

large, white, delicious grapes, and were reaching down for more when a

dark shape rose mysteriously up out of the shadows beside us and said

"Ho!" And so we left.

In ten minutes more we struck into a beautiful road, and unlike some

others we had stumbled upon at intervals, it led in the right direction.

We followed it. It was broad, and smooth, and white--handsome and in

perfect repair, and shaded on both sides for a mile or so with single

ranks of trees, and also with luxuriant vineyards. Twice we entered and

stole grapes, and the second time somebody shouted at us from some

invisible place. Whereupon we left again. We speculated in grapes no

more on that side of Athens.

Shortly we came upon an ancient stone aqueduct, built upon arches, and

from that time forth we had ruins all about us--we were approaching our

journey's end. We could not see the Acropolis now or the high hill,

either, and I wanted to follow the road till we were abreast of them, but

the others overruled me, and we toiled laboriously up the stony hill

immediately in our front--and from its summit saw another--climbed it and

saw another! It was an hour of exhausting work. Soon we came upon a row

of open graves, cut in the solid rock--(for a while one of them served

Socrates for a prison)--we passed around the shoulder of the hill, and

the citadel, in all its ruined magnificence, burst upon us! We hurried

across the ravine and up a winding road, and stood on the old Acropolis,

with the prodigious walls of the citadel towering above our heads. We

did not stop to inspect their massive blocks of marble, or measure their

height, or guess at their extraordinary thickness, but passed at once

through a great arched passage like a railway tunnel, and went straight

to the gate that leads to the ancient temples. It was locked! So, after

all, it seemed that we were not to see the great Parthenon face to face.

We sat down and held a council of war. Result: the gate was only a

flimsy structure of wood--we would break it down. It seemed like

desecration, but then we had traveled far, and our necessities were

urgent. We could not hunt up guides and keepers--we must be on the ship

before daylight. So we argued. This was all very fine, but when we came

to break the gate, we could not do it. We moved around an angle of the

wall and found a low bastion--eight feet high without--ten or twelve

within. Denny prepared to scale it, and we got ready to follow. By dint

of hard scrambling he finally straddled the top, but some loose stones

crumbled away and fell with a crash into the court within. There was

instantly a banging of doors and a shout. Denny dropped from the wall in

a twinkling, and we retreated in disorder to the gate. Xerxes took that

mighty citadel four hundred and eighty years before Christ, when his five

millions of soldiers and camp-followers followed him to Greece, and if we

four Americans could have remained unmolested five minutes longer, we

would have taken it too.

The garrison had turned out--four Greeks. We clamored at the gate, and

they admitted us. [Bribery and corruption.]

We crossed a large court, entered a great door, and stood upon a pavement

of purest white marble, deeply worn by footprints. Before us, in the

flooding moonlight, rose the noblest ruins we had ever looked upon--the

Propylae; a small Temple of Minerva; the Temple of Hercules, and the

grand Parthenon. [We got these names from the Greek guide, who didn't

seem to know more than seven men ought to know.] These edifices were all

built of the whitest Pentelic marble, but have a pinkish stain upon them

now. Where any part is broken, however, the fracture looks like fine

loaf sugar. Six caryatides, or marble women, clad in flowing robes,

support the portico of the Temple of Hercules, but the porticos and

colonnades of the other structures are formed of massive Doric and Ionic

pillars, whose flutings and capitals are still measurably perfect,

notwithstanding the centuries that have gone over them and the sieges

they have suffered. The Parthenon, originally, was two hundred and

twenty-six feet long, one hundred wide, and seventy high, and had two

rows of great columns, eight in each, at either end, and single rows of

seventeen each down the sides, and was one of the most graceful and

beautiful edifices ever erected.

Most of the Parthenon's imposing columns are still standing, but the roof

is gone. It was a perfect building two hundred and fifty years ago, when

a shell dropped into the Venetian magazine stored here, and the explosion

which followed wrecked and unroofed it. I remember but little about the

Parthenon, and I have put in one or two facts and figures for the use of

other people with short memories. Got them from the guide-book.

As we wandered thoughtfully down the marble-paved length of this stately

temple, the scene about us was strangely impressive. Here and there, in

lavish profusion, were gleaming white statues of men and women, propped

against blocks of marble, some of them armless, some without legs, others

headless--but all looking mournful in the moonlight, and startlingly

human! They rose up and confronted the midnight intruder on every side

--they stared at him with stony eyes from unlooked-for nooks and recesses;

they peered at him over fragmentary heaps far down the desolate

corridors; they barred his way in the midst of the broad forum, and

solemnly pointed with handless arms the way from the sacred fane; and

through the roofless temple the moon looked down, and banded the floor

and darkened the scattered fragments and broken statues with the slanting

shadows of the columns.

What a world of ruined sculpture was about us! Set up in rows--stacked

up in piles--scattered broadcast over the wide area of the Acropolis

--were hundreds of crippled statues of all sizes and of the most exquisite

workmanship; and vast fragments of marble that once belonged to the

entablatures, covered with bas-reliefs representing battles and sieges,

ships of war with three and four tiers of oars, pageants and processions

--every thing one could think of. History says that the temples of the

Acropolis were filled with the noblest works of Praxiteles and Phidias,

and of many a great master in sculpture besides--and surely these elegant

fragments attest it.

We walked out into the grass-grown, fragment-strewn court beyond the

Parthenon. It startled us, every now and then, to see a stony white face

stare suddenly up at us out of the grass with its dead eyes. The place

seemed alive with ghosts. I half expected to see the Athenian heroes of

twenty centuries ago glide out of the shadows and steal into the old

temple they knew so well and regarded with such boundless pride.

The full moon was riding high in the cloudless heavens, now. We

sauntered carelessly and unthinkingly to the edge of the lofty

battlements of the citadel, and looked down--a vision! And such a

vision! Athens by moonlight! The prophet that thought the splendors of

the New Jerusalem were revealed to him, surely saw this instead! It lay

in the level plain right under our feet--all spread abroad like a

picture--and we looked down upon it as we might have looked from a

balloon. We saw no semblance of a street, but every house, every window,

every clinging vine, every projection was as distinct and sharply marked

as if the time were noon-day; and yet there was no glare, no glitter,

nothing harsh or repulsive--the noiseless city was flooded with the

mellowest light that ever streamed from the moon, and seemed like some

living creature wrapped in peaceful slumber. On its further side was a

little temple, whose delicate pillars and ornate front glowed with a rich

lustre that chained the eye like a spell; and nearer by, the palace of

the king reared its creamy walls out of the midst of a great garden of

shrubbery that was flecked all over with a random shower of amber lights

--a spray of golden sparks that lost their brightness in the glory of the

moon, and glinted softly upon the sea of dark foliage like the pallid

stars of the milky-way. Overhead the stately columns, majestic still in

their ruin--under foot the dreaming city--in the distance the silver sea

--not on the broad earth is there an other picture half so beautiful!

As we turned and moved again through the temple, I wished that the

illustrious men who had sat in it in the remote ages could visit it again

and reveal themselves to our curious eyes--Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes,

Socrates, Phocion, Pythagoras, Euclid, Pindar, Xenophon, Herodotus,

Praxiteles and Phidias, Zeuxis the painter. What a constellation of

celebrated names! But more than all, I wished that old Diogenes, groping

so patiently with his lantern, searching so zealously for one solitary

honest man in all the world, might meander along and stumble on our

party. I ought not to say it, may be, but still I suppose he would have

put out his light.

We left the Parthenon to keep its watch over old Athens, as it had kept

it for twenty-three hundred years, and went and stood outside the walls

of the citadel. In the distance was the ancient, but still almost

perfect Temple of Theseus, and close by, looking to the west, was the

Bema, from whence Demosthenes thundered his philippics and fired the

wavering patriotism of his countrymen. To the right was Mars Hill, where

the Areopagus sat in ancient times and where St. Paul defined his

position, and below was the market-place where he "disputed daily" with

the gossip-loving Athenians. We climbed the stone steps St. Paul

ascended, and stood in the square-cut place he stood in, and tried to

recollect the Bible account of the matter--but for certain reasons, I

could not recall the words. I have found them since:

"Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in

him, when he saw the city wholly given up to idolatry. Therefore

disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout

persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

"And they took him and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we

know what this new doctrine whereof thou speakest is?

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

"Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars hill, and said, Ye men of

Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious; For

as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this

inscription: To THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly

worship, him declare I unto you."--Acts, ch. xvii."

It occurred to us, after a while, that if we wanted to get home before

daylight betrayed us, we had better be moving. So we hurried away. When

far on our road, we had a parting view of the Parthenon, with the

moonlight streaming through its open colonnades and touching its capitals

with silver. As it looked then, solemn, grand, and beautiful it will

always remain in our memories.

As we marched along, we began to get over our fears, and ceased to care

much about quarantine scouts or any body else. We grew bold and

reckless; and once, in a sudden burst of courage, I even threw a stone at

a dog. It was a pleasant reflection, though, that I did not hit him,

because his master might just possibly have been a policeman. Inspired

by this happy failure, my valor became utterly uncontrollable, and at

intervals I absolutely whistled, though on a moderate key. But boldness

breeds boldness, and shortly I plunged into a Vineyard, in the full light

of the moon, and captured a gallon of superb grapes, not even minding the

presence of a peasant who rode by on a mule. Denny and Birch followed my

example.

Now I had grapes enough for a dozen, but then Jackson was all swollen up

with courage, too, and he was obliged to enter a vineyard presently. The

first bunch he seized brought trouble. A frowsy, bearded brigand sprang

into the road with a shout, and flourished a musket in the light of the

moon! We sidled toward the Piraeus--not running you understand, but only

advancing with celerity. The brigand shouted again, but still we

advanced. It was getting late, and we had no time to fool away on every

ass that wanted to drivel Greek platitudes to us. We would just as soon

have talked with him as not if we had not been in a hurry. Presently

Denny said, "Those fellows are following us!"

We turned, and, sure enough, there they were--three fantastic pirates

armed with guns. We slackened our pace to let them come up, and in the

meantime I got out my cargo of grapes and dropped them firmly but

reluctantly into the shadows by the wayside. But I was not afraid. I

only felt that it was not right to steal grapes. And all the more so

when the owner was around--and not only around, but with his friends

around also. The villains came up and searched a bundle Dr. Birch had in

his hand, and scowled upon him when they found it had nothing in it but

some holy rocks from Mars Hill, and these were not contraband. They

evidently suspected him of playing some wretched fraud upon them, and

seemed half inclined to scalp the party. But finally they dismissed us

with a warning, couched in excellent Greek, I suppose, and dropped

tranquilly in our wake. When they had gone three hundred yards they

stopped, and we went on rejoiced. But behold, another armed rascal came

out of the shadows and took their place, and followed us two hundred

yards. Then he delivered us over to another miscreant, who emerged from

some mysterious place, and he in turn to another! For a mile and a half

our rear was guarded all the while by armed men. I never traveled in so

much state before in all my life.

It was a good while after that before we ventured to steal any more

grapes, and when we did we stirred up another troublesome brigand, and

then we ceased all further speculation in that line. I suppose that

fellow that rode by on the mule posted all the sentinels, from Athens to

the Piraeus, about us.

Every field on that long route was watched by an armed sentinel, some of

whom had fallen asleep, no doubt, but were on hand, nevertheless. This

shows what sort of a country modern Attica is--a community of

questionable characters. These men were not there to guard their

possessions against strangers, but against each other; for strangers

seldom visit Athens and the Piraeus, and when they do, they go in

daylight, and can buy all the grapes they want for a trifle. The modern

inhabitants are confiscators and falsifiers of high repute, if gossip

speaks truly concerning them, and I freely believe it does.

Just as the earliest tinges of the dawn flushed the eastern sky and

turned the pillared Parthenon to a broken harp hung in the pearly

horizon, we closed our thirteenth mile of weary, round-about marching,

and emerged upon the sea-shore abreast the ships, with our usual escort

of fifteen hundred Piraean dogs howling at our heels. We hailed a boat

that was two or three hundred yards from shore, and discovered

in a moment that it was a police-boat on the lookout for any

quarantine-breakers that might chance to be abroad. So we dodged--we

were used to that by this time--and when the scouts reached the spot we

had so lately occupied, we were absent. They cruised along the shore,

but in the wrong direction, and shortly our own boat issued from the

gloom and took us aboard. They had heard our signal on the ship. We

rowed noiselessly away, and before the police-boat came in sight again,

we were safe at home once more.

Four more of our passengers were anxious to visit Athens, and started

half an hour after we returned; but they had not been ashore five minutes

till the police discovered and chased them so hotly that they barely

escaped to their boat again, and that was all. They pursued the

enterprise no further.

We set sail for Constantinople to-day, but some of us little care for

that. We have seen all there was to see in the old city that had its

birth sixteen hundred years before Christ was born, and was an old town

before the foundations of Troy were laid--and saw it in its most

attractive aspect. Wherefore, why should we worry?

Two other passengers ran the blockade successfully last night. So we

learned this morning. They slipped away so quietly that they were not

missed from the ship for several hours. They had the hardihood to march

into the Piraeus in the early dusk and hire a carriage. They ran some

danger of adding two or three months' imprisonment to the other novelties

of their Holy Land Pleasure Excursion. I admire "cheek."--[Quotation

from the Pilgrims.]--But they went and came safely, and never walked a

step.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

From Athens all through the islands of the Grecian Archipelago, we saw

little but forbidding sea-walls and barren hills, sometimes surmounted by

three or four graceful columns of some ancient temple, lonely and

deserted--a fitting symbol of the desolation that has come upon all

Greece in these latter ages. We saw no ploughed fields, very few

villages, no trees or grass or vegetation of any kind, scarcely, and

hardly ever an isolated house. Greece is a bleak, unsmiling desert,

without agriculture, manufactures or commerce, apparently. What supports

its poverty-stricken people or its Government, is a mystery.

I suppose that ancient Greece and modern Greece compared, furnish the

most extravagant contrast to be found in history. George I., an infant

of eighteen, and a scraggy nest of foreign office holders, sit in the

places of Themistocles, Pericles, and the illustrious scholars and

generals of the Golden Age of Greece. The fleets that were the wonder of

the world when the Parthenon was new, are a beggarly handful of

fishing-smacks now, and the manly people that performed such miracles of

valor at Marathon are only a tribe of unconsidered slaves to-day. The

classic Illyssus has gone dry, and so have all the sources of Grecian

wealth and greatness. The nation numbers only eight hundred thousand

souls, and there is poverty and misery and mendacity enough among them

to furnish forty millions and be liberal about it. Under King Otho the

revenues of the State were five millions of dollars--raised from a tax

of one-tenth of all the agricultural products of the land (which tenth

the farmer had to bring to the royal granaries on pack-mules any

distance not exceeding six leagues) and from extravagant taxes on trade

and commerce. Out of that five millions the small tyrant tried to keep

an army of ten thousand men, pay all the hundreds of useless Grand

Equerries in Waiting, First Grooms of the Bedchamber, Lord High

Chancellors of the Exploded Exchequer, and all the other absurdities

which these puppy-kingdoms indulge in, in imitation of the great

monarchies; and in addition he set about building a white marble palace

to cost about five millions itself. The result was, simply: ten into

five goes no times and none over. All these things could not be done

with five millions, and Otho fell into trouble.

The Greek throne, with its unpromising adjuncts of a ragged population of

ingenious rascals who were out of employment eight months in the year

because there was little for them to borrow and less to confiscate, and a

waste of barren hills and weed-grown deserts, went begging for a good

while. It was offered to one of Victoria's sons, and afterwards to

various other younger sons of royalty who had no thrones and were out of

business, but they all had the charity to decline the dreary honor, and

veneration enough for Greece's ancient greatness to refuse to mock her

sorrowful rags and dirt with a tinsel throne in this day of her

humiliation--till they came to this young Danish George, and he took it.

He has finished the splendid palace I saw in the radiant moonlight the

other night, and is doing many other things for the salvation of Greece,

they say.

We sailed through the barren Archipelago, and into the narrow channel

they sometimes call the Dardanelles and sometimes the Hellespont. This

part of the country is rich in historic reminiscences, and poor as Sahara

in every thing else. For instance, as we approached the Dardanelles, we

coasted along the Plains of Troy and past the mouth of the Scamander; we

saw where Troy had stood (in the distance,) and where it does not stand

now--a city that perished when the world was young. The poor Trojans are

all dead, now. They were born too late to see Noah's ark, and died too

soon to see our menagerie. We saw where Agamemnon's fleets rendezvoused,

and away inland a mountain which the map said was Mount Ida. Within the

Hellespont we saw where the original first shoddy contract mentioned in

history was carried out, and the "parties of the second part" gently

rebuked by Xerxes. I speak of the famous bridge of boats which Xerxes

ordered to be built over the narrowest part of the Hellespont (where it

is only two or three miles wide.) A moderate gale destroyed the flimsy

structure, and the King, thinking that to publicly rebuke the contractors

might have a good effect on the next set, called them out before the army

and had them beheaded. In the next ten minutes he let a new contract for

the bridge. It has been observed by ancient writers that the second

bridge was a very good bridge. Xerxes crossed his host of five millions

of men on it, and if it had not been purposely destroyed, it would

probably have been there yet. If our Government would rebuke some of our

shoddy contractors occasionally, it might work much good. In the

Hellespont we saw where Leander and Lord Byron swam across, the one to

see her upon whom his soul's affections were fixed with a devotion that

only death could impair, and the other merely for a flyer, as Jack says.

We had two noted tombs near us, too. On one shore slept Ajax, and on the

other Hecuba.

We had water batteries and forts on both sides of the Hellespont, flying

the crimson flag of Turkey, with its white crescent, and occasionally a

village, and sometimes a train of camels; we had all these to look at

till we entered the broad sea of Marmora, and then the land soon fading

from view, we resumed euchre and whist once more.

We dropped anchor in the mouth of the Golden Horn at daylight in the

morning. Only three or four of us were up to see the great Ottoman

capital. The passengers do not turn out at unseasonable hours, as they

used to, to get the earliest possible glimpse of strange foreign cities.

They are well over that. If we were lying in sight of the Pyramids of

Egypt, they would not come on deck until after breakfast, now-a-days.

The Golden Horn is a narrow arm of the sea, which branches from the

Bosporus (a sort of broad river which connects the Marmora and Black

Seas,) and, curving around, divides the city in the middle. Galata and

Pera are on one side of the Bosporus, and the Golden Horn; Stamboul

(ancient Byzantium) is upon the other. On the other bank of the Bosporus

is Scutari and other suburbs of Constantinople. This great city contains

a million inhabitants, but so narrow are its streets, and so crowded

together are its houses, that it does not cover much more than half as

much ground as New York City. Seen from the anchorage or from a mile or

so up the Bosporus, it is by far the handsomest city we have seen. Its

dense array of houses swells upward from the water's edge, and spreads

over the domes of many hills; and the gardens that peep out here and

there, the great globes of the mosques, and the countless minarets that

meet the eye every where, invest the metropolis with the quaint Oriental

aspect one dreams of when he reads books of eastern travel.

Constantinople makes a noble picture.

But its attractiveness begins and ends with its picturesqueness. From

the time one starts ashore till he gets back again, he execrates it. The

boat he goes in is admirably miscalculated for the service it is built

for. It is handsomely and neatly fitted up, but no man could handle it

well in the turbulent currents that sweep down the Bosporus from the

Black Sea, and few men could row it satisfactorily even in still water.

It is a long, light canoe (caique,) large at one end and tapering to a

knife blade at the other. They make that long sharp end the bow, and you

can imagine how these boiling currents spin it about. It has two oars,

and sometimes four, and no rudder. You start to go to a given point and

you run in fifty different directions before you get there. First one

oar is backing water, and then the other; it is seldom that both are

going ahead at once. This kind of boating is calculated to drive an

impatient man mad in a week. The boatmen are the awkwardest, the

stupidest, and the most unscientific on earth, without question.

Ashore, it was--well, it was an eternal circus. People were thicker than

bees, in those narrow streets, and the men were dressed in all the

outrageous, outlandish, idolatrous, extravagant, thunder-and-lightning

costumes that ever a tailor with the delirium tremens and seven devils

could conceive of. There was no freak in dress too crazy to be indulged

in; no absurdity too absurd to be tolerated; no frenzy in ragged

diabolism too fantastic to be attempted. No two men were dressed alike.

It was a wild masquerade of all imaginable costumes--every struggling

throng in every street was a dissolving view of stunning contrasts. Some

patriarchs wore awful turbans, but the grand mass of the infidel horde

wore the fiery red skull-cap they call a fez. All the remainder of the

raiment they indulged in was utterly indescribable.

The shops here are mere coops, mere boxes, bath-rooms, closets--any thing

you please to call them--on the first floor. The Turks sit cross-legged

in them, and work and trade and smoke long pipes, and smell like--like

Turks. That covers the ground. Crowding the narrow streets in front of

them are beggars, who beg forever, yet never collect any thing; and

wonderful cripples, distorted out of all semblance of humanity, almost;

vagabonds driving laden asses; porters carrying dry-goods boxes as large

as cottages on their backs; peddlers of grapes, hot corn, pumpkin seeds,

and a hundred other things, yelling like fiends; and sleeping happily,

comfortably, serenely, among the hurrying feet, are the famed dogs of

Constantinople; drifting noiselessly about are squads of Turkish women,

draped from chin to feet in flowing robes, and with snowy veils bound

about their heads, that disclose only the eyes and a vague, shadowy

notion of their features. Seen moving about, far away in the dim, arched

aisles of the Great Bazaar, they look as the shrouded dead must have

looked when they walked forth from their graves amid the storms and

thunders and earthquakes that burst upon Calvary that awful night of the

Crucifixion. A street in Constantinople is a picture which one ought to

see once--not oftener.

And then there was the goose-rancher--a fellow who drove a hundred geese

before him about the city, and tried to sell them. He had a pole ten

feet long, with a crook in the end of it, and occasionally a goose would

branch out from the flock and make a lively break around the corner, with

wings half lifted and neck stretched to its utmost. Did the

goose-merchant get excited? No. He took his pole and reached after

that goose with unspeakable sang froid--took a hitch round his neck, and

"yanked" him back to his place in the flock without an effort. He

steered his geese with that stick as easily as another man would steer a

yawl. A few hours afterward we saw him sitting on a stone at a corner,

in the midst of the turmoil, sound asleep in the sun, with his geese

squatting around him, or dodging out of the way of asses and men. We

came by again, within the hour, and he was taking account of stock, to

see whether any of his flock had strayed or been stolen. The way he did

it was unique. He put the end of his stick within six or eight inches of

a stone wall, and made the geese march in single file between it and the

wall. He counted them as they went by. There was no dodging that

arrangement.

If you want dwarfs--I mean just a few dwarfs for a curiosity--go to

Genoa. If you wish to buy them by the gross, for retail, go to Milan.

There are plenty of dwarfs all over Italy, but it did seem to me that in

Milan the crop was luxuriant. If you would see a fair average style of

assorted cripples, go to Naples, or travel through the Roman States.

But if you would see the very heart and home of cripples and human

monsters, both, go straight to Constantinople. A beggar in Naples who

can show a foot which has all run into one horrible toe, with one

shapeless nail on it, has a fortune--but such an exhibition as that would

not provoke any notice in Constantinople. The man would starve. Who

would pay any attention to attractions like his among the rare monsters

that throng the bridges of the Golden Horn and display their deformities

in the gutters of Stamboul? O, wretched impostor! How could he stand

against the three-legged woman, and the man with his eye in his cheek?

How would he blush in presence of the man with fingers on his elbow?

Where would he hide himself when the dwarf with seven fingers on each

hand, no upper lip, and his under-jaw gone, came down in his majesty?

Bismillah! The cripples of Europe are a delusion and a fraud. The truly

gifted flourish only in the by-ways of Pera and Stamboul.

That three-legged woman lay on the bridge, with her stock in trade so

disposed as to command the most striking effect--one natural leg, and two

long, slender, twisted ones with feet on them like somebody else's

fore-arm. Then there was a man further along who had no eyes, and whose

face was the color of a fly-blown beefsteak, and wrinkled and twisted

like a lava-flow--and verily so tumbled and distorted were his features

that no man could tell the wart that served him for a nose from his

cheek-bones. In Stamboul was a man with a prodigious head, an uncommonly

long body, legs eight inches long and feet like snow-shoes. He traveled

on those feet and his hands, and was as sway-backed as if the Colossus

of Rhodes had been riding him. Ah, a beggar has to have exceedingly

good points to make a living in Constantinople. A blue-faced man, who

had nothing to offer except that he had been blown up in a mine, would

be regarded as a rank impostor, and a mere damaged soldier on crutches

would never make a cent. It would pay him to get apiece of his head

taken off, and cultivate a wen like a carpet sack.

The Mosque of St. Sophia is the chief lion of Constantinople. You must

get a firman and hurry there the first thing. We did that. We did not

get a firman, but we took along four or five francs apiece, which is much

the same thing.

I do not think much of the Mosque of St. Sophia. I suppose I lack

appreciation. We will let it go at that. It is the rustiest old barn in

heathendom. I believe all the interest that attaches to it comes from

the fact that it was built for a Christian church and then turned into a

mosque, without much alteration, by the Mohammedan conquerors of the

land. They made me take off my boots and walk into the place in my

stocking-feet. I caught cold, and got myself so stuck up with a

complication of gums, slime and general corruption, that I wore out more

than two thousand pair of boot-jacks getting my boots off that night, and

even then some Christian hide peeled off with them. I abate not a single

boot-jack.

St. Sophia is a colossal church, thirteen or fourteen hundred years old,

and unsightly enough to be very, very much older. Its immense dome is

said to be more wonderful than St. Peter's, but its dirt is much more

wonderful than its dome, though they never mention it. The church has a

hundred and seventy pillars in it, each a single piece, and all of costly

marbles of various kinds, but they came from ancient temples at Baalbec,

Heliopolis, Athens and Ephesus, and are battered, ugly and repulsive.

They were a thousand years old when this church was new, and then the

contrast must have been ghastly--if Justinian's architects did not trim

them any. The inside of the dome is figured all over with a monstrous

inscription in Turkish characters, wrought in gold mosaic, that looks as

glaring as a circus bill; the pavements and the marble balustrades are

all battered and dirty; the perspective is marred every where by a web of

ropes that depend from the dizzy height of the dome, and suspend

countless dingy, coarse oil lamps, and ostrich-eggs, six or seven feet

above the floor. Squatting and sitting in groups, here and there and far

and near, were ragged Turks reading books, hearing sermons, or receiving

lessons like children. And in fifty places were more of the same sort

bowing and straightening up, bowing again and getting down to kiss the

earth, muttering prayers the while, and keeping up their gymnastics till

they ought to have been tired, if they were not.

Every where was dirt, and dust, and dinginess, and gloom; every where

were signs of a hoary antiquity, but with nothing touching or beautiful

about it; every where were those groups of fantastic pagans; overhead the

gaudy mosaics and the web of lamp-ropes--nowhere was there any thing to

win one's love or challenge his admiration.

The people who go into ecstasies over St. Sophia must surely get them out

of the guide-book (where every church is spoken of as being "considered

by good judges to be the most marvelous structure, in many respects, that

the world has ever seen.") Or else they are those old connoisseurs from

the wilds of New Jersey who laboriously learn the difference between a

fresco and a fire-plug and from that day forward feel privileged to void

their critical bathos on painting, sculpture and architecture forever

more.

We visited the Dancing Dervishes. There were twenty-one of them. They

wore a long, light-colored loose robe that hung to their heels. Each in

his turn went up to the priest (they were all within a large circular

railing) and bowed profoundly and then went spinning away deliriously and

took his appointed place in the circle, and continued to spin. When all

had spun themselves to their places, they were about five or six feet

apart--and so situated, the entire circle of spinning pagans spun itself

three separate times around the room. It took twenty-five minutes to do

it. They spun on the left foot, and kept themselves going by passing the

right rapidly before it and digging it against the waxed floor. Some of

them made incredible "time." Most of them spun around forty times in a

minute, and one artist averaged about sixty-one times a minute, and kept

it up during the whole twenty-five. His robe filled with air and stood

out all around him like a balloon.

They made no noise of any kind, and most of them tilted their heads back

and closed their eyes, entranced with a sort of devotional ecstacy.

There was a rude kind of music, part of the time, but the musicians were

not visible. None but spinners were allowed within the circle. A man

had to either spin or stay outside. It was about as barbarous an

exhibition as we have witnessed yet. Then sick persons came and lay

down, and beside them women laid their sick children (one a babe at the

breast,) and the patriarch of the Dervishes walked upon their bodies. He

was supposed to cure their diseases by trampling upon their breasts or

backs or standing on the back of their necks. This is well enough for a

people who think all their affairs are made or marred by viewless spirits

of the air--by giants, gnomes, and genii--and who still believe, to this

day, all the wild tales in the Arabian Nights. Even so an intelligent

missionary tells me.

We visited the Thousand and One Columns. I do not know what it was

originally intended for, but they said it was built for a reservoir. It

is situated in the centre of Constantinople. You go down a flight of

stone steps in the middle of a barren place, and there you are. You are

forty feet under ground, and in the midst of a perfect wilderness of

tall, slender, granite columns, of Byzantine architecture. Stand where

you would, or change your position as often as you pleased, you were

always a centre from which radiated a dozen long archways and colonnades

that lost themselves in distance and the sombre twilight of the place.

This old dried-up reservoir is occupied by a few ghostly silk-spinners

now, and one of them showed me a cross cut high up in one of the pillars.

I suppose he meant me to understand that the institution was there before

the Turkish occupation, and I thought he made a remark to that effect;

but he must have had an impediment in his speech, for I did not

understand him.

We took off our shoes and went into the marble mausoleum of the Sultan

Mahmoud, the neatest piece of architecture, inside, that I have seen

lately. Mahmoud's tomb was covered with a black velvet pall, which was

elaborately embroidered with silver; it stood within a fancy silver

railing; at the sides and corners were silver candlesticks that would

weigh more than a hundred pounds, and they supported candles as large as

a man's leg; on the top of the sarcophagus was a fez, with a handsome

diamond ornament upon it, which an attendant said cost a hundred thousand

pounds, and lied like a Turk when he said it. Mahmoud's whole family

were comfortably planted around him.

We went to the great Bazaar in Stamboul, of course, and I shall not

describe it further than to say it is a monstrous hive of little shops

--thousands, I should say--all under one roof, and cut up into innumerable

little blocks by narrow streets which are arched overhead. One street is

devoted to a particular kind of merchandise, another to another, and so

on.

When you wish to buy a pair of shoes you have the swing of the whole

street--you do not have to walk yourself down hunting stores in different

localities. It is the same with silks, antiquities, shawls, etc. The

place is crowded with people all the time, and as the gay-colored Eastern

fabrics are lavishly displayed before every shop, the great Bazaar of

Stamboul is one of the sights that are worth seeing. It is full of life,

and stir, and business, dirt, beggars, asses, yelling peddlers, porters,

dervishes, high-born Turkish female shoppers, Greeks, and weird-looking

and weirdly dressed Mohammedans from the mountains and the far provinces

--and the only solitary thing one does not smell when he is in the Great

Bazaar, is something which smells good.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Mosques are plenty, churches are plenty, graveyards are plenty, but

morals and whiskey are scarce. The Koran does not permit Mohammedans to

drink. Their natural instincts do not permit them to be moral. They say

the Sultan has eight hundred wives. This almost amounts to bigamy. It

makes our cheeks burn with shame to see such a thing permitted here in

Turkey. We do not mind it so much in Salt Lake, however.

Circassian and Georgian girls are still sold in Constantinople by their

parents, but not publicly. The great slave marts we have all read so

much about--where tender young girls were stripped for inspection, and

criticised and discussed just as if they were horses at an agricultural

fair--no longer exist. The exhibition and the sales are private now.

Stocks are up, just at present, partly because of a brisk demand created

by the recent return of the Sultan's suite from the courts of Europe;

partly on account of an unusual abundance of bread-stuffs, which leaves

holders untortured by hunger and enables them to hold back for high

prices; and partly because buyers are too weak to bear the market, while

sellers are amply prepared to bull it. Under these circumstances, if the

American metropolitan newspapers were published here in Constantinople,

their next commercial report would read about as follows, I suppose:

SLAVE GIRL MARKET REPORT.

"Best brands Circassians, crop of 1850, L200; 1852, L250; 1854,

L300. Best brands Georgian, none in market; second quality, 1851,

L180. Nineteen fair to middling Wallachian girls offered at L130 @

150, but no takers; sixteen prime A 1 sold in small lots to close

out--terms private.

"Sales of one lot Circassians, prime to good, 1852 to 1854, at L240

@ 242, buyer 30; one forty-niner--damaged--at L23, seller ten, no

deposit. Several Georgians, fancy brands, 1852, changed hands to

fill orders. The Georgians now on hand are mostly last year's crop,

which was unusually poor. The new crop is a little backward, but

will be coming in shortly. As regards its quantity and quality, the

accounts are most encouraging. In this connection we can safely

say, also, that the new crop of Circassians is looking extremely

well. His Majesty the Sultan has already sent in large orders for

his new harem, which will be finished within a fortnight, and this

has naturally strengthened the market and given Circassian stock a

strong upward tendency. Taking advantage of the inflated market,

many of our shrewdest operators are selling short. There are hints

of a 'corner' on Wallachians.

"There is nothing new in Nubians. Slow sale.

"Eunuchs--None offering; however, large cargoes are expected from

Egypt today."

I think the above would be about the style of the commercial report.

Prices are pretty high now, and holders firm; but, two or three years

ago, parents in a starving condition brought their young daughters down

here and sold them for even twenty and thirty dollars, when they could do

no better, simply to save themselves and the girls from dying of want.

It is sad to think of so distressing a thing as this, and I for one am

sincerely glad the prices are up again.

Commercial morals, especially, are bad. There is no gainsaying that.

Greek, Turkish and Armenian morals consist only in attending church

regularly on the appointed Sabbaths, and in breaking the ten commandments

all the balance of the week. It comes natural to them to lie and cheat

in the first place, and then they go on and improve on nature until they

arrive at perfection. In recommending his son to a merchant as a

valuable salesman, a father does not say he is a nice, moral, upright

boy, and goes to Sunday School and is honest, but he says, "This boy is

worth his weight in broad pieces of a hundred--for behold, he will cheat

whomsoever hath dealings with him, and from the Euxine to the waters of

Marmora there abideth not so gifted a liar!" How is that for a

recommendation? The Missionaries tell me that they hear encomiums like

that passed upon people every day. They say of a person they admire,

"Ah, he is a charming swindler, and a most exquisite liar!"

Every body lies and cheats--every body who is in business, at any rate.

Even foreigners soon have to come down to the custom of the country, and

they do not buy and sell long in Constantinople till they lie and cheat

like a Greek. I say like a Greek, because the Greeks are called the

worst transgressors in this line. Several Americans long resident in

Constantinople contend that most Turks are pretty trustworthy, but few

claim that the Greeks have any virtues that a man can discover--at least

without a fire assay.

I am half willing to believe that the celebrated dogs of Constantinople

have been misrepresented--slandered. I have always been led to suppose

that they were so thick in the streets that they blocked the way; that

they moved about in organized companies, platoons and regiments, and took

what they wanted by determined and ferocious assault; and that at night

they drowned all other sounds with their terrible howlings. The dogs I

see here can not be those I have read of.

I find them every where, but not in strong force. The most I have found

together has been about ten or twenty. And night or day a fair

proportion of them were sound asleep. Those that were not asleep always

looked as if they wanted to be. I never saw such utterly wretched,

starving, sad-visaged, broken-hearted looking curs in my life. It seemed

a grim satire to accuse such brutes as these of taking things by force of

arms. They hardly seemed to have strength enough or ambition enough to

walk across the street--I do not know that I have seen one walk that far

yet. They are mangy and bruised and mutilated, and often you see one

with the hair singed off him in such wide and well defined tracts that he

looks like a map of the new Territories. They are the sorriest beasts

that breathe--the most abject--the most pitiful. In their faces is a

settled expression of melancholy, an air of hopeless despondency. The

hairless patches on a scalded dog are preferred by the fleas of

Constantinople to a wider range on a healthier dog; and the exposed

places suit the fleas exactly. I saw a dog of this kind start to nibble

at a flea--a fly attracted his attention, and he made a snatch at him;

the flea called for him once more, and that forever unsettled him; he

looked sadly at his flea-pasture, then sadly looked at his bald spot.

Then he heaved a sigh and dropped his head resignedly upon his paws. He

was not equal to the situation.

The dogs sleep in the streets, all over the city. From one end of the

street to the other, I suppose they will average about eight or ten to a

block. Sometimes, of course, there are fifteen or twenty to a block.

They do not belong to any body, and they seem to have no close personal

friendships among each other. But they district the city themselves, and

the dogs of each district, whether it be half a block in extent, or ten

blocks, have to remain within its bounds. Woe to a dog if he crosses the

line! His neighbors would snatch the balance of his hair off in a

second. So it is said. But they don't look it.

They sleep in the streets these days. They are my compass--my guide.

When I see the dogs sleep placidly on, while men, sheep, geese, and all

moving things turn out and go around them, I know I am not in the great

street where the hotel is, and must go further. In the Grand Rue the

dogs have a sort of air of being on the lookout--an air born of being

obliged to get out of the way of many carriages every day--and that

expression one recognizes in a moment. It does not exist upon the face

of any dog without the confines of that street. All others sleep

placidly and keep no watch. They would not move, though the Sultan

himself passed by.

In one narrow street (but none of them are wide) I saw three dogs lying

coiled up, about a foot or two apart. End to end they lay, and so they

just bridged the street neatly, from gutter to gutter. A drove of a

hundred sheep came along. They stepped right over the dogs, the rear

crowding the front, impatient to get on. The dogs looked lazily up,

flinched a little when the impatient feet of the sheep touched their raw

backs--sighed, and lay peacefully down again. No talk could be plainer

than that. So some of the sheep jumped over them and others scrambled

between, occasionally chipping a leg with their sharp hoofs, and when the

whole flock had made the trip, the dogs sneezed a little, in the cloud of

dust, but never budged their bodies an inch. I thought I was lazy, but I

am a steam-engine compared to a Constantinople dog. But was not that a

singular scene for a city of a million inhabitants?

These dogs are the scavengers of the city. That is their official

position, and a hard one it is. However, it is their protection. But

for their usefulness in partially cleansing these terrible streets, they

would not be tolerated long. They eat any thing and every thing that

comes in their way, from melon rinds and spoiled grapes up through all

the grades and species of dirt and refuse to their own dead friends and

relatives--and yet they are always lean, always hungry, always

despondent. The people are loath to kill them--do not kill them, in

fact. The Turks have an innate antipathy to taking the life of any dumb

animal, it is said. But they do worse. They hang and kick and stone and

scald these wretched creatures to the very verge of death, and then leave

them to live and suffer.

Once a Sultan proposed to kill off all the dogs here, and did begin the

work--but the populace raised such a howl of horror about it that the

massacre was stayed. After a while, he proposed to remove them all to an

island in the Sea of Marmora. No objection was offered, and a ship-load

or so was taken away. But when it came to be known that somehow or other

the dogs never got to the island, but always fell overboard in the night

and perished, another howl was raised and the transportation scheme was

dropped.

So the dogs remain in peaceable possession of the streets. I do not say

that they do not howl at night, nor that they do not attack people who

have not a red fez on their heads. I only say that it would be mean for

me to accuse them of these unseemly things who have not seen them do them

with my own eyes or heard them with my own ears.

I was a little surprised to see Turks and Greeks playing newsboy right

here in the mysterious land where the giants and genii of the Arabian

Nights once dwelt--where winged horses and hydra-headed dragons guarded

enchanted castles--where Princes and Princesses flew through the air on

carpets that obeyed a mystic talisman--where cities whose houses were

made of precious stones sprang up in a night under the hand of the

magician, and where busy marts were suddenly stricken with a spell and

each citizen lay or sat, or stood with weapon raised or foot advanced,

just as he was, speechless and motionless, till time had told a hundred

years!

It was curious to see newsboys selling papers in so dreamy a land as

that. And, to say truly, it is comparatively a new thing here. The

selling of newspapers had its birth in Constantinople about a year ago,

and was a child of the Prussian and Austrian war.

There is one paper published here in the English language--The Levant

Herald--and there are generally a number of Greek and a few French papers

rising and falling, struggling up and falling again. Newspapers are not

popular with the Sultan's Government. They do not understand journalism.

The proverb says, "The unknown is always great." To the court, the

newspaper is a mysterious and rascally institution. They know what a

pestilence is, because they have one occasionally that thins the people

out at the rate of two thousand a day, and they regard a newspaper as a

mild form of pestilence. When it goes astray, they suppress it--pounce

upon it without warning, and throttle it. When it don't go astray for a

long time, they get suspicious and throttle it anyhow, because they think

it is hatching deviltry. Imagine the Grand Vizier in solemn council with

the magnates of the realm, spelling his way through the hated newspaper,

and finally delivering his profound decision: "This thing means mischief

--it is too darkly, too suspiciously inoffensive--suppress it! Warn the

publisher that we can not have this sort of thing: put the editor in

prison!"

The newspaper business has its inconveniences in Constantinople. Two

Greek papers and one French one were suppressed here within a few days of

each other. No victories of the Cretans are allowed to be printed. From

time to time the Grand Vizier sends a notice to the various editors that

the Cretan insurrection is entirely suppressed, and although that editor

knows better, he still has to print the notice. The Levant Herald is too

fond of speaking praisefully of Americans to be popular with the Sultan,

who does not relish our sympathy with the Cretans, and therefore that

paper has to be particularly circumspect in order to keep out of trouble.

Once the editor, forgetting the official notice in his paper that the

Cretans were crushed out, printed a letter of a very different tenor,

from the American Consul in Crete, and was fined two hundred and fifty

dollars for it. Shortly he printed another from the same source and was

imprisoned three months for his pains. I think I could get the assistant

editorship of the Levant Herald, but I am going to try to worry along

without it.

To suppress a paper here involves the ruin of the publisher, almost. But

in Naples I think they speculate on misfortunes of that kind. Papers are

suppressed there every day, and spring up the next day under a new name.

During the ten days or a fortnight we staid there one paper was murdered

and resurrected twice. The newsboys are smart there, just as they are

elsewhere. They take advantage of popular weaknesses. When they find

they are not likely to sell out, they approach a citizen mysteriously,

and say in a low voice--"Last copy, sir: double price; paper just been

suppressed!" The man buys it, of course, and finds nothing in it. They

do say--I do not vouch for it--but they do say that men sometimes print a

vast edition of a paper, with a ferociously seditious article in it,

distribute it quickly among the newsboys, and clear out till the

Government's indignation cools. It pays well. Confiscation don't amount

to any thing. The type and presses are not worth taking care of.

There is only one English newspaper in Naples. It has seventy

subscribers. The publisher is getting rich very deliberately--very

deliberately indeed.

I never shall want another Turkish lunch. The cooking apparatus was in

the little lunch room, near the bazaar, and it was all open to the

street. The cook was slovenly, and so was the table, and it had no cloth

on it. The fellow took a mass of sausage meat and coated it round a wire

and laid it on a charcoal fire to cook. When it was done, he laid it

aside and a dog walked sadly in and nipped it. He smelt it first, and

probably recognized the remains of a friend. The cook took it away from

him and laid it before us. Jack said, "I pass"--he plays euchre

sometimes--and we all passed in turn. Then the cook baked a broad, flat,

wheaten cake, greased it well with the sausage, and started towards us

with it. It dropped in the dirt, and he picked it up and polished it on

his breeches, and laid it before us. Jack said, "I pass." We all

passed. He put some eggs in a frying pan, and stood pensively prying

slabs of meat from between his teeth with a fork. Then he used the fork

to turn the eggs with--and brought them along. Jack said "Pass again."

All followed suit. We did not know what to do, and so we ordered a new

ration of sausage. The cook got out his wire, apportioned a proper

amount of sausage-meat, spat it on his hands and fell to work! This

time, with one accord, we all passed out. We paid and left. That is

all I learned about Turkish lunches. A Turkish lunch is good, no doubt,

but it has its little drawbacks.

When I think how I have been swindled by books of Oriental travel, I want

a tourist for breakfast. For years and years I have dreamed of the

wonders of the Turkish bath; for years and years I have promised myself

that I would yet enjoy one. Many and many a time, in fancy, I have lain

in the marble bath, and breathed the slumbrous fragrance of Eastern

spices that filled the air; then passed through a weird and complicated

system of pulling and hauling, and drenching and scrubbing, by a gang of

naked savages who loomed vast and vaguely through the steaming mists,

like demons; then rested for a while on a divan fit for a king; then

passed through another complex ordeal, and one more fearful than the

first; and, finally, swathed in soft fabrics, been conveyed to a princely

saloon and laid on a bed of eider down, where eunuchs, gorgeous of

costume, fanned me while I drowsed and dreamed, or contentedly gazed at

the rich hangings of the apartment, the soft carpets, the sumptuous

furniture, the pictures, and drank delicious coffee, smoked the soothing

narghili, and dropped, at the last, into tranquil repose, lulled by

sensuous odors from unseen censers, by the gentle influence of the

narghili's Persian tobacco, and by the music of fountains that

counterfeited the pattering of summer rain.

That was the picture, just as I got it from incendiary books of travel.

It was a poor, miserable imposture. The reality is no more like it than

the Five Points are like the Garden of Eden. They received me in a great

court, paved with marble slabs; around it were broad galleries, one above

another, carpeted with seedy matting, railed with unpainted balustrades,

and furnished with huge rickety chairs, cushioned with rusty old

mattresses, indented with impressions left by the forms of nine

successive generations of men who had reposed upon them. The place was

vast, naked, dreary; its court a barn, its galleries stalls for human

horses. The cadaverous, half nude varlets that served in the

establishment had nothing of poetry in their appearance, nothing of

romance, nothing of Oriental splendor. They shed no entrancing odors

--just the contrary. Their hungry eyes and their lank forms continually

suggested one glaring, unsentimental fact--they wanted what they term in

California "a square meal."

I went into one of the racks and undressed. An unclean starveling

wrapped a gaudy table-cloth about his loins, and hung a white rag over my

shoulders. If I had had a tub then, it would have come natural to me to

take in washing. I was then conducted down stairs into the wet, slippery

court, and the first things that attracted my attention were my heels.

My fall excited no comment. They expected it, no doubt. It belonged in

the list of softening, sensuous influences peculiar to this home of

Eastern luxury. It was softening enough, certainly, but its application

was not happy. They now gave me a pair of wooden clogs--benches in

miniature, with leather straps over them to confine my feet (which they

would have done, only I do not wear No. 13s.) These things dangled

uncomfortably by the straps when I lifted up my feet, and came down in

awkward and unexpected places when I put them on the floor again, and

sometimes turned sideways and wrenched my ankles out of joint. However,

it was all Oriental luxury, and I did what I could to enjoy it.

They put me in another part of the barn and laid me on a stuffy sort of

pallet, which was not made of cloth of gold, or Persian shawls, but was

merely the unpretending sort of thing I have seen in the negro quarters

of Arkansas. There was nothing whatever in this dim marble prison but

five more of these biers. It was a very solemn place. I expected that

the spiced odors of Araby were going to steal over my senses now, but

they did not. A copper-colored skeleton, with a rag around him, brought

me a glass decanter of water, with a lighted tobacco pipe in the top of

it, and a pliant stem a yard long, with a brass mouth-piece to it.

It was the famous "narghili" of the East--the thing the Grand Turk smokes

in the pictures. This began to look like luxury. I took one blast at

it, and it was sufficient; the smoke went in a great volume down into my

stomach, my lungs, even into the uttermost parts of my frame. I exploded

one mighty cough, and it was as if Vesuvius had let go. For the next

five minutes I smoked at every pore, like a frame house that is on fire

on the inside. Not any more narghili for me. The smoke had a vile

taste, and the taste of a thousand infidel tongues that remained on that

brass mouthpiece was viler still. I was getting discouraged. Whenever,

hereafter, I see the cross-legged Grand Turk smoking his narghili, in

pretended bliss, on the outside of a paper of Connecticut tobacco, I

shall know him for the shameless humbug he is.

This prison was filled with hot air. When I had got warmed up

sufficiently to prepare me for a still warmer temperature, they took me

where it was--into a marble room, wet, slippery and steamy, and laid me

out on a raised platform in the centre. It was very warm. Presently my

man sat me down by a tank of hot water, drenched me well, gloved his hand

with a coarse mitten, and began to polish me all over with it. I began

to smell disagreeably. The more he polished the worse I smelt. It was

alarming. I said to him:

"I perceive that I am pretty far gone. It is plain that I ought to be

buried without any unnecessary delay. Perhaps you had better go after my

friends at once, because the weather is warm, and I can not 'keep' long."

He went on scrubbing, and paid no attention. I soon saw that he was

reducing my size. He bore hard on his mitten, and from under it rolled

little cylinders, like maccaroni. It could not be dirt, for it was too

white. He pared me down in this way for a long time. Finally I said:

"It is a tedious process. It will take hours to trim me to the size you

want me; I will wait; go and borrow a jack-plane."

He paid no attention at all.

After a while he brought a basin, some soap, and something that seemed to

be the tail of a horse. He made up a prodigious quantity of soap-suds,

deluged me with them from head to foot, without warning me to shut my

eyes, and then swabbed me viciously with the horse-tail. Then he left me

there, a snowy statue of lather, and went away. When I got tired of

waiting I went and hunted him up. He was propped against the wall, in

another room, asleep. I woke him. He was not disconcerted. He took me

back and flooded me with hot water, then turbaned my head, swathed me

with dry table-cloths, and conducted me to a latticed chicken-coop in one

of the galleries, and pointed to one of those Arkansas beds. I mounted

it, and vaguely expected the odors of Araby a gain. They did not come.

The blank, unornamented coop had nothing about it of that oriental

voluptuousness one reads of so much. It was more suggestive of the

county hospital than any thing else. The skinny servitor brought a

narghili, and I got him to take it out again without wasting any time

about it. Then he brought the world-renowned Turkish coffee that poets

have sung so rapturously for many generations, and I seized upon it as

the last hope that was left of my old dreams of Eastern luxury. It was

another fraud. Of all the unchristian beverages that ever passed my

lips, Turkish coffee is the worst. The cup is small, it is smeared with

grounds; the coffee is black, thick, unsavory of smell, and execrable in

taste. The bottom of the cup has a muddy sediment in it half an inch

deep. This goes down your throat, and portions of it lodge by the way,

and produce a tickling aggravation that keeps you barking and coughing

for an hour.

Here endeth my experience of the celebrated Turkish bath, and here also

endeth my dream of the bliss the mortal revels in who passes through it.

It is a malignant swindle. The man who enjoys it is qualified to enjoy

any thing that is repulsive to sight or sense, and he that can invest it

with a charm of poetry is able to do the same with any thing else in the

world that is tedious, and wretched, and dismal, and nasty.

CHAPTER XXXV.

We left a dozen passengers in Constantinople, and sailed through the

beautiful Bosporus and far up into the Black Sea. We left them in the

clutches of the celebrated Turkish guide, "FAR-AWAY MOSES," who will

seduce them into buying a ship-load of ottar of roses, splendid Turkish

vestments, and all manner of curious things they can never have any use

for. Murray's invaluable guide-books have mentioned 'Far-away Moses'

name, and he is a made man. He rejoices daily in the fact that he is a

recognized celebrity. However, we can not alter our established customs

to please the whims of guides; we can not show partialities this late in

the day. Therefore, ignoring this fellow's brilliant fame, and ignoring

the fanciful name he takes such pride in, we called him Ferguson, just as

we had done with all other guides. It has kept him in a state of

smothered exasperation all the time. Yet we meant him no harm. After he

has gotten himself up regardless of expense, in showy, baggy trowsers,

yellow, pointed slippers, fiery fez, silken jacket of blue, voluminous

waist-sash of fancy Persian stuff filled with a battery of silver-mounted

horse-pistols, and has strapped on his terrible scimitar, he considers it

an unspeakable humiliation to be called Ferguson. It can not be helped.

All guides are Fergusons to us. We can not master their dreadful foreign

names.

Sebastopol is probably the worst battered town in Russia or any where

else. But we ought to be pleased with it, nevertheless, for we have been

in no country yet where we have been so kindly received, and where we

felt that to be Americans was a sufficient visa for our passports. The

moment the anchor was down, the Governor of the town immediately

dispatched an officer on board to inquire if he could be of any

assistance to us, and to invite us to make ourselves at home in

Sebastopol! If you know Russia, you know that this was a wild stretch of

hospitality. They are usually so suspicious of strangers that they worry

them excessively with the delays and aggravations incident to a

complicated passport system. Had we come from any other country we could

not have had permission to enter Sebastopol and leave again under three

days--but as it was, we were at liberty to go and come when and where we

pleased. Every body in Constantinople warned us to be very careful about

our passports, see that they were strictly 'en regle', and never to

mislay them for a moment: and they told us of numerous instances of

Englishmen and others who were delayed days, weeks, and even months, in

Sebastopol, on account of trifling informalities in their passports, and

for which they were not to blame. I had lost my passport, and was

traveling under my room-mate's, who stayed behind in Constantinople to

await our return. To read the description of him in that passport and

then look at me, any man could see that I was no more like him than I am

like Hercules. So I went into the harbor of Sebastopol with fear and

trembling--full of a vague, horrible apprehension that I was going to be

found out and hanged. But all that time my true passport had been

floating gallantly overhead--and behold it was only our flag. They never

asked us for any other.

We have had a great many Russian and English gentlemen and ladies on

board to-day, and the time has passed cheerfully away. They were all

happy-spirited people, and I never heard our mother tongue sound so

pleasantly as it did when it fell from those English lips in this far-off

land. I talked to the Russians a good deal, just to be friendly, and

they talked to me from the same motive; I am sure that both enjoyed the

conversation, but never a word of it either of us understood. I did most

of my talking to those English people though, and I am sorry we can not

carry some of them along with us.

We have gone whithersoever we chose, to-day, and have met with nothing

but the kindest attentions. Nobody inquired whether we had any passports

or not.

Several of the officers of the Government have suggested that we take the

ship to a little watering-place thirty miles from here, and pay the

Emperor of Russia a visit. He is rusticating there. These officers said

they would take it upon themselves to insure us a cordial reception.

They said if we would go, they would not only telegraph the Emperor, but

send a special courier overland to announce our coming. Our time is so

short, though, and more especially our coal is so nearly out, that we

judged it best to forego the rare pleasure of holding social intercourse

with an Emperor.

Ruined Pompeii is in good condition compared to Sebastopol. Here, you

may look in whatsoever direction you please, and your eye encounters

scarcely any thing but ruin, ruin, ruin!--fragments of houses, crumbled

walls, torn and ragged hills, devastation every where! It is as if a

mighty earthquake had spent all its terrible forces upon this one little

spot. For eighteen long months the storms of war beat upon the helpless

town, and left it at last the saddest wreck that ever the sun has looked

upon. Not one solitary house escaped unscathed--not one remained

habitable, even. Such utter and complete ruin one could hardly conceive

of. The houses had all been solid, dressed stone structures; most of

them were ploughed through and through by cannon balls--unroofed and

sliced down from eaves to foundation--and now a row of them, half a mile

long, looks merely like an endless procession of battered chimneys. No

semblance of a house remains in such as these. Some of the larger

buildings had corners knocked off; pillars cut in two; cornices smashed;

holes driven straight through the walls. Many of these holes are as

round and as cleanly cut as if they had been made with an auger. Others

are half pierced through, and the clean impression is there in the rock,

as smooth and as shapely as if it were done in putty. Here and there a

ball still sticks in a wall, and from it iron tears trickle down and

discolor the stone.

The battle-fields were pretty close together. The Malakoff tower is on

a hill which is right in the edge of the town. The Redan was within

rifle-shot of the Malakoff; Inkerman was a mile away; and Balaklava

removed but an hour's ride. The French trenches, by which they

approached and invested the Malakoff were carried so close under its

sloping sides that one might have stood by the Russian guns and tossed a

stone into them. Repeatedly, during three terrible days, they swarmed up

the little Malakoff hill, and were beaten back with terrible slaughter.

Finally, they captured the place, and drove the Russians out, who then

tried to retreat into the town, but the English had taken the Redan, and

shut them off with a wall of flame; there was nothing for them to do but

go back and retake the Malakoff or die under its guns. They did go

back; they took the Malakoff and retook it two or three times, but their

desperate valor could not avail, and they had to give up at last.

These fearful fields, where such tempests of death used to rage, are

peaceful enough now; no sound is heard, hardly a living thing moves about

them, they are lonely and silent--their desolation is complete.

There was nothing else to do, and so every body went to hunting relics.

They have stocked the ship with them. They brought them from the

Malakoff, from the Redan, Inkerman, Balaklava--every where. They have

brought cannon balls, broken ramrods, fragments of shell--iron enough to

freight a sloop. Some have even brought bones--brought them laboriously

from great distances, and were grieved to hear the surgeon pronounce them

only bones of mules and oxen. I knew Blucher would not lose an

opportunity like this. He brought a sack full on board and was going for

another. I prevailed upon him not to go. He has already turned his

state-room into a museum of worthless trumpery, which he has gathered up

in his travels. He is labeling his trophies, now. I picked up one a

while ago, and found it marked "Fragment of a Russian General." I

carried it out to get a better light upon it--it was nothing but a couple

of teeth and part of the jaw-bone of a horse. I said with some asperity:

"Fragment of a Russian General! This is absurd. Are you never going to

learn any sense?"

He only said: "Go slow--the old woman won't know any different." [His

aunt.]

This person gathers mementoes with a perfect recklessness, now-a-days;

mixes them all up together, and then serenely labels them without any

regard to truth, propriety, or even plausibility. I have found him

breaking a stone in two, and labeling half of it "Chunk busted from the

pulpit of Demosthenes," and the other half "Darnick from the Tomb of

Abelard and Heloise." I have known him to gather up a handful of pebbles

by the roadside, and bring them on board ship and label them as coming

from twenty celebrated localities five hundred miles apart. I

remonstrate against these outrages upon reason and truth, of course, but

it does no good. I get the same tranquil, unanswerable reply every time:

"It don't signify--the old woman won't know any different."

Ever since we three or four fortunate ones made the midnight trip to

Athens, it has afforded him genuine satisfaction to give every body in

the ship a pebble from the Mars-hill where St. Paul preached. He got all

those pebbles on the sea shore, abreast the ship, but professes to have

gathered them from one of our party. However, it is not of any use for

me to expose the deception--it affords him pleasure, and does no harm to

any body. He says he never expects to run out of mementoes of St. Paul

as long as he is in reach of a sand-bank. Well, he is no worse than

others. I notice that all travelers supply deficiencies in their

collections in the same way. I shall never have any confidence in such

things again while I live.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

We have got so far east, now--a hundred and fifty-five degrees of

longitude from San Francisco--that my watch can not "keep the hang" of

the time any more. It has grown discouraged, and stopped. I think it

did a wise thing. The difference in time between Sebastopol and the

Pacific coast is enormous. When it is six o'clock in the morning here,

it is somewhere about week before last in California. We are excusable

for getting a little tangled as to time. These distractions and

distresses about the time have worried me so much that I was afraid my

mind was so much affected that I never would have any appreciation of

time again; but when I noticed how handy I was yet about comprehending

when it was dinner-time, a blessed tranquillity settled down upon me, and

I am tortured with doubts and fears no more.

Odessa is about twenty hours' run from Sebastopol, and is the most

northerly port in the Black Sea. We came here to get coal, principally.

The city has a population of one hundred and thirty-three thousand, and

is growing faster than any other small city out of America. It is a free

port, and is the great grain mart of this particular part of the world.

Its roadstead is full of ships. Engineers are at work, now, turning the

open roadstead into a spacious artificial harbor. It is to be almost

inclosed by massive stone piers, one of which will extend into the sea

over three thousand feet in a straight line.

I have not felt so much at home for a long time as I did when I "raised

the hill" and stood in Odessa for the first time. It looked just like an

American city; fine, broad streets, and straight as well; low houses,

(two or three stories,) wide, neat, and free from any quaintness of

architectural ornamentation; locust trees bordering the sidewalks (they

call them acacias;) a stirring, business-look about the streets and the

stores; fast walkers; a familiar new look about the houses and every

thing; yea, and a driving and smothering cloud of dust that was so like a

message from our own dear native land that we could hardly refrain from

shedding a few grateful tears and execrations in the old time-honored

American way. Look up the street or down the street, this way or that

way, we saw only America! There was not one thing to remind us that we

were in Russia. We walked for some little distance, reveling in this

home vision, and then we came upon a church and a hack-driver, and

presto! the illusion vanished! The church had a slender-spired dome that

rounded inward at its base, and looked like a turnip turned upside down,

and the hackman seemed to be dressed in a long petticoat with out any

hoops. These things were essentially foreign, and so were the carriages

--but every body knows about these things, and there is no occasion for

my describing them.

We were only to stay here a day and a night and take in coal; we

consulted the guide-books and were rejoiced to know that there were no

sights in Odessa to see; and so we had one good, untrammeled holyday on

our hands, with nothing to do but idle about the city and enjoy

ourselves. We sauntered through the markets and criticised the fearful

and wonderful costumes from the back country; examined the populace as

far as eyes could do it; and closed the entertainment with an ice-cream

debauch. We do not get ice-cream every where, and so, when we do, we are

apt to dissipate to excess. We never cared any thing about ice-cream at

home, but we look upon it with a sort of idolatry now that it is so

scarce in these red-hot climates of the East.

We only found two pieces of statuary, and this was another blessing. One

was a bronze image of the Duc de Richelieu, grand-nephew of the splendid

Cardinal. It stood in a spacious, handsome promenade, overlooking the

sea, and from its base a vast flight of stone steps led down to the

harbor--two hundred of them, fifty feet long, and a wide landing at the

bottom of every twenty. It is a noble staircase, and from a distance the

people toiling up it looked like insects. I mention this statue and this

stairway because they have their story. Richelieu founded Odessa

--watched over it with paternal care--labored with a fertile brain and a

wise understanding for its best interests--spent his fortune freely to

the same end--endowed it with a sound prosperity, and one which will yet

make it one of the great cities of the Old World--built this noble

stairway with money from his own private purse--and--. Well, the people

for whom he had done so much, let him walk down these same steps, one

day, unattended, old, poor, without a second coat to his back; and when,

years afterwards, he died in Sebastopol in poverty and neglect, they

called a meeting, subscribed liberally, and immediately erected this

tasteful monument to his memory, and named a great street after him.

It reminds me of what Robert Burns' mother said when they erected a

stately monument to his memory: "Ah, Robbie, ye asked them for bread and

they hae gi'en ye a stane."

The people of Odessa have warmly recommended us to go and call on the

Emperor, as did the Sebastopolians. They have telegraphed his Majesty,

and he has signified his willingness to grant us an audience. So we are

getting up the anchors and preparing to sail to his watering-place. What

a scratching around there will be, now! what a holding of important

meetings and appointing of solemn committees!--and what a furbishing up

of claw-hammer coats and white silk neck-ties! As this fearful ordeal we

are about to pass through pictures itself to my fancy in all its dread

sublimity, I begin to feel my fierce desire to converse with a genuine

Emperor cooling down and passing away. What am I to do with my hands?

What am I to do with my feet? What in the world am I to do with myself?

CHAPTER XXXVII.

We anchored here at Yalta, Russia, two or three days ago. To me the

place was a vision of the Sierras. The tall, gray mountains that back

it, their sides bristling with pines--cloven with ravines--here and there

a hoary rock towering into view--long, straight streaks sweeping down

from the summit to the sea, marking the passage of some avalanche of

former times--all these were as like what one sees in the Sierras as if

the one were a portrait of the other. The little village of Yalta

nestles at the foot of an amphitheatre which slopes backward and upward

to the wall of hills, and looks as if it might have sunk quietly down to

its present position from a higher elevation. This depression is covered

with the great parks and gardens of noblemen, and through the mass of

green foliage the bright colors of their palaces bud out here and there

like flowers. It is a beautiful spot.

We had the United States Consul on board--the Odessa Consul. We

assembled in the cabin and commanded him to tell us what we must do to be

saved, and tell us quickly. He made a speech. The first thing he said

fell like a blight on every hopeful spirit: he had never seen a court

reception. (Three groans for the Consul.) But he said he had seen

receptions at the Governor General's in Odessa, and had often listened to

people's experiences of receptions at the Russian and other courts, and

believed he knew very well what sort of ordeal we were about to essay.

(Hope budded again.) He said we were many; the summer palace was small

--a mere mansion; doubtless we should be received in summer fashion--in the

garden; we would stand in a row, all the gentlemen in swallow-tail coats,

white kids, and white neck-ties, and the ladies in light-colored silks,

or something of that kind; at the proper moment--12 meridian--the

Emperor, attended by his suite arrayed in splendid uniforms, would appear

and walk slowly along the line, bowing to some, and saying two or three

words to others. At the moment his Majesty appeared, a universal,

delighted, enthusiastic smile ought to break out like a rash among the

passengers--a smile of love, of gratification, of admiration--and with

one accord, the party must begin to bow--not obsequiously, but

respectfully, and with dignity; at the end of fifteen minutes the Emperor

would go in the house, and we could run along home again. We felt

immensely relieved. It seemed, in a manner, easy. There was not a man

in the party but believed that with a little practice he could stand in a

row, especially if there were others along; there was not a man but

believed he could bow without tripping on his coat tail and breaking his

neck; in a word, we came to believe we were equal to any item in the

performance except that complicated smile. The Consul also said we ought

to draft a little address to the Emperor, and present it to one of his

aides-de-camp, who would forward it to him at the proper time.

Therefore, five gentlemen were appointed to prepare the document, and the

fifty others went sadly smiling about the ship--practicing. During the

next twelve hours we had the general appearance, somehow, of being at a

funeral, where every body was sorry the death had occurred, but glad it

was over--where every body was smiling, and yet broken-hearted.

A committee went ashore to wait on his Excellency the Governor-General,

and learn our fate. At the end of three hours of boding suspense, they

came back and said the Emperor would receive us at noon the next day

--would send carriages for us--would hear the address in person. The Grand

Duke Michael had sent to invite us to his palace also. Any man could see

that there was an intention here to show that Russia's friendship for

America was so genuine as to render even her private citizens objects

worthy of kindly attentions.

At the appointed hour we drove out three miles, and assembled in the

handsome garden in front of the Emperor's palace.

We formed a circle under the trees before the door, for there was no one

room in the house able to accommodate our three-score persons

comfortably, and in a few minutes the imperial family came out bowing and

smiling, and stood in our midst. A number of great dignitaries of the

Empire, in undress unit forms, came with them. With every bow, his

Majesty said a word of welcome. I copy these speeches. There is

character in them--Russian character--which is politeness itself, and the

genuine article. The French are polite, but it is often mere ceremonious

politeness. A Russian imbues his polite things with a heartiness, both

of phrase and expression, that compels belief in their sincerity. As I

was saying, the Czar punctuated his speeches with bows:

"Good morning--I am glad to see you--I am gratified--I am delighted--I am

happy to receive you!"

All took off their hats, and the Consul inflicted the address on him. He

bore it with unflinching fortitude; then took the rusty-looking document

and handed it to some great officer or other, to be filed away among the

archives of Russia--in the stove. He thanked us for the address, and

said he was very much pleased to see us, especially as such friendly

relations existed between Russia and the United States. The Empress said

the Americans were favorites in Russia, and she hoped the Russians were

similarly regarded in America. These were all the speeches that were

made, and I recommend them to parties who present policemen with gold

watches, as models of brevity and point. After this the Empress went and

talked sociably (for an Empress) with various ladies around the circle;

several gentlemen entered into a disjointed general conversation with the

Emperor; the Dukes and Princes, Admirals and Maids of Honor dropped into

free-and-easy chat with first one and then another of our party, and

whoever chose stepped forward and spoke with the modest little Grand

Duchess Marie, the Czar's daughter. She is fourteen years old,

light-haired, blue-eyed, unassuming and pretty. Every body talks

English.

The Emperor wore a cap, frock coat and pantaloons, all of some kind of

plain white drilling--cotton or linen and sported no jewelry or any

insignia whatever of rank. No costume could be less ostentatious. He is

very tall and spare, and a determined-looking man, though a very

pleasant-looking one nevertheless. It is easy to see that he is kind and

affectionate There is something very noble in his expression when his cap

is off. There is none of that cunning in his eye that all of us noticed

in Louis Napoleon's.

The Empress and the little Grand Duchess wore simple suits of foulard

(or foulard silk, I don't know which is proper,) with a small blue spot

in it; the dresses were trimmed with blue; both ladies wore broad blue

sashes about their waists; linen collars and clerical ties of muslin;

low-crowned straw-hats trimmed with blue velvet; parasols and

flesh-colored gloves. The Grand Duchess had no heels on her shoes. I

do not know this of my own knowledge, but one of our ladies told me so.

I was not looking at her shoes. I was glad to observe that she wore her

own hair, plaited in thick braids against the back of her head, instead

of the uncomely thing they call a waterfall, which is about as much like

a waterfall as a canvas-covered ham is like a cataract. Taking the kind

expression that is in the Emperor's face and the gentleness that is in

his young daughter's into consideration, I wondered if it would not tax

the Czar's firmness to the utmost to condemn a supplicating wretch to

misery in the wastes of Siberia if she pleaded for him. Every time

their eyes met, I saw more and more what a tremendous power that weak,

diffident school-girl could wield if she chose to do it. Many and many

a time she might rule the Autocrat of Russia, whose lightest word is law

to seventy millions of human beings! She was only a girl, and she

looked like a thousand others I have seen, but never a girl provoked

such a novel and peculiar interest in me before. A strange, new

sensation is a rare thing in this hum-drum life, and I had it here.

There was nothing stale or worn out about the thoughts and feelings the

situation and the circumstances created. It seemed strange--stranger

than I can tell--to think that the central figure in the cluster of men

and women, chatting here under the trees like the most ordinary

individual in the land, was a man who could open his lips and ships

would fly through the waves, locomotives would speed over the plains,

couriers would hurry from village to village, a hundred telegraphs would

flash the word to the four corners of an Empire that stretches its vast

proportions over a seventh part of the habitable globe, and a countless

multitude of men would spring to do his bidding. I had a sort of vague

desire to examine his hands and see if they were of flesh and blood,

like other men's. Here was a man who could do this wonderful thing, and

yet if I chose I could knock him down. The case was plain, but it

seemed preposterous, nevertheless--as preposterous as trying to knock

down a mountain or wipe out a continent. If this man sprained his

ankle, a million miles of telegraph would carry the news over mountains

--valleys--uninhabited deserts--under the trackless sea--and ten thousand

newspapers would prate of it; if he were grievously ill, all the nations

would know it before the sun rose again; if he dropped lifeless where he

stood, his fall might shake the thrones of half a world! If I could

have stolen his coat, I would have done it. When I meet a man like

that, I want something to remember him by.

As a general thing, we have been shown through palaces by some

plush-legged filagreed flunkey or other, who charged a franc for it; but

after talking with the company half an hour, the Emperor of Russia and

his family conducted us all through their mansion themselves. They made

no charge. They seemed to take a real pleasure in it.

We spent half an hour idling through the palace, admiring the cosy

apartments and the rich but eminently home-like appointments of the

place, and then the Imperial family bade our party a kind good-bye, and

proceeded to count the spoons.

An invitation was extended to us to visit the palace of the eldest son,

the Crown Prince of Russia, which was near at hand. The young man was

absent, but the Dukes and Countesses and Princes went over the premises

with us as leisurely as was the case at the Emperor's, and conversation

continued as lively as ever.

It was a little after one o'clock, now. We drove to the Grand Duke

Michael's, a mile away, in response to his invitation, previously given.

We arrived in twenty minutes from the Emperor's. It is a lovely place.

The beautiful palace nestles among the grand old groves of the park, the

park sits in the lap of the picturesque crags and hills, and both look

out upon the breezy ocean. In the park are rustic seats, here and there,

in secluded nooks that are dark with shade; there are rivulets of crystal

water; there are lakelets, with inviting, grassy banks; there are

glimpses of sparkling cascades through openings in the wilderness of

foliage; there are streams of clear water gushing from mimic knots on the

trunks of forest trees; there are miniature marble temples perched upon

gray old crags; there are airy lookouts whence one may gaze upon a broad

expanse of landscape and ocean. The palace is modeled after the choicest

forms of Grecian architecture, and its wide colonnades surround a central

court that is banked with rare flowers that fill the place with their

fragrance, and in their midst springs a fountain that cools the summer

air, and may possibly breed mosquitoes, but I do not think it does.

The Grand Duke and his Duchess came out, and the presentation ceremonies

were as simple as they had been at the Emperor's. In a few minutes,

conversation was under way, as before. The Empress appeared in the

verandah, and the little Grand Duchess came out into the crowd. They had

beaten us there. In a few minutes, the Emperor came himself on

horseback. It was very pleasant. You can appreciate it if you have ever

visited royalty and felt occasionally that possibly you might be wearing

out your welcome--though as a general thing, I believe, royalty is not

scrupulous about discharging you when it is done with you.

The Grand Duke is the third brother of the Emperor, is about thirty-seven

years old, perhaps, and is the princeliest figure in Russia. He is even

taller than the Czar, as straight as an Indian, and bears himself like

one of those gorgeous knights we read about in romances of the Crusades.

He looks like a great-hearted fellow who would pitch an enemy into the

river in a moment, and then jump in and risk his life fishing him out

again. The stories they tell of him show him to be of a brave and

generous nature. He must have been desirous of proving that Americans

were welcome guests in the imperial palaces of Russia, because he rode

all the way to Yalta and escorted our procession to the Emperor's

himself, and kept his aids scurrying about, clearing the road and

offering assistance wherever it could be needed. We were rather familiar

with him then, because we did not know who he was. We recognized him

now, and appreciated the friendly spirit that prompted him to do us a

favor that any other Grand Duke in the world would have doubtless

declined to do. He had plenty of servitors whom he could have sent, but

he chose to attend to the matter himself.

The Grand Duke was dressed in the handsome and showy uniform of a Cossack

officer. The Grand Duchess had on a white alpaca robe, with the seams

and gores trimmed with black barb lace, and a little gray hat with a

feather of the same color. She is young, rather pretty modest and

unpretending, and full of winning politeness.

Our party walked all through the house, and then the nobility escorted

them all over the grounds, and finally brought them back to the palace

about half-past two o'clock to breakfast. They called it breakfast, but

we would have called it luncheon. It consisted of two kinds of wine;

tea, bread, cheese, and cold meats, and was served on the centre-tables

in the reception room and the verandahs--anywhere that was convenient;

there was no ceremony. It was a sort of picnic. I had heard before that

we were to breakfast there, but Blucher said he believed Baker's boy had

suggested it to his Imperial Highness. I think not--though it would be

like him. Baker's boy is the famine-breeder of the ship. He is always

hungry. They say he goes about the state-rooms when the passengers are

out, and eats up all the soap. And they say he eats oakum. They say he

will eat any thing he can get between meals, but he prefers oakum. He

does not like oakum for dinner, but he likes it for a lunch, at odd

hours, or any thing that way. It makes him very disagreeable, because it

makes his breath bad, and keeps his teeth all stuck up with tar. Baker's

boy may have suggested the breakfast, but I hope he did not. It went off

well, anyhow. The illustrious host moved about from place to place, and

helped to destroy the provisions and keep the conversation lively, and

the Grand Duchess talked with the verandah parties and such as had

satisfied their appetites and straggled out from the reception room.

The Grand Duke's tea was delicious. They give one a lemon to squeeze

into it, or iced milk, if he prefers it. The former is best. This tea

is brought overland from China. It injures the article to transport it

by sea.

When it was time to go, we bade our distinguished hosts good-bye, and

they retired happy and contented to their apartments to count their

spoons.

We had spent the best part of half a day in the home of royalty, and had

been as cheerful and comfortable all the time as we could have been in

the ship. I would as soon have thought of being cheerful in Abraham's

bosom as in the palace of an Emperor. I supposed that Emperors were

terrible people. I thought they never did any thing but wear magnificent

crowns and red velvet dressing-gowns with dabs of wool sewed on them in

spots, and sit on thrones and scowl at the flunkies and the people in the

parquette, and order Dukes and Duchesses off to execution. I find,

however, that when one is so fortunate as to get behind the scenes and

see them at home and in the privacy of their firesides, they are

strangely like common mortals. They are pleasanter to look upon then

than they are in their theatrical aspect. It seems to come as natural to

them to dress and act like other people as it is to put a friend's cedar

pencil in your pocket when you are done using it. But I can never have

any confidence in the tinsel kings of the theatre after this. It will be

a great loss. I used to take such a thrilling pleasure in them. But,

hereafter, I will turn me sadly away and say;

"This does not answer--this isn't the style of king that I am acquainted

with."

When they swagger around the stage in jeweled crowns and splendid robes,

I shall feel bound to observe that all the Emperors that ever I was

personally acquainted with wore the commonest sort of clothes, and did

not swagger. And when they come on the stage attended by a vast

body-guard of supes in helmets and tin breastplates, it will be my duty

as well as my pleasure to inform the ignorant that no crowned head of my

acquaintance has a soldier any where about his house or his person.

Possibly it may be thought that our party tarried too long, or did other

improper things, but such was not the case. The company felt that they

were occupying an unusually responsible position--they were representing

the people of America, not the Government--and therefore they were

careful to do their best to perform their high mission with credit.

On the other hand, the Imperial families, no doubt, considered that in

entertaining us they were more especially entertaining the people of

America than they could by showering attentions on a whole platoon of

ministers plenipotentiary and therefore they gave to the event its

fullest significance, as an expression of good will and friendly feeling

toward the entire country. We took the kindnesses we received as

attentions thus directed, of course, and not to ourselves as a party.

That we felt a personal pride in being received as the representatives of

a nation, we do not deny; that we felt a national pride in the warm

cordiality of that reception, can not be doubted.

Our poet has been rigidly suppressed, from the time we let go the anchor.

When it was announced that we were going to visit the Emperor of Russia,

the fountains of his great deep were broken up, and he rained ineffable

bosh for four-and-twenty hours. Our original anxiety as to what we were

going to do with ourselves, was suddenly transformed into anxiety about

what we were going to do with our poet. The problem was solved at last.

Two alternatives were offered him--he must either swear a dreadful oath

that he would not issue a line of his poetry while he was in the Czar's

dominions, or else remain under guard on board the ship until we were

safe at Constantinople again. He fought the dilemma long, but yielded at

last. It was a great deliverance. Perhaps the savage reader would like

a specimen of his style. I do not mean this term to be offensive. I

only use it because "the gentle reader" has been used so often that any

change from it can not but be refreshing:

"Save us and sanctify us, and finally, then,

See good provisions we enjoy while we journey to Jerusalem.

For so man proposes, which it is most true

And time will wait for none, nor for us too."

The sea has been unusually rough all day. However, we have had a

lively time of it, anyhow. We have had quite a run of visitors. The

Governor-General came, and we received him with a salute of nine guns.

He brought his family with him. I observed that carpets were spread

from the pier-head to his carriage for him to walk on, though I have

seen him walk there without any carpet when he was not on business. I

thought may be he had what the accidental insurance people might call an

extra-hazardous polish ("policy" joke, but not above mediocrity,) on his

boots, and wished to protect them, but I examined and could not see that

they were blacked any better than usual. It may have been that he had

forgotten his carpet, before, but he did not have it with him, anyhow.

He was an exceedingly pleasant old gentleman; we all liked him,

especially Blucher. When he went away, Blucher invited him to come

again and fetch his carpet along.

Prince Dolgorouki and a Grand Admiral or two, whom we had seen yesterday

at the reception, came on board also. I was a little distant with these

parties, at first, because when I have been visiting Emperors I do not

like to be too familiar with people I only know by reputation, and whose

moral characters and standing in society I can not be thoroughly

acquainted with. I judged it best to be a little offish, at first. I

said to myself, Princes and Counts and Grand Admirals are very well, but

they are not Emperors, and one can not be too particular about who he

associates with.

Baron Wrangel came, also. He used to be Russian Ambassador at

Washington. I told him I had an uncle who fell down a shaft and broke

himself in two, as much as a year before that. That was a falsehood, but

then I was not going to let any man eclipse me on surprising adventures,

merely for the want of a little invention. The Baron is a fine man, and

is said to stand high in the Emperor's confidence and esteem.

Baron Ungern-Sternberg, a boisterous, whole-souled old nobleman, came

with the rest. He is a man of progress and enterprise--a representative

man of the age. He is the Chief Director of the railway system of

Russia--a sort of railroad king. In his line he is making things move

along in this country He has traveled extensively in America. He says he

has tried convict labor on his railroads, and with perfect success. He

says the convicts work well, and are quiet and peaceable. He observed

that he employs nearly ten thousand of them now.

This appeared to be another call on my resources. I was equal to the

emergency. I said we had eighty thousand convicts employed on the

railways in America--all of them under sentence of death for murder in

the first degree. That closed him out.

We had General Todtleben (the famous defender of Sebastopol, during the

siege,) and many inferior army and also navy officers, and a number of

unofficial Russian ladies and gentlemen. Naturally, a champagne luncheon

was in order, and was accomplished without loss of life. Toasts and

jokes were discharged freely, but no speeches were made save one thanking

the Emperor and the Grand Duke, through the Governor-General, for our

hospitable reception, and one by the Governor-General in reply, in which

he returned the Emperor's thanks for the speech, etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

We returned to Constantinople, and after a day or two spent in exhausting

marches about the city and voyages up the Golden Horn in caiques, we

steamed away again. We passed through the Sea of Marmora and the

Dardanelles, and steered for a new land--a new one to us, at least--Asia.

We had as yet only acquired a bowing acquaintance with it, through

pleasure excursions to Scutari and the regions round about.

We passed between Lemnos and Mytilene, and saw them as we had seen Elba

and the Balearic Isles--mere bulky shapes, with the softening mists of

distance upon them--whales in a fog, as it were. Then we held our course

southward, and began to "read up" celebrated Smyrna.

At all hours of the day and night the sailors in the forecastle amused

themselves and aggravated us by burlesquing our visit to royalty. The

opening paragraph of our Address to the Emperor was framed as follows:

"We are a handful of private citizens of America, traveling simply

for recreation--and unostentatiously, as becomes our unofficial

state--and, therefore, we have no excuse to tender for presenting

ourselves before your Majesty, save the desire of offering our

grateful acknowledgments to the lord of a realm, which, through good

and through evil report, has been the steadfast friend of the land

we love so well."

The third cook, crowned with a resplendent tin basin and wrapped royally

in a table-cloth mottled with grease-spots and coffee stains, and bearing

a sceptre that looked strangely like a belaying-pin, walked upon a

dilapidated carpet and perched himself on the capstan, careless of the

flying spray; his tarred and weather-beaten Chamberlains, Dukes and Lord

High Admirals surrounded him, arrayed in all the pomp that spare

tarpaulins and remnants of old sails could furnish. Then the visiting

"watch below," transformed into graceless ladies and uncouth pilgrims, by

rude travesties upon waterfalls, hoopskirts, white kid gloves and

swallow-tail coats, moved solemnly up the companion way, and bowing low,

began a system of complicated and extraordinary smiling which few

monarchs could look upon and live. Then the mock consul, a

slush-plastered deck-sweep, drew out a soiled fragment of paper and

proceeded to read, laboriously:

"To His Imperial Majesty, Alexander II., Emperor of Russia:

"We are a handful of private citizens of America, traveling simply for

recreation,--and unostentatiously, as becomes our unofficial state--and

therefore, we have no excuse to tender for presenting ourselves before

your Majesty--"

The Emperor--"Then what the devil did you come for?"

--"Save the desire of offering our grateful acknowledgments to the lord

of a realm which--"

The Emperor--"Oh, d--n the Address!--read it to the police.

Chamberlain, take these people over to my brother, the Grand Duke's, and

give them a square meal. Adieu! I am happy--I am gratified--I am

delighted--I am bored. Adieu, adieu--vamos the ranch! The First Groom

of the Palace will proceed to count the portable articles of value

belonging to the premises."

The farce then closed, to be repeated again with every change of the

watches, and embellished with new and still more extravagant inventions

of pomp and conversation.

At all times of the day and night the phraseology of that tiresome

address fell upon our ears. Grimy sailors came down out of the foretop

placidly announcing themselves as "a handful of private citizens of

America, traveling simply for recreation and unostentatiously," etc.; the

coal passers moved to their duties in the profound depths of the ship,

explaining the blackness of their faces and their uncouthness of dress,

with the reminder that they were "a handful of private citizens,

traveling simply for recreation," etc., and when the cry rang through the

vessel at midnight: "EIGHT BELLS!--LARBOARD WATCH, TURN OUT!" the

larboard watch came gaping and stretching out of their den, with the

everlasting formula: "Aye-aye, sir! We are a handful of private citizens

of America, traveling simply for recreation, and unostentatiously, as

becomes our unofficial state!"

As I was a member of the committee, and helped to frame the Address,

these sarcasms came home to me. I never heard a sailor proclaiming

himself as a handful of American citizens traveling for recreation, but I

wished he might trip and fall overboard, and so reduce his handful by one

individual, at least. I never was so tired of any one phrase as the

sailors made me of the opening sentence of the Address to the Emperor of

Russia.

This seaport of Smyrna, our first notable acquaintance in Asia, is a

closely packed city of one hundred and thirty thousand inhabitants, and,

like Constantinople, it has no outskirts. It is as closely packed at its

outer edges as it is in the centre, and then the habitations leave

suddenly off and the plain beyond seems houseless. It is just like any

other Oriental city. That is to say, its Moslem houses are heavy and

dark, and as comfortless as so many tombs; its streets are crooked,

rudely and roughly paved, and as narrow as an ordinary staircase; the

streets uniformly carry a man to any other place than the one he wants to

go to, and surprise him by landing him in the most unexpected localities;

business is chiefly carried on in great covered bazaars, celled like a

honeycomb with innumerable shops no larger than a common closet, and the

whole hive cut up into a maze of alleys about wide enough to accommodate

a laden camel, and well calculated to confuse a stranger and eventually

lose him; every where there is dirt, every where there are fleas, every

where there are lean, broken-hearted dogs; every alley is thronged with

people; wherever you look, your eye rests upon a wild masquerade of

extravagant costumes; the workshops are all open to the streets, and the

workmen visible; all manner of sounds assail the ear, and over them all

rings out the muezzin's cry from some tall minaret, calling the faithful

vagabonds to prayer; and superior to the call to prayer, the noises in

the streets, the interest of the costumes--superior to every thing, and

claiming the bulk of attention first, last, and all the time--is a

combination of Mohammedan stenches, to which the smell of even a Chinese

quarter would be as pleasant as the roasting odors of the fatted calf to

the nostrils of the returning Prodigal. Such is Oriental luxury--such is

Oriental splendor! We read about it all our days, but we comprehend it

not until we see it. Smyrna is a very old city. Its name occurs several

times in the Bible, one or two of the disciples of Christ visited it, and

here was located one of the original seven apocalyptic churches spoken of

in Revelations. These churches were symbolized in the Scriptures as

candlesticks, and on certain conditions there was a sort of implied

promise that Smyrna should be endowed with a "crown of life." She was to

"be faithful unto death"--those were the terms. She has not kept up her

faith straight along, but the pilgrims that wander hither consider that

she has come near enough to it to save her, and so they point to the fact

that Smyrna to-day wears her crown of life, and is a great city, with a

great commerce and full of energy, while the cities wherein were located

the other six churches, and to which no crown of life was promised, have

vanished from the earth. So Smyrna really still possesses her crown of

life, in a business point of view. Her career, for eighteen centuries,

has been a chequered one, and she has been under the rule of princes of

many creeds, yet there has been no season during all that time, as far as

we know, (and during such seasons as she was inhabited at all,) that she

has been without her little community of Christians "faithful unto

death." Hers was the only church against which no threats were implied

in the Revelations, and the only one which survived.

With Ephesus, forty miles from here, where was located another of the

seven churches, the case was different. The "candlestick" has been

removed from Ephesus. Her light has been put out. Pilgrims, always

prone to find prophecies in the Bible, and often where none exist, speak

cheerfully and complacently of poor, ruined Ephesus as the victim of

prophecy. And yet there is no sentence that promises, without due

qualification, the destruction of the city. The words are:

"Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and

do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will

remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

That is all; the other verses are singularly complimentary to Ephesus.

The threat is qualified. There is no history to show that she did not

repent. But the cruelest habit the modern prophecy-savans have, is that

one of coolly and arbitrarily fitting the prophetic shirt on to the wrong

man. They do it without regard to rhyme or reason. Both the cases I

have just mentioned are instances in point. Those "prophecies" are

distinctly leveled at the "churches of Ephesus, Smyrna," etc., and yet

the pilgrims invariably make them refer to the cities instead. No crown

of life is promised to the town of Smyrna and its commerce, but to the

handful of Christians who formed its "church." If they were "faithful

unto death," they have their crown now--but no amount of faithfulness and

legal shrewdness combined could legitimately drag the city into a

participation in the promises of the prophecy. The stately language of

the Bible refers to a crown of life whose lustre will reflect the

day-beams of the endless ages of eternity, not the butterfly existence

of a city built by men's hands, which must pass to dust with the

builders and be forgotten even in the mere handful of centuries

vouchsafed to the solid world itself between its cradle and its grave.

The fashion of delving out fulfillments of prophecy where that prophecy

consists of mere "ifs," trenches upon the absurd. Suppose, a thousand

years from now, a malarious swamp builds itself up in the shallow harbor

of Smyrna, or something else kills the town; and suppose, also, that

within that time the swamp that has filled the renowned harbor of Ephesus

and rendered her ancient site deadly and uninhabitable to-day, becomes

hard and healthy ground; suppose the natural consequence ensues, to wit:

that Smyrna becomes a melancholy ruin, and Ephesus is rebuilt. What

would the prophecy-savans say? They would coolly skip over our age of

the world, and say: "Smyrna was not faithful unto death, and so her crown

of life was denied her; Ephesus repented, and lo! her candle-stick was

not removed. Behold these evidences! How wonderful is prophecy!"

Smyrna has been utterly destroyed six times. If her crown of life had

been an insurance policy, she would have had an opportunity to collect on

it the first time she fell. But she holds it on sufferance and by a

complimentary construction of language which does not refer to

her. Six different times, however, I suppose some infatuated

prophecy-enthusiast blundered along and said, to the infinite disgust of

Smyrna and the Smyrniotes: "In sooth, here is astounding fulfillment of

prophecy! Smyrna hath not been faithful unto death, and behold her

crown of life is vanished from her head. Verily, these things be

astonishing!"

Such things have a bad influence. They provoke worldly men into using

light conversation concerning sacred subjects. Thick-headed commentators

upon the Bible, and stupid preachers and teachers, work more damage to

religion than sensible, cool-brained clergymen can fight away again, toil

as they may. It is not good judgment to fit a crown of life upon a city

which has been destroyed six times. That other class of wiseacres who

twist prophecy in such a manner as to make it promise the destruction and

desolation of the same city, use judgment just as bad, since the city is

in a very flourishing condition now, unhappily for them. These things

put arguments into the mouth of infidelity.

A portion of the city is pretty exclusively Turkish; the Jews have a

quarter to themselves; the Franks another quarter; so, also, with the

Armenians. The Armenians, of course, are Christians. Their houses are

large, clean, airy, handsomely paved with black and white squares of

marble, and in the centre of many of them is a square court, which has in

it a luxuriant flower-garden and a sparkling fountain; the doors of all

the rooms open on this. A very wide hall leads to the street door, and

in this the women sit, the most of the day. In the cool of the evening

they dress up in their best raiment and show themselves at the door.

They are all comely of countenance, and exceedingly neat and cleanly;

they look as if they were just out of a band-box. Some of the young

ladies--many of them, I may say--are even very beautiful; they average a

shade better than American girls--which treasonable words I pray may be

forgiven me. They are very sociable, and will smile back when a stranger

smiles at them, bow back when he bows, and talk back if he speaks to

them. No introduction is required. An hour's chat at the door with a

pretty girl one never saw before, is easily obtained, and is very

pleasant. I have tried it. I could not talk anything but English, and

the girl knew nothing but Greek, or Armenian, or some such barbarous

tongue, but we got along very well. I find that in cases like these, the

fact that you can not comprehend each other isn't much of a drawback.

In that Russia n town of Yalta I danced an astonishing sort of dance an

hour long, and one I had not heard of before, with a very pretty girl,

and we talked incessantly, and laughed exhaustingly, and neither one ever

knew what the other was driving at. But it was splendid. There were

twenty people in the set, and the dance was very lively and complicated.

It was complicated enough without me--with me it was more so. I threw in

a figure now and then that surprised those Russians. But I have never

ceased to think of that girl. I have written to her, but I can not

direct the epistle because her name is one of those nine-jointed Russian

affairs, and there are not letters enough in our alphabet to hold out.

I am not reckless enough to try to pronounce it when I am awake, but I

make a stagger at it in my dreams, and get up with the lockjaw in the

morning. I am fading. I do not take my meals now, with any sort of

regularity. Her dear name haunts me still in my dreams. It is awful on

teeth. It never comes out of my mouth but it fetches an old snag along

with it. And then the lockjaw closes down and nips off a couple of the

last syllables--but they taste good.

Coming through the Dardanelles, we saw camel trains on shore with the

glasses, but we were never close to one till we got to Smyrna. These

camels are very much larger than the scrawny specimens one sees in the

menagerie. They stride along these streets, in single file, a dozen in a

train, with heavy loads on their backs, and a fancy-looking negro in

Turkish costume, or an Arab, preceding them on a little donkey and

completely overshadowed and rendered insignificant by the huge beasts.

To see a camel train laden with the spices of Arabia and the rare fabrics

of Persia come marching through the narrow alleys of the bazaar, among

porters with their burdens, money-changers, lamp-merchants, Al-naschars

in the glassware business, portly cross-legged Turks smoking the famous

narghili; and the crowds drifting to and fro in the fanciful costumes of

the East, is a genuine revelation of the Orient. The picture lacks

nothing. It casts you back at once into your forgotten boyhood, and

again you dream over the wonders of the Arabian Nights; again your

companions are princes, your lord is the Caliph Haroun Al Raschid, and

your servants are terrific giants and genii that come with smoke and

lightning and thunder, and go as a storm goes when they depart!

CHAPTER XXXIX.

We inquired, and learned that the lions of Smyrna consisted of the ruins

of the ancient citadel, whose broken and prodigious battlements frown

upon the city from a lofty hill just in the edge of the town--the Mount

Pagus of Scripture, they call it; the site of that one of the Seven

Apocalyptic Churches of Asia which was located here in the first century

of the Christian era; and the grave and the place of martyrdom of the

venerable Polycarp, who suffered in Smyrna for his religion some eighteen

hundred years ago.

We took little donkeys and started. We saw Polycarp's tomb, and then

hurried on.

The "Seven Churches"--thus they abbreviate it--came next on the list. We

rode there--about a mile and a half in the sweltering sun--and visited a

little Greek church which they said was built upon the ancient site; and

we paid a small fee, and the holy attendant gave each of us a little wax

candle as a remembrancer of the place, and I put mine in my hat and the

sun melted it and the grease all ran down the back of my neck; and so now

I have not any thing left but the wick, and it is a sorry and a

wilted-looking wick at that.

Several of us argued as well as we could that the "church" mentioned in

the Bible meant a party of Christians, and not a building; that the Bible

spoke of them as being very poor--so poor, I thought, and so subject to

persecution (as per Polycarp's martyrdom) that in the first place they

probably could not have afforded a church edifice, and in the second

would not have dared to build it in the open light of day if they could;

and finally, that if they had had the privilege of building it, common

judgment would have suggested that they build it somewhere near the town.

But the elders of the ship's family ruled us down and scouted our

evidences. However, retribution came to them afterward. They found that

they had been led astray and had gone to the wrong place; they discovered

that the accepted site is in the city.

Riding through the town, we could see marks of the six Smyrnas that have

existed here and been burned up by fire or knocked down by earthquakes.

The hills and the rocks are rent asunder in places, excavations expose

great blocks of building-stone that have lain buried for ages, and all

the mean houses and walls of modern Smyrna along the way are spotted

white with broken pillars, capitals and fragments of sculptured marble

that once adorned the lordly palaces that were the glory of the city in

the olden time.

The ascent of the hill of the citadel is very steep, and we proceeded

rather slowly. But there were matters of interest about us. In one

place, five hundred feet above the sea, the perpendicular bank on the

upper side of the road was ten or fifteen feet high, and the cut exposed

three veins of oyster shells, just as we have seen quartz veins exposed

in the cutting of a road in Nevada or Montana. The veins were about

eighteen inches thick and two or three feet apart, and they slanted along

downward for a distance of thirty feet or more, and then disappeared

where the cut joined the road. Heaven only knows how far a man might

trace them by "stripping." They were clean, nice oyster shells, large,

and just like any other oyster shells. They were thickly massed

together, and none were scattered above or below the veins. Each one was

a well-defined lead by itself, and without a spur. My first instinct was

to set up the usual--

NOTICE:

"We, the undersigned, claim five claims of two hundred feet each,

(and one for discovery,) on this ledge or lode of oyster-shells,

with all its dips, spurs, angles, variations and sinuosities, and

fifty feet on each side of the same, to work it, etc., etc.,

according to the mining laws of Smyrna."

They were such perfectly natural-looking leads that I could hardly keep

from "taking them up." Among the oyster-shells were mixed many fragments

of ancient, broken crockery ware. Now how did those masses of

oyster-shells get there? I can not determine. Broken crockery and

oyster-shells are suggestive of restaurants--but then they could have

had no such places away up there on that mountain side in our time,

because nobody has lived up there. A restaurant would not pay in such a

stony, forbidding, desolate place. And besides, there were no champagne

corks among the shells. If there ever was a restaurant there, it must

have been in Smyrna's palmy days, when the hills were covered with

palaces. I could believe in one restaurant, on those terms; but then how

about the three? Did they have restaurants there at three different

periods of the world?--because there are two or three feet of solid

earth between the oyster leads. Evidently, the restaurant solution will

not answer.

The hill might have been the bottom of the sea, once, and been lifted up,

with its oyster-beds, by an earthquake--but, then, how about the

crockery? And moreover, how about three oyster beds, one above another,

and thick strata of good honest earth between?

That theory will not do. It is just possible that this hill is Mount

Ararat, and that Noah's Ark rested here, and he ate oysters and threw the

shells overboard. But that will not do, either. There are the three

layers again and the solid earth between--and, besides, there were only

eight in Noah's family, and they could not have eaten all these oysters

in the two or three months they staid on top of that mountain. The

beasts--however, it is simply absurd to suppose he did not know any more

than to feed the beasts on oyster suppers.

It is painful--it is even humiliating--but I am reduced at last to one

slender theory: that the oysters climbed up there of their own accord.

But what object could they have had in view?--what did they want up

there? What could any oyster want to climb a hill for? To climb a hill

must necessarily be fatiguing and annoying exercise for an oyster. The

most natural conclusion would be that the oysters climbed up there to

look at the scenery. Yet when one comes to reflect upon the nature of an

oyster, it seems plain that he does not care for scenery. An oyster has

no taste for such things; he cares nothing for the beautiful. An oyster

is of a retiring disposition, and not lively--not even cheerful above the

average, and never enterprising. But above all, an oyster does not take

any interest in scenery--he scorns it. What have I arrived at now?

Simply at the point I started from, namely, those oyster shells are

there, in regular layers, five hundred feet above the sea, and no man

knows how they got there. I have hunted up the guide-books, and the gist

of what they say is this: "They are there, but how they got there is a

mystery."

Twenty-five years ago, a multitude of people in America put on their

ascension robes, took a tearful leave of their friends, and made ready to

fly up into heaven at the first blast of the trumpet. But the angel did

not blow it. Miller's resurrection day was a failure. The Millerites

were disgusted. I did not suspect that there were Millers in Asia Minor,

but a gentleman tells me that they had it all set for the world to come

to an end in Smyrna one day about three years ago. There was much

buzzing and preparation for a long time previously, and it culminated in

a wild excitement at the appointed time. A vast number of the populace

ascended the citadel hill early in the morning, to get out of the way of

the general destruction, and many of the infatuated closed up their shops

and retired from all earthly business. But the strange part of it was

that about three in the afternoon, while this gentleman and his friends

were at dinner in the hotel, a terrific storm of rain, accompanied by

thunder and lightning, broke forth and continued with dire fury for two

or three hours. It was a thing unprecedented in Smyrna at that time of

the year, and scared some of the most skeptical. The streets ran rivers

and the hotel floor was flooded with water. The dinner had to be

suspended. When the storm finished and left every body drenched through

and through, and melancholy and half-drowned, the ascensionists came down

from the mountain as dry as so many charity-sermons! They had been

looking down upon the fearful storm going on below, and really believed

that their proposed destruction of the world was proving a grand success.

A railway here in Asia--in the dreamy realm of the Orient--in the fabled

land of the Arabian Nights--is a strange thing to think of. And yet they

have one already, and are building another. The present one is well

built and well conducted, by an English Company, but is not doing an

immense amount of business. The first year it carried a good many

passengers, but its freight list only comprised eight hundred pounds of

figs!

It runs almost to the very gates of Ephesus--a town great in all ages of

the world--a city familiar to readers of the Bible, and one which was as

old as the very hills when the disciples of Christ preached in its

streets. It dates back to the shadowy ages of tradition, and was the

birthplace of gods renowned in Grecian mythology. The idea of a

locomotive tearing through such a place as this, and waking the phantoms

of its old days of romance out of their dreams of dead and gone

centuries, is curious enough.

We journey thither tomorrow to see the celebrated ruins.

CHAPTER XL.

This has been a stirring day. The Superintendent of the railway put a

train at our disposal, and did us the further kindness of accompanying us

to Ephesus and giving to us his watchful care. We brought sixty scarcely

perceptible donkeys in the freight cars, for we had much ground to go

over. We have seen some of the most grotesque costumes, along the line

of the railroad, that can be imagined. I am glad that no possible

combination of words could describe them, for I might then be foolish

enough to attempt it.

At ancient Ayassalook, in the midst of a forbidding desert, we came upon

long lines of ruined aqueducts, and other remnants of architectural

grandeur, that told us plainly enough we were nearing what had been a

metropolis, once. We left the train and mounted the donkeys, along with

our invited guests--pleasant young gentlemen from the officers' list of

an American man-of-war.

The little donkeys had saddles upon them which were made very high in

order that the rider's feet might not drag the ground. The preventative

did not work well in the cases of our tallest pilgrims, however. There

were no bridles--nothing but a single rope, tied to the bit. It was

purely ornamental, for the donkey cared nothing for it. If he were

drifting to starboard, you might put your helm down hard the other way,

if it were any satisfaction to you to do it, but he would continue to

drift to starboard all the same. There was only one process which could

be depended on, and it was to get down and lift his rear around until his

head pointed in the right direction, or take him under your arm and carry

him to a part of the road which he could not get out of without climbing.

The sun flamed down as hot as a furnace, and neck-scarfs, veils and

umbrellas seemed hardly any protection; they served only to make the long

procession look more than ever fantastic--for be it known the ladies were

all riding astride because they could not stay on the shapeless saddles

sidewise, the men were perspiring and out of temper, their feet were

banging against the rocks, the donkeys were capering in every direction

but the right one and being belabored with clubs for it, and every now

and then a broad umbrella would suddenly go down out of the cavalcade,

announcing to all that one more pilgrim had bitten the dust. It was a

wilder picture than those solitudes had seen for many a day. No donkeys

ever existed that were as hard to navigate as these, I think, or that had

so many vile, exasperating instincts. Occasionally we grew so tired and

breathless with fighting them that we had to desist,--and immediately the

donkey would come down to a deliberate walk. This, with the fatigue, and

the sun, would put a man asleep; and soon as the man was asleep, the

donkey would lie down. My donkey shall never see his boyhood's home

again. He has lain down once too often. He must die.

We all stood in the vast theatre of ancient Ephesus,--the stone-benched

amphitheatre I mean--and had our picture taken. We looked as proper

there as we would look any where, I suppose. We do not embellish the

general desolation of a desert much. We add what dignity we can to a

stately ruin with our green umbrellas and jackasses, but it is little.

However, we mean well.

I wish to say a brief word of the aspect of Ephesus.

On a high, steep hill, toward the sea, is a gray ruin of ponderous blocks

of marble, wherein, tradition says, St. Paul was imprisoned eighteen

centuries ago. From these old walls you have the finest view of the

desolate scene where once stood Ephesus, the proudest city of ancient

times, and whose Temple of Diana was so noble in design, and so exquisite

of workmanship, that it ranked high in the list of the Seven Wonders of

the World.

Behind you is the sea; in front is a level green valley, (a marsh, in

fact,) extending far away among the mountains; to the right of the front

view is the old citadel of Ayassalook, on a high hill; the ruined Mosque

of the Sultan Selim stands near it in the plain, (this is built over the

grave of St. John, and was formerly Christian Church); further toward

you is the hill of Pion, around whose front is clustered all that remains

of the ruins of Ephesus that still stand; divided from it by a narrow

valley is the long, rocky, rugged mountain of Coressus. The scene is a

pretty one, and yet desolate--for in that wide plain no man can live, and

in it is no human habitation. But for the crumbling arches and monstrous

piers and broken walls that rise from the foot of the hill of Pion, one

could not believe that in this place once stood a city whose renown is

older than tradition itself. It is incredible to reflect that things as

familiar all over the world to-day as household words, belong in the

history and in the shadowy legends of this silent, mournful solitude.

We speak of Apollo and of Diana--they were born here; of the

metamorphosis of Syrinx into a reed--it was done here; of the great god

Pan--he dwelt in the caves of this hill of Coressus; of the Amazons--this

was their best prized home; of Bacchus and Hercules both fought the

warlike women here; of the Cyclops--they laid the ponderous marble blocks

of some of the ruins yonder; of Homer--this was one of his many

birthplaces; of Cirmon of Athens; of Alcibiades, Lysander, Agesilaus

--they visited here; so did Alexander the Great; so did Hannibal and

Antiochus, Scipio, Lucullus and Sylla; Brutus, Cassius, Pompey, Cicero,

and Augustus; Antony was a judge in this place, and left his seat in the

open court, while the advocates were speaking, to run after Cleopatra,

who passed the door; from this city these two sailed on pleasure

excursions, in galleys with silver oars and perfumed sails, and with

companies of beautiful girls to serve them, and actors and musicians to

amuse them; in days that seem almost modern, so remote are they from the

early history of this city, Paul the Apostle preached the new religion

here, and so did John, and here it is supposed the former was pitted

against wild beasts, for in 1 Corinthians, xv. 32 he says:

"If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus,"

&c.,

when many men still lived who had seen the Christ; here Mary Magdalen

died, and here the Virgin Mary ended her days with John, albeit Rome has

since judged it best to locate her grave elsewhere; six or seven hundred

years ago--almost yesterday, as it were--troops of mail-clad Crusaders

thronged the streets; and to come down to trifles, we speak of meandering

streams, and find a new interest in a common word when we discover that

the crooked river Meander, in yonder valley, gave it to our dictionary.

It makes me feel as old as these dreary hills to look down upon these

moss-hung ruins, this historic desolation. One may read the Scriptures

and believe, but he can not go and stand yonder in the ruined theatre and

in imagination people it again with the vanished multitudes who mobbed

Paul's comrades there and shouted, with one voice, "Great is Diana of the

Ephesians!" The idea of a shout in such a solitude as this almost makes

one shudder.

It was a wonderful city, this Ephesus. Go where you will about these

broad plains, you find the most exquisitely sculptured marble fragments

scattered thick among the dust and weeds; and protruding from the ground,

or lying prone upon it, are beautiful fluted columns of porphyry and all

precious marbles; and at every step you find elegantly carved capitals

and massive bases, and polished tablets engraved with Greek inscriptions.

It is a world of precious relics, a wilderness of marred and mutilated

gems. And yet what are these things to the wonders that lie buried here

under the ground? At Constantinople, at Pisa, in the cities of Spain,

are great mosques and cathedrals, whose grandest columns came from the

temples and palaces of Ephesus, and yet one has only to scratch the

ground here to match them. We shall never know what magnificence is,

until this imperial city is laid bare to the sun.

The finest piece of sculpture we have yet seen and the one that impressed

us most, (for we do not know much about art and can not easily work up

ourselves into ecstasies over it,) is one that lies in this old theatre

of Ephesus which St. Paul's riot has made so celebrated. It is only the

headless body of a man, clad in a coat of mail, with a Medusa head upon

the breast-plate, but we feel persuaded that such dignity and such

majesty were never thrown into a form of stone before.

What builders they were, these men of antiquity! The massive arches of

some of these ruins rest upon piers that are fifteen feet square and

built entirely of solid blocks of marble, some of which are as large as a

Saratoga trunk, and some the size of a boarding-house sofa. They are not

shells or shafts of stone filled inside with rubbish, but the whole pier

is a mass of solid masonry. Vast arches, that may have been the gates of

the city, are built in the same way. They have braved the storms and

sieges of three thousand years, and have been shaken by many an

earthquake, but still they stand. When they dig alongside of them, they

find ranges of ponderous masonry that are as perfect in every detail as

they were the day those old Cyclopian giants finished them. An English

Company is going to excavate Ephesus--and then!

And now am I reminded of--

THE LEGEND OF THE SEVEN SLEEPERS.

In the Mount of Pion, yonder, is the Cave of the Seven Sleepers. Once

upon a time, about fifteen hundred years ago, seven young men lived near

each other in Ephesus, who belonged to the despised sect of the

Christians. It came to pass that the good King Maximilianus, (I am

telling this story for nice little boys and girls,) it came to pass, I

say, that the good King Maximilianus fell to persecuting the Christians,

and as time rolled on he made it very warm for them. So the seven young

men said one to the other, let us get up and travel. And they got up and

traveled. They tarried not to bid their fathers and mothers good-bye, or

any friend they knew. They only took certain moneys which their parents

had, and garments that belonged unto their friends, whereby they might

remember them when far away; and they took also the dog Ketmehr, which

was the property of their neighbor Malchus, because the beast did run his

head into a noose which one of the young men was carrying carelessly, and

they had not time to release him; and they took also certain chickens

that seemed lonely in the neighboring coops, and likewise some bottles of

curious liquors that stood near the grocer's window; and then they

departed from the city. By-and-by they came to a marvelous cave in the

Hill of Pion and entered into it and feasted, and presently they hurried

on again. But they forgot the bottles of curious liquors, and left them

behind. They traveled in many lands, and had many strange adventures.

They were virtuous young men, and lost no opportunity that fell in their

way to make their livelihood. Their motto was in these words, namely,

"Procrastination is the thief of time." And so, whenever they did come

upon a man who was alone, they said, Behold, this person hath the

wherewithal--let us go through him. And they went through him. At the

end of five years they had waxed tired of travel and adventure, and

longed to revisit their old home again and hear the voices and see the

faces that were dear unto their youth. Therefore they went through such

parties as fell in their way where they sojourned at that time, and

journeyed back toward Ephesus again. For the good King Maximilianus was

become converted unto the new faith, and the Christians rejoiced because

they were no longer persecuted. One day as the sun went down, they came

to the cave in the Mount of Pion, and they said, each to his fellow, Let

us sleep here, and go and feast and make merry with our friends when the

morning cometh. And each of the seven lifted up his voice and said, It

is a whiz. So they went in, and lo, where they had put them, there lay

the bottles of strange liquors, and they judged that age had not impaired

their excellence. Wherein the wanderers were right, and the heads of the

same were level. So each of the young men drank six bottles, and behold

they felt very tired, then, and lay down and slept soundly.

When they awoke, one of them, Johannes--surnamed Smithianus--said, We are

naked. And it was so. Their raiment was all gone, and the money which

they had gotten from a stranger whom they had proceeded through as they

approached the city, was lying upon the ground, corroded and rusted and

defaced. Likewise the dog Ketmehr was gone, and nothing save the brass

that was upon his collar remained. They wondered much at these things.

But they took the money, and they wrapped about their bodies some leaves,

and came up to the top of the hill. Then were they perplexed. The

wonderful temple of Diana was gone; many grand edifices they had never

seen before stood in the city; men in strange garbs moved about the

streets, and every thing was changed.

Johannes said, It hardly seems like Ephesus. Yet here is the great

gymnasium; here is the mighty theatre, wherein I have seen seventy

thousand men assembled; here is the Agora; there is the font where the

sainted John the Baptist immersed the converts; yonder is the prison of

the good St. Paul, where we all did use to go to touch the ancient chains

that bound him and be cured of our distempers; I see the tomb of the

disciple Luke, and afar off is the church wherein repose the ashes of the

holy John, where the Christians of Ephesus go twice a year to gather the

dust from the tomb, which is able to make bodies whole again that are

corrupted by disease, and cleanse the soul from sin; but see how the

wharves encroach upon the sea, and what multitudes of ships are anchored

in the bay; see, also, how the city hath stretched abroad, far over the

valley behind Pion, and even unto the walls of Ayassalook; and lo, all

the hills are white with palaces and ribbed with colonnades of marble.

How mighty is Ephesus become!

And wondering at what their eyes had seen, they went down into the city

and purchased garments and clothed themselves. And when they would have

passed on, the merchant bit the coins which they had given him, with his

teeth, and turned them about and looked curiously upon them, and cast

them upon his counter, and listened if they rang; and then he said, These

be bogus. And they said, Depart thou to Hades, and went their way. When

they were come to their houses, they recognized them, albeit they seemed

old and mean; and they rejoiced, and were glad. They ran to the doors,

and knocked, and strangers opened, and looked inquiringly upon them. And

they said, with great excitement, while their hearts beat high, and the

color in their faces came and went, Where is my father? Where is my

mother? Where are Dionysius and Serapion, and Pericles, and Decius? And

the strangers that opened said, We know not these. The Seven said, How,

you know them not? How long have ye dwelt here, and whither are they

gone that dwelt here before ye? And the strangers said, Ye play upon us

with a jest, young men; we and our fathers have sojourned under these

roofs these six generations; the names ye utter rot upon the tombs, and

they that bore them have run their brief race, have laughed and sung,

have borne the sorrows and the weariness that were allotted them, and are

at rest; for nine-score years the summers have come and gone, and the

autumn leaves have fallen, since the roses faded out of their cheeks and

they laid them to sleep with the dead.

Then the seven young men turned them away from their homes, and the

strangers shut the doors upon them. The wanderers marveled greatly, and

looked into the faces of all they met, as hoping to find one that they

knew; but all were strange, and passed them by and spake no friendly

word. They were sore distressed and sad. Presently they spake unto a

citizen and said, Who is King in Ephesus? And the citizen answered and

said, Whence come ye that ye know not that great Laertius reigns in

Ephesus? They looked one at the other, greatly perplexed, and presently

asked again, Where, then, is the good King Maximilianus? The citizen

moved him apart, as one who is afraid, and said, Verily these men be mad,

and dream dreams, else would they know that the King whereof they speak

is dead above two hundred years agone.

Then the scales fell from the eyes of the Seven, and one said, Alas, that

we drank of the curious liquors. They have made us weary, and in

dreamless sleep these two long centuries have we lain. Our homes are

desolate, our friends are dead. Behold, the jig is up--let us die. And

that same day went they forth and laid them down and died. And in that

self-same day, likewise, the Seven-up did cease in Ephesus, for that the

Seven that were up were down again, and departed and dead withal. And

the names that be upon their tombs, even unto this time, are Johannes

Smithianus, Trumps, Gift, High, and Low, Jack, and The Game. And with

the sleepers lie also the bottles wherein were once the curious liquors:

and upon them is writ, in ancient letters, such words as these--Dames of

heathen gods of olden time, perchance: Rumpunch, Jinsling, Egnog.

Such is the story of the Seven Sleepers, (with slight variations,) and I

know it is true, because I have seen the cave myself.

Really, so firm a faith had the ancients this legend, that as late as

eight or nine hundred years ago, learned travelers held it in

superstitious fear. Two of them record that they ventured into it, but

ran quickly out again, not daring to tarry lest they should fall asleep

and outlive their great grand-children a century or so. Even at this day

the ignorant denizens of the neighboring country prefer not to sleep in

it.

CHAPTER XLI.

When I last made a memorandum, we were at Ephesus. We are in Syria, now,

encamped in the mountains of Lebanon. The interregnum has been long,

both as to time and distance. We brought not a relic from Ephesus!

After gathering up fragments of sculptured marbles and breaking ornaments

from the interior work of the Mosques; and after bringing them at a cost

of infinite trouble and fatigue, five miles on muleback to the railway

depot, a government officer compelled all who had such things to

disgorge! He had an order from Constantinople to look out for our party,

and see that we carried nothing off. It was a wise, a just, and a

well-deserved rebuke, but it created a sensation. I never resist a

temptation to plunder a stranger's premises without feeling insufferably

vain about it. This time I felt proud beyond expression. I was serene

in the midst of the scoldings that were heaped upon the Ottoman

government for its affront offered to a pleasuring party of entirely

respectable gentlemen and ladies I said, "We that have free souls, it

touches us not." The shoe not only pinched our party, but it pinched

hard; a principal sufferer discovered that the imperial order was

inclosed in an envelop bearing the seal of the British Embassy at

Constantinople, and therefore must have been inspired by the

representative of the Queen. This was bad--very bad. Coming solely

from the Ottomans, it might have signified only Ottoman hatred of

Christians, and a vulgar ignorance as to genteel methods of expressing

it; but coming from the Christianized, educated, politic British

legation, it simply intimated that we were a sort of gentlemen and

ladies who would bear watching! So the party regarded it, and were

incensed accordingly. The truth doubtless was, that the same

precautions would have been taken against any travelers, because the

English Company who have acquired the right to excavate Ephesus, and

have paid a great sum for that right, need to be protected, and deserve

to be. They can not afford to run the risk of having their hospitality

abused by travelers, especially since travelers are such notorious

scorners of honest behavior.

We sailed from Smyrna, in the wildest spirit of expectancy, for the chief

feature, the grand goal of the expedition, was near at hand--we were

approaching the Holy Land! Such a burrowing into the hold for trunks

that had lain buried for weeks, yes for months; such a hurrying to and

fro above decks and below; such a riotous system of packing and

unpacking; such a littering up of the cabins with shirts and skirts, and

indescribable and unclassable odds and ends; such a making up of bundles,

and setting apart of umbrellas, green spectacles and thick veils; such a

critical inspection of saddles and bridles that had never yet touched

horses; such a cleaning and loading of revolvers and examining of

bowie-knives; such a half-soling of the seats of pantaloons with

serviceable buckskin; then such a poring over ancient maps; such a

reading up of Bibles and Palestine travels; such a marking out of

routes; such exasperating efforts to divide up the company into little

bands of congenial spirits who might make the long and arduous Journey

without quarreling; and morning, noon and night, such mass-meetings in

the cabins, such speech-making, such sage suggesting, such worrying and

quarreling, and such a general raising of the very mischief, was never

seen in the ship before!

But it is all over now. We are cut up into parties of six or eight, and

by this time are scattered far and wide. Ours is the only one, however,

that is venturing on what is called "the long trip"--that is, out into

Syria, by Baalbec to Damascus, and thence down through the full length of

Palestine. It would be a tedious, and also a too risky journey, at this

hot season of the year, for any but strong, healthy men, accustomed

somewhat to fatigue and rough life in the open air. The other parties

will take shorter journeys.

For the last two months we have been in a worry about one portion of this

Holy Land pilgrimage. I refer to transportation service. We knew very

well that Palestine was a country which did not do a large passenger

business, and every man we came across who knew any thing about it gave

us to understand that not half of our party would be able to get dragomen

and animals. At Constantinople every body fell to telegraphing the

American Consuls at Alexandria and Beirout to give notice that we wanted

dragomen and transportation. We were desperate--would take horses,

jackasses, cameleopards, kangaroos--any thing. At Smyrna, more

telegraphing was done, to the same end. Also fearing for the worst, we

telegraphed for a large number of seats in the diligence for Damascus,

and horses for the ruins of Baalbec.

As might have been expected, a notion got abroad in Syria and Egypt that

the whole population of the Province of America (the Turks consider us a

trifling little province in some unvisited corner of the world,) were

coming to the Holy Land--and so, when we got to Beirout yesterday, we

found the place full of dragomen and their outfits. We had all intended

to go by diligence to Damascus, and switch off to Baalbec as we went

along--because we expected to rejoin the ship, go to Mount Carmel, and

take to the woods from there. However, when our own private party of

eight found that it was possible, and proper enough, to make the "long

trip," we adopted that programme. We have never been much trouble to a

Consul before, but we have been a fearful nuisance to our Consul at

Beirout. I mention this because I can not help admiring his patience,

his industry, and his accommodating spirit. I mention it also, because I

think some of our ship's company did not give him as full credit for his

excellent services as he deserved.

Well, out of our eight, three were selected to attend to all business

connected with the expedition. The rest of us had nothing to do but look

at the beautiful city of Beirout, with its bright, new houses nestled

among a wilderness of green shrubbery spread abroad over an upland that

sloped gently down to the sea; and also at the mountains of Lebanon that

environ it; and likewise to bathe in the transparent blue water that

rolled its billows about the ship (we did not know there were sharks

there.) We had also to range up and down through the town and look at the

costumes. These are picturesque and fanciful, but not so varied as at

Constantinople and Smyrna; the women of Beirout add an agony--in the two

former cities the sex wear a thin veil which one can see through (and

they often expose their ancles,) but at Beirout they cover their entire

faces with dark-colored or black veils, so that they look like mummies,

and then expose their breasts to the public. A young gentleman (I

believe he was a Greek,) volunteered to show us around the city, and said

it would afford him great pleasure, because he was studying English and

wanted practice in that language. When we had finished the rounds,

however, he called for remuneration--said he hoped the gentlemen would

give him a trifle in the way of a few piastres (equivalent to a few five

cent pieces.) We did so. The Consul was surprised when he heard it, and

said he knew the young fellow's family very well, and that they were an

old and highly respectable family and worth a hundred and fifty thousand

dollars! Some people, so situated, would have been ashamed of the berth

he had with us and his manner of crawling into it.

At the appointed time our business committee reported, and said all

things were in readdress--that we were to start to-day, with horses, pack

animals, and tents, and go to Baalbec, Damascus, the Sea of Tiberias, and

thence southward by the way of the scene of Jacob's Dream and other

notable Bible localities to Jerusalem--from thence probably to the Dead

Sea, but possibly not--and then strike for the ocean and rejoin the ship

three or four weeks hence at Joppa; terms, five dollars a day apiece, in

gold, and every thing to be furnished by the dragoman. They said we

would lie as well as at a hotel. I had read something like that before,

and did not shame my judgment by believing a word of it. I said nothing,

however, but packed up a blanket and a shawl to sleep in, pipes and

tobacco, two or three woollen shirts, a portfolio, a guide-book, and a

Bible. I also took along a towel and a cake of soap, to inspire respect

in the Arabs, who would take me for a king in disguise.

We were to select our horses at 3 P.M. At that hour Abraham, the

dragoman, marshaled them before us. With all solemnity I set it down

here, that those horses were the hardest lot I ever did come across, and

their accoutrements were in exquisite keeping with their style. One

brute had an eye out; another had his tail sawed off close, like a

rabbit, and was proud of it; another had a bony ridge running from his

neck to his tail, like one of those ruined aqueducts one sees about Rome,

and had a neck on him like a bowsprit; they all limped, and had sore

backs, and likewise raw places and old scales scattered about their

persons like brass nails in a hair trunk; their gaits were marvelous to

contemplate, and replete with variety under way the procession looked

like a fleet in a storm. It was fearful. Blucher shook his head and

said:

"That dragon is going to get himself into trouble fetching these old

crates out of the hospital the way they are, unless he has got a permit."

I said nothing. The display was exactly according to the guide-book, and

were we not traveling by the guide-book? I selected a certain horse

because I thought I saw him shy, and I thought that a horse that had

spirit enough to shy was not to be despised.

At 6 o'clock P.M., we came to a halt here on the breezy summit of a

shapely mountain overlooking the sea, and the handsome valley where dwelt

some of those enterprising Phoenicians of ancient times we read so much

about; all around us are what were once the dominions of Hiram, King of

Tyre, who furnished timber from the cedars of these Lebanon hills to

build portions of King Solomon's Temple with.

Shortly after six, our pack train arrived. I had not seen it before, and

a good right I had to be astonished. We had nineteen serving men and

twenty-six pack mules! It was a perfect caravan. It looked like one,

too, as it wound among the rocks. I wondered what in the very mischief

we wanted with such a vast turn-out as that, for eight men. I wondered

awhile, but soon I began to long for a tin plate, and some bacon and

beans. I had camped out many and many a time before, and knew just what

was coming. I went off, without waiting for serving men, and unsaddled

my horse, and washed such portions of his ribs and his spine as projected

through his hide, and when I came back, behold five stately circus tents

were up--tents that were brilliant, within, with blue, and gold, and

crimson, and all manner of splendid adornment! I was speechless. Then

they brought eight little iron bedsteads, and set them up in the tents;

they put a soft mattress and pillows and good blankets and two snow-white

sheets on each bed. Next, they rigged a table about the centre-pole, and

on it placed pewter pitchers, basins, soap, and the whitest of towels

--one set for each man; they pointed to pockets in the tent, and said we

could put our small trifles in them for convenience, and if we needed

pins or such things, they were sticking every where. Then came the

finishing touch--they spread carpets on the floor! I simply said, "If

you call this camping out, all right--but it isn't the style I am used

to; my little baggage that I brought along is at a discount."

It grew dark, and they put candles on the tables--candles set in bright,

new, brazen candlesticks. And soon the bell--a genuine, simon-pure bell

--rang, and we were invited to "the saloon." I had thought before that

we had a tent or so too many, but now here was one, at least, provided

for; it was to be used for nothing but an eating-saloon. Like the

others, it was high enough for a family of giraffes to live in, and was

very handsome and clean and bright-colored within. It was a gem of a

place. A table for eight, and eight canvas chairs; a table-cloth and

napkins whose whiteness and whose fineness laughed to scorn the things we

were used to in the great excursion steamer; knives and forks,

soup-plates, dinner-plates--every thing, in the handsomest kind of

style. It was wonderful! And they call this camping out. Those

stately fellows in baggy trowsers and turbaned fezzes brought in a

dinner which consisted of roast mutton, roast chicken, roast goose,

potatoes, bread, tea, pudding, apples, and delicious grapes; the viands

were better cooked than any we had eaten for weeks, and the table made a

finer appearance, with its large German silver candlesticks and other

finery, than any table we had sat down to for a good while, and yet that

polite dragoman, Abraham, came bowing in and apologizing for the whole

affair, on account of the unavoidable confusion of getting under way for

a very long trip, and promising to do a great deal better in future!

It is midnight, now, and we break camp at six in the morning.

They call this camping out. At this rate it is a glorious privilege to

be a pilgrim to the Holy Land.

CHAPTER XLII.

We are camped near Temnin-el-Foka--a name which the boys have simplified

a good deal, for the sake of convenience in spelling. They call it

Jacksonville. It sounds a little strangely, here in the Valley of

Lebanon, but it has the merit of being easier to remember than the Arabic

name.

"COME LIKE SPIRITS, SO DEPART."

"The night shall be filled with music,

And the cares that infest the day

Shall fold their tents like the Arabs,

And as silently steal away."

I slept very soundly last night, yet when the dragoman's bell rang at

half-past five this morning and the cry went abroad of "Ten minutes to

dress for breakfast!" I heard both. It surprised me, because I have not

heard the breakfast gong in the ship for a month, and whenever we have

had occasion to fire a salute at daylight, I have only found it out in

the course of conversation afterward. However, camping out, even though

it be in a gorgeous tent, makes one fresh and lively in the morning

--especially if the air you are breathing is the cool, fresh air of the

mountains.

I was dressed within the ten minutes, and came out. The saloon tent had

been stripped of its sides, and had nothing left but its roof; so when we

sat down to table we could look out over a noble panorama of mountain,

sea and hazy valley. And sitting thus, the sun rose slowly up and

suffused the picture with a world of rich coloring.

Hot mutton chops, fried chicken, omelettes, fried potatoes and coffee

--all excellent. This was the bill of fare. It was sauced with a savage

appetite purchased by hard riding the day before, and refreshing sleep in

a pure atmosphere. As I called for a second cup of coffee, I glanced

over my shoulder, and behold our white village was gone--the splendid

tents had vanished like magic! It was wonderful how quickly those Arabs

had "folded their tents;" and it was wonderful, also, how quickly they

had gathered the thousand odds and ends of the camp together and

disappeared with them.

By half-past six we were under way, and all the Syrian world seemed to be

under way also. The road was filled with mule trains and long

processions of camels. This reminds me that we have been trying for some

time to think what a camel looks like, and now we have made it out. When

he is down on all his knees, flat on his breast to receive his load, he

looks something like a goose swimming; and when he is upright he looks

like an ostrich with an extra set of legs. Camels are not beautiful, and

their long under lip gives them an exceedingly "gallus"--[Excuse the

slang, no other word will describe it]--expression. They have immense,

flat, forked cushions of feet, that make a track in the dust like a pie

with a slice cut out of it. They are not particular about their diet.

They would eat a tombstone if they could bite it. A thistle grows about

here which has needles on it that would pierce through leather, I think;

if one touches you, you can find relief in nothing but profanity. The

camels eat these. They show by their actions that they enjoy them. I

suppose it would be a real treat to a camel to have a keg of nails for

supper.

While I am speaking of animals, I will mention that I have a horse now by

the name of "Jericho." He is a mare. I have seen remarkable horses

before, but none so remarkable as this. I wanted a horse that could shy,

and this one fills the bill. I had an idea that shying indicated spirit.

If I was correct, I have got the most spirited horse on earth. He shies

at every thing he comes across, with the utmost impartiality. He appears

to have a mortal dread of telegraph poles, especially; and it is

fortunate that these are on both sides of the road, because as it is now,

I never fall off twice in succession on the same side. If I fell on the

same side always, it would get to be monotonous after a while. This

creature has scared at every thing he has seen to-day, except a haystack.

He walked up to that with an intrepidity and a recklessness that were

astonishing. And it would fill any one with admiration to see how he

preserves his self-possession in the presence of a barley sack. This

dare-devil bravery will be the death of this horse some day.

He is not particularly fast, but I think he will get me through the Holy

Land. He has only one fault. His tail has been chopped off or else he

has sat down on it too hard, some time or other, and he has to fight the

flies with his heels. This is all very well, but when he tries to kick a

fly off the top of his head with his hind foot, it is too much variety.

He is going to get himself into trouble that way some day. He reaches

around and bites my legs too. I do not care particularly about that,

only I do not like to see a horse too sociable.

I think the owner of this prize had a wrong opinion about him. He had an

idea that he was one of those fiery, untamed steeds, but he is not of

that character. I know the Arab had this idea, because when he brought

the horse out for inspection in Beirout, he kept jerking at the bridle

and shouting in Arabic, "Ho! will you? Do you want to run away, you

ferocious beast, and break your neck?" when all the time the horse was

not doing anything in the world, and only looked like he wanted to lean

up against something and think. Whenever he is not shying at things, or

reaching after a fly, he wants to do that yet. How it would surprise his

owner to know this.

We have been in a historical section of country all day. At noon we

camped three hours and took luncheon at Mekseh, near the junction of the

Lebanon Mountains and the Jebel el Kuneiyiseh, and looked down into the

immense, level, garden-like Valley of Lebanon. To-night we are camping

near the same valley, and have a very wide sweep of it in view. We can

see the long, whale-backed ridge of Mount Hermon projecting above the

eastern hills. The "dews of Hermon" are falling upon us now, and the

tents are almost soaked with them.

Over the way from us, and higher up the valley, we can discern, through

the glasses, the faint outlines of the wonderful ruins of Baalbec, the

supposed Baal-Gad of Scripture. Joshua, and another person, were the two

spies who were sent into this land of Canaan by the children of Israel to

report upon its character--I mean they were the spies who reported

favorably. They took back with them some specimens of the grapes of this

country, and in the children's picture-books they are always represented

as bearing one monstrous bunch swung to a pole between them, a

respectable load for a pack-train. The Sunday-school books exaggerated

it a little. The grapes are most excellent to this day, but the bunches

are not as large as those in the pictures. I was surprised and hurt when

I saw them, because those colossal bunches of grapes were one of my most

cherished juvenile traditions.

Joshua reported favorably, and the children of Israel journeyed on, with

Moses at the head of the general government, and Joshua in command of the

army of six hundred thousand fighting men. Of women and children and

civilians there was a countless swarm. Of all that mighty host, none but

the two faithful spies ever lived to set their feet in the Promised Land.

They and their descendants wandered forty years in the desert, and then

Moses, the gifted warrior, poet, statesman and philosopher, went up into

Pisgah and met his mysterious fate. Where he was buried no man knows

--for

"\* \* \* no man dug that sepulchre,

And no man saw it e'er

--For the Sons of God upturned the sod

And laid the dead man there!"

Then Joshua began his terrible raid, and from Jericho clear to this

Baal-Gad, he swept the land like the Genius of Destruction. He

slaughtered the people, laid waste their soil, and razed their cities to

the ground. He wasted thirty-one kings also. One may call it that,

though really it can hardly be called wasting them, because there were

always plenty of kings in those days, and to spare. At any rate, he

destroyed thirty-one kings, and divided up their realms among his

Israelites. He divided up this valley stretched out here before us, and

so it was once Jewish territory. The Jews have long since disappeared

from it, however.

Back yonder, an hour's journey from here, we passed through an Arab

village of stone dry-goods boxes (they look like that,) where Noah's tomb

lies under lock and key. [Noah built the ark.] Over these old hills and

valleys the ark that contained all that was left of a vanished world once

floated.

I make no apology for detailing the above information. It will be news

to some of my readers, at any rate.

Noah's tomb is built of stone, and is covered with a long stone building.

Bucksheesh let us in. The building had to be long, because the grave of

the honored old navigator is two hundred and ten feet long itself! It is

only about four feet high, though. He must have cast a shadow like a

lightning-rod. The proof that this is the genuine spot where Noah was

buried can only be doubted by uncommonly incredulous people. The

evidence is pretty straight. Shem, the son of Noah, was present at the

burial, and showed the place to his descendants, who transmitted the

knowledge to their descendants, and the lineal descendants of these

introduced themselves to us to-day. It was pleasant to make the

acquaintance of members of so respectable a family. It was a thing to be

proud of. It was the next thing to being acquainted with Noah himself.

Noah's memorable voyage will always possess a living interest for me,

henceforward.

If ever an oppressed race existed, it is this one we see fettered around

us under the inhuman tyranny of the Ottoman Empire. I wish Europe would

let Russia annihilate Turkey a little--not much, but enough to make it

difficult to find the place again without a divining-rod or a

diving-bell. The Syrians are very poor, and yet they are ground down by

a system of taxation that would drive any other nation frantic. Last

year their taxes were heavy enough, in all conscience--but this year

they have been increased by the addition of taxes that were forgiven

them in times of famine in former years. On top of this the Government

has levied a tax of one-tenth of the whole proceeds of the land. This

is only half the story. The Pacha of a Pachalic does not trouble

himself with appointing tax-collectors. He figures up what all these

taxes ought to amount to in a certain district. Then he farms the

collection out. He calls the rich men together, the highest bidder gets

the speculation, pays the Pacha on the spot, and then sells out to

smaller fry, who sell in turn to a piratical horde of still smaller fry.

These latter compel the peasant to bring his little trifle of grain to

the village, at his own cost. It must be weighed, the various taxes set

apart, and the remainder returned to the producer. But the collector

delays this duty day after day, while the producer's family are

perishing for bread; at last the poor wretch, who can not but understand

the game, says, "Take a quarter--take half--take two-thirds if you will,

and let me go!" It is a most outrageous state of things.

These people are naturally good-hearted and intelligent, and with

education and liberty, would be a happy and contented race. They often

appeal to the stranger to know if the great world will not some day come

to their relief and save them. The Sultan has been lavishing money like

water in England and Paris, but his subjects are suffering for it now.

This fashion of camping out bewilders me. We have boot-jacks and a

bath-tub, now, and yet all the mysteries the pack-mules carry are not

revealed. What next?

CHAPTER XLIII.

We had a tedious ride of about five hours, in the sun, across the Valley

of Lebanon. It proved to be not quite so much of a garden as it had

seemed from the hill-sides. It was a desert, weed-grown waste, littered

thickly with stones the size of a man's fist. Here and there the natives

had scratched the ground and reared a sickly crop of grain, but for the

most part the valley was given up to a handful of shepherds, whose flocks

were doing what they honestly could to get a living, but the chances were

against them. We saw rude piles of stones standing near the roadside, at

intervals, and recognized the custom of marking boundaries which obtained

in Jacob's time. There were no walls, no fences, no hedges--nothing to

secure a man's possessions but these random heaps of stones. The

Israelites held them sacred in the old patriarchal times, and these other

Arabs, their lineal descendants, do so likewise. An American, of

ordinary intelligence, would soon widely extend his property, at an

outlay of mere manual labor, performed at night, under so loose a system

of fencing as this.

The plows these people use are simply a sharpened stick, such as Abraham

plowed with, and they still winnow their wheat as he did--they pile it on

the house-top, and then toss it by shovel-fulls into the air until the

wind has blown all the chaff away. They never invent any thing, never

learn any thing.

We had a fine race, of a mile, with an Arab perched on a camel. Some of

the horses were fast, and made very good time, but the camel scampered by

them without any very great effort. The yelling and shouting, and

whipping and galloping, of all parties interested, made it an

exhilarating, exciting, and particularly boisterous race.

At eleven o'clock, our eyes fell upon the walls and columns of Baalbec, a

noble ruin whose history is a sealed book. It has stood there for

thousands of years, the wonder and admiration of travelers; but who built

it, or when it was built, are questions that may never be answered. One

thing is very sure, though. Such grandeur of design, and such grace of

execution, as one sees in the temples of Baalbec, have not been equaled

or even approached in any work of men's hands that has been built within

twenty centuries past.

The great Temple of the Sun, the Temple of Jupiter, and several smaller

temples, are clustered together in the midst of one of these miserable

Syrian villages, and look strangely enough in such plebeian company.

These temples are built upon massive substructions that might support a

world, almost; the materials used are blocks of stone as large as an

omnibus--very few, if any of them, are smaller than a carpenter's tool

chest--and these substructions are traversed by tunnels of masonry

through which a train of cars might pass. With such foundations as

these, it is little wonder that Baalbec has lasted so long. The Temple

of the Sun is nearly three hundred feet long and one hundred and sixty

feet wide. It had fifty-four columns around it, but only six are

standing now--the others lie broken at its base, a confused and

picturesque heap. The six columns are their bases, Corinthian capitals

and entablature--and six more shapely columns do not exist. The columns

and the entablature together are ninety feet high--a prodigious altitude

for shafts of stone to reach, truly--and yet one only thinks of their

beauty and symmetry when looking at them; the pillars look slender and

delicate, the entablature, with its elaborate sculpture, looks like rich

stucco-work. But when you have gazed aloft till your eyes are weary, you

glance at the great fragments of pillars among which you are standing,

and find that they are eight feet through; and with them lie beautiful

capitals apparently as large as a small cottage; and also single slabs of

stone, superbly sculptured, that are four or five feet thick, and would

completely cover the floor of any ordinary parlor. You wonder where

these monstrous things came from, and it takes some little time to

satisfy yourself that the airy and graceful fabric that towers above your

head is made up of their mates. It seems too preposterous.

The Temple of Jupiter is a smaller ruin than the one I have been speaking

of, and yet is immense. It is in a tolerable state of preservation. One

row of nine columns stands almost uninjured. They are sixty-five feet

high and support a sort of porch or roof, which connects them with the

roof of the building. This porch-roof is composed of tremendous slabs of

stone, which are so finely sculptured on the under side that the work

looks like a fresco from below. One or two of these slabs had fallen,

and again I wondered if the gigantic masses of carved stone that lay

about me were no larger than those above my head. Within the temple, the

ornamentation was elaborate and colossal. What a wonder of architectural

beauty and grandeur this edifice must have been when it was new! And

what a noble picture it and its statelier companion, with the chaos of

mighty fragments scattered about them, yet makes in the moonlight!

I can not conceive how those immense blocks of stone were ever hauled

from the quarries, or how they were ever raised to the dizzy heights they

occupy in the temples. And yet these sculptured blocks are trifles in

size compared with the rough-hewn blocks that form the wide verandah or

platform which surrounds the Great Temple. One stretch of that platform,

two hundred feet long, is composed of blocks of stone as large, and some

of them larger, than a street-car. They surmount a wall about ten or

twelve feet high. I thought those were large rocks, but they sank into

insignificance compared with those which formed another section of the

platform. These were three in number, and I thought that each of them

was about as long as three street cars placed end to end, though of

course they are a third wider and a third higher than a street car.

Perhaps two railway freight cars of the largest pattern, placed end to

end, might better represent their size. In combined length these three

stones stretch nearly two hundred feet; they are thirteen feet square;

two of them are sixty-four feet long each, and the third is sixty-nine.

They are built into the massive wall some twenty feet above the ground.

They are there, but how they got there is the question. I have seen the

hull of a steamboat that was smaller than one of those stones. All these

great walls are as exact and shapely as the flimsy things we build of

bricks in these days. A race of gods or of giants must have inhabited

Baalbec many a century ago. Men like the men of our day could hardly

rear such temples as these.

We went to the quarry from whence the stones of Baalbec were taken. It

was about a quarter of a mile off, and down hill. In a great pit lay the

mate of the largest stone in the ruins. It lay there just as the giants

of that old forgotten time had left it when they were called hence--just

as they had left it, to remain for thousands of years, an eloquent rebuke

unto such as are prone to think slightingly of the men who lived before

them. This enormous block lies there, squared and ready for the

builders' hands--a solid mass fourteen feet by seventeen, and but a few

inches less than seventy feet long! Two buggies could be driven abreast

of each other, on its surface, from one end of it to the other, and leave

room enough for a man or two to walk on either side.

One might swear that all the John Smiths and George Wilkinsons, and all

the other pitiful nobodies between Kingdom Come and Baalbec would

inscribe their poor little names upon the walls of Baalbec's magnificent

ruins, and would add the town, the county and the State they came from

--and swearing thus, be infallibly correct. It is a pity some great ruin

does not fall in and flatten out some of these reptiles, and scare their

kind out of ever giving their names to fame upon any walls or monuments

again, forever.

Properly, with the sorry relics we bestrode, it was a three days' journey

to Damascus. It was necessary that we should do it in less than two.

It was necessary because our three pilgrims would not travel on the

Sabbath day. We were all perfectly willing to keep the Sabbath day, but

there are times when to keep the letter of a sacred law whose spirit is

righteous, becomes a sin, and this was a case in point. We pleaded for

the tired, ill-treated horses, and tried to show that their faithful

service deserved kindness in return, and their hard lot compassion. But

when did ever self-righteousness know the sentiment of pity? What were a

few long hours added to the hardships of some over-taxed brutes when

weighed against the peril of those human souls? It was not the most

promising party to travel with and hope to gain a higher veneration for

religion through the example of its devotees. We said the Saviour who

pitied dumb beasts and taught that the ox must be rescued from the mire

even on the Sabbath day, would not have counseled a forced march like

this. We said the "long trip" was exhausting and therefore dangerous in

the blistering heats of summer, even when the ordinary days' stages were

traversed, and if we persisted in this hard march, some of us might be

stricken down with the fevers of the country in consequence of it.

Nothing could move the pilgrims. They must press on. Men might die,

horses might die, but they must enter upon holy soil next week, with no

Sabbath-breaking stain upon them. Thus they were willing to commit a sin

against the spirit of religious law, in order that they might preserve

the letter of it. It was not worth while to tell them "the letter

kills." I am talking now about personal friends; men whom I like; men

who are good citizens; who are honorable, upright, conscientious; but

whose idea of the Saviour's religion seems to me distorted. They lecture

our shortcomings unsparingly, and every night they call us together and

read to us chapters from the Testament that are full of gentleness, of

charity, and of tender mercy; and then all the next day they stick to

their saddles clear up to the summits of these rugged mountains, and

clear down again. Apply the Testament's gentleness, and charity, and

tender mercy to a toiling, worn and weary horse?--Nonsense--these are for

God's human creatures, not His dumb ones. What the pilgrims choose to

do, respect for their almost sacred character demands that I should allow

to pass--but I would so like to catch any other member of the party

riding his horse up one of these exhausting hills once!

We have given the pilgrims a good many examples that might benefit them,

but it is virtue thrown away. They have never heard a cross word out of

our lips toward each other--but they have quarreled once or twice. We

love to hear them at it, after they have been lecturing us. The very

first thing they did, coming ashore at Beirout, was to quarrel in the

boat. I have said I like them, and I do like them--but every time they

read me a scorcher of a lecture I mean to talk back in print.

Not content with doubling the legitimate stages, they switched off the

main road and went away out of the way to visit an absurd fountain called

Figia, because Baalam's ass had drank there once. So we journeyed on,

through the terrible hills and deserts and the roasting sun, and then far

into the night, seeking the honored pool of Baalam's ass, the patron

saint of all pilgrims like us. I find no entry but this in my note-book:

"Rode to-day, altogether, thirteen hours, through deserts, partly,

and partly over barren, unsightly hills, and latterly through wild,

rocky scenery, and camped at about eleven o'clock at night on the

banks of a limpid stream, near a Syrian village. Do not know its

name--do not wish to know it--want to go to bed. Two horses lame

(mine and Jack's) and the others worn out. Jack and I walked three

or four miles, over the hills, and led the horses. Fun--but of a

mild type."

Twelve or thirteen hours in the saddle, even in a Christian land and a

Christian climate, and on a good horse, is a tiresome journey; but in an

oven like Syria, in a ragged spoon of a saddle that slips fore-and-aft,

and "thort-ships," and every way, and on a horse that is tired and lame,

and yet must be whipped and spurred with hardly a moment's cessation all

day long, till the blood comes from his side, and your conscience hurts

you every time you strike if you are half a man,--it is a journey to be

remembered in bitterness of spirit and execrated with emphasis for a

liberal division of a man's lifetime.

CHAPTER XLIV.

The next day was an outrage upon men and horses both. It was another

thirteen-hour stretch (including an hour's "nooning.") It was over the

barrenest chalk-hills and through the baldest canons that even Syria can

show. The heat quivered in the air every where. In the canons we almost

smothered in the baking atmosphere. On high ground, the reflection from

the chalk-hills was blinding. It was cruel to urge the crippled horses,

but it had to be done in order to make Damascus Saturday night. We saw

ancient tombs and temples of fanciful architecture carved out of the

solid rock high up in the face of precipices above our heads, but we had

neither time nor strength to climb up there and examine them. The terse

language of my note-book will answer for the rest of this day's

experiences:

"Broke camp at 7 A.M., and made a ghastly trip through the Zeb Dana

valley and the rough mountains--horses limping and that Arab

screech-owl that does most of the singing and carries the

water-skins, always a thousand miles ahead, of course, and no water

to drink--will he never die? Beautiful stream in a chasm, lined

thick with pomegranate, fig, olive and quince orchards, and nooned

an hour at the celebrated Baalam's Ass Fountain of Figia, second in

size in Syria, and the coldest water out of Siberia--guide-books do

not say Baalam's ass ever drank there--somebody been imposing on

the pilgrims, may be. Bathed in it--Jack and I. Only a

second--ice-water. It is the principal source of the Abana river

--only one-half mile down to where it joins. Beautiful

place--giant trees all around--so shady and cool, if one could keep

awake--vast stream gushes straight out from under the mountain in a

torrent. Over it is a very ancient ruin, with no known history

--supposed to have been for the worship of the deity of the fountain

or Baalam's ass or somebody. Wretched nest of human vermin about

the fountain--rags, dirt, sunken cheeks, pallor of sickness, sores,

projecting bones, dull, aching misery in their eyes and ravenous

hunger speaking from every eloquent fibre and muscle from head to

foot. How they sprang upon a bone, how they crunched the bread we

gave them! Such as these to swarm about one and watch every bite

he takes, with greedy looks, and swallow unconsciously every time

he swallows, as if they half fancied the precious morsel went down

their own throats--hurry up the caravan!--I never shall enjoy a

meal in this distressful country. To think of eating three times

every day under such circumstances for three weeks yet--it is worse

punishment than riding all day in the sun. There are sixteen

starving babies from one to six years old in the party, and their

legs are no larger than broom handles. Left the fountain at 1 P.M.

(the fountain took us at least two hours out of our way,) and

reached Mahomet's lookout perch, over Damascus, in time to get a

good long look before it was necessary to move on. Tired? Ask of

the winds that far away with fragments strewed the sea."

As the glare of day mellowed into twilight, we looked down upon a picture

which is celebrated all over the world. I think I have read about four

hundred times that when Mahomet was a simple camel-driver he reached this

point and looked down upon Damascus for the first time, and then made a

certain renowned remark. He said man could enter only one paradise; he

preferred to go to the one above. So he sat down there and feasted his

eyes upon the earthly paradise of Damascus, and then went away without

entering its gates. They have erected a tower on the hill to mark the

spot where he stood.

Damascus is beautiful from the mountain. It is beautiful even to

foreigners accustomed to luxuriant vegetation, and I can easily

understand how unspeakably beautiful it must be to eyes that are only

used to the God-forsaken barrenness and desolation of Syria. I should

think a Syrian would go wild with ecstacy when such a picture bursts upon

him for the first time.

From his high perch, one sees before him and below him, a wall of dreary

mountains, shorn of vegetation, glaring fiercely in the sun; it fences in

a level desert of yellow sand, smooth as velvet and threaded far away

with fine lines that stand for roads, and dotted with creeping mites we

know are camel-trains and journeying men; right in the midst of the

desert is spread a billowy expanse of green foliage; and nestling in its

heart sits the great white city, like an island of pearls and opals

gleaming out of a sea of emeralds. This is the picture you see spread

far below you, with distance to soften it, the sun to glorify it, strong

contrasts to heighten the effects, and over it and about it a drowsing

air of repose to spiritualize it and make it seem rather a beautiful

estray from the mysterious worlds we visit in dreams than a substantial

tenant of our coarse, dull globe. And when you think of the leagues of

blighted, blasted, sandy, rocky, sun-burnt, ugly, dreary, infamous

country you have ridden over to get here, you think it is the most

beautiful, beautiful picture that ever human eyes rested upon in all the

broad universe! If I were to go to Damascus again, I would camp on

Mahomet's hill about a week, and then go away. There is no need to go

inside the walls. The Prophet was wise without knowing it when he

decided not to go down into the paradise of Damascus.

There is an honored old tradition that the immense garden which Damascus

stands in was the Garden of Eden, and modern writers have gathered up

many chapters of evidence tending to show that it really was the Garden

of Eden, and that the rivers Pharpar and Abana are the "two rivers" that

watered Adam's Paradise. It may be so, but it is not paradise now, and

one would be as happy outside of it as he would be likely to be within.

It is so crooked and cramped and dirty that one can not realize that he

is in the splendid city he saw from the hill-top. The gardens are hidden

by high mud-walls, and the paradise is become a very sink of pollution

and uncomeliness. Damascus has plenty of clear, pure water in it,

though, and this is enough, of itself, to make an Arab think it beautiful

and blessed. Water is scarce in blistered Syria. We run railways by our

large cities in America; in Syria they curve the roads so as to make them

run by the meagre little puddles they call "fountains," and which are not

found oftener on a journey than every four hours. But the "rivers" of

Pharpar and Abana of Scripture (mere creeks,) run through Damascus, and

so every house and every garden have their sparkling fountains and

rivulets of water. With her forest of foliage and her abundance of

water, Damascus must be a wonder of wonders to the Bedouin from the

deserts. Damascus is simply an oasis--that is what it is. For four

thousand years its waters have not gone dry or its fertility failed.

Now we can understand why the city has existed so long. It could not

die. So long as its waters remain to it away out there in the midst of

that howling desert, so long will Damascus live to bless the sight of the

tired and thirsty wayfarer.

"Though old as history itself, thou art fresh as the breath of

spring, blooming as thine own rose-bud, and fragrant as thine own

orange flower, O Damascus, pearl of the East!"

Damascus dates back anterior to the days of Abraham, and is the oldest

city in the world. It was founded by Uz, the grandson of Noah. "The

early history of Damascus is shrouded in the mists of a hoary antiquity."

Leave the matters written of in the first eleven chapters of the Old

Testament out, and no recorded event has occurred in the world but

Damascus was in existence to receive the news of it. Go back as far as

you will into the vague past, there was always a Damascus. In the

writings of every century for more than four thousand years, its name has

been mentioned and its praises sung. To Damascus, years are only

moments, decades are only flitting trifles of time. She measures time,

not by days and months and years, but by the empires she has seen rise,

and prosper and crumble to ruin. She is a type of immortality. She saw

the foundations of Baalbec, and Thebes, and Ephesus laid; she saw these

villages grow into mighty cities, and amaze the world with their

grandeur--and she has lived to see them desolate, deserted, and given

over to the owls and the bats. She saw the Israelitish empire exalted,

and she saw it annihilated. She saw Greece rise, and flourish two

thousand years, and die. In her old age she saw Rome built; she saw it

overshadow the world with its power; she saw it perish. The few hundreds

of years of Genoese and Venetian might and splendor were, to grave old

Damascus, only a trifling scintillation hardly worth remembering.

Damascus has seen all that has ever occurred on earth, and still she

lives. She has looked upon the dry bones of a thousand empires, and will

see the tombs of a thousand more before she dies. Though another claims

the name, old Damascus is by right the Eternal City.

We reached the city gates just at sundown. They do say that one can get

into any walled city of Syria, after night, for bucksheesh, except

Damascus. But Damascus, with its four thousand years of respectability

in the world, has many old fogy notions. There are no street lamps

there, and the law compels all who go abroad at night to carry lanterns,

just as was the case in old days, when heroes and heroines of the Arabian

Nights walked the streets of Damascus, or flew away toward Bagdad on

enchanted carpets.

It was fairly dark a few minutes after we got within the wall, and we

rode long distances through wonderfully crooked streets, eight to ten

feet wide, and shut in on either side by the high mud-walls of the

gardens. At last we got to where lanterns could be seen flitting about

here and there, and knew we were in the midst of the curious old city.

In a little narrow street, crowded with our pack-mules and with a swarm

of uncouth Arabs, we alighted, and through a kind of a hole in the wall

entered the hotel. We stood in a great flagged court, with flowers and

citron trees about us, and a huge tank in the centre that was receiving

the waters of many pipes. We crossed the court and entered the rooms

prepared to receive four of us. In a large marble-paved recess between

the two rooms was a tank of clear, cool water, which was kept running

over all the time by the streams that were pouring into it from half a

dozen pipes. Nothing, in this scorching, desolate land could look so

refreshing as this pure water flashing in the lamp-light; nothing could

look so beautiful, nothing could sound so delicious as this mimic rain to

ears long unaccustomed to sounds of such a nature. Our rooms were large,

comfortably furnished, and even had their floors clothed with soft,

cheerful-tinted carpets. It was a pleasant thing to see a carpet again,

for if there is any thing drearier than the tomb-like, stone-paved

parlors and bed-rooms of Europe and Asia, I do not know what it is.

They make one think of the grave all the time. A very broad, gaily

caparisoned divan, some twelve or fourteen feet long, extended across one

side of each room, and opposite were single beds with spring mattresses.

There were great looking-glasses and marble-top tables. All this luxury

was as grateful to systems and senses worn out with an exhausting day's

travel, as it was unexpected--for one can not tell what to expect in a

Turkish city of even a quarter of a million inhabitants.

I do not know, but I think they used that tank between the rooms to draw

drinking water from; that did not occur to me, however, until I had

dipped my baking head far down into its cool depths. I thought of it

then, and superb as the bath was, I was sorry I had taken it, and was

about to go and explain to the landlord. But a finely curled and scented

poodle dog frisked up and nipped the calf of my leg just then, and before

I had time to think, I had soused him to the bottom of the tank, and when

I saw a servant coming with a pitcher I went off and left the pup trying

to climb out and not succeeding very well. Satisfied revenge was all I

needed to make me perfectly happy, and when I walked in to supper that

first night in Damascus I was in that condition. We lay on those divans

a long time, after supper, smoking narghilies and long-stemmed chibouks,

and talking about the dreadful ride of the day, and I knew then what I

had sometimes known before--that it is worth while to get tired out,

because one so enjoys resting afterward.

In the morning we sent for donkeys. It is worthy of note that we had to

send for these things. I said Damascus was an old fossil, and she is.

Any where else we would have been assailed by a clamorous army of

donkey-drivers, guides, peddlers and beggars--but in Damascus they so

hate the very sight of a foreign Christian that they want no intercourse

whatever with him; only a year or two ago, his person was not always

safe in Damascus streets. It is the most fanatical Mohammedan purgatory

out of Arabia. Where you see one green turban of a Hadji elsewhere (the

honored sign that my lord has made the pilgrimage to Mecca,) I think you

will see a dozen in Damascus. The Damascenes are the ugliest, wickedest

looking villains we have seen. All the veiled women we had seen yet,

nearly, left their eyes exposed, but numbers of these in Damascus

completely hid the face under a close-drawn black veil that made the

woman look like a mummy. If ever we caught an eye exposed it was

quickly hidden from our contaminating Christian vision; the beggars

actually passed us by without demanding bucksheesh; the merchants in the

bazaars did not hold up their goods and cry out eagerly, "Hey, John!"

or "Look this, Howajji!" On the contrary, they only scowled at us and

said never a word.

The narrow streets swarmed like a hive with men and women in strange

Oriental costumes, and our small donkeys knocked them right and left as

we plowed through them, urged on by the merciless donkey-boys. These

persecutors run after the animals, shouting and goading them for hours

together; they keep the donkey in a gallop always, yet never get tired

themselves or fall behind. The donkeys fell down and spilt us over their

heads occasionally, but there was nothing for it but to mount and hurry

on again. We were banged against sharp corners, loaded porters, camels,

and citizens generally; and we were so taken up with looking out for

collisions and casualties that we had no chance to look about us at all.

We rode half through the city and through the famous "street which is

called Straight" without seeing any thing, hardly. Our bones were nearly

knocked out of joint, we were wild with excitement, and our sides ached

with the jolting we had suffered. I do not like riding in the Damascus

street-cars.

We were on our way to the reputed houses of Judas and Ananias. About

eighteen or nineteen hundred years ago, Saul, a native of Tarsus, was

particularly bitter against the new sect called Christians, and he left

Jerusalem and started across the country on a furious crusade against

them. He went forth "breathing threatenings and slaughter against the

disciples of the Lord."

"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly there

shined round about him a light from heaven:

"And he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him, 'Saul,

Saul, why persecutest thou me?'

"And when he knew that it was Jesus that spoke to him he trembled,

and was astonished, and said, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?'"

He was told to arise and go into the ancient city and one would tell

him what to do. In the meantime his soldiers stood speechless and

awe-stricken, for they heard the mysterious voice but saw no man. Saul

rose up and found that that fierce supernatural light had destroyed his

sight, and he was blind, so "they led him by the hand and brought him to

Damascus." He was converted.

Paul lay three days, blind, in the house of Judas, and during that time

he neither ate nor drank.

There came a voice to a citizen of Damascus, named Ananias, saying,

"Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire at

the house of Judas, for one called Saul, of Tarsus; for behold, he

prayeth."

Ananias did not wish to go at first, for he had heard of Saul before, and

he had his doubts about that style of a "chosen vessel" to preach the

gospel of peace. However, in obedience to orders, he went into the

"street called Straight" (how he found his way into it, and after he did,

how he ever found his way out of it again, are mysteries only to be

accounted for by the fact that he was acting under Divine inspiration.)

He found Paul and restored him, and ordained him a preacher; and from

this old house we had hunted up in the street which is miscalled

Straight, he had started out on that bold missionary career which he

prosecuted till his death. It was not the house of the disciple who sold

the Master for thirty pieces of silver. I make this explanation in

justice to Judas, who was a far different sort of man from the person

just referred to. A very different style of man, and lived in a very

good house. It is a pity we do not know more about him.

I have given, in the above paragraphs, some more information for people

who will not read Bible history until they are defrauded into it by some

such method as this. I hope that no friend of progress and education

will obstruct or interfere with my peculiar mission.

The street called Straight is straighter than a corkscrew, but not as

straight as a rainbow. St. Luke is careful not to commit himself; he

does not say it is the street which is straight, but the "street which is

called Straight." It is a fine piece of irony; it is the only facetious

remark in the Bible, I believe. We traversed the street called Straight

a good way, and then turned off and called at the reputed house of

Ananias. There is small question that a part of the original house is

there still; it is an old room twelve or fifteen feet under ground, and

its masonry is evidently ancient. If Ananias did not live there in St.

Paul's time, somebody else did, which is just as well. I took a drink

out of Ananias' well, and singularly enough, the water was just as fresh

as if the well had been dug yesterday.

We went out toward the north end of the city to see the place where the

disciples let Paul down over the Damascus wall at dead of night--for he

preached Christ so fearlessly in Damascus that the people sought to kill

him, just as they would to-day for the same offense, and he had to escape

and flee to Jerusalem.

Then we called at the tomb of Mahomet's children and at a tomb which

purported to be that of St. George who killed the dragon, and so on out

to the hollow place under a rock where Paul hid during his flight till

his pursuers gave him up; and to the mausoleum of the five thousand

Christians who were massacred in Damascus in 1861 by the Turks. They say

those narrow streets ran blood for several days, and that men, women and

children were butchered indiscriminately and left to rot by hundreds all

through the Christian quarter; they say, further, that the stench was

dreadful. All the Christians who could get away fled from the city, and

the Mohammedans would not defile their hands by burying the "infidel

dogs." The thirst for blood extended to the high lands of Hermon and

Anti-Lebanon, and in a short time twenty-five thousand more Christians

were massacred and their possessions laid waste. How they hate a

Christian in Damascus!--and pretty much all over Turkeydom as well. And

how they will pay for it when Russia turns her guns upon them again!

It is soothing to the heart to abuse England and France for interposing

to save the Ottoman Empire from the destruction it has so richly deserved

for a thousand years. It hurts my vanity to see these pagans refuse to

eat of food that has been cooked for us; or to eat from a dish we have

eaten from; or to drink from a goatskin which we have polluted with our

Christian lips, except by filtering the water through a rag which they

put over the mouth of it or through a sponge! I never disliked a

Chinaman as I do these degraded Turks and Arabs, and when Russia is ready

to war with them again, I hope England and France will not find it good

breeding or good judgment to interfere.

In Damascus they think there are no such rivers in all the world as their

little Abana and Pharpar. The Damascenes have always thought that way.

In 2 Kings, chapter v., Naaman boasts extravagantly about them. That was

three thousand years ago. He says: "Are not Abana and Pharpar rivers of

Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them

and be clean?" But some of my readers have forgotten who Naaman was,

long ago. Naaman was the commander of the Syrian armies. He was the

favorite of the king and lived in great state. "He was a mighty man of

valor, but he was a leper." Strangely enough, the house they point out

to you now as his, has been turned into a leper hospital, and the inmates

expose their horrid deformities and hold up their hands and beg for

bucksheesh when a stranger enters.

One can not appreciate the horror of this disease until he looks upon it

in all its ghastliness, in Naaman's ancient dwelling in Damascus. Bones

all twisted out of shape, great knots protruding from face and body,

joints decaying and dropping away--horrible!

CHAPTER XLV.

The last twenty-four hours we staid in Damascus I lay prostrate with a

violent attack of cholera, or cholera morbus, and therefore had a good

chance and a good excuse to lie there on that wide divan and take an

honest rest. I had nothing to do but listen to the pattering of the

fountains and take medicine and throw it up again. It was dangerous

recreation, but it was pleasanter than traveling in Syria. I had plenty

of snow from Mount Hermon, and as it would not stay on my stomach, there

was nothing to interfere with my eating it--there was always room for

more. I enjoyed myself very well. Syrian travel has its interesting

features, like travel in any other part of the world, and yet to break

your leg or have the cholera adds a welcome variety to it.

We left Damascus at noon and rode across the plain a couple of hours, and

then the party stopped a while in the shade of some fig-trees to give me

a chance to rest. It was the hottest day we had seen yet--the sun-flames

shot down like the shafts of fire that stream out before a blow-pipe--the

rays seemed to fall in a steady deluge on the head and pass downward like

rain from a roof. I imagined I could distinguish between the floods of

rays--I thought I could tell when each flood struck my head, when it

reached my shoulders, and when the next one came. It was terrible. All

the desert glared so fiercely that my eyes were swimming in tears all the

time. The boys had white umbrellas heavily lined with dark green. They

were a priceless blessing. I thanked fortune that I had one, too,

notwithstanding it was packed up with the baggage and was ten miles

ahead. It is madness to travel in Syria without an umbrella. They told

me in Beirout (these people who always gorge you with advice) that it was

madness to travel in Syria without an umbrella. It was on this account

that I got one.

But, honestly, I think an umbrella is a nuisance any where when its

business is to keep the sun off. No Arab wears a brim to his fez, or

uses an umbrella, or any thing to shade his eyes or his face, and he

always looks comfortable and proper in the sun. But of all the

ridiculous sights I ever have seen, our party of eight is the most so

--they do cut such an outlandish figure. They travel single file; they all

wear the endless white rag of Constantinople wrapped round and round

their hats and dangling down their backs; they all wear thick green

spectacles, with side-glasses to them; they all hold white umbrellas,

lined with green, over their heads; without exception their stirrups are

too short--they are the very worst gang of horsemen on earth, their

animals to a horse trot fearfully hard--and when they get strung out one

after the other; glaring straight ahead and breathless; bouncing high and

out of turn, all along the line; knees well up and stiff, elbows flapping

like a rooster's that is going to crow, and the long file of umbrellas

popping convulsively up and down--when one sees this outrageous picture

exposed to the light of day, he is amazed that the gods don't get out

their thunderbolts and destroy them off the face of the earth! I do--I

wonder at it. I wouldn't let any such caravan go through a country of

mine.

And when the sun drops below the horizon and the boys close their

umbrellas and put them under their arms, it is only a variation of the

picture, not a modification of its absurdity.

But may be you can not see the wild extravagance of my panorama. You

could if you were here. Here, you feel all the time just as if you were

living about the year 1200 before Christ--or back to the patriarchs--or

forward to the New Era. The scenery of the Bible is about you--the

customs of the patriarchs are around you--the same people, in the same

flowing robes, and in sandals, cross your path--the same long trains of

stately camels go and come--the same impressive religious solemnity and

silence rest upon the desert and the mountains that were upon them in the

remote ages of antiquity, and behold, intruding upon a scene like this,

comes this fantastic mob of green-spectacled Yanks, with their flapping

elbows and bobbing umbrellas! It is Daniel in the lion's den with a

green cotton umbrella under his arm, all over again.

My umbrella is with the baggage, and so are my green spectacles--and

there they shall stay. I will not use them. I will show some respect

for the eternal fitness of things. It will be bad enough to get

sun-struck, without looking ridiculous into the bargain. If I fall,

let me fall bearing about me the semblance of a Christian, at least.

Three or four hours out from Damascus we passed the spot where Saul was

so abruptly converted, and from this place we looked back over the

scorching desert, and had our last glimpse of beautiful Damascus, decked

in its robes of shining green. After nightfall we reached our tents,

just outside of the nasty Arab village of Jonesborough. Of course the

real name of the place is El something or other, but the boys still

refuse to recognize the Arab names or try to pronounce them. When I say

that that village is of the usual style, I mean to insinuate that all

Syrian villages within fifty miles of Damascus are alike--so much alike

that it would require more than human intelligence to tell wherein one

differed from another. A Syrian village is a hive of huts one story high

(the height of a man,) and as square as a dry-goods box; it is

mud-plastered all over, flat roof and all, and generally whitewashed

after a fashion. The same roof often extends over half the town,

covering many of the streets, which are generally about a yard wide.

When you ride through one of these villages at noon-day, you first meet

a melancholy dog, that looks up at you and silently begs that you won't

run over him, but he does not offer to get out of the way; next you meet

a young boy without any clothes on, and he holds out his hand and says

"Bucksheesh!"--he don't really expect a cent, but then he learned to

say that before he learned to say mother, and now he can not break

himself of it; next you meet a woman with a black veil drawn closely

over her face, and her bust exposed; finally, you come to several

sore-eyed children and children in all stages of mutilation and decay;

and sitting humbly in the dust, and all fringed with filthy rags, is a

poor devil whose arms and legs are gnarled and twisted like grape-vines.

These are all the people you are likely to see. The balance of the

population are asleep within doors, or abroad tending goats in the

plains and on the hill-sides. The village is built on some consumptive

little water-course, and about it is a little fresh-looking vegetation.

Beyond this charmed circle, for miles on every side, stretches a weary

desert of sand and gravel, which produces a gray bunchy shrub like

sage-brush. A Syrian village is the sorriest sight in the world, and

its surroundings are eminently in keeping with it.

I would not have gone into this dissertation upon Syrian villages but for

the fact that Nimrod, the Mighty Hunter of Scriptural notoriety, is

buried in Jonesborough, and I wished the public to know about how he is

located. Like Homer, he is said to be buried in many other places, but

this is the only true and genuine place his ashes inhabit.

When the original tribes were dispersed, more than four thousand years

ago, Nimrod and a large party traveled three or four hundred miles, and

settled where the great city of Babylon afterwards stood. Nimrod built

that city. He also began to build the famous Tower of Babel, but

circumstances over which he had no control put it out of his power to

finish it. He ran it up eight stories high, however, and two of them

still stand, at this day--a colossal mass of brickwork, rent down the

centre by earthquakes, and seared and vitrified by the lightnings of an

angry God. But the vast ruin will still stand for ages, to shame the

puny labors of these modern generations of men. Its huge compartments

are tenanted by owls and lions, and old Nimrod lies neglected in this

wretched village, far from the scene of his grand enterprise.

We left Jonesborough very early in the morning, and rode forever and

forever and forever, it seemed to me, over parched deserts and rocky

hills, hungry, and with no water to drink. We had drained the goat-skins

dry in a little while. At noon we halted before the wretched Arab town

of El Yuba Dam, perched on the side of a mountain, but the dragoman said

if we applied there for water we would be attacked by the whole tribe,

for they did not love Christians. We had to journey on. Two hours later

we reached the foot of a tall isolated mountain, which is crowned by the

crumbling castle of Banias, the stateliest ruin of that kind on earth, no

doubt. It is a thousand feet long and two hundred wide, all of the most

symmetrical, and at the same time the most ponderous masonry. The

massive towers and bastions are more than thirty feet high, and have been

sixty. From the mountain's peak its broken turrets rise above the groves

of ancient oaks and olives, and look wonderfully picturesque. It is of

such high antiquity that no man knows who built it or when it was built.

It is utterly inaccessible, except in one place, where a bridle-path

winds upward among the solid rocks to the old portcullis. The horses'

hoofs have bored holes in these rocks to the depth of six inches during

the hundreds and hundreds of years that the castle was garrisoned. We

wandered for three hours among the chambers and crypts and dungeons of

the fortress, and trod where the mailed heels of many a knightly Crusader

had rang, and where Phenician heroes had walked ages before them.

We wondered how such a solid mass of masonry could be affected even by an

earthquake, and could not understand what agency had made Banias a ruin;

but we found the destroyer, after a while, and then our wonder was

increased tenfold. Seeds had fallen in crevices in the vast walls; the

seeds had sprouted; the tender, insignificant sprouts had hardened; they

grew larger and larger, and by a steady, imperceptible pressure forced

the great stones apart, and now are bringing sure destruction upon a

giant work that has even mocked the earthquakes to scorn! Gnarled and

twisted trees spring from the old walls every where, and beautify and

overshadow the gray battlements with a wild luxuriance of foliage.

From these old towers we looked down upon a broad, far-reaching green

plain, glittering with the pools and rivulets which are the sources of

the sacred river Jordan. It was a grateful vision, after so much desert.

And as the evening drew near, we clambered down the mountain, through

groves of the Biblical oaks of Bashan, (for we were just stepping over

the border and entering the long-sought Holy Land,) and at its extreme

foot, toward the wide valley, we entered this little execrable village of

Banias and camped in a great grove of olive trees near a torrent of

sparkling water whose banks are arrayed in fig-trees, pomegranates and

oleanders in full leaf. Barring the proximity of the village, it is a

sort of paradise.

The very first thing one feels like doing when he gets into camp, all

burning up and dusty, is to hunt up a bath. We followed the stream up to

where it gushes out of the mountain side, three hundred yards from the

tents, and took a bath that was so icy that if I did not know this was

the main source of the sacred river, I would expect harm to come of it.

It was bathing at noonday in the chilly source of the Abana, "River of

Damascus," that gave me the cholera, so Dr. B. said. However, it

generally does give me the cholera to take a bath.

The incorrigible pilgrims have come in with their pockets full of

specimens broken from the ruins. I wish this vandalism could be stopped.

They broke off fragments from Noah's tomb; from the exquisite sculptures

of the temples of Baalbec; from the houses of Judas and Ananias, in

Damascus; from the tomb of Nimrod the Mighty Hunter in Jonesborough; from

the worn Greek and Roman inscriptions set in the hoary walls of the

Castle of Banias; and now they have been hacking and chipping these old

arches here that Jesus looked upon in the flesh. Heaven protect the

Sepulchre when this tribe invades Jerusalem!

The ruins here are not very interesting. There are the massive walls of

a great square building that was once the citadel; there are many

ponderous old arches that are so smothered with debris that they barely

project above the ground; there are heavy-walled sewers through which the

crystal brook of which Jordan is born still runs; in the hill-side are

the substructions of a costly marble temple that Herod the Great built

here--patches of its handsome mosaic floors still remain; there is a

quaint old stone bridge that was here before Herod's time, may be;

scattered every where, in the paths and in the woods, are Corinthian

capitals, broken porphyry pillars, and little fragments of sculpture; and

up yonder in the precipice where the fountain gushes out, are well-worn

Greek inscriptions over niches in the rock where in ancient times the

Greeks, and after them the Romans, worshipped the sylvan god Pan. But

trees and bushes grow above many of these ruins now; the miserable huts

of a little crew of filthy Arabs are perched upon the broken masonry of

antiquity, the whole place has a sleepy, stupid, rural look about it, and

one can hardly bring himself to believe that a busy, substantially built

city once existed here, even two thousand years ago. The place was

nevertheless the scene of an event whose effects have added page after

page and volume after volume to the world's history. For in this place

Christ stood when he said to Peter:

"Thou art Peter; and upon this rock will I build my church, and the

gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto

thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt

bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt

loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

On those little sentences have been built up the mighty edifice of the

Church of Rome; in them lie the authority for the imperial power of the

Popes over temporal affairs, and their godlike power to curse a soul or

wash it white from sin. To sustain the position of "the only true

Church," which Rome claims was thus conferred upon her, she has fought

and labored and struggled for many a century, and will continue to keep

herself busy in the same work to the end of time. The memorable words I

have quoted give to this ruined city about all the interest it possesses

to people of the present day.

It seems curious enough to us to be standing on ground that was once

actually pressed by the feet of the Saviour. The situation is suggestive

of a reality and a tangibility that seem at variance with the vagueness

and mystery and ghostliness that one naturally attaches to the character

of a god. I can not comprehend yet that I am sitting where a god has

stood, and looking upon the brook and the mountains which that god looked

upon, and am surrounded by dusky men and women whose ancestors saw him,

and even talked with him, face to face, and carelessly, just as they

would have done with any other stranger. I can not comprehend this; the

gods of my understanding have been always hidden in clouds and very far

away.

This morning, during breakfast, the usual assemblage of squalid humanity

sat patiently without the charmed circle of the camp and waited for such

crumbs as pity might bestow upon their misery. There were old and young,

brown-skinned and yellow. Some of the men were tall and stalwart, (for

one hardly sees any where such splendid-looking men as here in the East,)

but all the women and children looked worn and sad, and distressed with

hunger. They reminded me much of Indians, did these people. They had

but little clothing, but such as they had was fanciful in character and

fantastic in its arrangement. Any little absurd gewgaw or gimcrack they

had they disposed in such a way as to make it attract attention most

readily. They sat in silence, and with tireless patience watched our

every motion with that vile, uncomplaining impoliteness which is so truly

Indian, and which makes a white man so nervous and uncomfortable and

savage that he wants to exterminate the whole tribe.

These people about us had other peculiarities, which I have noticed in

the noble red man, too: they were infested with vermin, and the dirt had

caked on them till it amounted to bark.

The little children were in a pitiable condition--they all had sore eyes,

and were otherwise afflicted in various ways. They say that hardly a

native child in all the East is free from sore eyes, and that thousands

of them go blind of one eye or both every year. I think this must be so,

for I see plenty of blind people every day, and I do not remember seeing

any children that hadn't sore eyes. And, would you suppose that an

American mother could sit for an hour, with her child in her arms, and

let a hundred flies roost upon its eyes all that time undisturbed? I see

that every day. It makes my flesh creep. Yesterday we met a woman

riding on a little jackass, and she had a little child in her arms

--honestly, I thought the child had goggles on as we approached, and I

wondered how its mother could afford so much style. But when we drew

near, we saw that the goggles were nothing but a camp meeting of flies

assembled around each of the child's eyes, and at the same time there was

a detachment prospecting its nose. The flies were happy, the child was

contented, and so the mother did not interfere.

As soon as the tribe found out that we had a doctor in our party, they

began to flock in from all quarters. Dr. B., in the charity of his

nature, had taken a child from a woman who sat near by, and put some sort

of a wash upon its diseased eyes. That woman went off and started the

whole nation, and it was a sight to see them swarm! The lame, the halt,

the blind, the leprous--all the distempers that are bred of indolence,

dirt, and iniquity--were represented in the Congress in ten minutes, and

still they came! Every woman that had a sick baby brought it along, and

every woman that hadn't, borrowed one. What reverent and what worshiping

looks they bent upon that dread, mysterious power, the Doctor! They

watched him take his phials out; they watched him measure the particles

of white powder; they watched him add drops of one precious liquid, and

drops of another; they lost not the slightest movement; their eyes were

riveted upon him with a fascination that nothing could distract.

I believe they thought he was gifted like a god. When each individual

got his portion of medicine, his eyes were radiant with joy

--notwithstanding by nature they are a thankless and impassive race--and

upon his face was written the unquestioning faith that nothing on earth

could prevent the patient from getting well now.

Christ knew how to preach to these simple, superstitious,

disease-tortured creatures: He healed the sick. They flocked to our

poor human doctor this morning when the fame of what he had done to the

sick child went abroad in the land, and they worshiped him with their

eyes while they did not know as yet whether there was virtue in his

simples or not. The ancestors of these--people precisely like them in

color, dress, manners, customs, simplicity--flocked in vast multitudes

after Christ, and when they saw Him make the afflicted whole with a

word, it is no wonder they worshiped Him. No wonder His deeds were the

talk of the nation. No wonder the multitude that followed Him was so

great that at one time--thirty miles from here--they had to let a sick

man down through the roof because no approach could be made to the door;

no wonder His audiences were so great at Galilee that He had to preach

from a ship removed a little distance from the shore; no wonder that

even in the desert places about Bethsaida, five thousand invaded His

solitude, and He had to feed them by a miracle or else see them suffer

for their confiding faith and devotion; no wonder when there was a great

commotion in a city in those days, one neighbor explained it to another

in words to this effect: "They say that Jesus of Nazareth is come!"

Well, as I was saying, the doctor distributed medicine as long as he had

any to distribute, and his reputation is mighty in Galilee this day.

Among his patients was the child of the Shiek's daughter--for even this

poor, ragged handful of sores and sin has its royal Shiek--a poor old

mummy that looked as if he would be more at home in a poor-house than in

the Chief Magistracy of this tribe of hopeless, shirtless savages. The

princess--I mean the Shiek's daughter--was only thirteen or fourteen

years old, and had a very sweet face and a pretty one. She was the only

Syrian female we have seen yet who was not so sinfully ugly that she

couldn't smile after ten o'clock Saturday night without breaking the

Sabbath. Her child was a hard specimen, though--there wasn't enough of

it to make a pie, and the poor little thing looked so pleadingly up at

all who came near it (as if it had an idea that now was its chance or

never,) that we were filled with compassion which was genuine and not put

on.

But this last new horse I have got is trying to break his neck over the

tent-ropes, and I shall have to go out and anchor him. Jericho and I

have parted company. The new horse is not much to boast of, I think.

One of his hind legs bends the wrong way, and the other one is as

straight and stiff as a tent-pole. Most of his teeth are gone, and he is

as blind as bat. His nose has been broken at some time or other, and is

arched like a culvert now. His under lip hangs down like a camel's, and

his ears are chopped off close to his head. I had some trouble at first

to find a name for him, but I finally concluded to call him Baalbec,

because he is such a magnificent ruin. I can not keep from talking about

my horses, because I have a very long and tedious journey before me, and

they naturally occupy my thoughts about as much as matters of apparently

much greater importance.

We satisfied our pilgrims by making those hard rides from Baalbec to

Damascus, but Dan's horse and Jack's were so crippled we had to leave

them behind and get fresh animals for them. The dragoman says Jack's

horse died. I swapped horses with Mohammed, the kingly-looking Egyptian

who is our Ferguson's lieutenant. By Ferguson I mean our dragoman

Abraham, of course. I did not take this horse on account of his personal

appearance, but because I have not seen his back. I do not wish to see

it. I have seen the backs of all the other horses, and found most of

them covered with dreadful saddle-boils which I know have not been washed

or doctored for years. The idea of riding all day long over such ghastly

inquisitions of torture is sickening. My horse must be like the others,

but I have at least the consolation of not knowing it to be so.

I hope that in future I may be spared any more sentimental praises of the

Arab's idolatry of his horse. In boyhood I longed to be an Arab of the

desert and have a beautiful mare, and call her Selim or Benjamin or

Mohammed, and feed her with my own hands, and let her come into the tent,

and teach her to caress me and look fondly upon me with her great tender

eyes; and I wished that a stranger might come at such a time and offer me

a hundred thousand dollars for her, so that I could do like the other

Arabs--hesitate, yearn for the money, but overcome by my love for my

mare, at last say, "Part with thee, my beautiful one! Never with my

life! Away, tempter, I scorn thy gold!" and then bound into the saddle

and speed over the desert like the wind!

But I recall those aspirations. If these Arabs be like the other Arabs,

their love for their beautiful mares is a fraud. These of my

acquaintance have no love for their horses, no sentiment of pity for

them, and no knowledge of how to treat them or care for them. The Syrian

saddle-blanket is a quilted mattress two or three inches thick. It is

never removed from the horse, day or night. It gets full of dirt and

hair, and becomes soaked with sweat. It is bound to breed sores. These

pirates never think of washing a horse's back. They do not shelter the

horses in the tents, either--they must stay out and take the weather as

it comes. Look at poor cropped and dilapidated "Baalbec," and weep for

the sentiment that has been wasted upon the Selims of romance!

CHAPTER XLVI.

About an hour's ride over a rough, rocky road, half flooded with water,

and through a forest of oaks of Bashan, brought us to Dan.

From a little mound here in the plain issues a broad stream of limpid

water and forms a large shallow pool, and then rushes furiously onward,

augmented in volume. This puddle is an important source of the Jordan.

Its banks, and those of the brook are respectably adorned with blooming

oleanders, but the unutterable beauty of the spot will not throw a

well-balanced man into convulsions, as the Syrian books of travel would

lead one to suppose.

From the spot I am speaking of, a cannon-ball would carry beyond the

confines of Holy Land and light upon profane ground three miles away.

We were only one little hour's travel within the borders of Holy Land--we

had hardly begun to appreciate yet that we were standing upon any

different sort of earth than that we had always been used to, and see how

the historic names began already to cluster! Dan--Bashan--Lake Huleh

--the Sources of Jordan--the Sea of Galilee. They were all in sight but

the last, and it was not far away. The little township of Bashan was

once the kingdom so famous in Scripture for its bulls and its oaks.

Lake Huleh is the Biblical "Waters of Merom." Dan was the northern and

Beersheba the southern limit of Palestine--hence the expression "from Dan

to Beersheba." It is equivalent to our phrases "from Maine to Texas"

--"from Baltimore to San Francisco." Our expression and that of the

Israelites both mean the same--great distance. With their slow camels

and asses, it was about a seven days' journey from Dan to Beersheba---say

a hundred and fifty or sixty miles--it was the entire length of their

country, and was not to be undertaken without great preparation and much

ceremony. When the Prodigal traveled to "a far country," it is not

likely that he went more than eighty or ninety miles. Palestine is only

from forty to sixty miles wide. The State of Missouri could be split

into three Palestines, and there would then be enough material left for

part of another--possibly a whole one. From Baltimore to San Francisco

is several thousand miles, but it will be only a seven days' journey in

the cars when I am two or three years older.--[The railroad has been

completed since the above was written.]--If I live I shall necessarily

have to go across the continent every now and then in those cars, but one

journey from Dan to Beersheba will be sufficient, no doubt. It must be

the most trying of the two. Therefore, if we chance to discover that

from Dan to Beersheba seemed a mighty stretch of country to the

Israelites, let us not be airy with them, but reflect that it was and is

a mighty stretch when one can not traverse it by rail.

The small mound I have mentioned a while ago was once occupied by the

Phenician city of Laish. A party of filibusters from Zorah and Eschol

captured the place, and lived there in a free and easy way, worshiping

gods of their own manufacture and stealing idols from their neighbors

whenever they wore their own out. Jeroboam set up a golden calf here to

fascinate his people and keep them from making dangerous trips to

Jerusalem to worship, which might result in a return to their rightful

allegiance. With all respect for those ancient Israelites, I can not

overlook the fact that they were not always virtuous enough to withstand

the seductions of a golden calf. Human nature has not changed much since

then.

Some forty centuries ago the city of Sodom was pillaged by the Arab

princes of Mesopotamia, and among other prisoners they seized upon the

patriarch Lot and brought him here on their way to their own possessions.

They brought him to Dan, and father Abraham, who was pursuing them, crept

softly in at dead of night, among the whispering oleanders and under the

shadows of the stately oaks, and fell upon the slumbering victors and

startled them from their dreams with the clash of steel. He recaptured

Lot and all the other plunder.

We moved on. We were now in a green valley, five or six miles wide and

fifteen long. The streams which are called the sources of the Jordan

flow through it to Lake Huleh, a shallow pond three miles in diameter,

and from the southern extremity of the Lake the concentrated Jordan flows

out. The Lake is surrounded by a broad marsh, grown with reeds. Between

the marsh and the mountains which wall the valley is a respectable strip

of fertile land; at the end of the valley, toward Dan, as much as half

the land is solid and fertile, and watered by Jordan's sources. There is

enough of it to make a farm. It almost warrants the enthusiasm of the

spies of that rabble of adventurers who captured Dan. They said: "We

have seen the land, and behold it is very good. \* \* \* A place where

there is no want of any thing that is in the earth."

Their enthusiasm was at least warranted by the fact that they had never

seen a country as good as this. There was enough of it for the ample

support of their six hundred men and their families, too.

When we got fairly down on the level part of the Danite farm, we came to

places where we could actually run our horses. It was a notable

circumstance.

We had been painfully clambering over interminable hills and rocks for

days together, and when we suddenly came upon this astonishing piece of

rockless plain, every man drove the spurs into his horse and sped away

with a velocity he could surely enjoy to the utmost, but could never hope

to comprehend in Syria.

Here were evidences of cultivation--a rare sight in this country--an acre

or two of rich soil studded with last season's dead corn-stalks of the

thickness of your thumb and very wide apart. But in such a land it was a

thrilling spectacle. Close to it was a stream, and on its banks a great

herd of curious-looking Syrian goats and sheep were gratefully eating

gravel. I do not state this as a petrified fact--I only suppose they

were eating gravel, because there did not appear to be any thing else for

them to eat. The shepherds that tended them were the very pictures of

Joseph and his brethren I have no doubt in the world. They were tall,

muscular, and very dark-skinned Bedouins, with inky black beards. They

had firm lips, unquailing eyes, and a kingly stateliness of bearing.

They wore the parti-colored half bonnet, half hood, with fringed ends

falling upon their shoulders, and the full, flowing robe barred with

broad black stripes--the dress one sees in all pictures of the swarthy

sons of the desert. These chaps would sell their younger brothers if

they had a chance, I think. They have the manners, the customs, the

dress, the occupation and the loose principles of the ancient stock.

[They attacked our camp last night, and I bear them no good will.]

They had with them the pigmy jackasses one sees all over Syria and

remembers in all pictures of the "Flight into Egypt," where Mary and the

Young Child are riding and Joseph is walking alongside, towering high

above the little donkey's shoulders.

But really, here the man rides and carries the child, as a general thing,

and the woman walks. The customs have not changed since Joseph's time.

We would not have in our houses a picture representing Joseph riding and

Mary walking; we would see profanation in it, but a Syrian Christian

would not. I know that hereafter the picture I first spoke of will look

odd to me.

We could not stop to rest two or three hours out from our camp, of

course, albeit the brook was beside us. So we went on an hour longer.

We saw water, then, but nowhere in all the waste around was there a foot

of shade, and we were scorching to death. "Like unto the shadow of a

great rock in a weary land." Nothing in the Bible is more beautiful than

that, and surely there is no place we have wandered to that is able to

give it such touching expression as this blistering, naked, treeless

land.

Here you do not stop just when you please, but when you can. We found

water, but no shade. We traveled on and found a tree at last, but no

water. We rested and lunched, and came on to this place, Ain Mellahah

(the boys call it Baldwinsville.) It was a very short day's run, but the

dragoman does not want to go further, and has invented a plausible lie

about the country beyond this being infested by ferocious Arabs, who

would make sleeping in their midst a dangerous pastime. Well, they ought

to be dangerous. They carry a rusty old weather-beaten flint-lock gun,

with a barrel that is longer than themselves; it has no sights on it, it

will not carry farther than a brickbat, and is not half so certain. And

the great sash they wear in many a fold around their waists has two or

three absurd old horse-pistols in it that are rusty from eternal disuse

--weapons that would hang fire just about long enough for you to walk out

of range, and then burst and blow the Arab's head off. Exceedingly

dangerous these sons of the desert are.

It used to make my blood run cold to read Wm. C. Grimes' hairbreadth

escapes from Bedouins, but I think I could read them now without a

tremor. He never said he was attacked by Bedouins, I believe, or was

ever treated uncivilly, but then in about every other chapter he

discovered them approaching, any how, and he had a blood-curdling fashion

of working up the peril; and of wondering how his relations far away

would feel could they see their poor wandering boy, with his weary feet

and his dim eyes, in such fearful danger; and of thinking for the last

time of the old homestead, and the dear old church, and the cow, and

those things; and of finally straightening his form to its utmost height

in the saddle, drawing his trusty revolver, and then dashing the spurs

into "Mohammed" and sweeping down upon the ferocious enemy determined to

sell his life as dearly as possible. True the Bedouins never did any

thing to him when he arrived, and never had any intention of doing any

thing to him in the first place, and wondered what in the mischief he was

making all that to-do about; but still I could not divest myself of the

idea, somehow, that a frightful peril had been escaped through that man's

dare-devil bravery, and so I never could read about Wm. C. Grimes'

Bedouins and sleep comfortably afterward. But I believe the Bedouins to

be a fraud, now. I have seen the monster, and I can outrun him. I shall

never be afraid of his daring to stand behind his own gun and discharge

it.

About fifteen hundred years before Christ, this camp-ground of ours by

the Waters of Merom was the scene of one of Joshua's exterminating

battles. Jabin, King of Hazor, (up yonder above Dan,) called all the

sheiks about him together, with their hosts, to make ready for Israel's

terrible General who was approaching.

"And when all these Kings were met together, they came and pitched

together by the Waters of Merom, to fight against Israel. And they

went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as

the sand that is upon the sea-shore for multitude," etc.

But Joshua fell upon them and utterly destroyed them, root and branch.

That was his usual policy in war. He never left any chance for newspaper

controversies about who won the battle. He made this valley, so quiet

now, a reeking slaughter-pen.

Somewhere in this part of the country--I do not know exactly where

--Israel fought another bloody battle a hundred years later. Deborah, the

prophetess, told Barak to take ten thousand men and sally forth against

another King Jabin who had been doing something. Barak came down from

Mount Tabor, twenty or twenty-five miles from here, and gave battle to

Jabin's forces, who were in command of Sisera. Barak won the fight, and

while he was making the victory complete by the usual method of

exterminating the remnant of the defeated host, Sisera fled away on foot,

and when he was nearly exhausted by fatigue and thirst, one Jael, a woman

he seems to have been acquainted with, invited him to come into her tent

and rest himself. The weary soldier acceded readily enough, and Jael put

him to bed. He said he was very thirsty, and asked his generous

preserver to get him a cup of water. She brought him some milk, and he

drank of it gratefully and lay down again, to forget in pleasant dreams

his lost battle and his humbled pride. Presently when he was asleep she

came softly in with a hammer and drove a hideous tent-pen down through

his brain!

"For he was fast asleep and weary. So he died." Such is the touching

language of the Bible. "The Song of Deborah and Barak" praises Jael for

the memorable service she had rendered, in an exultant strain:

"Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be,

blessed shall she be above women in the tent.

"He asked for water, and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter

in a lordly dish.

"She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workman's

hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head

when she had pierced and stricken through his temples.

"At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed,

he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead."

Stirring scenes like these occur in this valley no more. There is not a

solitary village throughout its whole extent--not for thirty miles in

either direction. There are two or three small clusters of Bedouin

tents, but not a single permanent habitation. One may ride ten miles,

hereabouts, and not see ten human beings.

To this region one of the prophecies is applied:

"I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell

therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the

heathen, and I will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall

be desolate and your cities waste."

No man can stand here by deserted Ain Mellahah and say the prophecy has

not been fulfilled.

In a verse from the Bible which I have quoted above, occurs the phrase

"all these kings." It attracted my attention in a moment, because it

carries to my mind such a vastly different significance from what it

always did at home. I can see easily enough that if I wish to profit by

this tour and come to a correct understanding of the matters of interest

connected with it, I must studiously and faithfully unlearn a great many

things I have somehow absorbed concerning Palestine. I must begin a

system of reduction. Like my grapes which the spies bore out of the

Promised Land, I have got every thing in Palestine on too large a scale.

Some of my ideas were wild enough. The word Palestine always brought to

my mind a vague suggestion of a country as large as the United States.

I do not know why, but such was the case. I suppose it was because I

could not conceive of a small country having so large a history. I think

I was a little surprised to find that the grand Sultan of Turkey was a

man of only ordinary size. I must try to reduce my ideas of Palestine to

a more reasonable shape. One gets large impressions in boyhood,

sometimes, which he has to fight against all his life. "All these

kings." When I used to read that in Sunday School, it suggested to me

the several kings of such countries as England, France, Spain, Germany,

Russia, etc., arrayed in splendid robes ablaze with jewels, marching in

grave procession, with sceptres of gold in their hands and flashing

crowns upon their heads. But here in Ain Mellahah, after coming through

Syria, and after giving serious study to the character and customs of the

country, the phrase "all these kings" loses its grandeur. It suggests

only a parcel of petty chiefs--ill-clad and ill-conditioned savages much

like our Indians, who lived in full sight of each other and whose

"kingdoms" were large when they were five miles square and contained two

thousand souls. The combined monarchies of the thirty "kings" destroyed

by Joshua on one of his famous campaigns, only covered an area about

equal to four of our counties of ordinary size. The poor old sheik we

saw at Cesarea Philippi with his ragged band of a hundred followers,

would have been called a "king" in those ancient times.

It is seven in the morning, and as we are in the country, the grass ought

to be sparkling with dew, the flowers enriching the air with their

fragrance, and the birds singing in the trees. But alas, there is no dew

here, nor flowers, nor birds, nor trees. There is a plain and an

unshaded lake, and beyond them some barren mountains. The tents are

tumbling, the Arabs are quarreling like dogs and cats, as usual, the

campground is strewn with packages and bundles, the labor of packing them

upon the backs of the mules is progressing with great activity, the

horses are saddled, the umbrellas are out, and in ten minutes we shall

mount and the long procession will move again. The white city of the

Mellahah, resurrected for a moment out of the dead centuries, will have

disappeared again and left no sign.

CHAPTER XLVII.

We traversed some miles of desolate country whose soil is rich enough,

but is given over wholly to weeds--a silent, mournful expanse, wherein we

saw only three persons--Arabs, with nothing on but a long coarse shirt

like the "tow-linen" shirts which used to form the only summer garment of

little negro boys on Southern plantations. Shepherds they were, and they

charmed their flocks with the traditional shepherd's pipe--a reed

instrument that made music as exquisitely infernal as these same Arabs

create when they sing.

In their pipes lingered no echo of the wonderful music the shepherd

forefathers heard in the Plains of Bethlehem what time the angels sang

"Peace on earth, good will to men."

Part of the ground we came over was not ground at all, but

rocks--cream-colored rocks, worn smooth, as if by water; with seldom an

edge or a corner on them, but scooped out, honey-combed, bored out with

eye-holes, and thus wrought into all manner of quaint shapes, among

which the uncouth imitation of skulls was frequent. Over this part of

the route were occasional remains of an old Roman road like the Appian

Way, whose paving-stones still clung to their places with Roman

tenacity.

Gray lizards, those heirs of ruin, of sepulchres and desolation, glided

in and out among the rocks or lay still and sunned themselves. Where

prosperity has reigned, and fallen; where glory has flamed, and gone out;

where beauty has dwelt, and passed away; where gladness was, and sorrow

is; where the pomp of life has been, and silence and death brood in its

high places, there this reptile makes his home, and mocks at human

vanity. His coat is the color of ashes: and ashes are the symbol of

hopes that have perished, of aspirations that came to nought, of loves

that are buried. If he could speak, he would say, Build temples: I will

lord it in their ruins; build palaces: I will inhabit them; erect

empires: I will inherit them; bury your beautiful: I will watch the worms

at their work; and you, who stand here and moralize over me: I will crawl

over your corpse at the last.

A few ants were in this desert place, but merely to spend the summer.

They brought their provisions from Ain Mellahah--eleven miles.

Jack is not very well to-day, it is easy to see; but boy as he is, he is

too much of a man to speak of it. He exposed himself to the sun too much

yesterday, but since it came of his earnest desire to learn, and to make

this journey as useful as the opportunities will allow, no one seeks to

discourage him by fault-finding. We missed him an hour from the camp,

and then found him some distance away, by the edge of a brook, and with

no umbrella to protect him from the fierce sun. If he had been used to

going without his umbrella, it would have been well enough, of course;

but he was not. He was just in the act of throwing a clod at a

mud-turtle which was sunning itself on a small log in the brook.

We said:

"Don't do that, Jack. What do you want to harm him for? What has he

done?"

"Well, then, I won't kill him, but I ought to, because he is a fraud."

We asked him why, but he said it was no matter. We asked him why, once

or twice, as we walked back to the camp but he still said it was no

matter. But late at night, when he was sitting in a thoughtful mood on

the bed, we asked him again and he said:

"Well, it don't matter; I don't mind it now, but I did not like it today,

you know, because I don't tell any thing that isn't so, and I don't think

the Colonel ought to, either. But he did; he told us at prayers in the

Pilgrims' tent, last night, and he seemed as if he was reading it out of

the Bible, too, about this country flowing with milk and honey, and about

the voice of the turtle being heard in the land. I thought that was

drawing it a little strong, about the turtles, any how, but I asked Mr.

Church if it was so, and he said it was, and what Mr. Church tells me, I

believe. But I sat there and watched that turtle nearly an hour today,

and I almost burned up in the sun; but I never heard him sing. I believe

I sweated a double handful of sweat---I know I did--because it got in my

eyes, and it was running down over my nose all the time; and you know my

pants are tighter than any body else's--Paris foolishness--and the

buckskin seat of them got wet with sweat, and then got dry again and

began to draw up and pinch and tear loose--it was awful--but I never

heard him sing. Finally I said, This is a fraud--that is what it is, it

is a fraud--and if I had had any sense I might have known a cursed

mud-turtle couldn't sing. And then I said, I don't wish to be hard on

this fellow, and I will just give him ten minutes to commence; ten

minutes--and then if he don't, down goes his building. But he didn't

commence, you know. I had staid there all that time, thinking may be he

might, pretty soon, because he kept on raising his head up and letting

it down, and drawing the skin over his eyes for a minute and then

opening them out again, as if he was trying to study up something to

sing, but just as the ten minutes were up and I was all beat out and

blistered, he laid his blamed head down on a knot and went fast asleep."

"It was a little hard, after you had waited so long."

"I should think so. I said, Well, if you won't sing, you shan't sleep,

any way; and if you fellows had let me alone I would have made him shin

out of Galilee quicker than any turtle ever did yet. But it isn't any

matter now--let it go. The skin is all off the back of my neck."

About ten in the morning we halted at Joseph's Pit. This is a ruined

Khan of the Middle Ages, in one of whose side courts is a great walled

and arched pit with water in it, and this pit, one tradition says, is the

one Joseph's brethren cast him into. A more authentic tradition, aided

by the geography of the country, places the pit in Dothan, some two days'

journey from here. However, since there are many who believe in this

present pit as the true one, it has its interest.

It is hard to make a choice of the most beautiful passage in a book which

is so gemmed with beautiful passages as the Bible; but it is certain that

not many things within its lids may take rank above the exquisite story

of Joseph. Who taught those ancient writers their simplicity of

language, their felicity of expression, their pathos, and above all,

their faculty of sinking themselves entirely out of sight of the reader

and making the narrative stand out alone and seem to tell itself?

Shakspeare is always present when one reads his book; Macaulay is present

when we follow the march of his stately sentences; but the Old Testament

writers are hidden from view.

If the pit I have been speaking of is the right one, a scene transpired

there, long ages ago, which is familiar to us all in pictures. The sons

of Jacob had been pasturing their flocks near there. Their father grew

uneasy at their long absence, and sent Joseph, his favorite, to see if

any thing had gone wrong with them. He traveled six or seven days'

journey; he was only seventeen years old, and, boy like, he toiled

through that long stretch of the vilest, rockiest, dustiest country in

Asia, arrayed in the pride of his heart, his beautiful claw-hammer coat

of many colors. Joseph was the favorite, and that was one crime in the

eyes of his brethren; he had dreamed dreams, and interpreted them to

foreshadow his elevation far above all his family in the far future, and

that was another; he was dressed well and had doubtless displayed the

harmless vanity of youth in keeping the fact prominently before his

brothers. These were crimes his elders fretted over among themselves and

proposed to punish when the opportunity should offer. When they saw him

coming up from the Sea of Galilee, they recognized him and were glad.

They said, "Lo, here is this dreamer--let us kill him." But Reuben

pleaded for his life, and they spared it. But they seized the boy, and

stripped the hated coat from his back and pushed him into the pit. They

intended to let him die there, but Reuben intended to liberate him

secretly. However, while Reuben was away for a little while, the

brethren sold Joseph to some Ishmaelitish merchants who were journeying

towards Egypt. Such is the history of the pit. And the self-same pit is

there in that place, even to this day; and there it will remain until the

next detachment of image-breakers and tomb desecraters arrives from the

Quaker City excursion, and they will infallibly dig it up and carry it

away with them. For behold in them is no reverence for the solemn

monuments of the past, and whithersoever they go they destroy and spare

not.

Joseph became rich, distinguished, powerful--as the Bible expresses it,

"lord over all the land of Egypt." Joseph was the real king, the

strength, the brain of the monarchy, though Pharaoh held the title.

Joseph is one of the truly great men of the Old Testament. And he was

the noblest and the manliest, save Esau. Why shall we not say a good

word for the princely Bedouin? The only crime that can be brought

against him is that he was unfortunate. Why must every body praise

Joseph's great-hearted generosity to his cruel brethren, without stint of

fervent language, and fling only a reluctant bone of praise to Esau for

his still sublimer generosity to the brother who had wronged him? Jacob

took advantage of Esau's consuming hunger to rob him of his birthright

and the great honor and consideration that belonged to the position; by

treachery and falsehood he robbed him of his father's blessing; he made

of him a stranger in his home, and a wanderer. Yet after twenty years

had passed away and Jacob met Esau and fell at his feet quaking with fear

and begging piteously to be spared the punishment he knew he deserved,

what did that magnificent savage do? He fell upon his neck and embraced

him! When Jacob--who was incapable of comprehending nobility of

character--still doubting, still fearing, insisted upon "finding grace

with my lord" by the bribe of a present of cattle, what did the gorgeous

son of the desert say?

"Nay, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself!"

Esau found Jacob rich, beloved by wives and children, and traveling in

state, with servants, herds of cattle and trains of camels--but he

himself was still the uncourted outcast this brother had made him. After

thirteen years of romantic mystery, the brethren who had wronged Joseph,

came, strangers in a strange land, hungry and humble, to buy "a little

food"; and being summoned to a palace, charged with crime, they beheld in

its owner their wronged brother; they were trembling beggars--he, the

lord of a mighty empire! What Joseph that ever lived would have thrown

away such a chance to "show off?" Who stands first--outcast Esau

forgiving Jacob in prosperity, or Joseph on a king's throne forgiving the

ragged tremblers whose happy rascality placed him there?

Just before we came to Joseph's Pit, we had "raised" a hill, and there, a

few miles before us, with not a tree or a shrub to interrupt the view,

lay a vision which millions of worshipers in the far lands of the earth

would give half their possessions to see--the sacred Sea of Galilee!

Therefore we tarried only a short time at the pit. We rested the horses

and ourselves, and felt for a few minutes the blessed shade of the

ancient buildings. We were out of water, but the two or three scowling

Arabs, with their long guns, who were idling about the place, said they

had none and that there was none in the vicinity. They knew there was a

little brackish water in the pit, but they venerated a place made sacred

by their ancestor's imprisonment too much to be willing to see Christian

dogs drink from it. But Ferguson tied rags and handkerchiefs together

till he made a rope long enough to lower a vessel to the bottom, and we

drank and then rode on; and in a short time we dismounted on those shores

which the feet of the Saviour have made holy ground.

At noon we took a swim in the Sea of Galilee--a blessed privilege in this

roasting climate--and then lunched under a neglected old fig-tree at the

fountain they call Ain-et-Tin, a hundred yards from ruined Capernaum.

Every rivulet that gurgles out of the rocks and sands of this part of the

world is dubbed with the title of "fountain," and people familiar with

the Hudson, the great lakes and the Mississippi fall into transports of

admiration over them, and exhaust their powers of composition in writing

their praises. If all the poetry and nonsense that have been discharged

upon the fountains and the bland scenery of this region were collected in

a book, it would make a most valuable volume to burn.

During luncheon, the pilgrim enthusiasts of our party, who had been so

light-hearted and so happy ever since they touched holy ground that they

did little but mutter incoherent rhapsodies, could scarcely eat, so

anxious were they to "take shipping" and sail in very person upon the

waters that had borne the vessels of the Apostles. Their anxiety grew

and their excitement augmented with every fleeting moment, until my fears

were aroused and I began to have misgivings that in their present

condition they might break recklessly loose from all considerations of

prudence and buy a whole fleet of ships to sail in instead of hiring a

single one for an hour, as quiet folk are wont to do. I trembled to

think of the ruined purses this day's performances might result in.

I could not help reflecting bodingly upon the intemperate zeal with which

middle-aged men are apt to surfeit themselves upon a seductive folly

which they have tasted for the first time. And yet I did not feel that

I had a right to be surprised at the state of things which was giving me

so much concern. These men had been taught from infancy to revere,

almost to worship, the holy places whereon their happy eyes were resting

now. For many and many a year this very picture had visited their

thoughts by day and floated through their dreams by night. To stand

before it in the flesh--to see it as they saw it now--to sail upon the

hallowed sea, and kiss the holy soil that compassed it about: these were

aspirations they had cherished while a generation dragged its lagging

seasons by and left its furrows in their faces and its frosts upon their

hair. To look upon this picture, and sail upon this sea, they had

forsaken home and its idols and journeyed thousands and thousands of

miles, in weariness and tribulation. What wonder that the sordid lights

of work-day prudence should pale before the glory of a hope like theirs

in the full splendor of its fruition? Let them squander millions!

I said--who speaks of money at a time like this?

In this frame of mind I followed, as fast as I could, the eager footsteps

of the pilgrims, and stood upon the shore of the lake, and swelled, with

hat and voice, the frantic hail they sent after the "ship" that was

speeding by. It was a success. The toilers of the sea ran in and

beached their barque. Joy sat upon every countenance.

"How much?--ask him how much, Ferguson!--how much to take us all--eight

of us, and you--to Bethsaida, yonder, and to the mouth of Jordan, and to

the place where the swine ran down into the sea--quick!--and we want to

coast around every where--every where!--all day long!--I could sail a

year in these waters!--and tell him we'll stop at Magdala and finish at

Tiberias!--ask him how much?--any thing--any thing whatever!--tell him we

don't care what the expense is!" [I said to myself, I knew how it would

be.]

Ferguson--(interpreting)--"He says two Napoleons--eight dollars."

One or two countenances fell. Then a pause.

"Too much!--we'll give him one!"

I never shall know how it was--I shudder yet when I think how the place

is given to miracles--but in a single instant of time, as it seemed to

me, that ship was twenty paces from the shore, and speeding away like a

frightened thing! Eight crestfallen creatures stood upon the shore, and

O, to think of it! this--this--after all that overmastering ecstacy!

Oh, shameful, shameful ending, after such unseemly boasting! It was too

much like "Ho! let me at him!" followed by a prudent "Two of you hold

him--one can hold me!"

Instantly there was wailing and gnashing of teeth in the camp. The two

Napoleons were offered--more if necessary--and pilgrims and dragoman

shouted themselves hoarse with pleadings to the retreating boatmen to

come back. But they sailed serenely away and paid no further heed to

pilgrims who had dreamed all their lives of some day skimming over the

sacred waters of Galilee and listening to its hallowed story in the

whisperings of its waves, and had journeyed countless leagues to do it,

and--and then concluded that the fare was too high. Impertinent

Mohammedan Arabs, to think such things of gentlemen of another faith!

Well, there was nothing to do but just submit and forego the privilege of

voyaging on Genessaret, after coming half around the globe to taste that

pleasure. There was a time, when the Saviour taught here, that boats

were plenty among the fishermen of the coasts--but boats and fishermen

both are gone, now; and old Josephus had a fleet of men-of-war in these

waters eighteen centuries ago--a hundred and thirty bold canoes--but

they, also, have passed away and left no sign. They battle here no more

by sea, and the commercial marine of Galilee numbers only two small

ships, just of a pattern with the little skiffs the disciples knew. One

was lost to us for good--the other was miles away and far out of hail.

So we mounted the horses and rode grimly on toward Magdala, cantering

along in the edge of the water for want of the means of passing over it.

How the pilgrims abused each other! Each said it was the other's fault,

and each in turn denied it. No word was spoken by the sinners--even the

mildest sarcasm might have been dangerous at such a time. Sinners that

have been kept down and had examples held up to them, and suffered

frequent lectures, and been so put upon in a moral way and in the matter

of going slow and being serious and bottling up slang, and so crowded in

regard to the matter of being proper and always and forever behaving,

that their lives have become a burden to them, would not lag behind

pilgrims at such a time as this, and wink furtively, and be joyful, and

commit other such crimes--because it would not occur to them to do it.

Otherwise they would. But they did do it, though--and it did them a

world of good to hear the pilgrims abuse each other, too. We took an

unworthy satisfaction in seeing them fall out, now and then, because it

showed that they were only poor human people like us, after all.

So we all rode down to Magdala, while the gnashing of teeth waxed and

waned by turns, and harsh words troubled the holy calm of Galilee.

Lest any man think I mean to be ill-natured when I talk about our

pilgrims as I have been talking, I wish to say in all sincerity that I do

not. I would not listen to lectures from men I did not like and could

not respect; and none of these can say I ever took their lectures

unkindly, or was restive under the infliction, or failed to try to profit

by what they said to me. They are better men than I am; I can say that

honestly; they are good friends of mine, too--and besides, if they did

not wish to be stirred up occasionally in print, why in the mischief did

they travel with me? They knew me. They knew my liberal way--that I

like to give and take--when it is for me to give and other people to

take. When one of them threatened to leave me in Damascus when I had the

cholera, he had no real idea of doing it--I know his passionate nature

and the good impulses that underlie it. And did I not overhear Church,

another pilgrim, say he did not care who went or who staid, he would

stand by me till I walked out of Damascus on my own feet or was carried

out in a coffin, if it was a year? And do I not include Church every

time I abuse the pilgrims--and would I be likely to speak ill-naturedly

of him? I wish to stir them up and make them healthy; that is all.

We had left Capernaum behind us. It was only a shapeless ruin. It bore

no semblance to a town, and had nothing about it to suggest that it had

ever been a town. But all desolate and unpeopled as it was, it was

illustrious ground. From it sprang that tree of Christianity whose broad

arms overshadow so many distant lands to-day. After Christ was tempted

of the devil in the desert, he came here and began his teachings; and

during the three or four years he lived afterward, this place was his

home almost altogether. He began to heal the sick, and his fame soon

spread so widely that sufferers came from Syria and beyond Jordan, and

even from Jerusalem, several days' journey away, to be cured of their

diseases. Here he healed the centurion's servant and Peter's

mother-in-law, and multitudes of the lame and the blind and persons

possessed of devils; and here, also, he raised Jairus's daughter from

the dead. He went into a ship with his disciples, and when they roused

him from sleep in the midst of a storm, he quieted the winds and lulled

the troubled sea to rest with his voice. He passed over to the other

side, a few miles away and relieved two men of devils, which passed into

some swine. After his return he called Matthew from the receipt of

customs, performed some cures, and created scandal by eating with

publicans and sinners. Then he went healing and teaching through

Galilee, and even journeyed to Tyre and Sidon. He chose the twelve

disciples, and sent them abroad to preach the new gospel. He worked

miracles in Bethsaida and Chorazin--villages two or three miles from

Capernaum. It was near one of them that the miraculous draft of fishes

is supposed to have been taken, and it was in the desert places near the

other that he fed the thousands by the miracles of the loaves and

fishes. He cursed them both, and Capernaum also, for not repenting,

after all the great works he had done in their midst, and prophesied

against them. They are all in ruins, now--which is gratifying to the

pilgrims, for, as usual, they fit the eternal words of gods to the

evanescent things of this earth; Christ, it is more probable, referred

to the people, not their shabby villages of wigwams: he said it would be

sad for them at "the day of judgment"--and what business have mud-hovels

at the Day of Judgment? It would not affect the prophecy in the least

--it would neither prove it or disprove it--if these towns were splendid

cities now instead of the almost vanished ruins they are. Christ visited

Magdala, which is near by Capernaum, and he also visited Cesarea

Philippi. He went up to his old home at Nazareth, and saw his brothers

Joses, and Judas, and James, and Simon--those persons who, being own

brothers to Jesus Christ, one would expect to hear mentioned sometimes,

yet who ever saw their names in a newspaper or heard them from a pulpit?

Who ever inquires what manner of youths they were; and whether they

slept with Jesus, played with him and romped about him; quarreled with

him concerning toys and trifles; struck him in anger, not suspecting

what he was? Who ever wonders what they thought when they saw him come

back to Nazareth a celebrity, and looked long at his unfamiliar face to

make sure, and then said, "It is Jesus?" Who wonders what passed in

their minds when they saw this brother, (who was only a brother to them,

however much he might be to others a mysterious stranger who was a god

and had stood face to face with God above the clouds,) doing strange

miracles with crowds of astonished people for witnesses? Who wonders if

the brothers of Jesus asked him to come home with them, and said his

mother and his sisters were grieved at his long absence, and would be

wild with delight to see his face again? Who ever gives a thought to

the sisters of Jesus at all?--yet he had sisters; and memories of them

must have stolen into his mind often when he was ill-treated among

strangers; when he was homeless and said he had not where to lay his

head; when all deserted him, even Peter, and he stood alone among his

enemies.

Christ did few miracles in Nazareth, and staid but a little while. The

people said, "This the Son of God! Why, his father is nothing but a

carpenter. We know the family. We see them every day. Are not his

brothers named so and so, and his sisters so and so, and is not his

mother the person they call Mary? This is absurd." He did not curse his

home, but he shook its dust from his feet and went away.

Capernaum lies close to the edge of the little sea, in a small plain some

five miles long and a mile or two wide, which is mildly adorned with

oleanders which look all the better contrasted with the bald hills and

the howling deserts which surround them, but they are not as deliriously

beautiful as the books paint them. If one be calm and resolute he can

look upon their comeliness and live.

One of the most astonishing things that have yet fallen under our

observation is the exceedingly small portion of the earth from which

sprang the now flourishing plant of Christianity. The longest journey

our Saviour ever performed was from here to Jerusalem--about one hundred

to one hundred and twenty miles. The next longest was from here to

Sidon--say about sixty or seventy miles. Instead of being wide apart--as

American appreciation of distances would naturally suggest--the places

made most particularly celebrated by the presence of Christ are nearly

all right here in full view, and within cannon-shot of Capernaum.

Leaving out two or three short journeys of the Saviour, he spent his

life, preached his gospel, and performed his miracles within a compass no

larger than an ordinary county in the United States. It is as much as I

can do to comprehend this stupefying fact. How it wears a man out to

have to read up a hundred pages of history every two or three miles--for

verily the celebrated localities of Palestine occur that close together.

How wearily, how bewilderingly they swarm about your path!

In due time we reached the ancient village of Magdala.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Magdala is not a beautiful place. It is thoroughly Syrian, and that is

to say that it is thoroughly ugly, and cramped, squalid, uncomfortable,

and filthy--just the style of cities that have adorned the country since

Adam's time, as all writers have labored hard to prove, and have

succeeded. The streets of Magdala are any where from three to six feet

wide, and reeking with uncleanliness. The houses are from five to seven

feet high, and all built upon one arbitrary plan--the ungraceful form of

a dry-goods box. The sides are daubed with a smooth white plaster, and

tastefully frescoed aloft and alow with disks of camel-dung placed there

to dry. This gives the edifice the romantic appearance of having been

riddled with cannon-balls, and imparts to it a very warlike aspect. When

the artist has arranged his materials with an eye to just proportion

--the small and the large flakes in alternate rows, and separated by

carefully-considered intervals--I know of nothing more cheerful to look

upon than a spirited Syrian fresco. The flat, plastered roof is

garnished by picturesque stacks of fresco materials, which, having

become thoroughly dried and cured, are placed there where it will be

convenient. It is used for fuel. There is no timber of any consequence

in Palestine--none at all to waste upon fires--and neither are there any

mines of coal. If my description has been intelligible, you will

perceive, now, that a square, flat-roofed hovel, neatly frescoed, with

its wall-tops gallantly bastioned and turreted with dried camel-refuse,

gives to a landscape a feature that is exceedingly festive and

picturesque, especially if one is careful to remember to stick in a cat

wherever, about the premises, there is room for a cat to sit. There are

no windows to a Syrian hut, and no chimneys. When I used to read that

they let a bed-ridden man down through the roof of a house in Capernaum

to get him into the presence of the Saviour, I generally had a

three-story brick in my mind, and marveled that they did not break his

neck with the strange experiment. I perceive now, however, that they

might have taken him by the heels and thrown him clear over the house

without discommoding him very much. Palestine is not changed any since

those days, in manners, customs, architecture, or people.

As we rode into Magdala not a soul was visible. But the ring of the

horses' hoofs roused the stupid population, and they all came trooping

out--old men and old women, boys and girls, the blind, the crazy, and the

crippled, all in ragged, soiled and scanty raiment, and all abject

beggars by nature, instinct and education. How the vermin-tortured

vagabonds did swarm! How they showed their scars and sores, and

piteously pointed to their maimed and crooked limbs, and begged with

their pleading eyes for charity! We had invoked a spirit we could not

lay. They hung to the horses's tails, clung to their manes and the

stirrups, closed in on every side in scorn of dangerous hoofs--and out of

their infidel throats, with one accord, burst an agonizing and most

infernal chorus: "Howajji, bucksheesh! howajji, bucksheesh! howajji,

bucksheesh! bucksheesh! bucksheesh!" I never was in a storm like that

before.

As we paid the bucksheesh out to sore-eyed children and brown, buxom

girls with repulsively tattooed lips and chins, we filed through the town

and by many an exquisite fresco, till we came to a bramble-infested

inclosure and a Roman-looking ruin which had been the veritable dwelling

of St. Mary Magdalene, the friend and follower of Jesus. The guide

believed it, and so did I. I could not well do otherwise, with the house

right there before my eyes as plain as day. The pilgrims took down

portions of the front wall for specimens, as is their honored custom, and

then we departed.

We are camped in this place, now, just within the city walls of Tiberias.

We went into the town before nightfall and looked at its people--we cared

nothing about its houses. Its people are best examined at a distance.

They are particularly uncomely Jews, Arabs, and negroes. Squalor and

poverty are the pride of Tiberias. The young women wear their dower

strung upon a strong wire that curves downward from the top of the head

to the jaw--Turkish silver coins which they have raked together or

inherited. Most of these maidens were not wealthy, but some few had been

very kindly dealt with by fortune. I saw heiresses there worth, in their

own right--worth, well, I suppose I might venture to say, as much as nine

dollars and a half. But such cases are rare. When you come across one

of these, she naturally puts on airs. She will not ask for bucksheesh.

She will not even permit of undue familiarity. She assumes a crushing

dignity and goes on serenely practicing with her fine-tooth comb and

quoting poetry just the same as if you were not present at all. Some

people can not stand prosperity.

They say that the long-nosed, lanky, dyspeptic-looking body-snatchers,

with the indescribable hats on, and a long curl dangling down in front of

each ear, are the old, familiar, self-righteous Pharisees we read of in

the Scriptures. Verily, they look it. Judging merely by their general

style, and without other evidence, one might easily suspect that

self-righteousness was their specialty.

From various authorities I have culled information concerning Tiberias.

It was built by Herod Antipas, the murderer of John the Baptist, and

named after the Emperor Tiberius. It is believed that it stands upon the

site of what must have been, ages ago, a city of considerable

architectural pretensions, judging by the fine porphyry pillars that are

scattered through Tiberias and down the lake shore southward. These were

fluted, once, and yet, although the stone is about as hard as iron, the

flutings are almost worn away. These pillars are small, and doubtless

the edifices they adorned were distinguished more for elegance than

grandeur. This modern town--Tiberias--is only mentioned in the New

Testament; never in the Old.

The Sanhedrim met here last, and for three hundred years Tiberias was the

metropolis of the Jews in Palestine. It is one of the four holy cities

of the Israelites, and is to them what Mecca is to the Mohammedan and

Jerusalem to the Christian. It has been the abiding place of many

learned and famous Jewish rabbins. They lie buried here, and near them

lie also twenty-five thousand of their faith who traveled far to be near

them while they lived and lie with them when they died. The great Rabbi

Ben Israel spent three years here in the early part of the third century.

He is dead, now.

The celebrated Sea of Galilee is not so large a sea as Lake Tahoe

--[I measure all lakes by Tahoe, partly because I am far more familiar with

it than with any other, and partly because I have such a high admiration

for it and such a world of pleasant recollections of it, that it is very

nearly impossible for me to speak of lakes and not mention it.]--by a

good deal--it is just about two-thirds as large. And when we come to

speak of beauty, this sea is no more to be compared to Tahoe than a

meridian of longitude is to a rainbow. The dim waters of this pool can

not suggest the limpid brilliancy of Tahoe; these low, shaven, yellow

hillocks of rocks and sand, so devoid of perspective, can not suggest the

grand peaks that compass Tahoe like a wall, and whose ribbed and chasmed

fronts are clad with stately pines that seem to grow small and smaller as

they climb, till one might fancy them reduced to weeds and shrubs far

upward, where they join the everlasting snows. Silence and solitude

brood over Tahoe; and silence and solitude brood also over this lake of

Genessaret. But the solitude of the one is as cheerful and fascinating

as the solitude of the other is dismal and repellant.

In the early morning one watches the silent battle of dawn and darkness

upon the waters of Tahoe with a placid interest; but when the shadows

sulk away and one by one the hidden beauties of the shore unfold

themselves in the full splendor of noon; when the still surface is belted

like a rainbow with broad bars of blue and green and white, half the

distance from circumference to centre; when, in the lazy summer

afternoon, he lies in a boat, far out to where the dead blue of the deep

water begins, and smokes the pipe of peace and idly winks at the

distant crags and patches of snow from under his cap-brim; when the boat

drifts shoreward to the white water, and he lolls over the gunwale and

gazes by the hour down through the crystal depths and notes the colors of

the pebbles and reviews the finny armies gliding in procession a hundred

feet below; when at night he sees moon and stars, mountain ridges

feathered with pines, jutting white capes, bold promontories, grand

sweeps of rugged scenery topped with bald, glimmering peaks, all

magnificently pictured in the polished mirror of the lake, in richest,

softest detail, the tranquil interest that was born with the morning

deepens and deepens, by sure degrees, till it culminates at last in

resistless fascination!

It is solitude, for birds and squirrels on the shore and fishes in the

water are all the creatures that are near to make it otherwise, but it is

not the sort of solitude to make one dreary. Come to Galilee for that.

If these unpeopled deserts, these rusty mounds of barrenness, that never,

never, never do shake the glare from their harsh outlines, and fade and

faint into vague perspective; that melancholy ruin of Capernaum; this

stupid village of Tiberias, slumbering under its six funereal plumes of

palms; yonder desolate declivity where the swine of the miracle ran down

into the sea, and doubtless thought it was better to swallow a devil or

two and get drowned into the bargain than have to live longer in such a

place; this cloudless, blistering sky; this solemn, sailless, tintless

lake, reposing within its rim of yellow hills and low, steep banks, and

looking just as expressionless and unpoetical (when we leave its sublime

history out of the question,) as any metropolitan reservoir in

Christendom--if these things are not food for rock me to sleep, mother,

none exist, I think.

But I should not offer the evidence for the prosecution and leave the

defense unheard. Wm. C. Grimes deposes as follows:--

"We had taken ship to go over to the other side. The sea was not

more than six miles wide. Of the beauty of the scene, however, I

can not say enough, nor can I imagine where those travelers carried

their eyes who have described the scenery of the lake as tame or

uninteresting. The first great characteristic of it is the deep

basin in which it lies. This is from three to four hundred feet

deep on all sides except at the lower end, and the sharp slope of

the banks, which are all of the richest green, is broken and

diversified by the wadys and water-courses which work their way down

through the sides of the basin, forming dark chasms or light sunny

valleys. Near Tiberias these banks are rocky, and ancient

sepulchres open in them, with their doors toward the water. They

selected grand spots, as did the Egyptians of old, for burial

places, as if they designed that when the voice of God should reach

the sleepers, they should walk forth and open their eyes on scenes

of glorious beauty. On the east, the wild and desolate mountains

contrast finely with the deep blue lake; and toward the north,

sublime and majestic, Hermon looks down on the sea, lifting his

white crown to heaven with the pride of a hill that has seen the

departing footsteps of a hundred generations. On the north-east

shore of the sea was a single tree, and this is the only tree of any

size visible from the water of the lake, except a few lonely palms

in the city of Tiberias, and by its solitary position attracts more

attention than would a forest. The whole appearance of the scene is

precisely what we would expect and desire the scenery of Genessaret

to be, grand beauty, but quiet calm. The very mountains are calm."

It is an ingeniously written description, and well calculated to deceive.

But if the paint and the ribbons and the flowers be stripped from it, a

skeleton will be found beneath.

So stripped, there remains a lake six miles wide and neutral in color;

with steep green banks, unrelieved by shrubbery; at one end bare,

unsightly rocks, with (almost invisible) holes in them of no consequence

to the picture; eastward, "wild and desolate mountains;" (low, desolate

hills, he should have said;) in the north, a mountain called Hermon, with

snow on it; peculiarity of the picture, "calmness;" its prominent

feature, one tree.

No ingenuity could make such a picture beautiful--to one's actual vision.

I claim the right to correct misstatements, and have so corrected the

color of the water in the above recapitulation. The waters of Genessaret

are of an exceedingly mild blue, even from a high elevation and a

distance of five miles. Close at hand (the witness was sailing on the

lake,) it is hardly proper to call them blue at all, much less "deep"

blue. I wish to state, also, not as a correction, but as matter of

opinion, that Mount Hermon is not a striking or picturesque mountain by

any means, being too near the height of its immediate neighbors to be so.

That is all. I do not object to the witness dragging a mountain

forty-five miles to help the scenery under consideration, because it is

entirely proper to do it, and besides, the picture needs it.

"C. W. E.," (of "Life in the Holy Land,") deposes as follows:--

"A beautiful sea lies unbosomed among the Galilean hills, in the

midst of that land once possessed by Zebulon and Naphtali, Asher and

Dan. The azure of the sky penetrates the depths of the lake, and

the waters are sweet and cool. On the west, stretch broad fertile

plains; on the north the rocky shores rise step by step until in the

far distance tower the snowy heights of Hermon; on the east through

a misty veil are seen the high plains of Perea, which stretch away

in rugged mountains leading the mind by varied paths toward

Jerusalem the Holy. Flowers bloom in this terrestrial paradise,

once beautiful and verdant with waving trees; singing birds enchant

the ear; the turtle-dove soothes with its soft note; the crested

lark sends up its song toward heaven, and the grave and stately

stork inspires the mind with thought, and leads it on to meditation

and repose. Life here was once idyllic, charming; here were once no

rich, no poor, no high, no low. It was a world of ease, simplicity,

and beauty; now it is a scene of desolation and misery."

This is not an ingenious picture. It is the worst I ever saw. It

describes in elaborate detail what it terms a "terrestrial paradise," and

closes with the startling information that this paradise is "a scene of

desolation and misery."

I have given two fair, average specimens of the character of the

testimony offered by the majority of the writers who visit this region.

One says, "Of the beauty of the scene I can not say enough," and then

proceeds to cover up with a woof of glittering sentences a thing which,

when stripped for inspection, proves to be only an unobtrusive basin of

water, some mountainous desolation, and one tree. The other, after a

conscientious effort to build a terrestrial paradise out of the same

materials, with the addition of a "grave and stately stork," spoils it

all by blundering upon the ghastly truth at the last.

Nearly every book concerning Galilee and its lake describes the scenery

as beautiful. No--not always so straightforward as that. Sometimes the

impression intentionally conveyed is that it is beautiful, at the same

time that the author is careful not to say that it is, in plain Saxon.

But a careful analysis of these descriptions will show that the materials

of which they are formed are not individually beautiful and can not be

wrought into combinations that are beautiful. The veneration and the

affection which some of these men felt for the scenes they were speaking

of, heated their fancies and biased their judgment; but the pleasant

falsities they wrote were full of honest sincerity, at any rate. Others

wrote as they did, because they feared it would be unpopular to write

otherwise. Others were hypocrites and deliberately meant to deceive.

Any of them would say in a moment, if asked, that it was always right and

always best to tell the truth. They would say that, at any rate, if they

did not perceive the drift of the question.

But why should not the truth be spoken of this region? Is the truth

harmful? Has it ever needed to hide its face? God made the Sea of

Galilee and its surroundings as they are. Is it the province of Mr.

Grimes to improve upon the work?

I am sure, from the tenor of books I have read, that many who have

visited this land in years gone by, were Presbyterians, and came seeking

evidences in support of their particular creed; they found a Presbyterian

Palestine, and they had already made up their minds to find no other,

though possibly they did not know it, being blinded by their zeal.

Others were Baptists, seeking Baptist evidences and a Baptist Palestine.

Others were Catholics, Methodists, Episcopalians, seeking evidences

indorsing their several creeds, and a Catholic, a Methodist, an

Episcopalian Palestine. Honest as these men's intentions may have been,

they were full of partialities and prejudices, they entered the country

with their verdicts already prepared, and they could no more write

dispassionately and impartially about it than they could about their own

wives and children. Our pilgrims have brought their verdicts with them.

They have shown it in their conversation ever since we left Beirout.

I can almost tell, in set phrase, what they will say when they see Tabor,

Nazareth, Jericho and Jerusalem--because I have the books they will

"smouch" their ideas from. These authors write pictures and frame

rhapsodies, and lesser men follow and see with the author's eyes instead

of their own, and speak with his tongue. What the pilgrims said at

Cesarea Philippi surprised me with its wisdom. I found it afterwards in

Robinson. What they said when Genessaret burst upon their vision,

charmed me with its grace. I find it in Mr. Thompson's "Land and the

Book." They have spoken often, in happily worded language which never

varied, of how they mean to lay their weary heads upon a stone at Bethel,

as Jacob did, and close their dim eyes, and dream, perchance, of angels

descending out of heaven on a ladder. It was very pretty. But I have

recognized the weary head and the dim eyes, finally. They borrowed the

idea--and the words--and the construction--and the punctuation--from

Grimes. The pilgrims will tell of Palestine, when they get home, not as

it appeared to them, but as it appeared to Thompson and Robinson and

Grimes--with the tints varied to suit each pilgrim's creed.

Pilgrims, sinners and Arabs are all abed, now, and the camp is still.

Labor in loneliness is irksome. Since I made my last few notes, I have

been sitting outside the tent for half an hour. Night is the time to see

Galilee. Genessaret under these lustrous stars has nothing repulsive

about it. Genessaret with the glittering reflections of the

constellations flecking its surface, almost makes me regret that I ever

saw the rude glare of the day upon it. Its history and its associations

are its chiefest charm, in any eyes, and the spells they weave are feeble

in the searching light of the sun. Then, we scarcely feel the fetters.

Our thoughts wander constantly to the practical concerns of life, and

refuse to dwell upon things that seem vague and unreal. But when the day

is done, even the most unimpressible must yield to the dreamy influences

of this tranquil starlight. The old traditions of the place steal upon

his memory and haunt his reveries, and then his fancy clothes all sights

and sounds with the supernatural. In the lapping of the waves upon the

beach, he hears the dip of ghostly oars; in the secret noises of the

night he hears spirit voices; in the soft sweep of the breeze, the rush

of invisible wings. Phantom ships are on the sea, the dead of twenty

centuries come forth from the tombs, and in the dirges of the night wind

the songs of old forgotten ages find utterance again.

In the starlight, Galilee has no boundaries but the broad compass of the

heavens, and is a theatre meet for great events; meet for the birth of a

religion able to save a world; and meet for the stately Figure appointed

to stand upon its stage and proclaim its high decrees. But in the

sunlight, one says: Is it for the deeds which were done and the words

which were spoken in this little acre of rocks and sand eighteen

centuries gone, that the bells are ringing to-day in the remote islands

of the sea and far and wide over continents that clasp the circumference

of the huge globe?

One can comprehend it only when night has hidden all incongruities and

created a theatre proper for so grand a drama.

CHAPTER XLIX.

We took another swim in the Sea of Galilee at twilight yesterday, and

another at sunrise this morning. We have not sailed, but three swims are

equal to a sail, are they not? There were plenty of fish visible in the

water, but we have no outside aids in this pilgrimage but "Tent Life in

the Holy Land," "The Land and the Book," and other literature of like

description--no fishing-tackle. There were no fish to be had in the

village of Tiberias. True, we saw two or three vagabonds mending their

nets, but never trying to catch any thing with them.

We did not go to the ancient warm baths two miles below Tiberias. I had

no desire in the world to go there. This seemed a little strange, and

prompted me to try to discover what the cause of this unreasonable

indifference was. It turned out to be simply because Pliny mentions

them. I have conceived a sort of unwarrantable unfriendliness toward

Pliny and St. Paul, because it seems as if I can never ferret out a place

that I can have to myself. It always and eternally transpires that St.

Paul has been to that place, and Pliny has "mentioned" it.

In the early morning we mounted and started. And then a weird apparition

marched forth at the head of the procession--a pirate, I thought, if ever

a pirate dwelt upon land. It was a tall Arab, as swarthy as an Indian;

young-say thirty years of age. On his head he had closely bound a

gorgeous yellow and red striped silk scarf, whose ends, lavishly fringed

with tassels, hung down between his shoulders and dallied with the wind.

From his neck to his knees, in ample folds, a robe swept down that was a

very star-spangled banner of curved and sinuous bars of black and white.

Out of his back, somewhere, apparently, the long stem of a chibouk

projected, and reached far above his right shoulder. Athwart his back,

diagonally, and extending high above his left shoulder, was an Arab gum

of Saladin's time, that was splendid with silver plating from stock clear

up to the end of its measureless stretch of barrel. About his waist was

bound many and many a yard of elaborately figured but sadly tarnished

stuff that came from sumptuous Persia, and among the baggy folds in front

the sunbeams glinted from a formidable battery of old brass-mounted

horse-pistols and the gilded hilts of blood-thirsty knives. There were

holsters for more pistols appended to the wonderful stack of long-haired

goat-skins and Persian carpets, which the man had been taught to regard

in the light of a saddle; and down among the pendulous rank of vast

tassels that swung from that saddle, and clanging against the iron shovel

of a stirrup that propped the warrior's knees up toward his chin, was a

crooked, silver-clad scimitar of such awful dimensions and such

implacable expression that no man might hope to look upon it and not

shudder. The fringed and bedizened prince whose privilege it is to ride

the pony and lead the elephant into a country village is poor and naked

compared to this chaos of paraphernalia, and the happy vanity of the one

is the very poverty of satisfaction compared to the majestic serenity,

the overwhelming complacency of the other.

"Who is this? What is this?" That was the trembling inquiry all down

the line.

"Our guard! From Galilee to the birthplace of the Savior, the country is

infested with fierce Bedouins, whose sole happiness it is, in this life,

to cut and stab and mangle and murder unoffending Christians. Allah be

with us!"

"Then hire a regiment! Would you send us out among these desperate

hordes, with no salvation in our utmost need but this old turret?"

The dragoman laughed--not at the facetiousness of the simile, for verily,

that guide or that courier or that dragoman never yet lived upon earth

who had in him the faintest appreciation of a joke, even though that joke

were so broad and so ponderous that if it fell on him it would flatten

him out like a postage stamp--the dragoman laughed, and then, emboldened

by some thought that was in his brain, no doubt, proceeded to extremities

and winked.

In straits like these, when a man laughs, it is encouraging when he

winks, it is positively reassuring. He finally intimated that one guard

would be sufficient to protect us, but that that one was an absolute

necessity. It was because of the moral weight his awful panoply would

have with the Bedouins. Then I said we didn't want any guard at all.

If one fantastic vagabond could protect eight armed Christians and a pack

of Arab servants from all harm, surely that detachment could protect

themselves. He shook his head doubtfully. Then I said, just think of

how it looks--think of how it would read, to self-reliant Americans, that

we went sneaking through this deserted wilderness under the protection of

this masquerading Arab, who would break his neck getting out of the

country if a man that was a man ever started after him. It was a mean,

low, degrading position. Why were we ever told to bring navy revolvers

with us if we had to be protected at last by this infamous star-spangled

scum of the desert? These appeals were vain--the dragoman only smiled

and shook his head.

I rode to the front and struck up an acquaintance with King

Solomon-in-all-his-glory, and got him to show me his lingering eternity

of a gun. It had a rusty flint lock; it was ringed and barred and plated

with silver from end to end, but it was as desperately out of the

perpendicular as are the billiard cues of '49 that one finds yet in

service in the ancient mining camps of California. The muzzle was eaten

by the rust of centuries into a ragged filigree-work, like the end of a

burnt-out stove-pipe. I shut one eye and peered within--it was flaked

with iron rust like an old steamboat boiler. I borrowed the ponderous

pistols and snapped them. They were rusty inside, too--had not been

loaded for a generation. I went back, full of encouragement, and

reported to the guide, and asked him to discharge this dismantled

fortress. It came out, then. This fellow was a retainer of the Sheik

of Tiberias. He was a source of Government revenue. He was to the

Empire of Tiberias what the customs are to America. The Sheik imposed

guards upon travelers and charged them for it. It is a lucrative source

of emolument, and sometimes brings into the national treasury as much as

thirty-five or forty dollars a year.

I knew the warrior's secret now; I knew the hollow vanity of his rusty

trumpery, and despised his asinine complacency. I told on him, and with

reckless daring the cavalcade straight ahead into the perilous solitudes

of the desert, and scorned his frantic warnings of the mutilation and

death that hovered about them on every side.

Arrived at an elevation of twelve hundred feet above the lake, (I ought

to mention that the lake lies six hundred feet below the level of the

Mediterranean--no traveler ever neglects to flourish that fragment of

news in his letters,) as bald and unthrilling a panorama as any land can

afford, perhaps, was spread out before us. Yet it was so crowded with

historical interest, that if all the pages that have been written about

it were spread upon its surface, they would flag it from horizon to

horizon like a pavement. Among the localities comprised in this view,

were Mount Hermon; the hills that border Cesarea Philippi, Dan, the

Sources of the Jordan and the Waters of Merom; Tiberias; the Sea of

Galilee; Joseph's Pit; Capernaum; Bethsaida; the supposed scenes of the

Sermon on the Mount, the feeding of the multitudes and the miraculous

draught of fishes; the declivity down which the swine ran to the sea; the

entrance and the exit of the Jordan; Safed, "the city set upon a hill,"

one of the four holy cities of the Jews, and the place where they believe

the real Messiah will appear when he comes to redeem the world; part of

the battle-field of Hattin, where the knightly Crusaders fought their

last fight, and in a blaze of glory passed from the stage and ended their

splendid career forever; Mount Tabor, the traditional scene of the Lord's

Transfiguration. And down toward the southeast lay a landscape that

suggested to my mind a quotation (imperfectly remembered, no doubt:)

"The Ephraimites, not being called upon to share in the rich spoils

of the Ammonitish war, assembled a mighty host to fight against

Jeptha, Judge of Israel; who, being apprised of their approach,

gathered together the men of Israel and gave them battle and put

them to flight. To make his victory the more secure, he stationed

guards at the different fords and passages of the Jordan, with

instructions to let none pass who could not say Shibboleth. The

Ephraimites, being of a different tribe, could not frame to

pronounce the word right, but called it Sibboleth, which proved them

enemies and cost them their lives; wherefore, forty and two thousand

fell at the different fords and passages of the Jordan that day."

We jogged along peacefully over the great caravan route from Damascus to

Jerusalem and Egypt, past Lubia and other Syrian hamlets, perched, in the

unvarying style, upon the summit of steep mounds and hills, and fenced

round about with giant cactuses, (the sign of worthless land,) with

prickly pears upon them like hams, and came at last to the battle-field

of Hattin.

It is a grand, irregular plateau, and looks as if it might have been

created for a battle-field. Here the peerless Saladin met the Christian

host some seven hundred years ago, and broke their power in Palestine for

all time to come. There had long been a truce between the opposing

forces, but according to the Guide-Book, Raynauld of Chatillon, Lord of

Kerak, broke it by plundering a Damascus caravan, and refusing to give up

either the merchants or their goods when Saladin demanded them. This

conduct of an insolent petty chieftain stung the Sultan to the quick, and

he swore that he would slaughter Raynauld with his own hand, no matter

how, or when, or where he found him. Both armies prepared for war.

Under the weak King of Jerusalem was the very flower of the Christian

chivalry. He foolishly compelled them to undergo a long, exhausting

march, in the scorching sun, and then, without water or other

refreshment, ordered them to encamp in this open plain. The splendidly

mounted masses of Moslem soldiers swept round the north end of

Genessaret, burning and destroying as they came, and pitched their camp

in front of the opposing lines. At dawn the terrific fight began.

Surrounded on all sides by the Sultan's swarming battalions, the

Christian Knights fought on without a hope for their lives. They fought

with desperate valor, but to no purpose; the odds of heat and numbers,

and consuming thirst, were too great against them. Towards the middle of

the day the bravest of their band cut their way through the Moslem ranks

and gained the summit of a little hill, and there, hour after hour, they

closed around the banner of the Cross, and beat back the charging

squadrons of the enemy.

But the doom of the Christian power was sealed. Sunset found Saladin

Lord of Palestine, the Christian chivalry strewn in heaps upon the field,

and the King of Jerusalem, the Grand Master of the Templars, and Raynauld

of Chatillon, captives in the Sultan's tent. Saladin treated two of the

prisoners with princely courtesy, and ordered refreshments to be set

before them. When the King handed an iced Sherbet to Chatillon, the

Sultan said, "It is thou that givest it to him, not I." He remembered

his oath, and slaughtered the hapless Knight of Chatillon with his own

hand.

It was hard to realize that this silent plain had once resounded with

martial music and trembled to the tramp of armed men. It was hard to

people this solitude with rushing columns of cavalry, and stir its torpid

pulses with the shouts of victors, the shrieks of the wounded, and the

flash of banner and steel above the surging billows of war. A desolation

is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of life and

action.

We reached Tabor safely, and considerably in advance of that old

iron-clad swindle of a guard. We never saw a human being on the whole

route, much less lawless hordes of Bedouins. Tabor stands solitary and

alone, a giant sentinel above the Plain of Esdraelon. It rises some

fourteen hundred feet above the surrounding level, a green, wooden cone,

symmetrical and full of grace--a prominent landmark, and one that is

exceedingly pleasant to eyes surfeited with the repulsive monotony of

desert Syria. We climbed the steep path to its summit, through breezy

glades of thorn and oak. The view presented from its highest peak was

almost beautiful. Below, was the broad, level plain of Esdraelon,

checkered with fields like a chess-board, and full as smooth and level,

seemingly; dotted about its borders with white, compact villages, and

faintly penciled, far and near, with the curving lines of roads and

trails. When it is robed in the fresh verdure of spring, it must form a

charming picture, even by itself. Skirting its southern border rises

"Little Hermon," over whose summit a glimpse of Gilboa is caught. Nain,

famous for the raising of the widow's son, and Endor, as famous for the

performances of her witch are in view. To the eastward lies the Valley

of the Jordan and beyond it the mountains of Gilead. Westward is Mount

Carmel. Hermon in the north--the table-lands of Bashan--Safed, the holy

city, gleaming white upon a tall spur of the mountains of Lebanon

--a steel-blue corner of the Sea of Galilee--saddle-peaked Hattin,

traditional "Mount of Beatitudes" and mute witness brave fights of the

Crusading host for Holy Cross--these fill up the picture.

To glance at the salient features of this landscape through the

picturesque framework of a ragged and ruined stone window--arch of the

time of Christ, thus hiding from sight all that is unattractive, is to

secure to yourself a pleasure worth climbing the mountain to enjoy. One

must stand on his head to get the best effect in a fine sunset, and set a

landscape in a bold, strong framework that is very close at hand, to

bring out all its beauty. One learns this latter truth never more to

forget it, in that mimic land of enchantment, the wonderful garden of my

lord the Count Pallavicini, near Genoa. You go wandering for hours among

hills and wooded glens, artfully contrived to leave the impression that

Nature shaped them and not man; following winding paths and coming

suddenly upon leaping cascades and rustic bridges; finding sylvan lakes

where you expected them not; loitering through battered mediaeval castles

in miniature that seem hoary with age and yet were built a dozen years

ago; meditating over ancient crumbling tombs, whose marble columns were

marred and broken purposely by the modern artist that made them;

stumbling unawares upon toy palaces, wrought of rare and costly

materials, and again upon a peasant's hut, whose dilapidated furniture

would never suggest that it was made so to order; sweeping round and

round in the midst of a forest on an enchanted wooden horse that is moved

by some invisible agency; traversing Roman roads and passing under

majestic triumphal arches; resting in quaint bowers where unseen spirits

discharge jets of water on you from every possible direction, and where

even the flowers you touch assail you with a shower; boating on a

subterranean lake among caverns and arches royally draped with clustering

stalactites, and passing out into open day upon another lake, which is

bordered with sloping banks of grass and gay with patrician barges that

swim at anchor in the shadow of a miniature marble temple that rises out

of the clear water and glasses its white statues, its rich capitals and

fluted columns in the tranquil depths. So, from marvel to marvel you

have drifted on, thinking all the time that the one last seen must be the

chiefest. And, verily, the chiefest wonder is reserved until the last,

but you do not see it until you step ashore, and passing through a

wilderness of rare flowers, collected from every corner of the earth, you

stand at the door of one more mimic temple. Right in this place the

artist taxed his genius to the utmost, and fairly opened the gates of

fairy land. You look through an unpretending pane of glass, stained

yellow--the first thing you see is a mass of quivering foliage, ten short

steps before you, in the midst of which is a ragged opening like a

gateway-a thing that is common enough in nature, and not apt to excite

suspicions of a deep human design--and above the bottom of the gateway,

project, in the most careless way! a few broad tropic leaves and

brilliant flowers. All of a sudden, through this bright, bold gateway,

you catch a glimpse of the faintest, softest, richest picture that ever

graced the dream of a dying Saint, since John saw the New Jerusalem

glimmering above the clouds of Heaven. A broad sweep of sea, flecked

with careening sails; a sharp, jutting cape, and a lofty lighthouse on

it; a sloping lawn behind it; beyond, a portion of the old "city of

palaces," with its parks and hills and stately mansions; beyond these, a

prodigious mountain, with its strong outlines sharply cut against ocean

and sky; and over all, vagrant shreds and flakes of cloud, floating in a

sea of gold. The ocean is gold, the city is gold, the meadow, the

mountain, the sky--every thing is golden-rich, and mellow, and dreamy as

a vision of Paradise. No artist could put upon canvas, its entrancing

beauty, and yet, without the yellow glass, and the carefully contrived

accident of a framework that cast it into enchanted distance and shut out

from it all unattractive features, it was not a picture to fall into

ecstasies over. Such is life, and the trail of the serpent is over us

all.

There is nothing for it now but to come back to old Tabor, though the

subject is tiresome enough, and I can not stick to it for wandering off

to scenes that are pleasanter to remember. I think I will skip, any how.

There is nothing about Tabor (except we concede that it was the scene of

the Transfiguration,) but some gray old ruins, stacked up there in all

ages of the world from the days of stout Gideon and parties that

flourished thirty centuries ago to the fresh yesterday of Crusading

times. It has its Greek Convent, and the coffee there is good, but never

a splinter of the true cross or bone of a hallowed saint to arrest the

idle thoughts of worldlings and turn them into graver channels.

A Catholic church is nothing to me that has no relics.

The plain of Esdraelon--"the battle-field of the nations"--only sets one

to dreaming of Joshua, and Benhadad, and Saul, and Gideon; Tamerlane,

Tancred, Coeur de Lion, and Saladin; the warrior Kings of Persia, Egypt's

heroes, and Napoleon--for they all fought here. If the magic of the

moonlight could summon from the graves of forgotten centuries and many

lands the countless myriads that have battled on this wide, far-reaching

floor, and array them in the thousand strange Costumes of their hundred

nationalities, and send the vast host sweeping down the plain, splendid

with plumes and banners and glittering lances, I could stay here an age

to see the phantom pageant. But the magic of the moonlight is a vanity

and a fraud; and whoso putteth his trust in it shall suffer sorrow and

disappointment.

Down at the foot of Tabor, and just at the edge of the storied Plain of

Esdraelon, is the insignificant village of Deburieh, where Deborah,

prophetess of Israel, lived. It is just like Magdala.

CHAPTER L.

We descended from Mount Tabor, crossed a deep ravine, followed a hilly,

rocky road to Nazareth--distant two hours. All distances in the East are

measured by hours, not miles. A good horse will walk three miles an hour

over nearly any kind of a road; therefore, an hour, here, always stands

for three miles. This method of computation is bothersome and annoying;

and until one gets thoroughly accustomed to it, it carries no

intelligence to his mind until he has stopped and translated the pagan

hours into Christian miles, just as people do with the spoken words of a

foreign language they are acquainted with, but not familiarly enough to

catch the meaning in a moment. Distances traveled by human feet are also

estimated by hours and minutes, though I do not know what the base of the

calculation is. In Constantinople you ask, "How far is it to the

Consulate?" and they answer, "About ten minutes." "How far is it to the

Lloyds' Agency?" "Quarter of an hour." "How far is it to the lower

bridge?" "Four minutes." I can not be positive about it, but I think

that there, when a man orders a pair of pantaloons, he says he wants them

a quarter of a minute in the legs and nine seconds around the waist.

Two hours from Tabor to Nazareth--and as it was an uncommonly narrow,

crooked trail, we necessarily met all the camel trains and jackass

caravans between Jericho and Jacksonville in that particular place and

nowhere else. The donkeys do not matter so much, because they are so

small that you can jump your horse over them if he is an animal of

spirit, but a camel is not jumpable. A camel is as tall as any ordinary

dwelling-house in Syria--which is to say a camel is from one to two, and

sometimes nearly three feet taller than a good-sized man. In this part

of the country his load is oftenest in the shape of colossal sacks--one

on each side. He and his cargo take up as much room as a carriage.

Think of meeting this style of obstruction in a narrow trail. The camel

would not turn out for a king. He stalks serenely along, bringing his

cushioned stilts forward with the long, regular swing of a pendulum, and

whatever is in the way must get out of the way peaceably, or be wiped out

forcibly by the bulky sacks. It was a tiresome ride to us, and perfectly

exhausting to the horses. We were compelled to jump over upwards of

eighteen hundred donkeys, and only one person in the party was unseated

less than sixty times by the camels. This seems like a powerful

statement, but the poet has said, "Things are not what they seem." I can

not think of any thing, now, more certain to make one shudder, than to

have a soft-footed camel sneak up behind him and touch him on the ear

with its cold, flabby under-lip. A camel did this for one of the boys,

who was drooping over his saddle in a brown study. He glanced up and saw

the majestic apparition hovering above him, and made frantic efforts to

get out of the way, but the camel reached out and bit him on the shoulder

before he accomplished it. This was the only pleasant incident of the

journey.

At Nazareth we camped in an olive grove near the Virgin Mary's fountain,

and that wonderful Arab "guard" came to collect some bucksheesh for his

"services" in following us from Tiberias and warding off invisible

dangers with the terrors of his armament. The dragoman had paid his

master, but that counted as nothing--if you hire a man to sneeze for you,

here, and another man chooses to help him, you have got to pay both.

They do nothing whatever without pay. How it must have surprised these

people to hear the way of salvation offered to them "without money and

without price." If the manners, the people or the customs of this

country have changed since the Saviour's time, the figures and metaphors

of the Bible are not the evidences to prove it by.

We entered the great Latin Convent which is built over the traditional

dwelling-place of the Holy Family. We went down a flight of fifteen

steps below the ground level, and stood in a small chapel tricked out

with tapestry hangings, silver lamps, and oil paintings. A spot marked

by a cross, in the marble floor, under the altar, was exhibited as the

place made forever holy by the feet of the Virgin when she stood up to

receive the message of the angel. So simple, so unpretending a locality,

to be the scene of so mighty an event! The very scene of the

Annunciation--an event which has been commemorated by splendid shrines

and august temples all over the civilized world, and one which the

princes of art have made it their loftiest ambition to picture worthily

on their canvas; a spot whose history is familiar to the very children of

every house, and city, and obscure hamlet of the furthest lands of

Christendom; a spot which myriads of men would toil across the breadth of

a world to see, would consider it a priceless privilege to look upon.

It was easy to think these thoughts. But it was not easy to bring myself

up to the magnitude of the situation. I could sit off several thousand

miles and imagine the angel appearing, with shadowy wings and lustrous

countenance, and note the glory that streamed downward upon the Virgin's

head while the message from the Throne of God fell upon her ears--any one

can do that, beyond the ocean, but few can do it here. I saw the little

recess from which the angel stepped, but could not fill its void. The

angels that I know are creatures of unstable fancy--they will not fit in

niches of substantial stone. Imagination labors best in distant fields.

I doubt if any man can stand in the Grotto of the Annunciation and people

with the phantom images of his mind its too tangible walls of stone.

They showed us a broken granite pillar, depending from the roof, which

they said was hacked in two by the Moslem conquerors of Nazareth, in the

vain hope of pulling down the sanctuary. But the pillar remained

miraculously suspended in the air, and, unsupported itself, supported

then and still supports the roof. By dividing this statement up among

eight, it was found not difficult to believe it.

These gifted Latin monks never do any thing by halves. If they were to

show you the Brazen Serpent that was elevated in the wilderness, you

could depend upon it that they had on hand the pole it was elevated on

also, and even the hole it stood in. They have got the "Grotto" of the

Annunciation here; and just as convenient to it as one's throat is to his

mouth, they have also the Virgin's Kitchen, and even her sitting-room,

where she and Joseph watched the infant Saviour play with Hebrew toys

eighteen hundred years ago. All under one roof, and all clean, spacious,

comfortable "grottoes." It seems curious that personages intimately

connected with the Holy Family always lived in grottoes--in Nazareth, in

Bethlehem, in imperial Ephesus--and yet nobody else in their day and

generation thought of doing any thing of the kind. If they ever did,

their grottoes are all gone, and I suppose we ought to wonder at the

peculiar marvel of the preservation of these I speak of. When the Virgin

fled from Herod's wrath, she hid in a grotto in Bethlehem, and the same

is there to this day. The slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem was

done in a grotto; the Saviour was born in a grotto--both are shown to

pilgrims yet. It is exceedingly strange that these tremendous events all

happened in grottoes--and exceedingly fortunate, likewise, because the

strongest houses must crumble to ruin in time, but a grotto in the living

rock will last forever. It is an imposture--this grotto stuff--but it is

one that all men ought to thank the Catholics for. Wherever they ferret

out a lost locality made holy by some Scriptural event, they straightway

build a massive--almost imperishable--church there, and preserve the

memory of that locality for the gratification of future generations. If

it had been left to Protestants to do this most worthy work, we would not

even know where Jerusalem is to-day, and the man who could go and put his

finger on Nazareth would be too wise for this world. The world owes the

Catholics its good will even for the happy rascality of hewing out these

bogus grottoes in the rock; for it is infinitely more satisfactory to

look at a grotto, where people have faithfully believed for centuries

that the Virgin once lived, than to have to imagine a dwelling-place for

her somewhere, any where, nowhere, loose and at large all over this town

of Nazareth. There is too large a scope of country. The imagination can

not work. There is no one particular spot to chain your eye, rivet your

interest, and make you think. The memory of the Pilgrims can not perish

while Plymouth Rock remains to us. The old monks are wise. They know

how to drive a stake through a pleasant tradition that will hold it to

its place forever.

We visited the places where Jesus worked for fifteen years as a

carpenter, and where he attempted to teach in the synagogue and was

driven out by a mob. Catholic chapels stand upon these sites and protect

the little fragments of the ancient walls which remain. Our pilgrims

broke off specimens. We visited, also, a new chapel, in the midst of the

town, which is built around a boulder some twelve feet long by four feet

thick; the priests discovered, a few years ago, that the disciples had

sat upon this rock to rest, once, when they had walked up from Capernaum.

They hastened to preserve the relic. Relics are very good property.

Travelers are expected to pay for seeing them, and they do it cheerfully.

We like the idea. One's conscience can never be the worse for the

knowledge that he has paid his way like a man. Our pilgrims would have

liked very well to get out their lampblack and stencil-plates and paint

their names on that rock, together with the names of the villages they

hail from in America, but the priests permit nothing of that kind.

To speak the strict truth, however, our party seldom offend in that way,

though we have men in the ship who never lose an opportunity to do it.

Our pilgrims' chief sin is their lust for "specimens." I suppose that by

this time they know the dimensions of that rock to an inch, and its

weight to a ton; and I do not hesitate to charge that they will go back

there to-night and try to carry it off.

This "Fountain of the Virgin" is the one which tradition says Mary used

to get water from, twenty times a day, when she was a girl, and bear it

away in a jar upon her head. The water streams through faucets in the

face of a wall of ancient masonry which stands removed from the houses of

the village. The young girls of Nazareth still collect about it by the

dozen and keep up a riotous laughter and sky-larking. The Nazarene girls

are homely. Some of them have large, lustrous eyes, but none of them

have pretty faces. These girls wear a single garment, usually, and it is

loose, shapeless, of undecided color; it is generally out of repair, too.

They wear, from crown to jaw, curious strings of old coins, after the

manner of the belles of Tiberias, and brass jewelry upon their wrists and

in their ears. They wear no shoes and stockings. They are the most

human girls we have found in the country yet, and the best natured.

But there is no question that these picturesque maidens sadly lack

comeliness.

A pilgrim--the "Enthusiast"--said: "See that tall, graceful girl! look at

the Madonna-like beauty of her countenance!"

Another pilgrim came along presently and said: "Observe that tall,

graceful girl; what queenly Madonna-like gracefulness of beauty is in her

countenance."

I said: "She is not tall, she is short; she is not beautiful, she is

homely; she is graceful enough, I grant, but she is rather boisterous."

The third and last pilgrim moved by, before long, and he said: "Ah, what

a tall, graceful girl! what Madonna-like gracefulness of queenly beauty!"

The verdicts were all in. It was time, now, to look up the authorities

for all these opinions. I found this paragraph, which follows. Written

by whom? Wm. C. Grimes:

"After we were in the saddle, we rode down to the spring to have a

last look at the women of Nazareth, who were, as a class, much the

prettiest that we had seen in the East. As we approached the crowd

a tall girl of nineteen advanced toward Miriam and offered her a cup

of water. Her movement was graceful and queenly. We exclaimed on

the spot at the Madonna-like beauty of her countenance. Whitely was

suddenly thirsty, and begged for water, and drank it slowly, with

his eyes over the top of the cup, fixed on her large black eyes,

which gazed on him quite as curiously as he on her. Then Moreright

wanted water. She gave it to him and he managed to spill it so as

to ask for another cup, and by the time she came to me she saw

through the operation; her eyes were full of fun as she looked at

me. I laughed outright, and she joined me in as gay a shout as ever

country maiden in old Orange county. I wished for a picture of her.

A Madonna, whose face was a portrait of that beautiful Nazareth

girl, would be a 'thing of beauty' and 'a joy forever.'"

That is the kind of gruel which has been served out from Palestine for

ages. Commend me to Fennimore Cooper to find beauty in the Indians, and

to Grimes to find it in the Arabs. Arab men are often fine looking, but

Arab women are not. We can all believe that the Virgin Mary was

beautiful; it is not natural to think otherwise; but does it follow that

it is our duty to find beauty in these present women of Nazareth?

I love to quote from Grimes, because he is so dramatic. And because he

is so romantic. And because he seems to care but little whether he tells

the truth or not, so he scares the reader or excites his envy or his

admiration.

He went through this peaceful land with one hand forever on his revolver,

and the other on his pocket-handkerchief. Always, when he was not on the

point of crying over a holy place, he was on the point of killing an

Arab. More surprising things happened to him in Palestine than ever

happened to any traveler here or elsewhere since Munchausen died.

At Beit Jin, where nobody had interfered with him, he crept out of his

tent at dead of night and shot at what he took to be an Arab lying on a

rock, some distance away, planning evil. The ball killed a wolf. Just

before he fired, he makes a dramatic picture of himself--as usual, to

scare the reader:

"Was it imagination, or did I see a moving object on the surface of

the rock? If it were a man, why did he not now drop me? He had a

beautiful shot as I stood out in my black boornoose against the

white tent. I had the sensation of an entering bullet in my throat,

breast, brain."

Reckless creature!

Riding toward Genessaret, they saw two Bedouins, and "we looked to our

pistols and loosened them quietly in our shawls," etc. Always cool.

In Samaria, he charged up a hill, in the face of a volley of stones; he

fired into the crowd of men who threw them. He says:

"I never lost an opportunity of impressing the Arabs with the

perfection of American and English weapons, and the danger of

attacking any one of the armed Franks. I think the lesson of that

ball not lost."

At Beit Jin he gave his whole band of Arab muleteers a piece of his mind,

and then--

"I contented myself with a solemn assurance that if there occurred

another instance of disobedience to orders I would thrash the

responsible party as he never dreamed of being thrashed, and if I

could not find who was responsible, I would whip them all, from

first to last, whether there was a governor at hand to do it or I

had to do it myself"

Perfectly fearless, this man.

He rode down the perpendicular path in the rocks, from the Castle of

Banias to the oak grove, at a flying gallop, his horse striding "thirty

feet" at every bound. I stand prepared to bring thirty reliable

witnesses to prove that Putnam's famous feat at Horseneck was

insignificant compared to this.

Behold him--always theatrical--looking at Jerusalem--this time, by an

oversight, with his hand off his pistol for once.

"I stood in the road, my hand on my horse's neck, and with my dim

eyes sought to trace the outlines of the holy places which I had

long before fixed in my mind, but the fast-flowing tears forbade my

succeeding. There were our Mohammedan servants, a Latin monk, two

Armenians and a Jew in our cortege, and all alike gazed with

overflowing eyes."

If Latin monks and Arabs cried, I know to a moral certainty that the

horses cried also, and so the picture is complete.

But when necessity demanded, he could be firm as adamant. In the Lebanon

Valley an Arab youth--a Christian; he is particular to explain that

Mohammedans do not steal--robbed him of a paltry ten dollars' worth of

powder and shot. He convicted him before a sheik and looked on while he

was punished by the terrible bastinado. Hear him:

"He (Mousa) was on his back in a twinkling, howling, shouting,

screaming, but he was carried out to the piazza before the door,

where we could see the operation, and laid face down. One man sat

on his back and one on his legs, the latter holding up his feet,

while a third laid on the bare soles a rhinoceros-hide koorbash

--["A Koorbash is Arabic for cowhide, the cow being a rhinoceros.

It is the most cruel whip known to fame. Heavy as lead, and

flexible as India-rubber, usually about forty inches long and

tapering gradually from an inch in diameter to a point, it

administers a blow which leaves its mark for time."--Scow Life in

Egypt, by the same author.]--that whizzed through the air at every

stroke. Poor Moreright was in agony, and Nama and Nama the Second

(mother and sister of Mousa,) were on their faces begging and

wailing, now embracing my knees and now Whitely's, while the

brother, outside, made the air ring with cries louder than Mousa's.

Even Yusef came and asked me on his knees to relent, and last of

all, Betuni--the rascal had lost a feed-bag in their house and had

been loudest in his denunciations that morning--besought the Howajji

to have mercy on the fellow."

But not he! The punishment was "suspended," at the fifteenth blow to

hear the confession. Then Grimes and his party rode away, and left the

entire Christian family to be fined and as severely punished as the

Mohammedan sheik should deem proper.

"As I mounted, Yusef once more begged me to interfere and have mercy

on them, but I looked around at the dark faces of the crowd, and I

couldn't find one drop of pity in my heart for them."

He closes his picture with a rollicking burst of humor which contrasts

finely with the grief of the mother and her children.

One more paragraph:

"Then once more I bowed my head. It is no shame to have wept in

Palestine. I wept, when I saw Jerusalem, I wept when I lay in the

starlight at Bethlehem. I wept on the blessed shores of Galilee.

My hand was no less firm on the rein, my anger did not tremble on

the trigger of my pistol when I rode with it in my right hand along

the shore of the blue sea" (weeping.) "My eye was not dimmed by

those tears nor my heart in aught weakened. Let him who would sneer

at my emotion close this volume here, for he will find little to his

taste in my journeyings through Holy Land."

He never bored but he struck water.

I am aware that this is a pretty voluminous notice of Mr. Grimes' book.

However, it is proper and legitimate to speak of it, for "Nomadic Life in

Palestine" is a representative book--the representative of a class of

Palestine books--and a criticism upon it will serve for a criticism upon

them all. And since I am treating it in the comprehensive capacity of a

representative book, I have taken the liberty of giving to both book and

author fictitious names. Perhaps it is in better taste, any how, to do

this.

CHAPTER LI.

Nazareth is wonderfully interesting because the town has an air about it

of being precisely as Jesus left it, and one finds himself saying, all

the time, "The boy Jesus has stood in this doorway--has played in that

street--has touched these stones with his hands--has rambled over these

chalky hills." Whoever shall write the boyhood of Jesus ingeniously will

make a book which will possess a vivid interest for young and old alike.

I judge so from the greater interest we found in Nazareth than any of our

speculations upon Capernaum and the Sea of Galilee gave rise to. It was

not possible, standing by the Sea of Galilee, to frame more than a vague,

far-away idea of the majestic Personage who walked upon the crested waves

as if they had been solid earth, and who touched the dead and they rose

up and spoke. I read among my notes, now, with a new interest, some

sentences from an edition of 1621 of the Apocryphal New Testament.

[Extract.]

"Christ, kissed by a bride made dumb by sorcerers, cures her. A

leprous girl cured by the water in which the infant Christ was

washed, and becomes the servant of Joseph and Mary. The leprous son

of a Prince cured in like manner.

"A young man who had been bewitched and turned into a mule,

miraculously cured by the infant Savior being put on his back, and

is married to the girl who had been cured of leprosy. Whereupon the

bystanders praise God.

"Chapter 16. Christ miraculously widens or contracts gates,

milk-pails, sieves or boxes, not properly made by Joseph, he not

being skillful at his carpenter's trade. The King of Jerusalem

gives Joseph an order for a throne. Joseph works on it for two

years and makes it two spans too short. The King being angry with

him, Jesus comforts him--commands him to pull one side of the

throne while he pulls the other, and brings it to its proper

dimensions.

"Chapter 19. Jesus, charged with throwing a boy from the roof of a

house, miraculously causes the dead boy to speak and acquit him;

fetches water for his mother, breaks the pitcher and miraculously

gathers the water in his mantle and brings it home.

"Sent to a schoolmaster, refuses to tell his letters, and the

schoolmaster going to whip him, his hand withers."

Further on in this quaint volume of rejected gospels is an epistle of St.

Clement to the Corinthians, which was used in the churches and considered

genuine fourteen or fifteen hundred years ago. In it this account of the

fabled phoenix occurs:

"1. Let us consider that wonderful type of the resurrection, which

is seen in the Eastern countries, that is to say, in Arabia.

"2. There is a certain bird called a phoenix. Of this there is

never but one at a time, and that lives five hundred years. And

when the time of its dissolution draws near, that it must die, it

makes itself a nest of frankincense, and myrrh, and other spices,

into which, when its time is fulfilled, it enters and dies.

"3. But its flesh, putrefying, breeds a certain worm, which, being

nourished by the juice of the dead bird, brings forth feathers; and

when it is grown to a perfect state, it takes up the nest in which

the bones of its parent lie, and carries it from Arabia into Egypt,

to a city called Heliopolis:

"4. And flying in open day in the sight of all men, lays it upon

the altar of the sun, and so returns from whence it came.

"5. The priests then search into the records of the time, and find

that it returned precisely at the end of five hundred years."

Business is business, and there is nothing like punctuality, especially

in a phoenix.

The few chapters relating to the infancy of the Saviour contain many

things which seem frivolous and not worth preserving. A large part of

the remaining portions of the book read like good Scripture, however.

There is one verse that ought not to have been rejected, because it so

evidently prophetically refers to the general run of Congresses of the

United States:

"199. They carry themselves high, and as prudent men; and though

they are fools, yet would seem to be teachers."

I have set these extracts down, as I found them. Everywhere among the

cathedrals of France and Italy, one finds traditions of personages that

do not figure in the Bible, and of miracles that are not mentioned in its

pages. But they are all in this Apocryphal New Testament, and though

they have been ruled out of our modern Bible, it is claimed that they

were accepted gospel twelve or fifteen centuries ago, and ranked as high

in credit as any. One needs to read this book before he visits those

venerable cathedrals, with their treasures of tabooed and forgotten

tradition.

They imposed another pirate upon us at Nazareth--another invincible Arab

guard. We took our last look at the city, clinging like a whitewashed

wasp's nest to the hill-side, and at eight o'clock in the morning

departed. We dismounted and drove the horses down a bridle-path which I

think was fully as crooked as a corkscrew, which I know to be as steep as

the downward sweep of a rainbow, and which I believe to be the worst

piece of road in the geography, except one in the Sandwich Islands, which

I remember painfully, and possibly one or two mountain trails in the

Sierra Nevadas. Often, in this narrow path the horse had to poise

himself nicely on a rude stone step and then drop his fore-feet over the

edge and down something more than half his own height. This brought his

nose near the ground, while his tail pointed up toward the sky somewhere,

and gave him the appearance of preparing to stand on his head. A horse

cannot look dignified in this position. We accomplished the long descent

at last, and trotted across the great Plain of Esdraelon.

Some of us will be shot before we finish this pilgrimage. The pilgrims

read "Nomadic Life" and keep themselves in a constant state of Quixotic

heroism. They have their hands on their pistols all the time, and every

now and then, when you least expect it, they snatch them out and take aim

at Bedouins who are not visible, and draw their knives and make savage

passes at other Bedouins who do not exist. I am in deadly peril always,

for these spasms are sudden and irregular, and of course I cannot tell

when to be getting out of the way. If I am accidentally murdered, some

time, during one of these romantic frenzies of the pilgrims, Mr. Grimes

must be rigidly held to answer as an accessory before the fact. If the

pilgrims would take deliberate aim and shoot at a man, it would be all

right and proper--because that man would not be in any danger; but these

random assaults are what I object to. I do not wish to see any more

places like Esdraelon, where the ground is level and people can gallop.

It puts melodramatic nonsense into the pilgrims' heads. All at once,

when one is jogging along stupidly in the sun, and thinking about

something ever so far away, here they come, at a stormy gallop, spurring

and whooping at those ridgy old sore-backed plugs till their heels fly

higher than their heads, and as they whiz by, out comes a little

potato-gun of a revolver, there is a startling little pop, and a small

pellet goes singing through the air. Now that I have begun this

pilgrimage, I intend to go through with it, though sooth to say, nothing

but the most desperate valor has kept me to my purpose up to the present

time. I do not mind Bedouins,--I am not afraid of them; because neither

Bedouins nor ordinary Arabs have shown any disposition to harm us, but I

do feel afraid of my own comrades.

Arriving at the furthest verge of the Plain, we rode a little way up a

hill and found ourselves at Endor, famous for its witch. Her descendants

are there yet. They were the wildest horde of half-naked savages we have

found thus far. They swarmed out of mud bee-hives; out of hovels of the

dry-goods box pattern; out of gaping caves under shelving rocks; out of

crevices in the earth. In five minutes the dead solitude and silence of

the place were no more, and a begging, screeching, shouting mob were

struggling about the horses' feet and blocking the way. "Bucksheesh!

bucksheesh! bucksheesh! howajji, bucksheesh!" It was Magdala over

again, only here the glare from the infidel eyes was fierce and full of

hate. The population numbers two hundred and fifty, and more than half

the citizens live in caves in the rock. Dirt, degradation and savagery

are Endor's specialty. We say no more about Magdala and Deburieh now.

Endor heads the list. It is worse than any Indian 'campoodie'. The hill

is barren, rocky, and forbidding. No sprig of grass is visible, and only

one tree. This is a fig-tree, which maintains a precarious footing among

the rocks at the mouth of the dismal cavern once occupied by the

veritable Witch of Endor. In this cavern, tradition says, Saul, the

king, sat at midnight, and stared and trembled, while the earth shook,

the thunders crashed among the hills, and out of the midst of fire and

smoke the spirit of the dead prophet rose up and confronted him. Saul

had crept to this place in the darkness, while his army slept, to learn

what fate awaited him in the morrow's battle. He went away a sad man, to

meet disgrace and death.

A spring trickles out of the rock in the gloomy recesses of the cavern,

and we were thirsty. The citizens of Endor objected to our going in

there. They do not mind dirt; they do not mind rags; they do not mind

vermin; they do not mind barbarous ignorance and savagery; they do not

mind a reasonable degree of starvation, but they do like to be pure and

holy before their god, whoever he may be, and therefore they shudder and

grow almost pale at the idea of Christian lips polluting a spring whose

waters must descend into their sanctified gullets. We had no wanton

desire to wound even their feelings or trample upon their prejudices, but

we were out of water, thus early in the day, and were burning up with

thirst. It was at this time, and under these circumstances, that I

framed an aphorism which has already become celebrated. I said:

"Necessity knows no law." We went in and drank.

We got away from the noisy wretches, finally, dropping them in squads and

couples as we filed over the hills--the aged first, the infants next, the

young girls further on; the strong men ran beside us a mile, and only

left when they had secured the last possible piastre in the way of

bucksheesh.

In an hour, we reached Nain, where Christ raised the widow's son to life.

Nain is Magdala on a small scale. It has no population of any

consequence. Within a hundred yards of it is the original graveyard, for

aught I know; the tombstones lie flat on the ground, which is Jewish

fashion in Syria. I believe the Moslems do not allow them to have

upright tombstones. A Moslem grave is usually roughly plastered over and

whitewashed, and has at one end an upright projection which is shaped

into exceedingly rude attempts at ornamentation. In the cities, there is

often no appearance of a grave at all; a tall, slender marble tombstone,

elaborately lettred, gilded and painted, marks the burial place, and this

is surmounted by a turban, so carved and shaped as to signify the dead

man's rank in life.

They showed a fragment of ancient wall which they said was one side of

the gate out of which the widow's dead son was being brought so many

centuries ago when Jesus met the procession:

"Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold there was a

dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a

widow: and much people of the city was with her.

"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said, Weep

not.

"And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood

still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, arise.

"And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered

him to his mother.

"And there came a fear on all. And they glorified God, saying, That

a great prophet is risen up among us; and That God hath visited his

people."

A little mosque stands upon the spot which tradition says was occupied by

the widow's dwelling. Two or three aged Arabs sat about its door. We

entered, and the pilgrims broke specimens from the foundation walls,

though they had to touch, and even step, upon the "praying carpets" to do

it. It was almost the same as breaking pieces from the hearts of those

old Arabs. To step rudely upon the sacred praying mats, with booted

feet--a thing not done by any Arab--was to inflict pain upon men who had

not offended us in any way. Suppose a party of armed foreigners were to

enter a village church in America and break ornaments from the altar

railings for curiosities, and climb up and walk upon the Bible and the

pulpit cushions? However, the cases are different. One is the

profanation of a temple of our faith--the other only the profanation of a

pagan one.

We descended to the Plain again, and halted a moment at a well--of

Abraham's time, no doubt. It was in a desert place. It was walled three

feet above ground with squared and heavy blocks of stone, after the

manner of Bible pictures. Around it some camels stood, and others knelt.

There was a group of sober little donkeys with naked, dusky children

clambering about them, or sitting astride their rumps, or pulling their

tails. Tawny, black-eyed, barefooted maids, arrayed in rags and adorned

with brazen armlets and pinchbeck ear-rings, were poising water-jars upon

their heads, or drawing water from the well. A flock of sheep stood by,

waiting for the shepherds to fill the hollowed stones with water, so that

they might drink--stones which, like those that walled the well, were

worn smooth and deeply creased by the chafing chins of a hundred

generations of thirsty animals. Picturesque Arabs sat upon the ground,

in groups, and solemnly smoked their long-stemmed chibouks. Other Arabs

were filling black hog-skins with water--skins which, well filled, and

distended with water till the short legs projected painfully out of the

proper line, looked like the corpses of hogs bloated by drowning. Here

was a grand Oriental picture which I had worshiped a thousand times in

soft, rich steel engravings! But in the engraving there was no

desolation; no dirt; no rags; no fleas; no ugly features; no sore eyes;

no feasting flies; no besotted ignorance in the countenances; no raw

places on the donkeys' backs; no disagreeable jabbering in unknown

tongues; no stench of camels; no suggestion that a couple of tons of

powder placed under the party and touched off would heighten the effect

and give to the scene a genuine interest and a charm which it would

always be pleasant to recall, even though a man lived a thousand years.

Oriental scenes look best in steel engravings. I cannot be imposed upon

any more by that picture of the Queen of Sheba visiting Solomon. I shall

say to myself, You look fine, Madam but your feet are not clean and you

smell like a camel.

Presently a wild Arab in charge of a camel train recognized an old friend

in Ferguson, and they ran and fell upon each other's necks and kissed

each other's grimy, bearded faces upon both cheeks. It explained

instantly a something which had always seemed to me only a farfetched

Oriental figure of speech. I refer to the circumstance of Christ's

rebuking a Pharisee, or some such character, and reminding him that from

him he had received no "kiss of welcome." It did not seem reasonable to

me that men should kiss each other, but I am aware, now, that they did.

There was reason in it, too. The custom was natural and proper; because

people must kiss, and a man would not be likely to kiss one of the women

of this country of his own free will and accord. One must travel, to

learn. Every day, now, old Scriptural phrases that never possessed any

significance for me before, take to themselves a meaning.

We journeyed around the base of the mountain--"Little Hermon,"--past the

old Crusaders' castle of El Fuleh, and arrived at Shunem. This was

another Magdala, to a fraction, frescoes and all. Here, tradition says,

the prophet Samuel was born, and here the Shunamite woman built a little

house upon the city wall for the accommodation of the prophet Elisha.

Elisha asked her what she expected in return. It was a perfectly natural

question, for these people are and were in the habit of proffering favors

and services and then expecting and begging for pay. Elisha knew them

well. He could not comprehend that any body should build for him that

humble little chamber for the mere sake of old friendship, and with no

selfish motive whatever. It used to seem a very impolite, not to say a

rude, question, for Elisha to ask the woman, but it does not seem so to

me now. The woman said she expected nothing. Then for her goodness and

her unselfishness, he rejoiced her heart with the news that she should

bear a son. It was a high reward--but she would not have thanked him for

a daughter--daughters have always been unpopular here. The son was born,

grew, waxed strong, died. Elisha restored him to life in Shunem.

We found here a grove of lemon trees--cool, shady, hung with fruit. One

is apt to overestimate beauty when it is rare, but to me this grove

seemed very beautiful. It was beautiful. I do not overestimate it. I

must always remember Shunem gratefully, as a place which gave to us this

leafy shelter after our long, hot ride. We lunched, rested, chatted,

smoked our pipes an hour, and then mounted and moved on.

As we trotted across the Plain of Jezreel, we met half a dozen Digger

Indians (Bedouins) with very long spears in their hands, cavorting around

on old crowbait horses, and spearing imaginary enemies; whooping, and

fluttering their rags in the wind, and carrying on in every respect like

a pack of hopeless lunatics. At last, here were the "wild, free sons of

the desert, speeding over the plain like the wind, on their beautiful

Arabian mares" we had read so much about and longed so much to see! Here

were the "picturesque costumes!" This was the "gallant spectacle!"

Tatterdemalion vagrants--cheap braggadocio--"Arabian mares" spined and

necked like the ichthyosaurus in the museum, and humped and cornered like

a dromedary! To glance at the genuine son of the desert is to take the

romance out of him forever--to behold his steed is to long in charity to

strip his harness off and let him fall to pieces.

Presently we came to a ruinous old town on a hill, the same being the

ancient Jezreel.

Ahab, King of Samaria, (this was a very vast kingdom, for those days, and

was very nearly half as large as Rhode Island) dwelt in the city of

Jezreel, which was his capital. Near him lived a man by the name of

Naboth, who had a vineyard. The King asked him for it, and when he would

not give it, offered to buy it. But Naboth refused to sell it. In those

days it was considered a sort of crime to part with one's inheritance at

any price--and even if a man did part with it, it reverted to himself or

his heirs again at the next jubilee year. So this spoiled child of a

King went and lay down on the bed with his face to the wall, and grieved

sorely. The Queen, a notorious character in those days, and whose name

is a by-word and a reproach even in these, came in and asked him

wherefore he sorrowed, and he told her. Jezebel said she could secure

the vineyard; and she went forth and forged letters to the nobles and

wise men, in the King's name, and ordered them to proclaim a fast and set

Naboth on high before the people, and suborn two witnesses to swear that

he had blasphemed. They did it, and the people stoned the accused by the

city wall, and he died. Then Jezebel came and told the King, and said,

Behold, Naboth is no more--rise up and seize the vineyard. So Ahab

seized the vineyard, and went into it to possess it. But the Prophet

Elijah came to him there and read his fate to him, and the fate of

Jezebel; and said that in the place where dogs licked the blood of

Naboth, dogs should also lick his blood--and he said, likewise, the dogs

should eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. In the course of time, the

King was killed in battle, and when his chariot wheels were washed in the

pool of Samaria, the dogs licked the blood. In after years, Jehu, who

was King of Israel, marched down against Jezreel, by order of one of the

Prophets, and administered one of those convincing rebukes so common

among the people of those days: he killed many kings and their subjects,

and as he came along he saw Jezebel, painted and finely dressed, looking

out of a window, and ordered that she be thrown down to him. A servant

did it, and Jehu's horse trampled her under foot. Then Jehu went in and

sat down to dinner; and presently he said, Go and bury this cursed woman,

for she is a King's daughter. The spirit of charity came upon him too

late, however, for the prophecy had already been fulfilled--the dogs had

eaten her, and they "found no more of her than the skull, and the feet,

and the palms of her hands."

Ahab, the late King, had left a helpless family behind him, and Jehu

killed seventy of the orphan sons. Then he killed all the relatives, and

teachers, and servants and friends of the family, and rested from his

labors, until he was come near to Samaria, where he met forty-two persons

and asked them who they were; they said they were brothers of the King of

Judah. He killed them. When he got to Samaria, he said he would show

his zeal for the Lord; so he gathered all the priests and people together

that worshiped Baal, pretending that he was going to adopt that worship

and offer up a great sacrifice; and when they were all shut up where they

could not defend themselves, he caused every person of them to be killed.

Then Jehu, the good missionary, rested from his labors once more.

We went back to the valley, and rode to the Fountain of Ain Jelud. They

call it the Fountain of Jezreel, usually. It is a pond about one hundred

feet square and four feet deep, with a stream of water trickling into it

from under an overhanging ledge of rocks. It is in the midst of a great

solitude. Here Gideon pitched his camp in the old times; behind Shunem

lay the "Midianites, the Amalekites, and the Children of the East," who

were "as grasshoppers for multitude; both they and their camels were

without number, as the sand by the sea-side for multitude." Which means

that there were one hundred and thirty-five thousand men, and that they

had transportation service accordingly.

Gideon, with only three hundred men, surprised them in the night, and

stood by and looked on while they butchered each other until a hundred

and twenty thousand lay dead on the field.

We camped at Jenin before night, and got up and started again at one

o'clock in the morning. Somewhere towards daylight we passed the

locality where the best authenticated tradition locates the pit into

which Joseph's brethren threw him, and about noon, after passing over a

succession of mountain tops, clad with groves of fig and olive trees,

with the Mediterranean in sight some forty miles away, and going by many

ancient Biblical cities whose inhabitants glowered savagely upon our

Christian procession, and were seemingly inclined to practice on it with

stones, we came to the singularly terraced and unlovely hills that

betrayed that we were out of Galilee and into Samaria at last.

We climbed a high hill to visit the city of Samaria, where the woman may

have hailed from who conversed with Christ at Jacob's Well, and from

whence, no doubt, came also the celebrated Good Samaritan. Herod the

Great is said to have made a magnificent city of this place, and a great

number of coarse limestone columns, twenty feet high and two feet

through, that are almost guiltless of architectural grace of shape and

ornament, are pointed out by many authors as evidence of the fact. They

would not have been considered handsome in ancient Greece, however.

The inhabitants of this camp are particularly vicious, and stoned two

parties of our pilgrims a day or two ago who brought about the difficulty

by showing their revolvers when they did not intend to use them--a thing

which is deemed bad judgment in the Far West, and ought certainly to be

so considered any where. In the new Territories, when a man puts his

hand on a weapon, he knows that he must use it; he must use it instantly

or expect to be shot down where he stands. Those pilgrims had been

reading Grimes.

There was nothing for us to do in Samaria but buy handfuls of old Roman

coins at a franc a dozen, and look at a dilapidated church of the

Crusaders and a vault in it which once contained the body of John the

Baptist. This relic was long ago carried away to Genoa.

Samaria stood a disastrous siege, once, in the days of Elisha, at the

hands of the King of Syria. Provisions reached such a figure that "an

ass' head was sold for eighty pieces of silver and the fourth part of a

cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver."

An incident recorded of that heavy time will give one a very good idea of

the distress that prevailed within these crumbling walls. As the King

was walking upon the battlements one day, "a woman cried out, saying,

Help, my lord, O King! And the King said, What aileth thee? and she

answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him

to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow. So we boiled my son, and did

eat him; and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son that we may

eat him; and she hath hid her son."

The prophet Elisha declared that within four and twenty hours the prices

of food should go down to nothing, almost, and it was so. The Syrian

army broke camp and fled, for some cause or other, the famine was

relieved from without, and many a shoddy speculator in dove's dung and

ass's meat was ruined.

We were glad to leave this hot and dusty old village and hurry on. At

two o'clock we stopped to lunch and rest at ancient Shechem, between the

historic Mounts of Gerizim and Ebal, where in the old times the books of

the law, the curses and the blessings, were read from the heights to the

Jewish multitudes below.

CHAPTER LII.

The narrow canon in which Nablous, or Shechem, is situated, is under high

cultivation, and the soil is exceedingly black and fertile. It is well

watered, and its affluent vegetation gains effect by contrast with the

barren hills that tower on either side. One of these hills is the

ancient Mount of Blessings and the other the Mount of Curses and wise men

who seek for fulfillments of prophecy think they find here a wonder of

this kind--to wit, that the Mount of Blessings is strangely fertile and

its mate as strangely unproductive. We could not see that there was

really much difference between them in this respect, however.

Shechem is distinguished as one of the residences of the patriarch Jacob,

and as the seat of those tribes that cut themselves loose from their

brethren of Israel and propagated doctrines not in conformity with those

of the original Jewish creed. For thousands of years this clan have

dwelt in Shechem under strict tabu, and having little commerce or

fellowship with their fellow men of any religion or nationality. For

generations they have not numbered more than one or two hundred, but they

still adhere to their ancient faith and maintain their ancient rites and

ceremonies. Talk of family and old descent! Princes and nobles pride

themselves upon lineages they can trace back some hundreds of years.

What is this trifle to this handful of old first families of Shechem who

can name their fathers straight back without a flaw for thousands

--straight back to a period so remote that men reared in a country where

the days of two hundred years ago are called "ancient" times grow dazed

and bewildered when they try to comprehend it! Here is respectability

for you--here is "family"--here is high descent worth talking about.

This sad, proud remnant of a once mighty community still hold themselves

aloof from all the world; they still live as their fathers lived, labor

as their fathers labored, think as they did, feel as they did, worship in

the same place, in sight of the same landmarks, and in the same quaint,

patriarchal way their ancestors did more than thirty centuries ago. I

found myself gazing at any straggling scion of this strange race with a

riveted fascination, just as one would stare at a living mastodon, or a

megatherium that had moved in the grey dawn of creation and seen the

wonders of that mysterious world that was before the flood.

Carefully preserved among the sacred archives of this curious community

is a MSS. copy of the ancient Jewish law, which is said to be the oldest

document on earth. It is written on vellum, and is some four or five

thousand years old. Nothing but bucksheesh can purchase a sight. Its

fame is somewhat dimmed in these latter days, because of the doubts so

many authors of Palestine travels have felt themselves privileged to cast

upon it. Speaking of this MSS. reminds me that I procured from the

high-priest of this ancient Samaritan community, at great expense, a

secret document of still higher antiquity and far more extraordinary

interest, which I propose to publish as soon as I have finished

translating it.

Joshua gave his dying injunction to the children of Israel at Shechem,

and buried a valuable treasure secretly under an oak tree there about the

same time. The superstitious Samaritans have always been afraid to hunt

for it. They believe it is guarded by fierce spirits invisible to men.

About a mile and a half from Shechem we halted at the base of Mount Ebal

before a little square area, inclosed by a high stone wall, neatly

whitewashed. Across one end of this inclosure is a tomb built after the

manner of the Moslems. It is the tomb of Joseph. No truth is better

authenticated than this.

When Joseph was dying he prophesied that exodus of the Israelites from

Egypt which occurred four hundred years afterwards. At the same time he

exacted of his people an oath that when they journeyed to the land of

Canaan they would bear his bones with them and bury them in the ancient

inheritance of his fathers. The oath was kept. "And the bones of Joseph,

which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in

Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor

the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of silver."

Few tombs on earth command the veneration of so many races and men of

divers creeds as this of Joseph. "Samaritan and Jew, Moslem and

Christian alike, revere it, and honor it with their visits. The tomb of

Joseph, the dutiful son, the affectionate, forgiving brother, the

virtuous man, the wise Prince and ruler. Egypt felt his influence--the

world knows his history."

In this same "parcel of ground" which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor

for a hundred pieces of silver, is Jacob's celebrated well. It is cut in

the solid rock, and is nine feet square and ninety feet deep. The name

of this unpretending hole in the ground, which one might pass by and take

no notice of, is as familiar as household words to even the children and

the peasants of many a far-off country. It is more famous than the

Parthenon; it is older than the Pyramids.

It was by this well that Jesus sat and talked with a woman of that

strange, antiquated Samaritan community I have been speaking of, and told

her of the mysterious water of life. As descendants of old English

nobles still cherish in the traditions of their houses how that this king

or that king tarried a day with some favored ancestor three hundred years

ago, no doubt the descendants of the woman of Samaria, living there in

Shechem, still refer with pardonable vanity to this conversation of their

ancestor, held some little time gone by, with the Messiah of the

Christians. It is not likely that they undervalue a distinction such as

this. Samaritan nature is human nature, and human nature remembers

contact with the illustrious, always.

For an offense done to the family honor, the sons of Jacob exterminated

all Shechem once.

We left Jacob's Well and traveled till eight in the evening, but rather

slowly, for we had been in the saddle nineteen hours, and the horses were

cruelly tired. We got so far ahead of the tents that we had to camp in

an Arab village, and sleep on the ground. We could have slept in the

largest of the houses; but there were some little drawbacks: it was

populous with vermin, it had a dirt floor, it was in no respect cleanly,

and there was a family of goats in the only bedroom, and two donkeys in

the parlor. Outside there were no inconveniences, except that the dusky,

ragged, earnest-eyed villagers of both sexes and all ages grouped

themselves on their haunches all around us, and discussed us and

criticised us with noisy tongues till midnight. We did not mind the

noise, being tired, but, doubtless, the reader is aware that it is almost

an impossible thing to go to sleep when you know that people are looking

at you. We went to bed at ten, and got up again at two and started once

more. Thus are people persecuted by dragomen, whose sole ambition in

life is to get ahead of each other.

About daylight we passed Shiloh, where the Ark of the Covenant rested

three hundred years, and at whose gates good old Eli fell down and "brake

his neck" when the messenger, riding hard from the battle, told him of

the defeat of his people, the death of his sons, and, more than all, the

capture of Israel's pride, her hope, her refuge, the ancient Ark her

forefathers brought with them out of Egypt. It is little wonder that

under circumstances like these he fell down and brake his neck. But

Shiloh had no charms for us. We were so cold that there was no comfort

but in motion, and so drowsy we could hardly sit upon the horses.

After a while we came to a shapeless mass of ruins, which still bears the

name of Bethel. It was here that Jacob lay down and had that superb

vision of angels flitting up and down a ladder that reached from the

clouds to earth, and caught glimpses of their blessed home through the

open gates of Heaven.

The pilgrims took what was left of the hallowed ruin, and we pressed on

toward the goal of our crusade, renowned Jerusalem.

The further we went the hotter the sun got, and the more rocky and bare,

repulsive and dreary the landscape became. There could not have been

more fragments of stone strewn broadcast over this part of the world, if

every ten square feet of the land had been occupied by a separate and

distinct stonecutter's establishment for an age. There was hardly a tree

or a shrub any where. Even the olive and the cactus, those fast friends

of a worthless soil, had almost deserted the country. No landscape

exists that is more tiresome to the eye than that which bounds the

approaches to Jerusalem. The only difference between the roads and the

surrounding country, perhaps, is that there are rather more rocks in the

roads than in the surrounding country.

We passed Ramah, and Beroth, and on the right saw the tomb of the prophet

Samuel, perched high upon a commanding eminence. Still no Jerusalem came

in sight. We hurried on impatiently. We halted a moment at the ancient

Fountain of Beira, but its stones, worn deeply by the chins of thirsty

animals that are dead and gone centuries ago, had no interest for us--we

longed to see Jerusalem. We spurred up hill after hill, and usually

began to stretch our necks minutes before we got to the top--but

disappointment always followed:--more stupid hills beyond--more unsightly

landscape--no Holy City.

At last, away in the middle of the day, ancient bite of wall and

crumbling arches began to line the way--we toiled up one more hill, and

every pilgrim and every sinner swung his hat on high! Jerusalem!

Perched on its eternal hills, white and domed and solid, massed together

and hooped with high gray walls, the venerable city gleamed in the sun.

So small! Why, it was no larger than an American village of four

thousand inhabitants, and no larger than an ordinary Syrian city of

thirty thousand. Jerusalem numbers only fourteen thousand people.

We dismounted and looked, without speaking a dozen sentences, across the

wide intervening valley for an hour or more; and noted those prominent

features of the city that pictures make familiar to all men from their

school days till their death. We could recognize the Tower of Hippicus,

the Mosque of Omar, the Damascus Gate, the Mount of Olives, the Valley of

Jehoshaphat, the Tower of David, and the Garden of Gethsemane--and dating

from these landmarks could tell very nearly the localities of many others

we were not able to distinguish.

I record it here as a notable but not discreditable fact that not even

our pilgrims wept. I think there was no individual in the party whose

brain was not teeming with thoughts and images and memories invoked by

the grand history of the venerable city that lay before us, but still

among them all was no "voice of them that wept."

There was no call for tears. Tears would have been out of place. The

thoughts Jerusalem suggests are full of poetry, sublimity, and more than

all, dignity. Such thoughts do not find their appropriate expression in

the emotions of the nursery.

Just after noon we entered these narrow, crooked streets, by the ancient

and the famed Damascus Gate, and now for several hours I have been trying

to comprehend that I am actually in the illustrious old city where

Solomon dwelt, where Abraham held converse with the Deity, and where

walls still stand that witnessed the spectacle of the Crucifixion.

CHAPTER LIII.

A fast walker could go outside the walls of Jerusalem and walk entirely

around the city in an hour. I do not know how else to make one

understand how small it is. The appearance of the city is peculiar. It

is as knobby with countless little domes as a prison door is with

bolt-heads. Every house has from one to half a dozen of these white

plastered domes of stone, broad and low, sitting in the centre of, or in

a cluster upon, the flat roof. Wherefore, when one looks down from an

eminence, upon the compact mass of houses (so closely crowded together,

in fact, that there is no appearance of streets at all, and so the city

looks solid,) he sees the knobbiest town in the world, except

Constantinople. It looks as if it might be roofed, from centre to

circumference, with inverted saucers. The monotony of the view is

interrupted only by the great Mosque of Omar, the Tower of Hippicus, and

one or two other buildings that rise into commanding prominence.

The houses are generally two stories high, built strongly of masonry,

whitewashed or plastered outside, and have a cage of wooden lattice-work

projecting in front of every window. To reproduce a Jerusalem street, it

would only be necessary to up-end a chicken-coop and hang it before each

window in an alley of American houses.

The streets are roughly and badly paved with stone, and are tolerably

crooked--enough so to make each street appear to close together

constantly and come to an end about a hundred yards ahead of a pilgrim as

long as he chooses to walk in it. Projecting from the top of the lower

story of many of the houses is a very narrow porch-roof or shed, without

supports from below; and I have several times seen cats jump across the

street from one shed to the other when they were out calling. The cats

could have jumped double the distance without extraordinary exertion. I

mention these things to give an idea of how narrow the streets are.

Since a cat can jump across them without the least inconvenience, it is

hardly necessary to state that such streets are too narrow for carriages.

These vehicles cannot navigate the Holy City.

The population of Jerusalem is composed of Moslems, Jews, Greeks, Latins,

Armenians, Syrians, Copts, Abyssinians, Greek Catholics, and a handful of

Protestants. One hundred of the latter sect are all that dwell now in

this birthplace of Christianity. The nice shades of nationality

comprised in the above list, and the languages spoken by them, are

altogether too numerous to mention. It seems to me that all the races

and colors and tongues of the earth must be represented among the

fourteen thousand souls that dwell in Jerusalem. Rags, wretchedness,

poverty and dirt, those signs and symbols that indicate the presence of

Moslem rule more surely than the crescent-flag itself, abound. Lepers,

cripples, the blind, and the idiotic, assail you on every hand, and they

know but one word of but one language apparently--the eternal

"bucksheesh." To see the numbers of maimed, malformed and diseased

humanity that throng the holy places and obstruct the gates, one might

suppose that the ancient days had come again, and that the angel of the

Lord was expected to descend at any moment to stir the waters of

Bethesda. Jerusalem is mournful, and dreary, and lifeless. I would not

desire to live here.

One naturally goes first to the Holy Sepulchre. It is right in the city,

near the western gate; it and the place of the Crucifixion, and, in fact,

every other place intimately connected with that tremendous event, are

ingeniously massed together and covered by one roof--the dome of the

Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Entering the building, through the midst of the usual assemblage of

beggars, one sees on his left a few Turkish guards--for Christians of

different sects will not only quarrel, but fight, also, in this sacred

place, if allowed to do it. Before you is a marble slab, which covers

the Stone of Unction, whereon the Saviour's body was laid to prepare it

for burial. It was found necessary to conceal the real stone in this way

in order to save it from destruction. Pilgrims were too much given to

chipping off pieces of it to carry home. Near by is a circular railing

which marks the spot where the Virgin stood when the Lord's body was

anointed.

Entering the great Rotunda, we stand before the most sacred locality in

Christendom--the grave of Jesus. It is in the centre of the church, and

immediately under the great dome. It is inclosed in a sort of little

temple of yellow and white stone, of fanciful design. Within the little

temple is a portion of the very stone which was rolled away from the door

of the Sepulchre, and on which the angel was sitting when Mary came

thither "at early dawn." Stooping low, we enter the vault--the Sepulchre

itself. It is only about six feet by seven, and the stone couch on which

the dead Saviour lay extends from end to end of the apartment and

occupies half its width. It is covered with a marble slab which has been

much worn by the lips of pilgrims. This slab serves as an altar, now.

Over it hang some fifty gold and silver lamps, which are kept always

burning, and the place is otherwise scandalized by trumpery, gewgaws, and

tawdry ornamentation.

All sects of Christians (except Protestants,) have chapels under the roof

of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and each must keep to itself and not

venture upon another's ground. It has been proven conclusively that they

can not worship together around the grave of the Saviour of the World in

peace. The chapel of the Syrians is not handsome; that of the Copts is

the humblest of them all. It is nothing but a dismal cavern, roughly

hewn in the living rock of the Hill of Calvary. In one side of it two

ancient tombs are hewn, which are claimed to be those in which Nicodemus

and Joseph of Aramathea were buried.

As we moved among the great piers and pillars of another part of the

church, we came upon a party of black-robed, animal-looking Italian

monks, with candles in their hands, who were chanting something in Latin,

and going through some kind of religious performance around a disk of

white marble let into the floor. It was there that the risen Saviour

appeared to Mary Magdalen in the likeness of a gardener. Near by was a

similar stone, shaped like a star--here the Magdalen herself stood, at

the same time. Monks were performing in this place also. They perform

everywhere--all over the vast building, and at all hours. Their candles

are always flitting about in the gloom, and making the dim old church

more dismal than there is any necessity that it should be, even though it

is a tomb.

We were shown the place where our Lord appeared to His mother after the

Resurrection. Here, also, a marble slab marks the place where St.

Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, found the crosses about

three hundred years after the Crucifixion. According to the legend, this

great discovery elicited extravagant demonstrations of joy. But they

were of short duration. The question intruded itself: "Which bore the

blessed Saviour, and which the thieves?" To be in doubt, in so mighty a

matter as this--to be uncertain which one to adore--was a grievous

misfortune. It turned the public joy to sorrow. But when lived there a

holy priest who could not set so simple a trouble as this at rest? One

of these soon hit upon a plan that would be a certain test. A noble lady

lay very ill in Jerusalem. The wise priests ordered that the three

crosses be taken to her bedside one at a time. It was done. When her

eyes fell upon the first one, she uttered a scream that was heard beyond

the Damascus Gate, and even upon the Mount of Olives, it was said, and

then fell back in a deadly swoon. They recovered her and brought the

second cross. Instantly she went into fearful convulsions, and it was

with the greatest difficulty that six strong men could hold her. They

were afraid, now, to bring in the third cross. They began to fear that

possibly they had fallen upon the wrong crosses, and that the true cross

was not with this number at all. However, as the woman seemed likely to

die with the convulsions that were tearing her, they concluded that the

third could do no more than put her out of her misery with a happy

dispatch. So they brought it, and behold, a miracle! The woman sprang

from her bed, smiling and joyful, and perfectly restored to health. When

we listen to evidence like this, we cannot but believe. We would be

ashamed to doubt, and properly, too. Even the very part of Jerusalem

where this all occurred is there yet. So there is really no room for

doubt.

The priests tried to show us, through a small screen, a fragment of the

genuine Pillar of Flagellation, to which Christ was bound when they

scourged him. But we could not see it, because it was dark inside the

screen. However, a baton is kept here, which the pilgrim thrusts through

a hole in the screen, and then he no longer doubts that the true Pillar

of Flagellation is in there. He can not have any excuse to doubt it, for

he can feel it with the stick. He can feel it as distinctly as he could

feel any thing.

Not far from here was a niche where they used to preserve a piece of the

True Cross, but it is gone, now. This piece of the cross was discovered

in the sixteenth century. The Latin priests say it was stolen away, long

ago, by priests of another sect. That seems like a hard statement to

make, but we know very well that it was stolen, because we have seen it

ourselves in several of the cathedrals of Italy and France.

But the relic that touched us most was the plain old sword of that stout

Crusader, Godfrey of Bulloigne--King Godfrey of Jerusalem. No blade in

Christendom wields such enchantment as this--no blade of all that rust in

the ancestral halls of Europe is able to invoke such visions of romance

in the brain of him who looks upon it--none that can prate of such

chivalric deeds or tell such brave tales of the warrior days of old. It

stirs within a man every memory of the Holy Wars that has been sleeping

in his brain for years, and peoples his thoughts with mail-clad images,

with marching armies, with battles and with sieges. It speaks to him of

Baldwin, and Tancred, the princely Saladin, and great Richard of the Lion

Heart. It was with just such blades as these that these splendid heroes

of romance used to segregate a man, so to speak, and leave the half of

him to fall one way and the other half the other. This very sword has

cloven hundreds of Saracen Knights from crown to chin in those old times

when Godfrey wielded it. It was enchanted, then, by a genius that was

under the command of King Solomon. When danger approached its master's

tent it always struck the shield and clanged out a fierce alarm upon the

startled ear of night. In times of doubt, or in fog or darkness, if it

were drawn from its sheath it would point instantly toward the foe, and

thus reveal the way--and it would also attempt to start after them of its

own accord. A Christian could not be so disguised that it would not know

him and refuse to hurt him--nor a Moslem so disguised that it would not

leap from its scabbard and take his life. These statements are all well

authenticated in many legends that are among the most trustworthy legends

the good old Catholic monks preserve. I can never forget old Godfrey's

sword, now. I tried it on a Moslem, and clove him in twain like a

doughnut. The spirit of Grimes was upon me, and if I had had a graveyard

I would have destroyed all the infidels in Jerusalem. I wiped the blood

off the old sword and handed it back to the priest--I did not want the

fresh gore to obliterate those sacred spots that crimsoned its brightness

one day six hundred years ago and thus gave Godfrey warning that before

the sun went down his journey of life would end.

Still moving through the gloom of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre we

came to a small chapel, hewn out of the rock--a place which has been

known as "The Prison of Our Lord" for many centuries. Tradition says

that here the Saviour was confined just previously to the crucifixion.

Under an altar by the door was a pair of stone stocks for human legs.

These things are called the "Bonds of Christ," and the use they were once

put to has given them the name they now bear.

The Greek Chapel is the most roomy, the richest and the showiest chapel

in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Its altar, like that of all the

Greek churches, is a lofty screen that extends clear across the chapel,

and is gorgeous with gilding and pictures. The numerous lamps that hang

before it are of gold and silver, and cost great sums.

But the feature of the place is a short column that rises from the middle

of the marble pavement of the chapel, and marks the exact centre of the

earth. The most reliable traditions tell us that this was known to be

the earth's centre, ages ago, and that when Christ was upon earth he set

all doubts upon the subject at rest forever, by stating with his own lips

that the tradition was correct. Remember, He said that that particular

column stood upon the centre of the world. If the centre of the world

changes, the column changes its position accordingly. This column has

moved three different times of its own accord. This is because, in great

convulsions of nature, at three different times, masses of the earth

--whole ranges of mountains, probably--have flown off into space, thus

lessening the diameter of the earth, and changing the exact locality of

its centre by a point or two. This is a very curious and interesting

circumstance, and is a withering rebuke to those philosophers who would

make us believe that it is not possible for any portion of the earth to

fly off into space.

To satisfy himself that this spot was really the centre of the earth, a

sceptic once paid well for the privilege of ascending to the dome of the

church to see if the sun gave him a shadow at noon. He came down

perfectly convinced. The day was very cloudy and the sun threw no

shadows at all; but the man was satisfied that if the sun had come out

and made shadows it could not have made any for him. Proofs like these

are not to be set aside by the idle tongues of cavilers. To such as are

not bigoted, and are willing to be convinced, they carry a conviction

that nothing can ever shake.

If even greater proofs than those I have mentioned are wanted, to satisfy

the headstrong and the foolish that this is the genuine centre of the

earth, they are here. The greatest of them lies in the fact that from

under this very column was taken the dust from which Adam was made. This

can surely be regarded in the light of a settler. It is not likely that

the original first man would have been made from an inferior quality of

earth when it was entirely convenient to get first quality from the

world's centre. This will strike any reflecting mind forcibly. That

Adam was formed of dirt procured in this very spot is amply proven by the

fact that in six thousand years no man has ever been able to prove that

the dirt was not procured here whereof he was made.

It is a singular circumstance that right under the roof of this same

great church, and not far away from that illustrious column, Adam

himself, the father of the human race, lies buried. There is no question

that he is actually buried in the grave which is pointed out as his

--there can be none--because it has never yet been proven that that grave

is not the grave in which he is buried.

The tomb of Adam! How touching it was, here in a land of strangers, far

away from home, and friends, and all who cared for me, thus to discover

the grave of a blood relation. True, a distant one, but still a

relation. The unerring instinct of nature thrilled its recognition. The

fountain of my filial affection was stirred to its profoundest depths,

and I gave way to tumultuous emotion. I leaned upon a pillar and burst

into tears. I deem it no shame to have wept over the grave of my poor

dead relative. Let him who would sneer at my emotion close this volume

here, for he will find little to his taste in my journeyings through Holy

Land. Noble old man--he did not live to see me--he did not live to see

his child. And I--I--alas, I did not live to see him. Weighed down by

sorrow and disappointment, he died before I was born--six thousand brief

summers before I was born. But let us try to bear it with fortitude.

Let us trust that he is better off where he is. Let us take comfort in

the thought that his loss is our eternal gain.

The next place the guide took us to in the holy church was an altar

dedicated to the Roman soldier who was of the military guard that

attended at the Crucifixion to keep order, and who--when the vail of the

Temple was rent in the awful darkness that followed; when the rock of

Golgotha was split asunder by an earthquake; when the artillery of heaven

thundered, and in the baleful glare of the lightnings the shrouded dead

flitted about the streets of Jerusalem--shook with fear and said, "Surely

this was the Son of God!" Where this altar stands now, that Roman

soldier stood then, in full view of the crucified Saviour--in full sight

and hearing of all the marvels that were transpiring far and wide about

the circumference of the Hill of Calvary. And in this self-same spot the

priests of the Temple beheaded him for those blasphemous words he had

spoken.

In this altar they used to keep one of the most curious relics that human

eyes ever looked upon--a thing that had power to fascinate the beholder

in some mysterious way and keep him gazing for hours together. It was

nothing less than the copper plate Pilate put upon the Saviour's cross,

and upon which he wrote, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." I think St.

Helena, the mother of Constantine, found this wonderful memento when she

was here in the third century. She traveled all over Palestine, and was

always fortunate. Whenever the good old enthusiast found a thing

mentioned in her Bible, Old or New, she would go and search for that

thing, and never stop until she found it. If it was Adam, she would find

Adam; if it was the Ark, she would find the Ark; if it was Goliath, or

Joshua, she would find them. She found the inscription here that I was

speaking of, I think. She found it in this very spot, close to where the

martyred Roman soldier stood. That copper plate is in one of the

churches in Rome, now. Any one can see it there. The inscription is

very distinct.

We passed along a few steps and saw the altar built over the very spot

where the good Catholic priests say the soldiers divided the raiment of

the Saviour.

Then we went down into a cavern which cavilers say was once a cistern.

It is a chapel, now, however--the Chapel of St. Helena. It is fifty-one

feet long by forty-three wide. In it is a marble chair which Helena used

to sit in while she superintended her workmen when they were digging and

delving for the True Cross. In this place is an altar dedicated to St.

Dimas, the penitent thief. A new bronze statue is here--a statue of St.

Helena. It reminded us of poor Maximilian, so lately shot. He presented

it to this chapel when he was about to leave for his throne in Mexico.

From the cistern we descended twelve steps into a large roughly-shaped

grotto, carved wholly out of the living rock. Helena blasted it out when

she was searching for the true Cross. She had a laborious piece of work,

here, but it was richly rewarded. Out of this place she got the crown of

thorns, the nails of the cross, the true Cross itself, and the cross of

the penitent thief. When she thought she had found every thing and was

about to stop, she was told in a dream to continue a day longer. It was

very fortunate. She did so, and found the cross of the other thief.

The walls and roof of this grotto still weep bitter tears in memory of

the event that transpired on Calvary, and devout pilgrims groan and sob

when these sad tears fall upon them from the dripping rock. The monks

call this apartment the "Chapel of the Invention of the Cross"--a name

which is unfortunate, because it leads the ignorant to imagine that a

tacit acknowledgment is thus made that the tradition that Helena found

the true Cross here is a fiction--an invention. It is a happiness to

know, however, that intelligent people do not doubt the story in any of

its particulars.

Priests of any of the chapels and denominations in the Church of the Holy

Sepulchre can visit this sacred grotto to weep and pray and worship the

gentle Redeemer. Two different congregations are not allowed to enter at

the same time, however, because they always fight.

Still marching through the venerable Church of the Holy Sepulchre, among

chanting priests in coarse long robes and sandals; pilgrims of all colors

and many nationalities, in all sorts of strange costumes; under dusky

arches and by dingy piers and columns; through a sombre cathedral gloom

freighted with smoke and incense, and faintly starred with scores of

candles that appeared suddenly and as suddenly disappeared, or drifted

mysteriously hither and thither about the distant aisles like ghostly

jack-o'-lanterns--we came at last to a small chapel which is called the

"Chapel of the Mocking." Under the altar was a fragment of a marble

column; this was the seat Christ sat on when he was reviled, and

mockingly made King, crowned with a crown of thorns and sceptred with a

reed. It was here that they blindfolded him and struck him, and said in

derision, "Prophesy who it is that smote thee." The tradition that this

is the identical spot of the mocking is a very ancient one. The guide

said that Saewulf was the first to mention it. I do not know Saewulf,

but still, I cannot well refuse to receive his evidence--none of us can.

They showed us where the great Godfrey and his brother Baldwin, the first

Christian Kings of Jerusalem, once lay buried by that sacred sepulchre

they had fought so long and so valiantly to wrest from the hands of the

infidel. But the niches that had contained the ashes of these renowned

crusaders were empty. Even the coverings of their tombs were gone

--destroyed by devout members of the Greek Church, because Godfrey and

Baldwin were Latin princes, and had been reared in a Christian faith

whose creed differed in some unimportant respects from theirs.

We passed on, and halted before the tomb of Melchisedek! You will

remember Melchisedek, no doubt; he was the King who came out and levied a

tribute on Abraham the time that he pursued Lot's captors to Dan, and

took all their property from them. That was about four thousand years

ago, and Melchisedek died shortly afterward. However, his tomb is in a

good state of preservation.

When one enters the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Sepulchre itself is

the first thing he desires to see, and really is almost the first thing

he does see. The next thing he has a strong yearning to see is the spot

where the Saviour was crucified. But this they exhibit last. It is the

crowning glory of the place. One is grave and thoughtful when he stands

in the little Tomb of the Saviour--he could not well be otherwise in such

a place--but he has not the slightest possible belief that ever the Lord

lay there, and so the interest he feels in the spot is very, very greatly

marred by that reflection. He looks at the place where Mary stood, in

another part of the church, and where John stood, and Mary Magdalen;

where the mob derided the Lord; where the angel sat; where the crown of

thorns was found, and the true Cross; where the risen Saviour appeared

--he looks at all these places with interest, but with the same conviction

he felt in the case of the Sepulchre, that there is nothing genuine about

them, and that they are imaginary holy places created by the monks. But

the place of the Crucifixion affects him differently. He fully believes

that he is looking upon the very spot where the Savior gave up his

life. He remembers that Christ was very celebrated, long before he came

to Jerusalem; he knows that his fame was so great that crowds followed

him all the time; he is aware that his entry into the city produced a

stirring sensation, and that his reception was a kind of ovation; he can

not overlook the fact that when he was crucified there were very many in

Jerusalem who believed that he was the true Son of God. To publicly

execute such a personage was sufficient in itself to make the locality of

the execution a memorable place for ages; added to this, the storm, the

darkness, the earthquake, the rending of the vail of the Temple, and the

untimely waking of the dead, were events calculated to fix the execution

and the scene of it in the memory of even the most thoughtless witness.

Fathers would tell their sons about the strange affair, and point out the

spot; the sons would transmit the story to their children, and thus a

period of three hundred years would easily be spanned--[The thought is

Mr. Prime's, not mine, and is full of good sense. I borrowed it from his

"Tent Life."--M. T.]--at which time Helena came and built a church upon

Calvary to commemorate the death and burial of the Lord and preserve the

sacred place in the memories of men; since that time there has always

been a church there. It is not possible that there can be any mistake

about the locality of the Crucifixion. Not half a dozen persons knew

where they buried the Saviour, perhaps, and a burial is not a startling

event, any how; therefore, we can be pardoned for unbelief in the

Sepulchre, but not in the place of the Crucifixion. Five hundred years

hence there will be no vestige of Bunker Hill Monument left, but America

will still know where the battle was fought and where Warren fell. The

crucifixion of Christ was too notable an event in Jerusalem, and the Hill

of Calvary made too celebrated by it, to be forgotten in the short space

of three hundred years. I climbed the stairway in the church which

brings one to the top of the small inclosed pinnacle of rock, and looked

upon the place where the true cross once stood, with a far more absorbing

interest than I had ever felt in any thing earthly before. I could not

believe that the three holes in the top of the rock were the actual ones

the crosses stood in, but I felt satisfied that those crosses had stood

so near the place now occupied by them, that the few feet of possible

difference were a matter of no consequence.

When one stands where the Saviour was crucified, he finds it all he can

do to keep it strictly before his mind that Christ was not crucified in a

Catholic Church. He must remind himself every now and then that the

great event transpired in the open air, and not in a gloomy,

candle-lighted cell in a little corner of a vast church, up-stairs

--a small cell all bejeweled and bespangled with flashy ornamentation,

in execrable taste.

Under a marble altar like a table, is a circular hole in the marble

floor, corresponding with the one just under it in which the true Cross

stood. The first thing every one does is to kneel down and take a candle

and examine this hole. He does this strange prospecting with an amount

of gravity that can never be estimated or appreciated by a man who has

not seen the operation. Then he holds his candle before a richly

engraved picture of the Saviour, done on a messy slab of gold, and

wonderfully rayed and starred with diamonds, which hangs above the hole

within the altar, and his solemnity changes to lively admiration. He

rises and faces the finely wrought figures of the Saviour and the

malefactors uplifted upon their crosses behind the altar, and bright with

a metallic lustre of many colors. He turns next to the figures close to

them of the Virgin and Mary Magdalen; next to the rift in the living rock

made by the earthquake at the time of the Crucifixion, and an extension

of which he had seen before in the wall of one of the grottoes below; he

looks next at the show-case with a figure of the Virgin in it, and is

amazed at the princely fortune in precious gems and jewelry that hangs so

thickly about the form as to hide it like a garment almost. All about

the apartment the gaudy trappings of the Greek Church offend the eye and

keep the mind on the rack to remember that this is the Place of the

Crucifixion--Golgotha--the Mount of Calvary. And the last thing he looks

at is that which was also the first--the place where the true Cross

stood. That will chain him to the spot and compel him to look once more,

and once again, after he has satisfied all curiosity and lost all

interest concerning the other matters pertaining to the locality.

And so I close my chapter on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre--the most

sacred locality on earth to millions and millions of men, and women, and

children, the noble and the humble, bond and free. In its history from

the first, and in its tremendous associations, it is the most illustrious

edifice in Christendom. With all its clap-trap side-shows and unseemly

impostures of every kind, it is still grand, reverend, venerable--for a

god died there; for fifteen hundred years its shrines have been wet with

the tears of pilgrims from the earth's remotest confines; for more than

two hundred, the most gallant knights that ever wielded sword wasted

their lives away in a struggle to seize it and hold it sacred from

infidel pollution. Even in our own day a war, that cost millions of

treasure and rivers of blood, was fought because two rival nations

claimed the sole right to put a new dome upon it. History is full of

this old Church of the Holy Sepulchre--full of blood that was shed

because of the respect and the veneration in which men held the last

resting-place of the meek and lowly, the mild and gentle, Prince of

Peace!

CHAPTER LIV.

We were standing in a narrow street, by the Tower of Antonio. "On these

stones that are crumbling away," the guide said, "the Saviour sat and

rested before taking up the cross. This is the beginning of the

Sorrowful Way, or the Way of Grief." The party took note of the sacred

spot, and moved on. We passed under the "Ecce Homo Arch," and saw the

very window from which Pilate's wife warned her husband to have nothing

to do with the persecution of the Just Man. This window is in an

excellent state of preservation, considering its great age. They showed

us where Jesus rested the second time, and where the mob refused to give

him up, and said, "Let his blood be upon our heads, and upon our

children's children forever." The French Catholics are building a church

on this spot, and with their usual veneration for historical relics, are

incorporating into the new such scraps of ancient walls as they have

found there. Further on, we saw the spot where the fainting Saviour fell

under the weight of his cross. A great granite column of some ancient

temple lay there at the time, and the heavy cross struck it such a blow

that it broke in two in the middle. Such was the guide's story when he

halted us before the broken column.

We crossed a street, and came presently to the former residence of St.

Veronica. When the Saviour passed there, she came out, full of womanly

compassion, and spoke pitying words to him, undaunted by the hootings and

the threatenings of the mob, and wiped the perspiration from his face

with her handkerchief. We had heard so much of St. Veronica, and seen

her picture by so many masters, that it was like meeting an old friend

unexpectedly to come upon her ancient home in Jerusalem. The strangest

thing about the incident that has made her name so famous, is, that when

she wiped the perspiration away, the print of the Saviour's face remained

upon the handkerchief, a perfect portrait, and so remains unto this day.

We knew this, because we saw this handkerchief in a cathedral in Paris,

in another in Spain, and in two others in Italy. In the Milan cathedral

it costs five francs to see it, and at St. Peter's, at Rome, it is almost

impossible to see it at any price. No tradition is so amply verified as

this of St. Veronica and her handkerchief.

At the next corner we saw a deep indention in the hard stone masonry of

the corner of a house, but might have gone heedlessly by it but that the

guide said it was made by the elbow of the Saviour, who stumbled here and

fell. Presently we came to just such another indention in a stone wall.

The guide said the Saviour fell here, also, and made this depression with

his elbow.

There were other places where the Lord fell, and others where he rested;

but one of the most curious landmarks of ancient history we found on this

morning walk through the crooked lanes that lead toward Calvary, was a

certain stone built into a house--a stone that was so seamed and scarred

that it bore a sort of grotesque resemblance to the human face. The

projections that answered for cheeks were worn smooth by the passionate

kisses of generations of pilgrims from distant lands. We asked "Why?"

The guide said it was because this was one of "the very stones of

Jerusalem" that Christ mentioned when he was reproved for permitting the

people to cry "Hosannah!" when he made his memorable entry into the

city upon an ass. One of the pilgrims said, "But there is no evidence

that the stones did cry out--Christ said that if the people stopped from

shouting Hosannah, the very stones would do it." The guide was perfectly

serene. He said, calmly, "This is one of the stones that would have

cried out." It was of little use to try to shake this fellow's simple

faith--it was easy to see that.

And so we came at last to another wonder, of deep and abiding interest

--the veritable house where the unhappy wretch once lived who has been

celebrated in song and story for more than eighteen hundred years as the

Wandering Jew. On the memorable day of the Crucifixion he stood in this

old doorway with his arms akimbo, looking out upon the struggling mob

that was approaching, and when the weary Saviour would have sat down and

rested him a moment, pushed him rudely away and said, "Move on!" The

Lord said, "Move on, thou, likewise," and the command has never been

revoked from that day to this. All men know how that the miscreant upon

whose head that just curse fell has roamed up and down the wide world,

for ages and ages, seeking rest and never finding it--courting death but

always in vain--longing to stop, in city, in wilderness, in desert

solitudes, yet hearing always that relentless warning to march--march on!

They say--do these hoary traditions--that when Titus sacked Jerusalem and

slaughtered eleven hundred thousand Jews in her streets and by-ways, the

Wandering Jew was seen always in the thickest of the fight, and that when

battle-axes gleamed in the air, he bowed his head beneath them; when

swords flashed their deadly lightnings, he sprang in their way; he bared

his breast to whizzing javelins, to hissing arrows, to any and to every

weapon that promised death and forgetfulness, and rest. But it was

useless--he walked forth out of the carnage without a wound. And it is

said that five hundred years afterward he followed Mahomet when he

carried destruction to the cities of Arabia, and then turned against him,

hoping in this way to win the death of a traitor. His calculations were

wrong again. No quarter was given to any living creature but one, and

that was the only one of all the host that did not want it. He sought

death five hundred years later, in the wars of the Crusades, and offered

himself to famine and pestilence at Ascalon. He escaped again--he could

not die. These repeated annoyances could have at last but one effect

--they shook his confidence. Since then the Wandering Jew has carried on a

kind of desultory toying with the most promising of the aids and

implements of destruction, but with small hope, as a general thing. He

has speculated some in cholera and railroads, and has taken almost a

lively interest in infernal machines and patent medicines. He is old,

now, and grave, as becomes an age like his; he indulges in no light

amusements save that he goes sometimes to executions, and is fond of

funerals.

There is one thing he can not avoid; go where he will about the world, he

must never fail to report in Jerusalem every fiftieth year. Only a year

or two ago he was here for the thirty-seventh time since Jesus was

crucified on Calvary. They say that many old people, who are here now,

saw him then, and had seen him before. He looks always the same--old,

and withered, and hollow-eyed, and listless, save that there is about him

something which seems to suggest that he is looking for some one,

expecting some one--the friends of his youth, perhaps. But the most of

them are dead, now. He always pokes about the old streets looking

lonesome, making his mark on a wall here and there, and eyeing the oldest

buildings with a sort of friendly half interest; and he sheds a few tears

at the threshold of his ancient dwelling, and bitter, bitter tears they

are. Then he collects his rent and leaves again. He has been seen

standing near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on many a starlight night,

for he has cherished an idea for many centuries that if he could only

enter there, he could rest. But when he approaches, the doors slam to

with a crash, the earth trembles, and all the lights in Jerusalem burn a

ghastly blue! He does this every fifty years, just the same. It is

hopeless, but then it is hard to break habits one has been eighteen

hundred years accustomed to. The old tourist is far away on his

wanderings, now. How he must smile to see a pack of blockheads like us,

galloping about the world, and looking wise, and imagining we are finding

out a good deal about it! He must have a consuming contempt for the

ignorant, complacent asses that go skurrying about the world in these

railroading days and call it traveling.

When the guide pointed out where the Wandering Jew had left his familiar

mark upon a wall, I was filled with astonishment. It read:

"S. T.--1860--X."

All I have revealed about the Wandering Jew can be amply proven by

reference to our guide.

The mighty Mosque of Omar, and the paved court around it, occupy a fourth

part of Jerusalem. They are upon Mount Moriah, where King Solomon's

Temple stood. This Mosque is the holiest place the Mohammedan knows,

outside of Mecca. Up to within a year or two past, no Christian could

gain admission to it or its court for love or money. But the prohibition

has been removed, and we entered freely for bucksheesh.

I need not speak of the wonderful beauty and the exquisite grace and

symmetry that have made this Mosque so celebrated--because I did not see

them. One can not see such things at an instant glance--one frequently

only finds out how really beautiful a really beautiful woman is after

considerable acquaintance with her; and the rule applies to Niagara

Falls, to majestic mountains and to mosques--especially to mosques.

The great feature of the Mosque of Omar is the prodigious rock in the

centre of its rotunda. It was upon this rock that Abraham came so near

offering up his son Isaac--this, at least, is authentic--it is very much

more to be relied on than most of the traditions, at any rate. On this

rock, also, the angel stood and threatened Jerusalem, and David persuaded

him to spare the city. Mahomet was well acquainted with this stone.

From it he ascended to heaven. The stone tried to follow him, and if the

angel Gabriel had not happened by the merest good luck to be there to

seize it, it would have done it. Very few people have a grip like

Gabriel--the prints of his monstrous fingers, two inches deep, are to be

seen in that rock to-day.

This rock, large as it is, is suspended in the air. It does not touch

any thing at all. The guide said so. This is very wonderful. In the

place on it where Mahomet stood, he left his foot-prints in the solid

stone. I should judge that he wore about eighteens. But what I was

going to say, when I spoke of the rock being suspended, was, that in the

floor of the cavern under it they showed us a slab which they said

covered a hole which was a thing of extraordinary interest to all

Mohammedans, because that hole leads down to perdition, and every soul

that is transferred from thence to Heaven must pass up through this

orifice. Mahomet stands there and lifts them out by the hair. All

Mohammedans shave their heads, but they are careful to leave a lock of

hair for the Prophet to take hold of. Our guide observed that a good

Mohammedan would consider himself doomed to stay with the damned forever

if he were to lose his scalp-lock and die before it grew again. The most

of them that I have seen ought to stay with the damned, any how, without

reference to how they were barbered.

For several ages no woman has been allowed to enter the cavern where that

important hole is. The reason is that one of the sex was once caught

there blabbing every thing she knew about what was going on above ground,

to the rapscallions in the infernal regions down below. She carried her

gossiping to such an extreme that nothing could be kept private--nothing

could be done or said on earth but every body in perdition knew all about

it before the sun went down. It was about time to suppress this woman's

telegraph, and it was promptly done. Her breath subsided about the same

time.

The inside of the great mosque is very showy with variegated marble walls

and with windows and inscriptions of elaborate mosaic. The Turks have

their sacred relics, like the Catholics. The guide showed us the

veritable armor worn by the great son-in-law and successor of Mahomet,

and also the buckler of Mahomet's uncle. The great iron railing which

surrounds the rock was ornamented in one place with a thousand rags tied

to its open work. These are to remind Mahomet not to forget the

worshipers who placed them there. It is considered the next best thing

to tying threads around his finger by way of reminders.

Just outside the mosque is a miniature temple, which marks the spot where

David and Goliah used to sit and judge the people.--[A pilgrim informs

me that it was not David and Goliah, but David and Saul. I stick to my

own statement--the guide told me, and he ought to know.]

Every where about the Mosque of Omar are portions of pillars, curiously

wrought altars, and fragments of elegantly carved marble--precious

remains of Solomon's Temple. These have been dug from all depths in the

soil and rubbish of Mount Moriah, and the Moslems have always shown a

disposition to preserve them with the utmost care. At that portion of

the ancient wall of Solomon's Temple which is called the Jew's Place of

Wailing, and where the Hebrews assemble every Friday to kiss the

venerated stones and weep over the fallen greatness of Zion, any one can

see a part of the unquestioned and undisputed Temple of Solomon, the same

consisting of three or four stones lying one upon the other, each of

which is about twice as long as a seven-octave piano, and about as thick

as such a piano is high. But, as I have remarked before, it is only a

year or two ago that the ancient edict prohibiting Christian rubbish like

ourselves to enter the Mosque of Omar and see the costly marbles that

once adorned the inner Temple was annulled. The designs wrought upon

these fragments are all quaint and peculiar, and so the charm of novelty

is added to the deep interest they naturally inspire. One meets with

these venerable scraps at every turn, especially in the neighboring

Mosque el Aksa, into whose inner walls a very large number of them are

carefully built for preservation. These pieces of stone, stained and

dusty with age, dimly hint at a grandeur we have all been taught to

regard as the princeliest ever seen on earth; and they call up pictures

of a pageant that is familiar to all imaginations--camels laden with

spices and treasure--beautiful slaves, presents for Solomon's harem--a

long cavalcade of richly caparisoned beasts and warriors--and Sheba's

Queen in the van of this vision of "Oriental magnificence." These

elegant fragments bear a richer interest than the solemn vastness of the

stones the Jews kiss in the Place of Wailing can ever have for the

heedless sinner.

Down in the hollow ground, underneath the olives and the orange-trees

that flourish in the court of the great Mosque, is a wilderness of

pillars--remains of the ancient Temple; they supported it. There are

ponderous archways down there, also, over which the destroying "plough"

of prophecy passed harmless. It is pleasant to know we are disappointed,

in that we never dreamed we might see portions of the actual Temple of

Solomon, and yet experience no shadow of suspicion that they were a

monkish humbug and a fraud.

We are surfeited with sights. Nothing has any fascination for us, now,

but the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. We have been there every day, and

have not grown tired of it; but we are weary of every thing else. The

sights are too many. They swarm about you at every step; no single foot

of ground in all Jerusalem or within its neighborhood seems to be without

a stirring and important history of its own. It is a very relief to

steal a walk of a hundred yards without a guide along to talk unceasingly

about every stone you step upon and drag you back ages and ages to the

day when it achieved celebrity.

It seems hardly real when I find myself leaning for a moment on a ruined

wall and looking listlessly down into the historic pool of Bethesda. I

did not think such things could be so crowded together as to diminish

their interest. But in serious truth, we have been drifting about, for

several days, using our eyes and our ears more from a sense of duty than

any higher and worthier reason. And too often we have been glad when it

was time to go home and be distressed no more about illustrious

localities.

Our pilgrims compress too much into one day. One can gorge sights to

repletion as well as sweetmeats. Since we breakfasted, this morning, we

have seen enough to have furnished us food for a year's reflection if we

could have seen the various objects in comfort and looked upon them

deliberately. We visited the pool of Hezekiah, where David saw Uriah's

wife coming from the bath and fell in love with her.

We went out of the city by the Jaffa gate, and of course were told many

things about its Tower of Hippicus.

We rode across the Valley of Hinnom, between two of the Pools of Gihon,

and by an aqueduct built by Solomon, which still conveys water to the

city. We ascended the Hill of Evil Counsel, where Judas received his

thirty pieces of silver, and we also lingered a moment under the tree a

venerable tradition says he hanged himself on.

We descended to the canon again, and then the guide began to give name

and history to every bank and boulder we came to: "This was the Field of

Blood; these cuttings in the rocks were shrines and temples of Moloch;

here they sacrificed children; yonder is the Zion Gate; the Tyropean

Valley, the Hill of Ophel; here is the junction of the Valley of

Jehoshaphat--on your right is the Well of Job." We turned up

Jehoshaphat. The recital went on. "This is the Mount of Olives; this is

the Hill of Offense; the nest of huts is the Village of Siloam; here,

yonder, every where, is the King's Garden; under this great tree

Zacharias, the high priest, was murdered; yonder is Mount Moriah and the

Temple wall; the tomb of Absalom; the tomb of St. James; the tomb of

Zacharias; beyond, are the Garden of Gethsemane and the tomb of the

Virgin Mary; here is the Pool of Siloam, and----"

We said we would dismount, and quench our thirst, and rest. We were

burning up with the heat. We were failing under the accumulated fatigue

of days and days of ceaseless marching. All were willing.

The Pool is a deep, walled ditch, through which a clear stream of water

runs, that comes from under Jerusalem somewhere, and passing through the

Fountain of the Virgin, or being supplied from it, reaches this place by

way of a tunnel of heavy masonry. The famous pool looked exactly as it

looked in Solomon's time, no doubt, and the same dusky, Oriental women,

came down in their old Oriental way, and carried off jars of the water on

their heads, just as they did three thousand years ago, and just as they

will do fifty thousand years hence if any of them are still left on

earth.

We went away from there and stopped at the Fountain of the Virgin. But

the water was not good, and there was no comfort or peace any where, on

account of the regiment of boys and girls and beggars that persecuted us

all the time for bucksheesh. The guide wanted us to give them some

money, and we did it; but when he went on to say that they were starving

to death we could not but feel that we had done a great sin in throwing

obstacles in the way of such a desirable consummation, and so we tried to

collect it back, but it could not be done.

We entered the Garden of Gethsemane, and we visited the Tomb of the

Virgin, both of which we had seen before. It is not meet that I should

speak of them now. A more fitting time will come.

I can not speak now of the Mount of Olives or its view of Jerusalem, the

Dead Sea and the mountains of Moab; nor of the Damascus Gate or the tree

that was planted by King Godfrey of Jerusalem. One ought to feel

pleasantly when he talks of these things. I can not say any thing about

the stone column that projects over Jehoshaphat from the Temple wall like

a cannon, except that the Moslems believe Mahomet will sit astride of it

when he comes to judge the world. It is a pity he could not judge it

from some roost of his own in Mecca, without trespassing on our holy

ground. Close by is the Golden Gate, in the Temple wall--a gate that was

an elegant piece of sculpture in the time of the Temple, and is even so

yet. From it, in ancient times, the Jewish High Priest turned loose the

scapegoat and let him flee to the wilderness and bear away his

twelve-month load of the sins of the people. If they were to turn one

loose now, he would not get as far as the Garden of Gethsemane, till

these miserable vagabonds here would gobble him up,--[Favorite pilgrim

expression.]--sins and all. They wouldn't care. Mutton-chops and sin

is good enough living for them. The Moslems watch the Golden Gate with

a jealous eye, and an anxious one, for they have an honored tradition

that when it falls, Islamism will fall and with it the Ottoman Empire.

It did not grieve me any to notice that the old gate was getting a

little shaky.

We are at home again. We are exhausted. The sun has roasted us, almost.

We have full comfort in one reflection, however. Our experiences in

Europe have taught us that in time this fatigue will be forgotten; the

heat will be forgotten; the thirst, the tiresome volubility of the guide,

the persecutions of the beggars--and then, all that will be left will be

pleasant memories of Jerusalem, memories we shall call up with always

increasing interest as the years go by, memories which some day will

become all beautiful when the last annoyance that incumbers them shall

have faded out of our minds never again to return. School-boy days are

no happier than the days of after life, but we look back upon them

regretfully because we have forgotten our punishments at school, and how

we grieved when our marbles were lost and our kites destroyed--because we

have forgotten all the sorrows and privations of that canonized epoch and

remember only its orchard robberies, its wooden sword pageants and its

fishing holydays. We are satisfied. We can wait. Our reward will come.

To us, Jerusalem and to-day's experiences will be an enchanted memory a

year hence--memory which money could not buy from us.

CHAPTER LV.

We cast up the account. It footed up pretty fairly. There was nothing

more at Jerusalem to be seen, except the traditional houses of Dives and

Lazarus of the parable, the Tombs of the Kings, and those of the Judges;

the spot where they stoned one of the disciples to death, and beheaded

another; the room and the table made celebrated by the Last Supper; the

fig-tree that Jesus withered; a number of historical places about

Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives, and fifteen or twenty others in

different portions of the city itself.

We were approaching the end. Human nature asserted itself, now.

Overwork and consequent exhaustion began to have their natural effect.

They began to master the energies and dull the ardor of the party.

Perfectly secure now, against failing to accomplish any detail of the

pilgrimage, they felt like drawing in advance upon the holiday soon to be

placed to their credit. They grew a little lazy. They were late to

breakfast and sat long at dinner. Thirty or forty pilgrims had arrived

from the ship, by the short routes, and much swapping of gossip had to be

indulged in. And in hot afternoons, they showed a strong disposition to

lie on the cool divans in the hotel and smoke and talk about pleasant

experiences of a month or so gone by--for even thus early do episodes of

travel which were sometimes annoying, sometimes exasperating and full as

often of no consequence at all when they transpired, begin to rise above

the dead level of monotonous reminiscences and become shapely landmarks

in one's memory. The fog-whistle, smothered among a million of trifling

sounds, is not noticed a block away, in the city, but the sailor hears it

far at sea, whither none of those thousands of trifling sounds can reach.

When one is in Rome, all the domes are alike; but when he has gone away

twelve miles, the city fades utterly from sight and leaves St. Peter's

swelling above the level plain like an anchored balloon. When one is

traveling in Europe, the daily incidents seem all alike; but when he has

placed them all two months and two thousand miles behind him, those that

were worthy of being remembered are prominent, and those that were really

insignificant have vanished. This disposition to smoke, and idle and

talk, was not well. It was plain that it must not be allowed to gain

ground. A diversion must be tried, or demoralization would ensue. The

Jordan, Jericho and the Dead Sea were suggested. The remainder of

Jerusalem must be left unvisited, for a little while. The journey was

approved at once. New life stirred in every pulse. In the saddle

--abroad on the plains--sleeping in beds bounded only by the horizon: fancy

was at work with these things in a moment.--It was painful to note how

readily these town-bred men had taken to the free life of the camp and

the desert The nomadic instinct is a human instinct; it was born with

Adam and transmitted through the patriarchs, and after thirty centuries

of steady effort, civilization has not educated it entirely out of us

yet. It has a charm which, once tasted, a man will yearn to taste again.

The nomadic instinct can not be educated out of an Indian at all.

The Jordan journey being approved, our dragoman was notified.

At nine in the morning the caravan was before the hotel door and we were

at breakfast. There was a commotion about the place. Rumors of war and

bloodshed were flying every where. The lawless Bedouins in the Valley of

the Jordan and the deserts down by the Dead Sea were up in arms, and were

going to destroy all comers. They had had a battle with a troop of

Turkish cavalry and defeated them; several men killed. They had shut up

the inhabitants of a village and a Turkish garrison in an old fort near

Jericho, and were besieging them. They had marched upon a camp of our

excursionists by the Jordan, and the pilgrims only saved their lives by

stealing away and flying to Jerusalem under whip and spur in the darkness

of the night. Another of our parties had been fired on from an ambush

and then attacked in the open day. Shots were fired on both sides.

Fortunately there was no bloodshed. We spoke with the very pilgrim who

had fired one of the shots, and learned from his own lips how, in this

imminent deadly peril, only the cool courage of the pilgrims, their

strength of numbers and imposing display of war material, had saved them

from utter destruction. It was reported that the Consul had requested

that no more of our pilgrims should go to the Jordan while this state of

things lasted; and further, that he was unwilling that any more should

go, at least without an unusually strong military guard. Here was

trouble. But with the horses at the door and every body aware of what

they were there for, what would you have done? Acknowledged that you

were afraid, and backed shamefully out? Hardly. It would not be human

nature, where there were so many women. You would have done as we did:

said you were not afraid of a million Bedouins--and made your will and

proposed quietly to yourself to take up an unostentatious position in the

rear of the procession.

I think we must all have determined upon the same line of tactics, for it

did seem as if we never would get to Jericho. I had a notoriously slow

horse, but somehow I could not keep him in the rear, to save my neck.

He was forever turning up in the lead. In such cases I trembled a

little, and got down to fix my saddle. But it was not of any use. The

others all got down to fix their saddles, too. I never saw such a time

with saddles. It was the first time any of them had got out of order in

three weeks, and now they had all broken down at once. I tried walking,

for exercise--I had not had enough in Jerusalem searching for holy

places. But it was a failure. The whole mob were suffering for

exercise, and it was not fifteen minutes till they were all on foot and I

had the lead again. It was very discouraging.

This was all after we got beyond Bethany. We stopped at the village of

Bethany, an hour out from Jerusalem. They showed us the tomb of Lazarus.

I had rather live in it than in any house in the town. And they showed

us also a large "Fountain of Lazarus," and in the centre of the village

the ancient dwelling of Lazarus. Lazarus appears to have been a man of

property. The legends of the Sunday Schools do him great injustice; they

give one the impression that he was poor. It is because they get him

confused with that Lazarus who had no merit but his virtue, and virtue

never has been as respectable as money. The house of Lazarus is a

three-story edifice, of stone masonry, but the accumulated rubbish of

ages has buried all of it but the upper story. We took candles and

descended to the dismal cell-like chambers where Jesus sat at meat with

Martha and Mary, and conversed with them about their brother. We could

not but look upon these old dingy apartments with a more than common

interest.

We had had a glimpse, from a mountain top, of the Dead Sea, lying like a

blue shield in the plain of the Jordan, and now we were marching down a

close, flaming, rugged, desolate defile, where no living creature could

enjoy life, except, perhaps, a salamander. It was such a dreary,

repulsive, horrible solitude! It was the "wilderness" where John

preached, with camel's hair about his loins--raiment enough--but he never

could have got his locusts and wild honey here. We were moping along

down through this dreadful place, every man in the rear. Our guards--two

gorgeous young Arab sheiks, with cargoes of swords, guns, pistols and

daggers on board--were loafing ahead.

"Bedouins!"

Every man shrunk up and disappeared in his clothes like a mud-turtle.

My first impulse was to dash forward and destroy the Bedouins. My second

was to dash to the rear to see if there were any coming in that

direction. I acted on the latter impulse. So did all the others. If

any Bedouins had approached us, then, from that point of the compass,

they would have paid dearly for their rashness. We all remarked that,

afterwards. There would have been scenes of riot and bloodshed there

that no pen could describe. I know that, because each man told what he

would have done, individually; and such a medley of strange and

unheard-of inventions of cruelty you could not conceive of. One man

said he had calmly made up his mind to perish where he stood, if need

be, but never yield an inch; he was going to wait, with deadly patience,

till he could count the stripes upon the first Bedouin's jacket, and

then count them and let him have it. Another was going to sit still

till the first lance reached within an inch of his breast, and then

dodge it and seize it. I forbear to tell what he was going to do to

that Bedouin that owned it. It makes my blood run cold to think of it.

Another was going to scalp such Bedouins as fell to his share, and take

his bald-headed sons of the desert home with him alive for trophies.

But the wild-eyed pilgrim rhapsodist was silent. His orbs gleamed with

a deadly light, but his lips moved not. Anxiety grew, and he was

questioned. If he had got a Bedouin, what would he have done with him

--shot him? He smiled a smile of grim contempt and shook his head.

Would he have stabbed him? Another shake. Would he have quartered him

--flayed him? More shakes. Oh! horror what would he have done?

"Eat him!"

Such was the awful sentence that thundered from his lips. What was

grammar to a desperado like that? I was glad in my heart that I had been

spared these scenes of malignant carnage. No Bedouins attacked our

terrible rear. And none attacked the front. The new-comers were only a

reinforcement of cadaverous Arabs, in shirts and bare legs, sent far

ahead of us to brandish rusty guns, and shout and brag, and carry on like

lunatics, and thus scare away all bands of marauding Bedouins that might

lurk about our path. What a shame it is that armed white Christians must

travel under guard of vermin like this as a protection against the

prowling vagabonds of the desert--those sanguinary outlaws who are always

going to do something desperate, but never do it. I may as well mention

here that on our whole trip we saw no Bedouins, and had no more use for

an Arab guard than we could have had for patent leather boots and white

kid gloves. The Bedouins that attacked the other parties of pilgrims so

fiercely were provided for the occasion by the Arab guards of those

parties, and shipped from Jerusalem for temporary service as Bedouins.

They met together in full view of the pilgrims, after the battle, and

took lunch, divided the bucksheesh extorted in the season of danger, and

then accompanied the cavalcade home to the city! The nuisance of an Arab

guard is one which is created by the Sheiks and the Bedouins together,

for mutual profit, it is said, and no doubt there is a good deal of truth

in it.

We visited the fountain the prophet Elisha sweetened (it is sweet yet,)

where he remained some time and was fed by the ravens.

Ancient Jericho is not very picturesque as a ruin. When Joshua marched

around it seven times, some three thousand years ago, and blew it down

with his trumpet, he did the work so well and so completely that he

hardly left enough of the city to cast a shadow. The curse pronounced

against the rebuilding of it, has never been removed. One King, holding

the curse in light estimation, made the attempt, but was stricken sorely

for his presumption. Its site will always remain unoccupied; and yet it

is one of the very best locations for a town we have seen in all

Palestine.

At two in the morning they routed us out of bed--another piece of

unwarranted cruelty--another stupid effort of our dragoman to get ahead

of a rival. It was not two hours to the Jordan. However, we were

dressed and under way before any one thought of looking to see what time

it was, and so we drowsed on through the chill night air and dreamed of

camp fires, warm beds, and other comfortable things.

There was no conversation. People do not talk when they are cold, and

wretched, and sleepy. We nodded in the saddle, at times, and woke up

with a start to find that the procession had disappeared in the gloom.

Then there was energy and attention to business until its dusky outlines

came in sight again. Occasionally the order was passed in a low voice

down the line: "Close up--close up! Bedouins lurk here, every where!"

What an exquisite shudder it sent shivering along one's spine!

We reached the famous river before four o'clock, and the night was so

black that we could have ridden into it without seeing it. Some of us

were in an unhappy frame of mind. We waited and waited for daylight, but

it did not come. Finally we went away in the dark and slept an hour on

the ground, in the bushes, and caught cold. It was a costly nap, on that

account, but otherwise it was a paying investment because it brought

unconsciousness of the dreary minutes and put us in a somewhat fitter

mood for a first glimpse of the sacred river.

With the first suspicion of dawn, every pilgrim took off his clothes and

waded into the dark torrent, singing:

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,

And cast a wistful eye

To Canaan's fair and happy land,

Where my possessions lie."

But they did not sing long. The water was so fearfully cold that they

were obliged to stop singing and scamper out again. Then they stood on

the bank shivering, and so chagrined and so grieved, that they merited

holiest compassion. Because another dream, another cherished hope, had

failed. They had promised themselves all along that they would cross the

Jordan where the Israelites crossed it when they entered Canaan from

their long pilgrimage in the desert. They would cross where the twelve

stones were placed in memory of that great event. While they did it they

would picture to themselves that vast army of pilgrims marching through

the cloven waters, bearing the hallowed ark of the covenant and shouting

hosannahs, and singing songs of thanksgiving and praise. Each had

promised himself that he would be the first to cross. They were at the

goal of their hopes at last, but the current was too swift, the water was

too cold!

It was then that Jack did them a service. With that engaging

recklessness of consequences which is natural to youth, and so proper and

so seemly, as well, he went and led the way across the Jordan, and all

was happiness again. Every individual waded over, then, and stood upon

the further bank. The water was not quite breast deep, any where. If it

had been more, we could hardly have accomplished the feat, for the strong

current would have swept us down the stream, and we would have been

exhausted and drowned before reaching a place where we could make a

landing. The main object compassed, the drooping, miserable party sat

down to wait for the sun again, for all wanted to see the water as well

as feel it. But it was too cold a pastime. Some cans were filled from

the holy river, some canes cut from its banks, and then we mounted and

rode reluctantly away to keep from freezing to death. So we saw the

Jordan very dimly. The thickets of bushes that bordered its banks threw

their shadows across its shallow, turbulent waters ("stormy," the hymn

makes them, which is rather a complimentary stretch of fancy,) and we

could not judge of the width of the stream by the eye. We knew by our

wading experience, however, that many streets in America are double as

wide as the Jordan.

Daylight came, soon after we got under way, and in the course of an hour

or two we reached the Dead Sea. Nothing grows in the flat, burning

desert around it but weeds and the Dead Sea apple the poets say is

beautiful to the eye, but crumbles to ashes and dust when you break it.

Such as we found were not handsome, but they were bitter to the taste.

They yielded no dust. It was because they were not ripe, perhaps.

The desert and the barren hills gleam painfully in the sun, around the

Dead Sea, and there is no pleasant thing or living creature upon it or

about its borders to cheer the eye. It is a scorching, arid, repulsive

solitude. A silence broods over the scene that is depressing to the

spirits. It makes one think of funerals and death.

The Dead Sea is small. Its waters are very clear, and it has a pebbly

bottom and is shallow for some distance out from the shores. It yields

quantities of asphaltum; fragments of it lie all about its banks; this

stuff gives the place something of an unpleasant smell.

All our reading had taught us to expect that the first plunge into the

Dead Sea would be attended with distressing results--our bodies would

feel as if they were suddenly pierced by millions of red-hot needles; the

dreadful smarting would continue for hours; we might even look to be

blistered from head to foot, and suffer miserably for many days. We were

disappointed. Our eight sprang in at the same time that another party of

pilgrims did, and nobody screamed once. None of them ever did complain

of any thing more than a slight pricking sensation in places where their

skin was abraded, and then only for a short time. My face smarted for a

couple of hours, but it was partly because I got it badly sun-burned

while I was bathing, and staid in so long that it became plastered over

with salt.

No, the water did not blister us; it did not cover us with a slimy ooze

and confer upon us an atrocious fragrance; it was not very slimy; and I

could not discover that we smelt really any worse than we have always

smelt since we have been in Palestine. It was only a different kind of

smell, but not conspicuous on that account, because we have a great deal

of variety in that respect. We didn't smell, there on the Jordan, the

same as we do in Jerusalem; and we don't smell in Jerusalem just as we

did in Nazareth, or Tiberias, or Cesarea Philippi, or any of those other

ruinous ancient towns in Galilee. No, we change all the time, and

generally for the worse. We do our own washing.

It was a funny bath. We could not sink. One could stretch himself at

full length on his back, with his arms on his breast, and all of his body

above a line drawn from the corner of his jaw past the middle of his

side, the middle of his leg and through his ancle bone, would remain out

of water. He could lift his head clear out, if he chose. No position

can be retained long; you lose your balance and whirl over, first on your

back and then on your face, and so on. You can lie comfortably, on your

back, with your head out, and your legs out from your knees down, by

steadying yourself with your hands. You can sit, with your knees drawn

up to your chin and your arms clasped around them, but you are bound to

turn over presently, because you are top-heavy in that position. You can

stand up straight in water that is over your head, and from the middle of

your breast upward you will not be wet. But you can not remain so. The

water will soon float your feet to the surface. You can not swim on your

back and make any progress of any consequence, because your feet stick

away above the surface, and there is nothing to propel yourself with but

your heels. If you swim on your face, you kick up the water like a

stern-wheel boat. You make no headway. A horse is so top-heavy that he

can neither swim nor stand up in the Dead Sea. He turns over on his side

at once. Some of us bathed for more than an hour, and then came out

coated with salt till we shone like icicles. We scrubbed it off with a

coarse towel and rode off with a splendid brand-new smell, though it was

one which was not any more disagreeable than those we have been for

several weeks enjoying. It was the variegated villainy and novelty of it

that charmed us. Salt crystals glitter in the sun about the shores of

the lake. In places they coat the ground like a brilliant crust of ice.

When I was a boy I somehow got the impression that the river Jordan was

four thousand miles long and thirty-five miles wide. It is only ninety

miles long, and so crooked that a man does not know which side of it he

is on half the time. In going ninety miles it does not get over more

than fifty miles of ground. It is not any wider than Broadway in New

York.

There is the Sea of Galilee and this Dead Sea--neither of them twenty

miles long or thirteen wide. And yet when I was in Sunday School I

thought they were sixty thousand miles in diameter.

Travel and experience mar the grandest pictures and rob us of the most

cherished traditions of our boyhood. Well, let them go. I have already

seen the Empire of King Solomon diminish to the size of the State of

Pennsylvania; I suppose I can bear the reduction of the seas and the

river.

We looked every where, as we passed along, but never saw grain or crystal

of Lot's wife. It was a great disappointment. For many and many a year

we had known her sad story, and taken that interest in her which

misfortune always inspires. But she was gone. Her picturesque form no

longer looms above the desert of the Dead Sea to remind the tourist of

the doom that fell upon the lost cities.

I can not describe the hideous afternoon's ride from the Dead Sea to Mars

Saba. It oppresses me yet, to think of it. The sun so pelted us that

the tears ran down our cheeks once or twice. The ghastly, treeless,

grassless, breathless canons smothered us as if we had been in an oven.

The sun had positive weight to it, I think. Not a man could sit erect

under it. All drooped low in the saddles. John preached in this

"Wilderness!" It must have been exhausting work. What a very heaven the

messy towers and ramparts of vast Mars Saba looked to us when we caught a

first glimpse of them!

We staid at this great convent all night, guests of the hospitable

priests. Mars Saba, perched upon a crag, a human nest stock high up

against a perpendicular mountain wall, is a world of grand masonry that

rises, terrace upon terrace away above your head, like the terraced and

retreating colonnades one sees in fanciful pictures of Belshazzar's Feast

and the palaces of the ancient Pharaohs. No other human dwelling is

near. It was founded many ages ago by a holy recluse who lived at first

in a cave in the rock--a cave which is inclosed in the convent walls,

now, and was reverently shown to us by the priests. This recluse, by his

rigorous torturing of his flesh, his diet of bread and water, his utter

withdrawal from all society and from the vanities of the world, and his

constant prayer and saintly contemplation of a skull, inspired an

emulation that brought about him many disciples. The precipice on the

opposite side of the canyon is well perforated with the small holes they

dug in the rock to live in. The present occupants of Mars Saba, about

seventy in number, are all hermits. They wear a coarse robe, an ugly,

brimless stove-pipe of a hat, and go without shoes. They eat nothing

whatever but bread and salt; they drink nothing but water. As long as

they live they can never go outside the walls, or look upon a woman--for

no woman is permitted to enter Mars Saba, upon any pretext whatsoever.

Some of those men have been shut up there for thirty years. In all that

dreary time they have not heard the laughter of a child or the blessed

voice of a woman; they have seen no human tears, no human smiles; they

have known no human joys, no wholesome human sorrows. In their hearts

are no memories of the past, in their brains no dreams of the future.

All that is lovable, beautiful, worthy, they have put far away from them;

against all things that are pleasant to look upon, and all sounds that

are music to the ear, they have barred their massive doors and reared

their relentless walls of stone forever. They have banished the tender

grace of life and left only the sapped and skinny mockery. Their lips

are lips that never kiss and never sing; their hearts are hearts that

never hate and never love; their breasts are breasts that never swell

with the sentiment, "I have a country and a flag." They are dead men who

walk.

I set down these first thoughts because they are natural--not because

they are just or because it is right to set them down. It is easy for

book-makers to say "I thought so and so as I looked upon such and such a

scene"--when the truth is, they thought all those fine things afterwards.

One's first thought is not likely to be strictly accurate, yet it is no

crime to think it and none to write it down, subject to modification by

later experience. These hermits are dead men, in several respects, but

not in all; and it is not proper, that, thinking ill of them at first, I

should go on doing so, or, speaking ill of them I should reiterate the

words and stick to them. No, they treated us too kindly for that. There

is something human about them somewhere. They knew we were foreigners

and Protestants, and not likely to feel admiration or much friendliness

toward them. But their large charity was above considering such things.

They simply saw in us men who were hungry, and thirsty, and tired, and

that was sufficient. They opened their doors and gave us welcome. They

asked no questions, and they made no self-righteous display of their

hospitality. They fished for no compliments. They moved quietly about,

setting the table for us, making the beds, and bringing water to wash in,

and paid no heed when we said it was wrong for them to do that when we

had men whose business it was to perform such offices. We fared most

comfortably, and sat late at dinner. We walked all over the building

with the hermits afterward, and then sat on the lofty battlements and

smoked while we enjoyed the cool air, the wild scenery and the sunset.

One or two chose cosy bed-rooms to sleep in, but the nomadic instinct

prompted the rest to sleep on the broad divan that extended around the

great hall, because it seemed like sleeping out of doors, and so was more

cheery and inviting. It was a royal rest we had.

When we got up to breakfast in the morning, we were new men. For all

this hospitality no strict charge was made. We could give something if

we chose; we need give nothing, if we were poor or if we were stingy.

The pauper and the miser are as free as any in the Catholic Convents of

Palestine. I have been educated to enmity toward every thing that is

Catholic, and sometimes, in consequence of this, I find it much easier to

discover Catholic faults than Catholic merits. But there is one thing I

feel no disposition to overlook, and no disposition to forget: and that

is, the honest gratitude I and all pilgrims owe, to the Convent Fathers

in Palestine. Their doors are always open, and there is always a welcome

for any worthy man who comes, whether he comes in rags or clad in purple.

The Catholic Convents are a priceless blessing to the poor. A pilgrim

without money, whether he be a Protestant or a Catholic, can travel the

length and breadth of Palestine, and in the midst of her desert wastes

find wholesome food and a clean bed every night, in these buildings.

Pilgrims in better circumstances are often stricken down by the sun and

the fevers of the country, and then their saving refuge is the Convent.

Without these hospitable retreats, travel in Palestine would be a

pleasure which none but the strongest men could dare to undertake. Our

party, pilgrims and all, will always be ready and always willing, to

touch glasses and drink health, prosperity and long life to the Convent

Fathers of Palestine.

So, rested and refreshed, we fell into line and filed away over the

barren mountains of Judea, and along rocky ridges and through sterile

gorges, where eternal silence and solitude reigned. Even the scattering

groups of armed shepherds we met the afternoon before, tending their

flocks of long-haired goats, were wanting here. We saw but two living

creatures. They were gazelles, of "soft-eyed" notoriety. They looked

like very young kids, but they annihilated distance like an express

train. I have not seen animals that moved faster, unless I might say it

of the antelopes of our own great plains.

At nine or ten in the morning we reached the Plain of the Shepherds, and

stood in a walled garden of olives where the shepherds were watching

their flocks by night, eighteen centuries ago, when the multitude of

angels brought them the tidings that the Saviour was born. A quarter of

a mile away was Bethlehem of Judea, and the pilgrims took some of the

stone wall and hurried on.

The Plain of the Shepherds is a desert, paved with loose stones, void of

vegetation, glaring in the fierce sun. Only the music of the angels it

knew once could charm its shrubs and flowers to life again and restore

its vanished beauty. No less potent enchantment could avail to work this

miracle.

In the huge Church of the Nativity, in Bethlehem, built fifteen hundred

years ago by the inveterate St. Helena, they took us below ground, and

into a grotto cut in the living rock. This was the "manger" where Christ

was born. A silver star set in the floor bears a Latin inscription to

that effect. It is polished with the kisses of many generations of

worshiping pilgrims. The grotto was tricked out in the usual tasteless

style observable in all the holy places of Palestine. As in the Church

of the Holy Sepulchre, envy and uncharitableness were apparent here. The

priests and the members of the Greek and Latin churches can not come by

the same corridor to kneel in the sacred birthplace of the Redeemer, but

are compelled to approach and retire by different avenues, lest they

quarrel and fight on this holiest ground on earth.

I have no "meditations," suggested by this spot where the very first

"Merry Christmas!" was uttered in all the world, and from whence the

friend of my childhood, Santa Claus, departed on his first journey, to

gladden and continue to gladden roaring firesides on wintry mornings in

many a distant land forever and forever. I touch, with reverent finger,

the actual spot where the infant Jesus lay, but I think--nothing.

You can not think in this place any more than you can in any other in

Palestine that would be likely to inspire reflection. Beggars, cripples

and monks compass you about, and make you think only of bucksheesh when

you would rather think of something more in keeping with the character of

the spot.

I was glad to get away, and glad when we had walked through the grottoes

where Eusebius wrote, and Jerome fasted, and Joseph prepared for the

flight into Egypt, and the dozen other distinguished grottoes, and knew

we were done. The Church of the Nativity is almost as well packed with

exceeding holy places as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre itself. They

even have in it a grotto wherein twenty thousand children were

slaughtered by Herod when he was seeking the life of the infant Saviour.

We went to the Milk Grotto, of course--a cavern where Mary hid herself

for a while before the flight into Egypt. Its walls were black before

she entered, but in suckling the Child, a drop of her milk fell upon the

floor and instantly changed the darkness of the walls to its own snowy

hue. We took many little fragments of stone from here, because it is

well known in all the East that a barren woman hath need only to touch

her lips to one of these and her failing will depart from her. We took

many specimens, to the end that we might confer happiness upon certain

households that we wot of.

We got away from Bethlehem and its troops of beggars and relic-peddlers

in the afternoon, and after spending some little time at Rachel's tomb,

hurried to Jerusalem as fast as possible. I never was so glad to get

home again before. I never have enjoyed rest as I have enjoyed it during

these last few hours. The journey to the Dead Sea, the Jordan and

Bethlehem was short, but it was an exhausting one. Such roasting heat,

such oppressive solitude, and such dismal desolation can not surely exist

elsewhere on earth. And such fatigue!

The commonest sagacity warns me that I ought to tell the customary

pleasant lie, and say I tore myself reluctantly away from every noted

place in Palestine. Every body tells that, but with as little

ostentation as I may, I doubt the word of every he who tells it. I could

take a dreadful oath that I have never heard any one of our forty

pilgrims say any thing of the sort, and they are as worthy and as

sincerely devout as any that come here. They will say it when they get

home, fast enough, but why should they not? They do not wish to array

themselves against all the Lamartines and Grimeses in the world. It does

not stand to reason that men are reluctant to leave places where the very

life is almost badgered out of them by importunate swarms of beggars and

peddlers who hang in strings to one's sleeves and coat-tails and shriek

and shout in his ears and horrify his vision with the ghastly sores and

malformations they exhibit. One is glad to get away. I have heard

shameless people say they were glad to get away from Ladies' Festivals

where they were importuned to buy by bevies of lovely young ladies.

Transform those houris into dusky hags and ragged savages, and replace

their rounded forms with shrunken and knotted distortions, their soft

hands with scarred and hideous deformities, and the persuasive music of

their voices with the discordant din of a hated language, and then see

how much lingering reluctance to leave could be mustered. No, it is the

neat thing to say you were reluctant, and then append the profound

thoughts that "struggled for utterance," in your brain; but it is the

true thing to say you were not reluctant, and found it impossible to

think at all--though in good sooth it is not respectable to say it, and

not poetical, either.

We do not think, in the holy places; we think in bed, afterwards, when

the glare, and the noise, and the confusion are gone, and in fancy we

revisit alone, the solemn monuments of the past, and summon the phantom

pageants of an age that has passed away.

CHAPTER LVI.

We visited all the holy places about Jerusalem which we had left

unvisited when we journeyed to the Jordan and then, about three o'clock

one afternoon, we fell into procession and marched out at the stately

Damascus gate, and the walls of Jerusalem shut us out forever. We paused

on the summit of a distant hill and took a final look and made a final

farewell to the venerable city which had been such a good home to us.

For about four hours we traveled down hill constantly. We followed a

narrow bridle-path which traversed the beds of the mountain gorges, and

when we could we got out of the way of the long trains of laden camels

and asses, and when we could not we suffered the misery of being mashed

up against perpendicular walls of rock and having our legs bruised by the

passing freight. Jack was caught two or three times, and Dan and Moult

as often. One horse had a heavy fall on the slippery rocks, and the

others had narrow escapes. However, this was as good a road as we had

found in Palestine, and possibly even the best, and so there was not much

grumbling.

Sometimes, in the glens, we came upon luxuriant orchards of figs,

apricots, pomegranates, and such things, but oftener the scenery was

rugged, mountainous, verdureless and forbidding. Here and there, towers

were perched high up on acclivities which seemed almost inaccessible.

This fashion is as old as Palestine itself and was adopted in ancient

times for security against enemies.

We crossed the brook which furnished David the stone that killed Goliah,

and no doubt we looked upon the very ground whereon that noted battle was

fought. We passed by a picturesque old gothic ruin whose stone pavements

had rung to the armed heels of many a valorous Crusader, and we rode

through a piece of country which we were told once knew Samson as a

citizen.

We staid all night with the good monks at the convent of Ramleh, and in

the morning got up and galloped the horses a good part of the distance

from there to Jaffa, or Joppa, for the plain was as level as a floor and

free from stones, and besides this was our last march in Holy Land.

These two or three hours finished, we and the tired horses could have

rest and sleep as long as we wanted it. This was the plain of which

Joshua spoke when he said, "Sun, stand thou still on Gibeon, and thou

moon in the valley of Ajalon." As we drew near to Jaffa, the boys

spurred up the horses and indulged in the excitement of an actual race

--an experience we had hardly had since we raced on donkeys in the Azores

islands.

We came finally to the noble grove of orange-trees in which the Oriental

city of Jaffa lies buried; we passed through the walls, and rode again

down narrow streets and among swarms of animated rags, and saw other

sights and had other experiences we had long been familiar with. We

dismounted, for the last time, and out in the offing, riding at anchor,

we saw the ship! I put an exclamation point there because we felt one

when we saw the vessel. The long pilgrimage was ended, and somehow we

seemed to feel glad of it.

[For description of Jaffa, see Universal Gazetteer.] Simon the Tanner

formerly lived here. We went to his house. All the pilgrims visit Simon

the Tanner's house. Peter saw the vision of the beasts let down in a

sheet when he lay upon the roof of Simon the Tanner's house. It was from

Jaffa that Jonah sailed when he was told to go and prophesy against

Nineveh, and no doubt it was not far from the town that the whale threw

him up when he discovered that he had no ticket. Jonah was disobedient,

and of a fault-finding, complaining disposition, and deserves to be

lightly spoken of, almost. The timbers used in the construction of

Solomon's Temple were floated to Jaffa in rafts, and the narrow opening

in the reef through which they passed to the shore is not an inch wider

or a shade less dangerous to navigate than it was then. Such is the

sleepy nature of the population Palestine's only good seaport has now and

always had. Jaffa has a history and a stirring one. It will not be

discovered any where in this book. If the reader will call at the

circulating library and mention my name, he will be furnished with books

which will afford him the fullest information concerning Jaffa.

So ends the pilgrimage. We ought to be glad that we did not make it for

the purpose of feasting our eyes upon fascinating aspects of nature, for

we should have been disappointed--at least at this season of the year. A

writer in "Life in the Holy Land" observes:

"Monotonous and uninviting as much of the Holy Land will appear to

persons accustomed to the almost constant verdure of flowers, ample

streams and varied surface of our own country, we must remember that

its aspect to the Israelites after the weary march of forty years

through the desert must have been very different."

Which all of us will freely grant. But it truly is "monotonous and

uninviting," and there is no sufficient reason for describing it as being

otherwise.

Of all the lands there are for dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be

the prince. The hills are barren, they are dull of color, they are

unpicturesque in shape. The valleys are unsightly deserts fringed with a

feeble vegetation that has an expression about it of being sorrowful and

despondent. The Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee sleep in the midst of a

vast stretch of hill and plain wherein the eye rests upon no pleasant

tint, no striking object, no soft picture dreaming in a purple haze or

mottled with the shadows of the clouds. Every outline is harsh, every

feature is distinct, there is no perspective--distance works no

enchantment here. It is a hopeless, dreary, heart-broken land.

Small shreds and patches of it must be very beautiful in the full flush

of spring, however, and all the more beautiful by contrast with the

far-reaching desolation that surrounds them on every side. I would like

much to see the fringes of the Jordan in spring-time, and Shechem,

Esdraelon, Ajalon and the borders of Galilee--but even then these spots

would seem mere toy gardens set at wide intervals in the waste of a

limitless desolation.

Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a

curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies. Where

Sodom and Gomorrah reared their domes and towers, that solemn sea now

floods the plain, in whose bitter waters no living thing exists--over

whose waveless surface the blistering air hangs motionless and dead

--about whose borders nothing grows but weeds, and scattering tufts of

cane, and that treacherous fruit that promises refreshment to parching

lips, but turns to ashes at the touch. Nazareth is forlorn; about that

ford of Jordan where the hosts of Israel entered the Promised Land with

songs of rejoicing, one finds only a squalid camp of fantastic Bedouins

of the desert; Jericho the accursed, lies a moldering ruin, to-day, even

as Joshua's miracle left it more than three thousand years ago; Bethlehem

and Bethany, in their poverty and their humiliation, have nothing about

them now to remind one that they once knew the high honor of the

Saviour's presence; the hallowed spot where the shepherds watched their

flocks by night, and where the angels sang Peace on earth, good will to

men, is untenanted by any living creature, and unblessed by any feature

that is pleasant to the eye. Renowned Jerusalem itself, the stateliest

name in history, has lost all its ancient grandeur, and is become a

pauper village; the riches of Solomon are no longer there to compel the

admiration of visiting Oriental queens; the wonderful temple which was

the pride and the glory of Israel, is gone, and the Ottoman crescent is

lifted above the spot where, on that most memorable day in the annals of

the world, they reared the Holy Cross. The noted Sea of Galilee, where

Roman fleets once rode at anchor and the disciples of the Saviour sailed

in their ships, was long ago deserted by the devotees of war and

commerce, and its borders are a silent wilderness; Capernaum is a

shapeless ruin; Magdala is the home of beggared Arabs; Bethsaida and

Chorazin have vanished from the earth, and the "desert places" round

about them where thousands of men once listened to the Saviour's voice

and ate the miraculous bread, sleep in the hush of a solitude that is

inhabited only by birds of prey and skulking foxes.

Palestine is desolate and unlovely. And why should it be otherwise? Can

the curse of the Deity beautify a land?

Palestine is no more of this work-day world. It is sacred to poetry and

tradition--it is dream-land.

CHAPTER LVII.

It was worth a kingdom to be at sea again. It was a relief to drop all

anxiety whatsoever--all questions as to where we should go; how long we

should stay; whether it were worth while to go or not; all anxieties

about the condition of the horses; all such questions as "Shall we ever

get to water?" "Shall we ever lunch?" "Ferguson, how many more million

miles have we got to creep under this awful sun before we camp?" It was

a relief to cast all these torturing little anxieties far away--ropes of

steel they were, and every one with a separate and distinct strain on it

--and feel the temporary contentment that is born of the banishment of

all care and responsibility. We did not look at the compass: we did not

care, now, where the ship went to, so that she went out of sight of land

as quickly as possible. When I travel again, I wish to go in a pleasure

ship. No amount of money could have purchased for us, in a strange

vessel and among unfamiliar faces, the perfect satisfaction and the sense

of being at home again which we experienced when we stepped on board the

"Quaker City,"--our own ship--after this wearisome pilgrimage. It is a

something we have felt always when we returned to her, and a something we

had no desire to sell.

We took off our blue woollen shirts, our spurs, and heavy boots, our

sanguinary revolvers and our buckskin-seated pantaloons, and got shaved

and came out in Christian costume once more. All but Jack, who changed

all other articles of his dress, but clung to his traveling pantaloons.

They still preserved their ample buckskin seat intact; and so his short

pea jacket and his long, thin legs assisted to make him a picturesque

object whenever he stood on the forecastle looking abroad upon the ocean

over the bows. At such times his father's last injunction suggested

itself to me. He said:

"Jack, my boy, you are about to go among a brilliant company of gentlemen

and ladies, who are refined and cultivated, and thoroughly accomplished

in the manners and customs of good society. Listen to their

conversation, study their habits of life, and learn. Be polite and

obliging to all, and considerate towards every one's opinions, failings

and prejudices. Command the just respect of all your fellow-voyagers,

even though you fail to win their friendly regard. And Jack--don't you

ever dare, while you live, appear in public on those decks in fair

weather, in a costume unbecoming your mother's drawing-room!"

It would have been worth any price if the father of this hopeful youth

could have stepped on board some time, and seen him standing high on the

fore-castle, pea jacket, tasseled red fez, buckskin patch and all,

placidly contemplating the ocean--a rare spectacle for any body's

drawing-room.

After a pleasant voyage and a good rest, we drew near to Egypt and out of

the mellowest of sunsets we saw the domes and minarets of Alexandria rise

into view. As soon as the anchor was down, Jack and I got a boat and

went ashore. It was night by this time, and the other passengers were

content to remain at home and visit ancient Egypt after breakfast. It

was the way they did at Constantinople. They took a lively interest in

new countries, but their school-boy impatience had worn off, and they had

learned that it was wisdom to take things easy and go along comfortably

--these old countries do not go away in the night; they stay till after

breakfast.

When we reached the pier we found an army of Egyptian boys with donkeys

no larger than themselves, waiting for passengers--for donkeys are the

omnibuses of Egypt. We preferred to walk, but we could not have our own

way. The boys crowded about us, clamored around us, and slewed their

donkeys exactly across our path, no matter which way we turned. They

were good-natured rascals, and so were the donkeys. We mounted, and the

boys ran behind us and kept the donkeys in a furious gallop, as is the

fashion at Damascus. I believe I would rather ride a donkey than any

beast in the world. He goes briskly, he puts on no airs, he is docile,

though opinionated. Satan himself could not scare him, and he is

convenient--very convenient. When you are tired riding you can rest your

feet on the ground and let him gallop from under you.

We found the hotel and secured rooms, and were happy to know that the

Prince of Wales had stopped there once. They had it every where on

signs. No other princes had stopped there since, till Jack and I came.

We went abroad through the town, then, and found it a city of huge

commercial buildings, and broad, handsome streets brilliant with

gas-light. By night it was a sort of reminiscence of Paris. But finally

Jack found an ice-cream saloon, and that closed investigations for that

evening. The weather was very hot, it had been many a day since Jack had

seen ice-cream, and so it was useless to talk of leaving the saloon till

it shut up.

In the morning the lost tribes of America came ashore and infested the

hotels and took possession of all the donkeys and other open barouches

that offered. They went in picturesque procession to the American

Consul's; to the great gardens; to Cleopatra's Needles; to Pompey's

Pillar; to the palace of the Viceroy of Egypt; to the Nile; to the superb

groves of date-palms. One of our most inveterate relic-hunters had his

hammer with him, and tried to break a fragment off the upright Needle and

could not do it; he tried the prostrate one and failed; he borrowed a

heavy sledge hammer from a mason and tried again. He tried Pompey's

Pillar, and this baffled him. Scattered all about the mighty monolith

were sphinxes of noble countenance, carved out of Egyptian granite as

hard as blue steel, and whose shapely features the wear of five thousand

years had failed to mark or mar. The relic-hunter battered at these

persistently, and sweated profusely over his work. He might as well have

attempted to deface the moon. They regarded him serenely with the

stately smile they had worn so long, and which seemed to say, "Peck away,

poor insect; we were not made to fear such as you; in ten-score dragging

ages we have seen more of your kind than there are sands at your feet:

have they left a blemish upon us?"

But I am forgetting the Jaffa Colonists. At Jaffa we had taken on board

some forty members of a very celebrated community. They were male and

female; babies, young boys and young girls; young married people, and

some who had passed a shade beyond the prime of life. I refer to the

"Adams Jaffa Colony." Others had deserted before. We left in Jaffa Mr.

Adams, his wife, and fifteen unfortunates who not only had no money but

did not know where to turn or whither to go. Such was the statement made

to us. Our forty were miserable enough in the first place, and they lay

about the decks seasick all the voyage, which about completed their

misery, I take it. However, one or two young men remained upright, and

by constant persecution we wormed out of them some little information.

They gave it reluctantly and in a very fragmentary condition, for, having

been shamefully humbugged by their prophet, they felt humiliated and

unhappy. In such circumstances people do not like to talk.

The colony was a complete fiasco. I have already said that such as could

get away did so, from time to time. The prophet Adams--once an actor,

then several other things, afterward a Mormon and a missionary, always an

adventurer--remains at Jaffa with his handful of sorrowful subjects. The

forty we brought away with us were chiefly destitute, though not all of

them. They wished to get to Egypt. What might become of them then they

did not know and probably did not care--any thing to get away from hated

Jaffa. They had little to hope for. Because after many appeals to the

sympathies of New England, made by strangers of Boston, through the

newspapers, and after the establishment of an office there for the

reception of moneyed contributions for the Jaffa colonists, One Dollar

was subscribed. The consul-general for Egypt showed me the newspaper

paragraph which mentioned the circumstance and mentioned also the

discontinuance of the effort and the closing of the office. It was

evident that practical New England was not sorry to be rid of such

visionaries and was not in the least inclined to hire any body to bring

them back to her. Still, to get to Egypt, was something, in the eyes of

the unfortunate colonists, hopeless as the prospect seemed of ever

getting further.

Thus circumstanced, they landed at Alexandria from our ship. One of our

passengers, Mr. Moses S. Beach, of the New York Sun, inquired of the

consul-general what it would cost to send these people to their home in

Maine by the way of Liverpool, and he said fifteen hundred dollars in

gold would do it. Mr. Beach gave his check for the money and so the

troubles of the Jaffa colonists were at an end.--[It was an unselfish

act of benevolence; it was done without any ostentation, and has never

been mentioned in any newspaper, I think. Therefore it is refreshing to

learn now, several months after the above narrative was written, that

another man received all the credit of this rescue of the colonists.

Such is life.]

Alexandria was too much like a European city to be novel, and we soon

tired of it. We took the cars and came up here to ancient Cairo, which

is an Oriental city and of the completest pattern. There is little about

it to disabuse one's mind of the error if he should take it into his head

that he was in the heart of Arabia. Stately camels and dromedaries,

swarthy Egyptians, and likewise Turks and black Ethiopians, turbaned,

sashed, and blazing in a rich variety of Oriental costumes of all shades

of flashy colors, are what one sees on every hand crowding the narrow

streets and the honeycombed bazaars. We are stopping at Shepherd's

Hotel, which is the worst on earth except the one I stopped at once in a

small town in the United States. It is pleasant to read this sketch in

my note-book, now, and know that I can stand Shepherd's Hotel, sure,

because I have been in one just like it in America and survived:

I stopped at the Benton House. It used to be a good hotel, but that

proves nothing--I used to be a good boy, for that matter. Both of

us have lost character of late years. The Benton is not a good

hotel. The Benton lacks a very great deal of being a good hotel.

Perdition is full of better hotels than the Benton.

It was late at night when I got there, and I told the clerk I would

like plenty of lights, because I wanted to read an hour or two.

When I reached No. 15 with the porter (we came along a dim hall that

was clad in ancient carpeting, faded, worn out in many places, and

patched with old scraps of oil cloth--a hall that sank under one's

feet, and creaked dismally to every footstep,) he struck a light

--two inches of sallow, sorrowful, consumptive tallow candle, that

burned blue, and sputtered, and got discouraged and went out. The

porter lit it again, and I asked if that was all the light the clerk

sent. He said, "Oh no, I've got another one here," and he produced

another couple of inches of tallow candle. I said, "Light them both

--I'll have to have one to see the other by." He did it, but the

result was drearier than darkness itself. He was a cheery,

accommodating rascal. He said he would go "somewheres" and steal a

lamp. I abetted and encouraged him in his criminal design. I heard

the landlord get after him in the hall ten minutes afterward.

"Where are you going with that lamp?"

"Fifteen wants it, sir."

"Fifteen! why he's got a double lot of candles--does the man want

to illuminate the house?--does he want to get up a torch-light

procession?--what is he up to, any how?"

"He don't like them candles--says he wants a lamp."

"Why what in the nation does----why I never heard of such a thing?

What on earth can he want with that lamp?"

"Well, he only wants to read--that's what he says."

"Wants to read, does he?--ain't satisfied with a thousand candles,

but has to have a lamp!--I do wonder what the devil that fellow

wants that lamp for? Take him another candle, and then if----"

"But he wants the lamp--says he'll burn the d--d old house down if

he don't get a lamp!" (a remark which I never made.)

"I'd like to see him at it once. Well, you take it along--but I

swear it beats my time, though--and see if you can't find out what

in the very nation he wants with that lamp."

And he went off growling to himself and still wondering and

wondering over the unaccountable conduct of No. 15. The lamp was a

good one, but it revealed some disagreeable things--a bed in the

suburbs of a desert of room--a bed that had hills and valleys in it,

and you'd have to accommodate your body to the impression left in it

by the man that slept there last, before you could lie comfortably;

a carpet that had seen better days; a melancholy washstand in a

remote corner, and a dejected pitcher on it sorrowing over a broken

nose; a looking-glass split across the centre, which chopped your

head off at the chin and made you look like some dreadful unfinished

monster or other; the paper peeling in shreds from the walls.

I sighed and said: "This is charming; and now don't you think you

could get me something to read?"

The porter said, "Oh, certainly; the old man's got dead loads of

books;" and he was gone before I could tell him what sort of

literature I would rather have. And yet his countenance expressed

the utmost confidence in his ability to execute the commission with

credit to himself. The old man made a descent on him.

"What are you going to do with that pile of books?"

"Fifteen wants 'em, sir."

"Fifteen, is it? He'll want a warming-pan, next--he'll want a

nurse! Take him every thing there is in the house--take him the

bar-keeper--take him the baggage-wagon--take him a chamber-maid!

Confound me, I never saw any thing like it. What did he say he

wants with those books?"

"Wants to read 'em, like enough; it ain't likely he wants to eat

'em, I don't reckon."

"Wants to read 'em--wants to read 'em this time of night, the

infernal lunatic! Well, he can't have them."

"But he says he's mor'ly bound to have 'em; he says he'll just go

a-rairin' and a-chargin' through this house and raise more--well,

there's no tellin' what he won't do if he don't get 'em; because

he's drunk and crazy and desperate, and nothing'll soothe him down

but them cussed books." [I had not made any threats, and was not in

the condition ascribed to me by the porter.]

"Well, go on; but I will be around when he goes to rairing and

charging, and the first rair he makes I'll make him rair out of the

window." And then the old gentleman went off, growling as before.

The genius of that porter was something wonderful. He put an armful

of books on the bed and said "Good night" as confidently as if he

knew perfectly well that those books were exactly my style of

reading matter. And well he might. His selection covered the whole

range of legitimate literature. It comprised "The Great

Consummation," by Rev. Dr. Cummings--theology; "Revised Statutes of

the State of Missouri"--law; "The Complete Horse-Doctor"--medicine;

"The Toilers of the Sea," by Victor Hugo--romance; "The works of

William Shakspeare"--poetry. I shall never cease to admire the tact

and the intelligence of that gifted porter.

But all the donkeys in Christendom, and most of the Egyptian boys, I

think, are at the door, and there is some noise going on, not to put it

in stronger language.--We are about starting to the illustrious Pyramids

of Egypt, and the donkeys for the voyage are under inspection. I will go

and select one before the choice animals are all taken.

CHAPTER LVIII.

The donkeys were all good, all handsome, all strong and in good

condition, all fast and all willing to prove it. They were the best we

had found any where, and the most 'recherche'. I do not know what

'recherche' is, but that is what these donkeys were, anyhow. Some

were of a soft mouse-color, and the others were white, black, and

vari-colored. Some were close-shaven, all over, except that a tuft like

a paint-brush was left on the end of the tail. Others were so shaven in

fanciful landscape garden patterns, as to mark their bodies with curving

lines, which were bounded on one side by hair and on the other by the

close plush left by the shears. They had all been newly barbered, and

were exceedingly stylish. Several of the white ones were barred like

zebras with rainbow stripes of blue and red and yellow paint. These

were indescribably gorgeous. Dan and Jack selected from this lot

because they brought back Italian reminiscences of the "old masters."

The saddles were the high, stuffy, frog-shaped things we had known in

Ephesus and Smyrna. The donkey-boys were lively young Egyptian rascals

who could follow a donkey and keep him in a canter half a day without

tiring. We had plenty of spectators when we mounted, for the hotel was

full of English people bound overland to India and officers getting

ready for the African campaign against the Abyssinian King Theodorus.

We were not a very large party, but as we charged through the streets of

the great metropolis, we made noise for five hundred, and displayed

activity and created excitement in proportion. Nobody can steer a

donkey, and some collided with camels, dervishes, effendis, asses,

beggars and every thing else that offered to the donkeys a reasonable

chance for a collision. When we turned into the broad avenue that leads

out of the city toward Old Cairo, there was plenty of room. The walls

of stately date-palms that fenced the gardens and bordered the way,

threw their shadows down and made the air cool and bracing. We rose to

the spirit of the time and the race became a wild rout, a stampede, a

terrific panic. I wish to live to enjoy it again.

Somewhere along this route we had a few startling exhibitions of Oriental

simplicity. A girl apparently thirteen years of age came along the great

thoroughfare dressed like Eve before the fall. We would have called her

thirteen at home; but here girls who look thirteen are often not more

than nine, in reality. Occasionally we saw stark-naked men of superb

build, bathing, and making no attempt at concealment. However, an hour's

acquaintance with this cheerful custom reconciled the pilgrims to it, and

then it ceased to occasion remark. Thus easily do even the most

startling novelties grow tame and spiritless to these sight-surfeited

wanderers.

Arrived at Old Cairo, the camp-followers took up the donkeys and tumbled

them bodily aboard a small boat with a lateen sail, and we followed and

got under way. The deck was closely packed with donkeys and men; the two

sailors had to climb over and under and through the wedged mass to work

the sails, and the steersman had to crowd four or five donkeys out of the

way when he wished to swing his tiller and put his helm hard-down. But

what were their troubles to us? We had nothing to do; nothing to do but

enjoy the trip; nothing to do but shove the donkeys off our corns and

look at the charming scenery of the Nile.

On the island at our right was the machine they call the Nilometer, a

stone-column whose business it is to mark the rise of the river and

prophecy whether it will reach only thirty-two feet and produce a famine,

or whether it will properly flood the land at forty and produce plenty,

or whether it will rise to forty-three and bring death and destruction to

flocks and crops--but how it does all this they could not explain to us

so that we could understand. On the same island is still shown the spot

where Pharaoh's daughter found Moses in the bulrushes. Near the spot we

sailed from, the Holy Family dwelt when they sojourned in Egypt till

Herod should complete his slaughter of the innocents. The same tree they

rested under when they first arrived, was there a short time ago, but the

Viceroy of Egypt sent it to the Empress Eugenie lately. He was just in

time, otherwise our pilgrims would have had it.

The Nile at this point is muddy, swift and turbid, and does not lack a

great deal of being as wide as the Mississippi.

We scrambled up the steep bank at the shabby town of Ghizeh, mounted the

donkeys again, and scampered away. For four or five miles the route lay

along a high embankment which they say is to be the bed of a railway the

Sultan means to build for no other reason than that when the Empress of

the French comes to visit him she can go to the Pyramids in comfort.

This is true Oriental hospitality. I am very glad it is our privilege to

have donkeys instead of cars.

At the distance of a few miles the Pyramids rising above the palms,

looked very clean-cut, very grand and imposing, and very soft and filmy,

as well. They swam in a rich haze that took from them all suggestions of

unfeeling stone, and made them seem only the airy nothings of a dream

--structures which might blossom into tiers of vague arches, or ornate

colonnades, may be, and change and change again, into all graceful forms

of architecture, while we looked, and then melt deliciously away and

blend with the tremulous atmosphere.

At the end of the levee we left the mules and went in a sailboat across

an arm of the Nile or an overflow, and landed where the sands of the

Great Sahara left their embankment, as straight as a wall, along the

verge of the alluvial plain of the river. A laborious walk in the

flaming sun brought us to the foot of the great Pyramid of Cheops. It

was a fairy vision no longer. It was a corrugated, unsightly mountain of

stone. Each of its monstrous sides was a wide stairway which rose

upward, step above step, narrowing as it went, till it tapered to a point

far aloft in the air. Insect men and women--pilgrims from the Quaker

City--were creeping about its dizzy perches, and one little black swarm

were waving postage stamps from the airy summit--handkerchiefs will be

understood.

Of course we were besieged by a rabble of muscular Egyptians and Arabs

who wanted the contract of dragging us to the top--all tourists are. Of

course you could not hear your own voice for the din that was around you.

Of course the Sheiks said they were the only responsible parties; that

all contracts must be made with them, all moneys paid over to them, and

none exacted from us by any but themselves alone. Of course they

contracted that the varlets who dragged us up should not mention

bucksheesh once. For such is the usual routine. Of course we contracted

with them, paid them, were delivered into the hands of the draggers,

dragged up the Pyramids, and harried and be-deviled for bucksheesh from

the foundation clear to the summit. We paid it, too, for we were

purposely spread very far apart over the vast side of the Pyramid. There

was no help near if we called, and the Herculeses who dragged us had a

way of asking sweetly and flatteringly for bucksheesh, which was

seductive, and of looking fierce and threatening to throw us down the

precipice, which was persuasive and convincing.

Each step being full as high as a dinner-table; there being very, very

many of the steps; an Arab having hold of each of our arms and springing

upward from step to step and snatching us with them, forcing us to lift

our feet as high as our breasts every time, and do it rapidly and keep it

up till we were ready to faint, who shall say it is not lively,

exhilarating, lacerating, muscle-straining, bone-wrenching and perfectly

excruciating and exhausting pastime, climbing the Pyramids? I beseeched

the varlets not to twist all my joints asunder; I iterated, reiterated,

even swore to them that I did not wish to beat any body to the top; did

all I could to convince them that if I got there the last of all I would

feel blessed above men and grateful to them forever; I begged them,

prayed them, pleaded with them to let me stop and rest a moment--only one

little moment: and they only answered with some more frightful springs,

and an unenlisted volunteer behind opened a bombardment of determined

boosts with his head which threatened to batter my whole political

economy to wreck and ruin.

Twice, for one minute, they let me rest while they extorted bucksheesh,

and then continued their maniac flight up the Pyramid. They wished to

beat the other parties. It was nothing to them that I, a stranger, must

be sacrificed upon the altar of their unholy ambition. But in the midst

of sorrow, joy blooms. Even in this dark hour I had a sweet consolation.

For I knew that except these Mohammedans repented they would go straight

to perdition some day. And they never repent--they never forsake their

paganism. This thought calmed me, cheered me, and I sank down, limp and

exhausted, upon the summit, but happy, so happy and serene within.

On the one hand, a mighty sea of yellow sand stretched away toward the

ends of the earth, solemn, silent, shorn of vegetation, its solitude

uncheered by any forms of creature life; on the other, the Eden of Egypt

was spread below us--a broad green floor, cloven by the sinuous river,

dotted with villages, its vast distances measured and marked by the

diminishing stature of receding clusters of palms. It lay asleep in an

enchanted atmosphere. There was no sound, no motion. Above the

date-plumes in the middle distance, swelled a domed and pinnacled mass,

glimmering through a tinted, exquisite mist; away toward the horizon a

dozen shapely pyramids watched over ruined Memphis: and at our feet the

bland impassible Sphynx looked out upon the picture from her throne in

the sands as placidly and pensively as she had looked upon its like full

fifty lagging centuries ago.

We suffered torture no pen can describe from the hungry appeals for

bucksheesh that gleamed from Arab eyes and poured incessantly from Arab

lips. Why try to call up the traditions of vanished Egyptian grandeur;

why try to fancy Egypt following dead Rameses to his tomb in the Pyramid,

or the long multitude of Israel departing over the desert yonder? Why

try to think at all? The thing was impossible. One must bring his

meditations cut and dried, or else cut and dry them afterward.

The traditional Arab proposed, in the traditional way, to run down

Cheops, cross the eighth of a mile of sand intervening between it and the

tall pyramid of Cephron, ascend to Cephron's summit and return to us on

the top of Cheops--all in nine minutes by the watch, and the whole

service to be rendered for a single dollar. In the first flush of

irritation, I said let the Arab and his exploits go to the mischief.

But stay. The upper third of Cephron was coated with dressed marble,

smooth as glass. A blessed thought entered my brain. He must infallibly

break his neck. Close the contract with dispatch, I said, and let him

go. He started. We watched. He went bounding down the vast broadside,

spring after spring, like an ibex. He grew small and smaller till he

became a bobbing pigmy, away down toward the bottom--then disappeared.

We turned and peered over the other side--forty seconds--eighty seconds

--a hundred--happiness, he is dead already!--two minutes--and a quarter

--"There he goes!" Too true--it was too true. He was very small, now.

Gradually, but surely, he overcame the level ground. He began to spring

and climb again. Up, up, up--at last he reached the smooth coating--now

for it. But he clung to it with toes and fingers, like a fly. He

crawled this way and that--away to the right, slanting upward--away to

the left, still slanting upward--and stood at last, a black peg on the

summit, and waved his pigmy scarf! Then he crept downward to the raw

steps again, then picked up his agile heels and flew. We lost him

presently. But presently again we saw him under us, mounting with

undiminished energy. Shortly he bounded into our midst with a gallant

war-whoop. Time, eight minutes, forty-one seconds. He had won. His

bones were intact. It was a failure. I reflected. I said to myself, he

is tired, and must grow dizzy. I will risk another dollar on him.

He started again. Made the trip again. Slipped on the smooth coating

--I almost had him. But an infamous crevice saved him. He was with us

once more--perfectly sound. Time, eight minutes, forty-six seconds.

I said to Dan, "Lend me a dollar--I can beat this game, yet."

Worse and worse. He won again. Time, eight minutes, forty-eight

seconds. I was out of all patience, now. I was desperate.--Money was

no longer of any consequence. I said, "Sirrah, I will give you a hundred

dollars to jump off this pyramid head first. If you do not like the

terms, name your bet. I scorn to stand on expenses now. I will stay

right here and risk money on you as long as Dan has got a cent."

I was in a fair way to win, now, for it was a dazzling opportunity for an

Arab. He pondered a moment, and would have done it, I think, but his

mother arrived, then, and interfered. Her tears moved me--I never can

look upon the tears of woman with indifference--and I said I would give

her a hundred to jump off, too.

But it was a failure. The Arabs are too high-priced in Egypt. They put

on airs unbecoming to such savages.

We descended, hot and out of humor. The dragoman lit candles, and we all

entered a hole near the base of the pyramid, attended by a crazy rabble

of Arabs who thrust their services upon us uninvited. They dragged us up

a long inclined chute, and dripped candle-grease all over us. This chute

was not more than twice as wide and high as a Saratoga trunk, and was

walled, roofed and floored with solid blocks of Egyptian granite as wide

as a wardrobe, twice as thick and three times as long. We kept on

climbing, through the oppressive gloom, till I thought we ought to be

nearing the top of the pyramid again, and then came to the "Queen's

Chamber," and shortly to the Chamber of the King. These large apartments

were tombs. The walls were built of monstrous masses of smoothed

granite, neatly joined together. Some of them were nearly as large

square as an ordinary parlor. A great stone sarcophagus like a bath-tub

stood in the centre of the King's Chamber. Around it were gathered a

picturesque group of Arab savages and soiled and tattered pilgrims, who

held their candles aloft in the gloom while they chattered, and the

winking blurs of light shed a dim glory down upon one of the

irrepressible memento-seekers who was pecking at the venerable

sarcophagus with his sacrilegious hammer.

We struggled out to the open air and the bright sunshine, and for the

space of thirty minutes received ragged Arabs by couples, dozens and

platoons, and paid them bucksheesh for services they swore and proved by

each other that they had rendered, but which we had not been aware of

before--and as each party was paid, they dropped into the rear of the

procession and in due time arrived again with a newly-invented delinquent

list for liquidation.

We lunched in the shade of the pyramid, and in the midst of this

encroaching and unwelcome company, and then Dan and Jack and I started

away for a walk. A howling swarm of beggars followed us--surrounded us

--almost headed us off. A sheik, in flowing white bournous and gaudy

head-gear, was with them. He wanted more bucksheesh. But we had

adopted a new code--it was millions for defense, but not a cent for

bucksheesh. I asked him if he could persuade the others to depart if we

paid him. He said yes--for ten francs. We accepted the contract, and

said--

"Now persuade your vassals to fall back."

He swung his long staff round his head and three Arabs bit the dust. He

capered among the mob like a very maniac. His blows fell like hail, and

wherever one fell a subject went down. We had to hurry to the rescue and

tell him it was only necessary to damage them a little, he need not kill

them.--In two minutes we were alone with the sheik, and remained so.

The persuasive powers of this illiterate savage were remarkable.

Each side of the Pyramid of Cheops is about as long as the Capitol at

Washington, or the Sultan's new palace on the Bosporus, and is longer

than the greatest depth of St. Peter's at Rome--which is to say that each

side of Cheops extends seven hundred and some odd feet. It is about

seventy-five feet higher than the cross on St. Peter's. The first time I

ever went down the Mississippi, I thought the highest bluff on the river

between St. Louis and New Orleans--it was near Selma, Missouri--was

probably the highest mountain in the world. It is four hundred and

thirteen feet high. It still looms in my memory with undiminished

grandeur. I can still see the trees and bushes growing smaller and

smaller as I followed them up its huge slant with my eye, till they

became a feathery fringe on the distant summit. This symmetrical Pyramid

of Cheops--this solid mountain of stone reared by the patient hands of

men--this mighty tomb of a forgotten monarch--dwarfs my cherished

mountain. For it is four hundred and eighty feet high. In still earlier

years than those I have been recalling, Holliday's Hill, in our town, was

to me the noblest work of God. It appeared to pierce the skies. It was

nearly three hundred feet high. In those days I pondered the subject

much, but I never could understand why it did not swathe its summit with

never-failing clouds, and crown its majestic brow with everlasting snows.

I had heard that such was the custom of great mountains in other parts of

the world. I remembered how I worked with another boy, at odd afternoons

stolen from study and paid for with stripes, to undermine and start from

its bed an immense boulder that rested upon the edge of that hilltop; I

remembered how, one Saturday afternoon, we gave three hours of honest

effort to the task, and saw at last that our reward was at hand; I

remembered how we sat down, then, and wiped the perspiration away, and

waited to let a picnic party get out of the way in the road below--and

then we started the boulder. It was splendid. It went crashing down the

hillside, tearing up saplings, mowing bushes down like grass, ripping and

crushing and smashing every thing in its path--eternally splintered and

scattered a wood pile at the foot of the hill, and then sprang from the

high bank clear over a dray in the road--the negro glanced up once and

dodged--and the next second it made infinitesimal mince-meat of a frame

cooper-shop, and the coopers swarmed out like bees. Then we said it was

perfectly magnificent, and left. Because the coopers were starting up

the hill to inquire.

Still, that mountain, prodigious as it was, was nothing to the Pyramid of

Cheops. I could conjure up no comparison that would convey to my mind a

satisfactory comprehension of the magnitude of a pile of monstrous stones

that covered thirteen acres of ground and stretched upward four hundred

and eighty tiresome feet, and so I gave it up and walked down to the

Sphynx.

After years of waiting, it was before me at last. The great face was so

sad, so earnest, so longing, so patient. There was a dignity not of

earth in its mien, and in its countenance a benignity such as never any

thing human wore. It was stone, but it seemed sentient. If ever image

of stone thought, it was thinking. It was looking toward the verge of

the landscape, yet looking at nothing--nothing but distance and vacancy.

It was looking over and beyond every thing of the present, and far into

the past. It was gazing out over the ocean of Time--over lines of

century-waves which, further and further receding, closed nearer and

nearer together, and blended at last into one unbroken tide, away toward

the horizon of remote antiquity. It was thinking of the wars of departed

ages; of the empires it had seen created and destroyed; of the nations

whose birth it had witnessed, whose progress it had watched, whose

annihilation it had noted; of the joy and sorrow, the life and death, the

grandeur and decay, of five thousand slow revolving years. It was the

type of an attribute of man--of a faculty of his heart and brain. It was

MEMORY--RETROSPECTION--wrought into visible, tangible form. All who know

what pathos there is in memories of days that are accomplished and faces

that have vanished--albeit only a trifling score of years gone by--will

have some appreciation of the pathos that dwells in these grave eyes that

look so steadfastly back upon the things they knew before History was

born--before Tradition had being--things that were, and forms that moved,

in a vague era which even Poetry and Romance scarce know of--and passed

one by one away and left the stony dreamer solitary in the midst of a

strange new age, and uncomprehended scenes.

The Sphynx is grand in its loneliness; it is imposing in its magnitude;

it is impressive in the mystery that hangs over its story. And there is

that in the overshadowing majesty of this eternal figure of stone, with

its accusing memory of the deeds of all ages, which reveals to one

something of what he shall feel when he shall stand at last in the awful

presence of God.

There are some things which, for the credit of America, should be left

unsaid, perhaps; but these very things happen sometimes to be the very

things which, for the real benefit of Americans, ought to have prominent

notice. While we stood looking, a wart, or an excrescence of some kind,

appeared on the jaw of the Sphynx. We heard the familiar clink of a

hammer, and understood the case at once. One of our well meaning

reptiles--I mean relic-hunters--had crawled up there and was trying to

break a "specimen" from the face of this the most majestic creation the

hand of man has wrought. But the great image contemplated the dead ages

as calmly as ever, unconscious of the small insect that was fretting at

its jaw. Egyptian granite that has defied the storms and earthquakes of

all time has nothing to fear from the tack-hammers of ignorant

excursionists--highwaymen like this specimen. He failed in his

enterprise. We sent a sheik to arrest him if he had the authority, or to

warn him, if he had not, that by the laws of Egypt the crime he was

attempting to commit was punishable with imprisonment or the bastinado.

Then he desisted and went away.

The Sphynx: a hundred and twenty-five feet long, sixty feet high, and a

hundred and two feet around the head, if I remember rightly--carved out

of one solid block of stone harder than any iron. The block must have

been as large as the Fifth Avenue Hotel before the usual waste (by the

necessities of sculpture) of a fourth or a half of the original mass was

begun. I only set down these figures and these remarks to suggest the

prodigious labor the carving of it so elegantly, so symmetrically, so

faultlessly, must have cost. This species of stone is so hard that

figures cut in it remain sharp and unmarred after exposure to the weather

for two or three thousand years. Now did it take a hundred years of

patient toil to carve the Sphynx? It seems probable.

Something interfered, and we did not visit the Red Sea and walk upon the

sands of Arabia. I shall not describe the great mosque of Mehemet Ali,

whose entire inner walls are built of polished and glistening alabaster;

I shall not tell how the little birds have built their nests in the

globes of the great chandeliers that hang in the mosque, and how they

fill the whole place with their music and are not afraid of any body

because their audacity is pardoned, their rights are respected, and

nobody is allowed to interfere with them, even though the mosque be thus

doomed to go unlighted; I certainly shall not tell the hackneyed story of

the massacre of the Mamelukes, because I am glad the lawless rascals were

massacred, and I do not wish to get up any sympathy in their behalf; I

shall not tell how that one solitary Mameluke jumped his horse a hundred

feet down from the battlements of the citadel and escaped, because I do

not think much of that--I could have done it myself; I shall not tell of

Joseph's well which he dug in the solid rock of the citadel hill and

which is still as good as new, nor how the same mules he bought to draw

up the water (with an endless chain) are still at it yet and are getting

tired of it, too; I shall not tell about Joseph's granaries which he

built to store the grain in, what time the Egyptian brokers were "selling

short," unwitting that there would be no corn in all the land when it

should be time for them to deliver; I shall not tell any thing about the

strange, strange city of Cairo, because it is only a repetition, a good

deal intensified and exaggerated, of the Oriental cities I have already

spoken of; I shall not tell of the Great Caravan which leaves for Mecca

every year, for I did not see it; nor of the fashion the people have of

prostrating themselves and so forming a long human pavement to be ridden

over by the chief of the expedition on its return, to the end that their

salvation may be thus secured, for I did not see that either; I shall not

speak of the railway, for it is like any other railway--I shall only say

that the fuel they use for the locomotive is composed of mummies three

thousand years old, purchased by the ton or by the graveyard for that

purpose, and that sometimes one hears the profane engineer call out

pettishly, "D--n these plebeians, they don't burn worth a cent--pass out

a King;"--[Stated to me for a fact. I only tell it as I got it. I am

willing to believe it. I can believe any thing.]--I shall not tell of

the groups of mud cones stuck like wasps' nests upon a thousand mounds

above high water-mark the length and breadth of Egypt--villages of the

lower classes; I shall not speak of the boundless sweep of level plain,

green with luxuriant grain, that gladdens the eye as far as it can pierce

through the soft, rich atmosphere of Egypt; I shall not speak of the

vision of the Pyramids seen at a distance of five and twenty miles, for

the picture is too ethereal to be limned by an uninspired pen; I shall

not tell of the crowds of dusky women who flocked to the cars when they

stopped a moment at a station, to sell us a drink of water or a ruddy,

juicy pomegranate; I shall not tell of the motley multitudes and wild

costumes that graced a fair we found in full blast at another barbarous

station; I shall not tell how we feasted on fresh dates and enjoyed the

pleasant landscape all through the flying journey; nor how we thundered

into Alexandria, at last, swarmed out of the cars, rowed aboard the ship,

left a comrade behind, (who was to return to Europe, thence home,) raised

the anchor, and turned our bows homeward finally and forever from the

long voyage; nor how, as the mellow sun went down upon the oldest land on

earth, Jack and Moult assembled in solemn state in the smoking-room and

mourned over the lost comrade the whole night long, and would not be

comforted. I shall not speak a word of any of these things, or write a

line. They shall be as a sealed book. I do not know what a sealed book

is, because I never saw one, but a sealed book is the expression to use

in this connection, because it is popular.

We were glad to have seen the land which was the mother of civilization

--which taught Greece her letters, and through Greece Rome, and through

Rome the world; the land which could have humanized and civilized the

hapless children of Israel, but allowed them to depart out of her borders

little better than savages. We were glad to have seen that land which

had an enlightened religion with future eternal rewards and punishment in

it, while even Israel's religion contained no promise of a hereafter.

We were glad to have seen that land which had glass three thousand years

before England had it, and could paint upon it as none of us can paint

now; that land which knew, three thousand years ago, well nigh all of

medicine and surgery which science has discovered lately; which had all

those curious surgical instruments which science has invented recently;

which had in high excellence a thousand luxuries and necessities of an

advanced civilization which we have gradually contrived and accumulated

in modern times and claimed as things that were new under the sun; that

had paper untold centuries before we dreampt of it--and waterfalls before

our women thought of them; that had a perfect system of common schools so

long before we boasted of our achievements in that direction that it

seems forever and forever ago; that so embalmed the dead that flesh was

made almost immortal--which we can not do; that built temples which mock

at destroying time and smile grimly upon our lauded little prodigies of

architecture; that old land that knew all which we know now, perchance,

and more; that walked in the broad highway of civilization in the gray

dawn of creation, ages and ages before we were born; that left the

impress of exalted, cultivated Mind upon the eternal front of the Sphynx

to confound all scoffers who, when all her other proofs had passed away,

might seek to persuade the world that imperial Egypt, in the days of her

high renown, had groped in darkness.

CHAPTER LIX.

We were at sea now, for a very long voyage--we were to pass through the

entire length of the Levant; through the entire length of the

Mediterranean proper, also, and then cross the full width of the

Atlantic--a voyage of several weeks. We naturally settled down into a

very slow, stay-at-home manner of life, and resolved to be quiet,

exemplary people, and roam no more for twenty or thirty days. No more,

at least, than from stem to stern of the ship. It was a very comfortable

prospect, though, for we were tired and needed a long rest.

We were all lazy and satisfied, now, as the meager entries in my

note-book (that sure index, to me, of my condition), prove. What a

stupid thing a note-book gets to be at sea, any way. Please observe the

style:

"Sunday--Services, as usual, at four bells. Services at night,

also. No cards.

"Monday--Beautiful day, but rained hard. The cattle purchased at

Alexandria for beef ought to be shingled. Or else fattened. The

water stands in deep puddles in the depressions forward of their

after shoulders. Also here and there all over their backs. It is

well they are not cows--it would soak in and ruin the milk. The

poor devil eagle--[Afterwards presented to the Central Park.]--from

Syria looks miserable and droopy in the rain, perched on the forward

capstan. He appears to have his own opinion of a sea voyage, and if

it were put into language and the language solidified, it would

probably essentially dam the widest river in the world.

"Tuesday--Somewhere in the neighborhood of the island of Malta. Can

not stop there. Cholera. Weather very stormy. Many passengers

seasick and invisible.

"Wednesday--Weather still very savage. Storm blew two land birds to

sea, and they came on board. A hawk was blown off, also. He

circled round and round the ship, wanting to light, but afraid of

the people. He was so tired, though, that he had to light, at last,

or perish. He stopped in the foretop, repeatedly, and was as often

blown away by the wind. At last Harry caught him. Sea full of

flying-fish. They rise in flocks of three hundred and flash along

above the tops of the waves a distance of two or three hundred feet,

then fall and disappear.

"Thursday--Anchored off Algiers, Africa. Beautiful city, beautiful

green hilly landscape behind it. Staid half a day and left. Not

permitted to land, though we showed a clean bill of health. They

were afraid of Egyptian plague and cholera.

"Friday--Morning, dominoes. Afternoon, dominoes. Evening,

promenading the deck. Afterwards, charades.

"Saturday--Morning, dominoes. Afternoon, dominoes. Evening,

promenading the decks. Afterwards, dominoes.

"Sunday--Morning service, four bells. Evening service, eight bells.

Monotony till midnight.--Whereupon, dominoes.

"Monday--Morning, dominoes. Afternoon, dominoes. Evening,

promenading the decks. Afterward, charades and a lecture from Dr.

C. Dominoes.

"No date--Anchored off the picturesque city of Cagliari, Sardinia.

Staid till midnight, but not permitted to land by these infamous

foreigners. They smell inodorously--they do not wash--they dare not

risk cholera.

"Thursday--Anchored off the beautiful cathedral city of Malaga,

Spain.--Went ashore in the captain's boat--not ashore, either, for

they would not let us land. Quarantine. Shipped my newspaper

correspondence, which they took with tongs, dipped it in sea water,

clipped it full of holes, and then fumigated it with villainous

vapors till it smelt like a Spaniard. Inquired about chances to run

to blockade and visit the Alhambra at Granada. Too risky--they

might hang a body. Set sail--middle of afternoon.

"And so on, and so on, and so forth, for several days. Finally,

anchored off Gibraltar, which looks familiar and home-like."

It reminds me of the journal I opened with the New Year, once, when I was

a boy and a confiding and a willing prey to those impossible schemes of

reform which well-meaning old maids and grandmothers set for the feet of

unwary youths at that season of the year--setting oversized tasks for

them, which, necessarily failing, as infallibly weaken the boy's strength

of will, diminish his confidence in himself and injure his chances of

success in life. Please accept of an extract:

"Monday--Got up, washed, went to bed.

"Tuesday--Got up, washed, went to bed.

"Wednesday--Got up, washed, went to bed.

"Thursday--Got up, washed, went to bed.

"Friday--Got up, washed, went to bed.

"Next Friday--Got up, washed, went to bed.

"Friday fortnight--Got up, washed, went to bed.

"Following month--Got up, washed, went to bed."

I stopped, then, discouraged. Startling events appeared to be too rare,

in my career, to render a diary necessary. I still reflect with pride,

however, that even at that early age I washed when I got up. That

journal finished me. I never have had the nerve to keep one since. My

loss of confidence in myself in that line was permanent.

The ship had to stay a week or more at Gibraltar to take in coal for the

home voyage.

It would be very tiresome staying here, and so four of us ran the

quarantine blockade and spent seven delightful days in Seville, Cordova,

Cadiz, and wandering through the pleasant rural scenery of Andalusia, the

garden of Old Spain. The experiences of that cheery week were too varied

and numerous for a short chapter and I have not room for a long one.

Therefore I shall leave them all out.

CHAPTER LX.

Ten or eleven o'clock found us coming down to breakfast one morning in

Cadiz. They told us the ship had been lying at anchor in the harbor two

or three hours. It was time for us to bestir ourselves. The ship could

wait only a little while because of the quarantine. We were soon on

board, and within the hour the white city and the pleasant shores of

Spain sank down behind the waves and passed out of sight. We had seen no

land fade from view so regretfully.

It had long ago been decided in a noisy public meeting in the main cabin

that we could not go to Lisbon, because we must surely be quarantined

there. We did every thing by mass-meeting, in the good old national way,

from swapping off one empire for another on the programme of the voyage

down to complaining of the cookery and the scarcity of napkins. I am

reminded, now, of one of these complaints of the cookery made by a

passenger. The coffee had been steadily growing more and more execrable

for the space of three weeks, till at last it had ceased to be coffee

altogether and had assumed the nature of mere discolored water--so this

person said. He said it was so weak that it was transparent an inch in

depth around the edge of the cup. As he approached the table one morning

he saw the transparent edge--by means of his extraordinary vision long

before he got to his seat. He went back and complained in a high-handed

way to Capt. Duncan. He said the coffee was disgraceful. The Captain

showed his. It seemed tolerably good. The incipient mutineer was more

outraged than ever, then, at what he denounced as the partiality shown

the captain's table over the other tables in the ship. He flourished

back and got his cup and set it down triumphantly, and said:

"Just try that mixture once, Captain Duncan."

He smelt it--tasted it--smiled benignantly--then said:

"It is inferior--for coffee--but it is pretty fair tea."

The humbled mutineer smelt it, tasted it, and returned to his seat. He

had made an egregious ass of himself before the whole ship. He did it no

more. After that he took things as they came. That was me.

The old-fashioned ship-life had returned, now that we were no longer in

sight of land. For days and days it continued just the same, one day

being exactly like another, and, to me, every one of them pleasant. At

last we anchored in the open roadstead of Funchal, in the beautiful

islands we call the Madeiras.

The mountains looked surpassingly lovely, clad as they were in living,

green; ribbed with lava ridges; flecked with white cottages; riven by

deep chasms purple with shade; the great slopes dashed with sunshine and

mottled with shadows flung from the drifting squadrons of the sky, and

the superb picture fitly crowned by towering peaks whose fronts were

swept by the trailing fringes of the clouds.

But we could not land. We staid all day and looked, we abused the man

who invented quarantine, we held half a dozen mass-meetings and crammed

them full of interrupted speeches, motions that fell still-born,

amendments that came to nought and resolutions that died from sheer

exhaustion in trying to get before the house. At night we set sail.

We averaged four mass-meetings a week for the voyage--we seemed always in

labor in this way, and yet so often fallaciously that whenever at long

intervals we were safely delivered of a resolution, it was cause for

public rejoicing, and we hoisted the flag and fired a salute.

Days passed--and nights; and then the beautiful Bermudas rose out of the

sea, we entered the tortuous channel, steamed hither and thither among

the bright summer islands, and rested at last under the flag of England

and were welcome. We were not a nightmare here, where were civilization

and intelligence in place of Spanish and Italian superstition, dirt and

dread of cholera. A few days among the breezy groves, the flower

gardens, the coral caves, and the lovely vistas of blue water that went

curving in and out, disappearing and anon again appearing through jungle

walls of brilliant foliage, restored the energies dulled by long drowsing

on the ocean, and fitted us for our final cruise--our little run of a

thousand miles to New York--America--HOME.

We bade good-bye to "our friends the Bermudians," as our programme hath

it--the majority of those we were most intimate with were negroes--and

courted the great deep again. I said the majority. We knew more negroes

than white people, because we had a deal of washing to be done, but we

made some most excellent friends among the whites, whom it will be a

pleasant duty to hold long in grateful remembrance.

We sailed, and from that hour all idling ceased. Such another system of

overhauling, general littering of cabins and packing of trunks we had not

seen since we let go the anchor in the harbor of Beirout. Every body was

busy. Lists of all purchases had to be made out, and values attached, to

facilitate matters at the custom-house. Purchases bought by bulk in

partnership had to be equitably divided, outstanding debts canceled,

accounts compared, and trunks, boxes and packages labeled. All day long

the bustle and confusion continued.

And now came our first accident. A passenger was running through a

gangway, between decks, one stormy night, when he caught his foot in the

iron staple of a door that had been heedlessly left off a hatchway, and

the bones of his leg broke at the ancle. It was our first serious

misfortune. We had traveled much more than twenty thousand miles, by

land and sea, in many trying climates, without a single hurt, without a

serious case of sickness and without a death among five and sixty

passengers. Our good fortune had been wonderful. A sailor had jumped

overboard at Constantinople one night, and was seen no more, but it was

suspected that his object was to desert, and there was a slim chance, at

least, that he reached the shore. But the passenger list was complete.

There was no name missing from the register.

At last, one pleasant morning, we steamed up the harbor of New York, all

on deck, all dressed in Christian garb--by special order, for there was a

latent disposition in some quarters to come out as Turks--and amid a

waving of handkerchiefs from welcoming friends, the glad pilgrims noted

the shiver of the decks that told that ship and pier had joined hands

again and the long, strange cruise was over. Amen.

CHAPTER LXI.

In this place I will print an article which I wrote for the New York

Herald the night we arrived. I do it partly because my contract with my

publishers makes it compulsory; partly because it is a proper, tolerably

accurate, and exhaustive summing up of the cruise of the ship and the

performances of the pilgrims in foreign lands; and partly because some of

the passengers have abused me for writing it, and I wish the public to

see how thankless a task it is to put one's self to trouble to glorify

unappreciative people. I was charged with "rushing into print" with

these compliments. I did not rush. I had written news letters to the

Herald sometimes, but yet when I visited the office that day I did not

say any thing about writing a valedictory. I did go to the Tribune

office to see if such an article was wanted, because I belonged on the

regular staff of that paper and it was simply a duty to do it. The

managing editor was absent, and so I thought no more about it. At night

when the Herald's request came for an article, I did not "rush." In

fact, I demurred for a while, because I did not feel like writing

compliments then, and therefore was afraid to speak of the cruise lest I

might be betrayed into using other than complimentary language. However,

I reflected that it would be a just and righteous thing to go down and

write a kind word for the Hadjis--Hadjis are people who have made the

pilgrimage--because parties not interested could not do it so feelingly

as I, a fellow-Hadji, and so I penned the valedictory. I have read it,

and read it again; and if there is a sentence in it that is not fulsomely

complimentary to captain, ship and passengers, I can not find it. If it

is not a chapter that any company might be proud to have a body write

about them, my judgment is fit for nothing. With these remarks I

confidently submit it to the unprejudiced judgment of the reader:

RETURN OF THE HOLY LAND EXCURSIONISTS--THE STORY OF THE CRUISE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD:

The steamer Quaker City has accomplished at last her extraordinary

voyage and returned to her old pier at the foot of Wall street.

The expedition was a success in some respects, in some it was not.

Originally it was advertised as a "pleasure excursion." Well,

perhaps, it was a pleasure excursion, but certainly it did not look

like one; certainly it did not act like one. Any body's and every

body's notion of a pleasure excursion is that the parties to it will

of a necessity be young and giddy and somewhat boisterous. They

will dance a good deal, sing a good deal, make love, but sermonize

very little. Any body's and every body's notion of a well conducted

funeral is that there must be a hearse and a corpse, and chief

mourners and mourners by courtesy, many old people, much solemnity,

no levity, and a prayer and a sermon withal. Three-fourths of the

Quaker City's passengers were between forty and seventy years of

age! There was a picnic crowd for you! It may be supposed that the

other fourth was composed of young girls. But it was not. It was

chiefly composed of rusty old bachelors and a child of six years.

Let us average the ages of the Quaker City's pilgrims and set the

figure down as fifty years. Is any man insane enough to imagine

that this picnic of patriarchs sang, made love, danced, laughed,

told anecdotes, dealt in ungodly levity? In my experience they

sinned little in these matters. No doubt it was presumed here at

home that these frolicsome veterans laughed and sang and romped all

day, and day after day, and kept up a noisy excitement from one end

of the ship to the other; and that they played blind-man's buff or

danced quadrilles and waltzes on moonlight evenings on the

quarter-deck; and that at odd moments of unoccupied time they jotted

a laconic item or two in the journals they opened on such an

elaborate plan when they left home, and then skurried off to their

whist and euchre labors under the cabin lamps. If these things were

presumed, the presumption was at fault. The venerable excursionists

were not gay and frisky. They played no blind-man's buff; they

dealt not in whist; they shirked not the irksome journal, for alas!

most of them were even writing books. They never romped, they

talked but little, they never sang, save in the nightly

prayer-meeting. The pleasure ship was a synagogue, and the pleasure

trip was a funeral excursion without a corpse. (There is nothing

exhilarating about a funeral excursion without a corpse.) A free,

hearty laugh was a sound that was not heard oftener than once in

seven days about those decks or in those cabins, and when it was

heard it met with precious little sympathy. The excursionists

danced, on three separate evenings, long, long ago, (it seems an

age.) quadrilles, of a single set, made up of three ladies and five

gentlemen, (the latter with handkerchiefs around their arms to

signify their sex.) who timed their feet to the solemn wheezing of a

melodeon; but even this melancholy orgie was voted to be sinful, and

dancing was discontinued.

The pilgrims played dominoes when too much Josephus or Robinson's

Holy Land Researches, or book-writing, made recreation necessary

--for dominoes is about as mild and sinless a game as any in the

world, perhaps, excepting always the ineffably insipid diversion

they call croquet, which is a game where you don't pocket any balls

and don't carom on any thing of any consequence, and when you are

done nobody has to pay, and there are no refreshments to saw off,

and, consequently, there isn't any satisfaction whatever about it

--they played dominoes till they were rested, and then they

blackguarded each other privately till prayer-time. When they were

not seasick they were uncommonly prompt when the dinner-gong

sounded. Such was our daily life on board the ship--solemnity,

decorum, dinner, dominoes, devotions, slander. It was not lively

enough for a pleasure trip; but if we had only had a corpse it would

have made a noble funeral excursion. It is all over now; but when I

look back, the idea of these venerable fossils skipping forth on a

six months' picnic, seems exquisitely refreshing. The advertised

title of the expedition--"The Grand Holy Land Pleasure Excursion"

--was a misnomer. "The Grand Holy Land Funeral Procession" would have

been better--much better.

Wherever we went, in Europe, Asia, or Africa, we made a sensation,

and, I suppose I may add, created a famine. None of us had ever

been any where before; we all hailed from the interior; travel was a

wild novelty to us, and we conducted ourselves in accordance with

the natural instincts that were in us, and trammeled ourselves with

no ceremonies, no conventionalities. We always took care to make it

understood that we were Americans--Americans! When we found that a

good many foreigners had hardly ever heard of America, and that a

good many more knew it only as a barbarous province away off

somewhere, that had lately been at war with somebody, we pitied the

ignorance of the Old World, but abated no jot of our importance.

Many and many a simple community in the Eastern hemisphere will

remember for years the incursion of the strange horde in the year of

our Lord 1867, that called themselves Americans, and seemed to

imagine in some unaccountable way that they had a right to be proud

of it. We generally created a famine, partly because the coffee on

the Quaker City was unendurable, and sometimes the more substantial

fare was not strictly first class; and partly because one naturally

tires of sitting long at the same board and eating from the same

dishes.

The people of those foreign countries are very, very ignorant. They

looked curiously at the costumes we had brought from the wilds of

America. They observed that we talked loudly at table sometimes.

They noticed that we looked out for expenses, and got what we

conveniently could out of a franc, and wondered where in the

mischief we came from. In Paris they just simply opened their eyes

and stared when we spoke to them in French! We never did succeed in

making those idiots understand their own language. One of our

passengers said to a shopkeeper, in reference to a proposed return

to buy a pair of gloves, "Allong restay trankeel--may be ve coom

Moonday;" and would you believe it, that shopkeeper, a born

Frenchman, had to ask what it was that had been said. Sometimes it

seems to me, somehow, that there must be a difference between

Parisian French and Quaker City French.

The people stared at us every where, and we stared at them. We

generally made them feel rather small, too, before we got done with

them, because we bore down on them with America's greatness until we

crushed them. And yet we took kindly to the manners and customs,

and especially to the fashions of the various people we visited.

When we left the Azores, we wore awful capotes and used fine tooth

combs--successfully. When we came back from Tangier, in Africa, we

were topped with fezzes of the bloodiest hue, hung with tassels like

an Indian's scalp-lock. In France and Spain we attracted some

attention in these costumes. In Italy they naturally took us for

distempered Garibaldians, and set a gunboat to look for any thing

significant in our changes of uniform. We made Rome howl. We could

have made any place howl when we had all our clothes on. We got no

fresh raiment in Greece--they had but little there of any kind. But

at Constantinople, how we turned out! Turbans, scimetars, fezzes,

horse-pistols, tunics, sashes, baggy trowsers, yellow slippers--Oh,

we were gorgeous! The illustrious dogs of Constantinople barked

their under jaws off, and even then failed to do us justice. They

are all dead by this time. They could not go through such a run of

business as we gave them and survive.

And then we went to see the Emperor of Russia. We just called on

him as comfortably as if we had known him a century or so, and when

we had finished our visit we variegated ourselves with selections

from Russian costumes and sailed away again more picturesque than

ever. In Smyrna we picked up camel's hair shawls and other dressy

things from Persia; but in Palestine--ah, in Palestine--our splendid

career ended. They didn't wear any clothes there to speak of. We

were satisfied, and stopped. We made no experiments. We did not

try their costume. But we astonished the natives of that country.

We astonished them with such eccentricities of dress as we could

muster. We prowled through the Holy Land, from Cesarea Philippi to

Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, a weird procession of pilgrims, gotten

up regardless of expense, solemn, gorgeous, green-spectacled,

drowsing under blue umbrellas, and astride of a sorrier lot of

horses, camels and asses than those that came out of Noah's ark,

after eleven months of seasickness and short rations. If ever those

children of Israel in Palestine forget when Gideon's Band went

through there from America, they ought to be cursed once more and

finished. It was the rarest spectacle that ever astounded mortal

eyes, perhaps.

Well, we were at home in Palestine. It was easy to see that that

was the grand feature of the expedition. We had cared nothing much

about Europe. We galloped through the Louvre, the Pitti, the

Ufizzi, the Vatican--all the galleries--and through the pictured and

frescoed churches of Venice, Naples, and the cathedrals of Spain;

some of us said that certain of the great works of the old masters

were glorious creations of genius, (we found it out in the

guide-book, though we got hold of the wrong picture sometimes,) and

the others said they were disgraceful old daubs. We examined modern

and ancient statuary with a critical eye in Florence, Rome, or any

where we found it, and praised it if we saw fit, and if we didn't we

said we preferred the wooden Indians in front of the cigar stores of

America. But the Holy Land brought out all our enthusiasm. We fell

into raptures by the barren shores of Galilee; we pondered at Tabor

and at Nazareth; we exploded into poetry over the questionable

loveliness of Esdraelon; we meditated at Jezreel and Samaria over

the missionary zeal of Jehu; we rioted--fairly rioted among the holy

places of Jerusalem; we bathed in Jordan and the Dead Sea, reckless

whether our accident-insurance policies were extra-hazardous or not,

and brought away so many jugs of precious water from both places

that all the country from Jericho to the mountains of Moab will

suffer from drouth this year, I think. Yet, the pilgrimage part of

the excursion was its pet feature--there is no question about that.

After dismal, smileless Palestine, beautiful Egypt had few charms

for us. We merely glanced at it and were ready for home.

They wouldn't let us land at Malta--quarantine; they would not let

us land in Sardinia; nor at Algiers, Africa; nor at Malaga, Spain,

nor Cadiz, nor at the Madeira islands. So we got offended at all

foreigners and turned our backs upon them and came home. I suppose

we only stopped at the Bermudas because they were in the programme.

We did not care any thing about any place at all. We wanted to go

home. Homesickness was abroad in the ship--it was epidemic. If the

authorities of New York had known how badly we had it, they would

have quarantined us here.

The grand pilgrimage is over. Good-bye to it, and a pleasant memory

to it, I am able to say in all kindness. I bear no malice, no

ill-will toward any individual that was connected with it, either as

passenger or officer. Things I did not like at all yesterday I like

very well to-day, now that I am at home, and always hereafter I

shall be able to poke fun at the whole gang if the spirit so moves

me to do, without ever saying a malicious word. The expedition

accomplished all that its programme promised that it should

accomplish, and we ought all to be satisfied with the management of

the matter, certainly. Bye-bye!

MARK TWAIN.

I call that complimentary. It is complimentary; and yet I never have

received a word of thanks for it from the Hadjis; on the contrary I speak

nothing but the serious truth when I say that many of them even took

exceptions to the article. In endeavoring to please them I slaved over

that sketch for two hours, and had my labor for my pains. I never will

do a generous deed again.

CONCLUSION.

Nearly one year has flown since this notable pilgrimage was ended; and as

I sit here at home in San Francisco thinking, I am moved to confess that

day by day the mass of my memories of the excursion have grown more and

more pleasant as the disagreeable incidents of travel which encumbered

them flitted one by one out of my mind--and now, if the Quaker City were

weighing her anchor to sail away on the very same cruise again, nothing

could gratify me more than to be a passenger. With the same captain and

even the same pilgrims, the same sinners. I was on excellent terms with

eight or nine of the excursionists (they are my staunch friends yet,) and

was even on speaking terms with the rest of the sixty-five. I have been

at sea quite enough to know that that was a very good average. Because a

long sea-voyage not only brings out all the mean traits one has, and

exaggerates them, but raises up others which he never suspected he

possessed, and even creates new ones. A twelve months' voyage at sea

would make of an ordinary man a very miracle of meanness. On the other

hand, if a man has good qualities, the spirit seldom moves him to exhibit

them on shipboard, at least with any sort of emphasis. Now I am

satisfied that our pilgrims are pleasant old people on shore; I am also

satisfied that at sea on a second voyage they would be pleasanter,

somewhat, than they were on our grand excursion, and so I say without

hesitation that I would be glad enough to sail with them again. I could

at least enjoy life with my handful of old friends. They could enjoy

life with their cliques as well--passengers invariably divide up into

cliques, on all ships.

And I will say, here, that I would rather travel with an excursion party

of Methuselahs than have to be changing ships and comrades constantly, as

people do who travel in the ordinary way. Those latter are always

grieving over some other ship they have known and lost, and over other

comrades whom diverging routes have separated from them. They learn to

love a ship just in time to change it for another, and they become

attached to a pleasant traveling companion only to lose him. They have

that most dismal experience of being in a strange vessel, among strange

people who care nothing about them, and of undergoing the customary

bullying by strange officers and the insolence of strange servants,

repeated over and over again within the compass of every month. They

have also that other misery of packing and unpacking trunks--of running

the distressing gauntlet of custom-houses--of the anxieties attendant

upon getting a mass of baggage from point to point on land in safety.

I had rasher sail with a whole brigade of patriarchs than suffer so.

We never packed our trunks but twice--when we sailed from New York, and

when we returned to it. Whenever we made a land journey, we estimated

how many days we should be gone and what amount of clothing we should

need, figured it down to a mathematical nicety, packed a valise or two

accordingly, and left the trunks on board. We chose our comrades from

among our old, tried friends, and started. We were never dependent upon

strangers for companionship. We often had occasion to pity Americans

whom we found traveling drearily among strangers with no friends to

exchange pains and pleasures with. Whenever we were coming back from a

land journey, our eyes sought one thing in the distance first--the ship

--and when we saw it riding at anchor with the flag apeak, we felt as a

returning wanderer feels when he sees his home. When we stepped on

board, our cares vanished, our troubles were at an end--for the ship was

home to us. We always had the same familiar old state-room to go to, and

feel safe and at peace and comfortable again.

I have no fault to find with the manner in which our excursion was

conducted. Its programme was faithfully carried out--a thing which

surprised me, for great enterprises usually promise vastly more than they

perform. It would be well if such an excursion could be gotten up every

year and the system regularly inaugurated. Travel is fatal to prejudice,

bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on

these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things can

not be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's

lifetime.

The Excursion is ended, and has passed to its place among the things that

were. But its varied scenes and its manifold incidents will linger

pleasantly in our memories for many a year to come. Always on the wing,

as we were, and merely pausing a moment to catch fitful glimpses of the

wonders of half a world, we could not hope to receive or retain vivid

impressions of all it was our fortune to see. Yet our holyday flight has

not been in vain--for above the confusion of vague recollections, certain

of its best prized pictures lift themselves and will still continue

perfect in tint and outline after their surroundings shall have faded

away.

We shall remember something of pleasant France; and something also of

Paris, though it flashed upon us a splendid meteor, and was gone again,

we hardly knew how or where. We shall remember, always, how we saw

majestic Gibraltar glorified with the rich coloring of a Spanish sunset

and swimming in a sea of rainbows. In fancy we shall see Milan again,

and her stately Cathedral with its marble wilderness of graceful spires.

And Padua--Verona--Como, jeweled with stars; and patrician Venice, afloat

on her stagnant flood--silent, desolate, haughty--scornful of her humbled

state--wrapping herself in memories of her lost fleets, of battle and

triumph, and all the pageantry of a glory that is departed.

We can not forget Florence--Naples--nor the foretaste of heaven that is

in the delicious atmosphere of Greece--and surely not Athens and the

broken temples of the Acropolis. Surely not venerable Rome--nor the

green plain that compasses her round about, contrasting its brightness

with her gray decay--nor the ruined arches that stand apart in the plain

and clothe their looped and windowed raggedness with vines. We shall

remember St. Peter's: not as one sees it when he walks the streets of

Rome and fancies all her domes are just alike, but as he sees it leagues

away, when every meaner edifice has faded out of sight and that one dome

looms superbly up in the flush of sunset, full of dignity and grace,

strongly outlined as a mountain.

We shall remember Constantinople and the Bosporus--the colossal

magnificence of Baalbec--the Pyramids of Egypt--the prodigious form, the

benignant countenance of the Sphynx--Oriental Smyrna--sacred Jerusalem

--Damascus, the "Pearl of the East," the pride of Syria, the fabled Garden

of Eden, the home of princes and genii of the Arabian Nights, the oldest

metropolis on earth, the one city in all the world that has kept its name

and held its place and looked serenely on while the Kingdoms and Empires

of four thousand years have risen to life, enjoyed their little season of

pride and pomp, and then vanished and been forgotten!