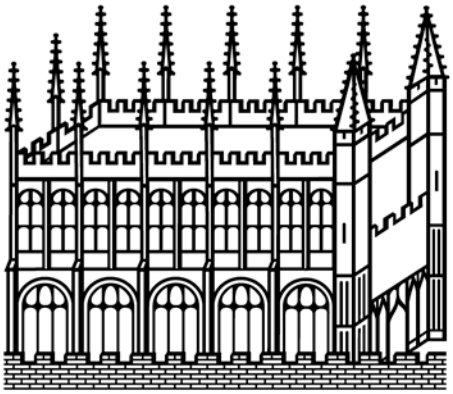
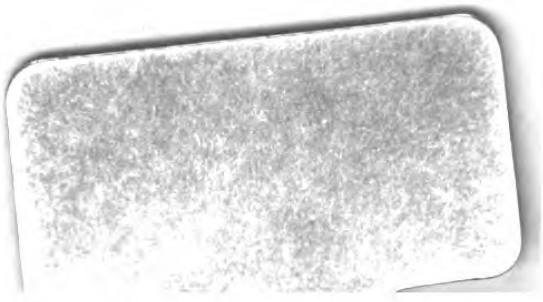
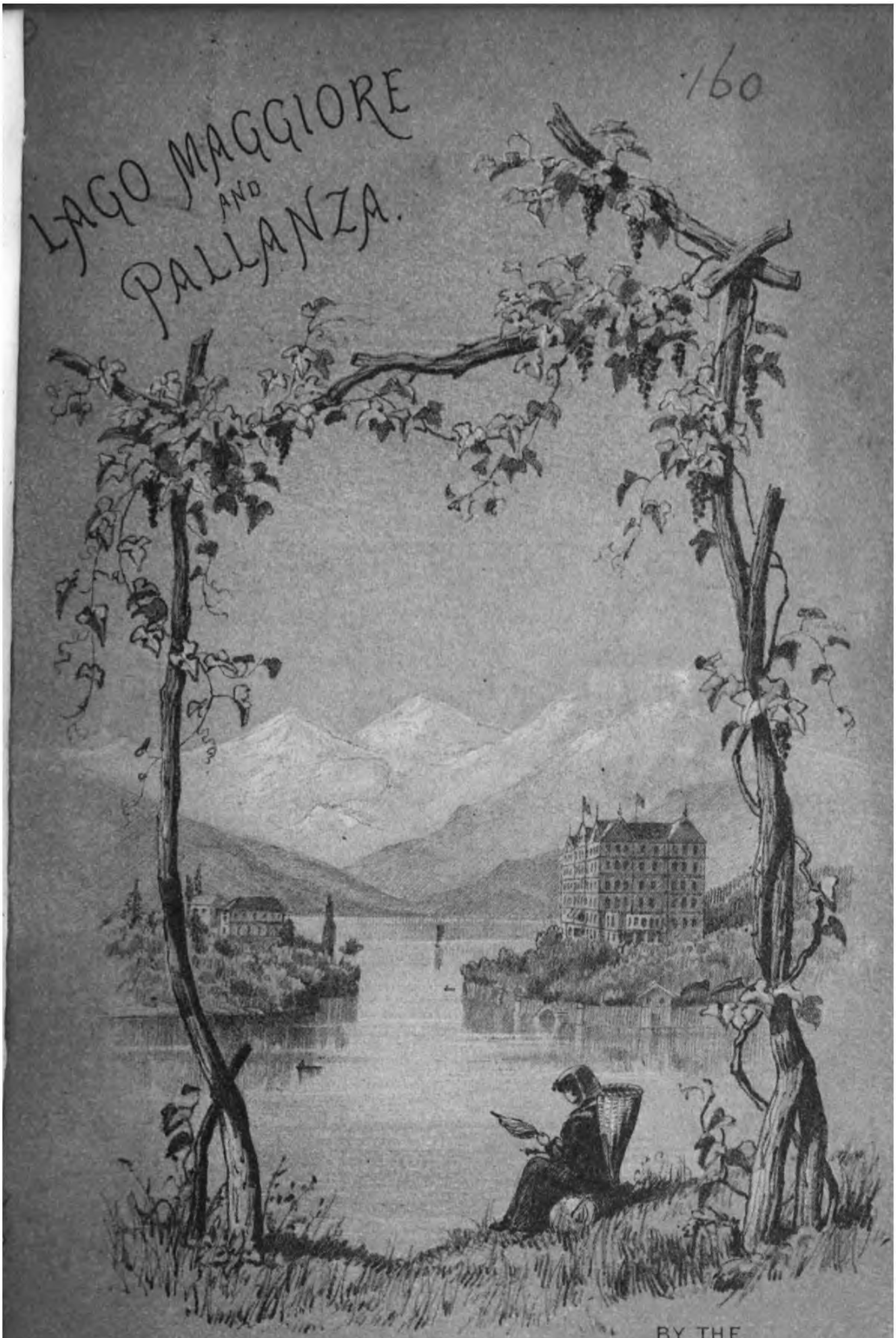




LAGO MAGGIORE AND PALLANZA.



BY THE
REVD. WILLIAM OWEN, B.A.

SKETCHES

OF

LAGO MAGGIORE

AND

PALLANZA

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM OWEN, B.A.

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CONTENTS.

THE LAKES—MAGGIORE.

"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
As cloudless, save with rare and roseate shadows
As I would have thy fate."

E. Bulwer Lytton.

THE Italian lakes! embosomed in rich hills; sentinelled by Alpine giants! What life-long memories they leave; rich, warm, and unfading, of that beauty and grandeur that enchained us breathless and awe-stricken; till more familiar grown, the spirit felt it might lovingly abandon itself to revel in the ever-changing glory of the spot; fain, like the birds around, to make that paradise its home!

And each lake, though sharing in a common family beauty, has its own peculiar charm. The beauty of Varese is that of sweet laughing childhood; Lugano's that of freer, wilder, irrepressible girlhood; while their elder sister, Garda, ever smiles in calm and placid dignity. But for

imposing majesty, these readily cede the palm to those noblest of rivals, Como and Maggiore. To decide between these, however, is not so easy, and to attempt it were ungracious. To either the line of Shakspeare applies—

"This other Eden, demi-Paradise."

Each has its characteristic graces. Each offers a different, but a perfect type of beauty. Their glories are not emulous, but supplementary. One can best compare them, standing at the head of the family group of lakes, as Milton contrasts Adam and Eve, a comparison not unapt, invested as is Como with the softer, gentler charms, just as Maggiore is with attributes of strength, and might, and majesty—

"Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
Godlike erect, with native honour clad
In naked majesty, seemed lords of all;
And worthy seemed: for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone.

For contemplation he, and valour formed;
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace.

His fair large front, and eye sublime declared
Absolute rule.

Fairest of all her daughters, Eve
Her unadorned golden tresses wore
Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved,
As the vine curls her tendrils."

This last line, as every traveller familiar with the spot is aware, beautifully corresponds with the trailing vines that fringe the margin of Como.

The conformation of the two lakes is the same ; each consists of three bays, and at its centre a promontory ; that in Como, projecting northwards, is occupied by Bellagio ; that in Maggiore, projecting southwards—the secret, taken together with its sheltered position, of its genial winter climate—is occupied by Pallanza ; and in each case the promontory is surmounted by a hill from which you look down the three arms of the lake—spectacles unrivalled in Europe. Bellagio and Pallanza are thus, so to speak, the eyes of the lakes, and, like the eyes, set in the noblest part of the frame, watch-towers of the soul, surveying all, so these two, set amidst the noblest features of the lake, contemplate the surpassing loveliness with which they are encircled. From its vast extent, however, and varied scenery, Maggiore seems to reproduce in its different parts the rest of the lakes in turn, with the peculiar characteristics of each ; and thus may be said to combine the beauty of them all. Its southern bay presents along its coast-line the lesser lakes with their gentle landscapes ; its northern bay reflects the nobler features of Como ; while in its western bay—the bay of Pallanza, the crowning glory of the lakes—Maggiore stands in culminating grandeur, in transcendent majesty, alone !

Some delicious passage of this wonderful variety invites the gaze whichever way it turns, now a bit of melting tenderness, now some sublime piece, enchantment everywhere.

It is seen to still greater advantage by ascending Castagnolo or Monte Rosso, the two hills that shelter Pallanza; in the former case an ascent of a few minutes; in the latter of little more than an hour, through prettily trained vineyards, then by rough watercourses where lovely wild flowers blow amongst mosses and ferns, and lastly through masses of pink heather, whortleberry, broom, and golden gorse, the view around growing in extent and beauty at every step, until at the summit it expands into a panorama of rare splendour. Beneath—the three branches of the lake in ever-changing shades of deepest blue and green and indigo, the enchanted islands, Isola Bella, Isola Madre, and the rest. Around—the skirts of the lake and the mountain sides, dashed with magical and never constant effects of light and shade, and, sparkling here and there, a tiny village perched on the hill side, each hamlet with its own tall campanile; the varied vegetation from the vine-trained fringe at the base, up to Nature's cunning lichen-frescoes in green and gold on the crags. Above—sublimity itself, the towering Alpine snow giants! And over all —that delicious veil of haze, in tint and tone so marvellously delicate, shewing here a trembling pearly radiance, and yonder in the mountain hollows vague mysterious depths of purple.

There are moments when the spectator is instinctively hushed; conscious of being in the

most solemn of temples, his soul must needs worship. Nature seems to be inviting and waiting for men's tribute of praise, as though, "if these should hold their peace, the stones—the crags, the peaks—would immediately cry out!"

If such is the ordinary aspect of the spot, how may one speak of its ravishing accession of beauty at sunset and sunrise? The latter especially is as a vision of transfiguration. Just ere dawn the solemn silver snowpeaks are dimly seen, like mighty angels in white, guardian watchers over God's sleeping world. Suddenly the giant Simplon catches a ruddy glow, a crown of flame, and then his fellows, one by one, catch, as from his torch, the living fire, flashing down the promise of day to the awakening earth. Then the warm glow begins to creep down, spreading like a golden mantle over the dark robe of night beneath. Gradually, silently, the rosy flush mantles all the solemn wilderness of snow; then the lower ranges, the hoary crags, the lichen-velveted rocks, are in turn suffused with crimson and purple. And all the while the shades of night still shroud all below, save where the lake mirrors in duplicate, and in undiminished warmth, the growing glory. But soon, all lovingly, the two pictures approach each other, to melt in a common embrace; the narrowing belt of darkness that separates them melting, vanishing, till "the shadows flee away."

GEOLOGY OF THE DISTRICT.

EXCURSION TO MOTTERONE.

"Eternity stands ever fronting God;
A stern colossal image, with blind eyes
And grand dim lips, that murmur evermore
God—God—God!"

E. B. Browning.

AS the geologic formation of a region goes so far to affect its general features, its natural history, human character, and history alike, it demands our first attention. Pallanza, then, in brief, may be described as standing upon the margin of an immense tract of the metamorphic or primary formation, principally gneiss and schists, extending from and including Monte Rosa and the Simplon Range (protoginous) on the west, the S. Gotthard on the north, and the Bernina and Engadine in the east.

The lakes themselves are supposed to be the plowings of immense glaciers of remote periods.

A most interesting proof of this is furnished by one of their results in the rounded and polished surfaces of the rocks of porphyry at the lower end of the lake, near Arona, as well as by the foreign material in the shape of erratic blocks, deposited by the glaciers, and the débris of their moraines, which often quite covers, not only the low skirts of that part of the lake, but often the hill-sides, to a considerable elevation,

showing the extraordinary mass and impetus of the glacier. More extraordinary still is the fact that the two sides of the lake at that part are covered respectively with débris of different materials, evidently the lateral moraines of two glaciers, coming from two distinct sources, easily traced. Thus, the western lower bank has deposits of white granite peculiar to the beautiful Monte Orfano, at the head of the *western* bay, whence the Simplon ice-stream must have borne them down ; while the eastern banks, from Angera to beyond Luino, are covered superficially, and often entirely made up of débris—crystals, pebbles, &c.—evidently borne down as lateral moraines, from the *north* end of the lake, with no trace of that granite. Each of the two upper bays must thus have been occupied, and in fact formed, by an enormous glacier, or, more probably, a union of several, side by side, one from each opening valley; and these must have united in the centre of the lake, opposite the promontory of Pallanza. This is all the more probable from the fact that here, between Pallanza and the Monastery of Santa Catarina, the lake has been ploughed deepest, two thousand five hundred feet and more—the greatest lake depth in Europe. This must have been also the glacier's depth at least; a fact that with the result—the formation of the lakes—shows the scale of operations in nature's laboratory in the olden time.

A few hundred yards from Pallanza, on the Intra road, a good illustration of the tale-telling

débris and boulder is found in a fine broken escarpment, some two hundred feet high, excavated for its material, on the flank of Castagnolo. This hill, like all the ground about Pallanza, is formed of schists; but the escarpment just mentioned is an immense foreign mass of débris, evidently borne down from elsewhere, and containing rounded boulders, gathered on the way. One enormous boulder, weighing some tons, is to be seen in the garden of the Marchese Casanova, on the hill-top.

The best way to conceive what must have been the aspect of the scene at that glacial epoch is to imagine the northern bay occupied by, say, the Gorner Gletscher, that sea of ice between Monte Rosa and the Riffelberg above Zermatt; the western bay, by the Mer-de-Glace at Chamounix, but something huger; and the southern bay by these ice-streams united side by side, well represented by the Aletsch glacier, vastest of existing Swiss ice-seas.

The simplest way however to get an idea of the geological character and history of the district is to climb Motterone, a hill considerably higher than Ben Nevis, separated from Pallanza by the western arm of the lake; and, aided by a good geological map, so to arrive at that history. You pass the celebrated Borromean islands on the way, and recognise there the same mica and slaty schists as at Pallanza; here however as islets that the old glacial rivers encircled and spared. Before commencing the ascent, which

occupies about four hours, if there be any invalids in the party it is well to engage donkeys. As there are but three in all that country, comprising the stud of an elderly lady, who acts as guide, and their vocations are various and in widely separated districts, the arrangement is best made the day before; otherwise at the moment of setting out a search may have to be instituted as prolonged as Saul's when on this identical errand. The delays are quite enough when they are found; for the ass is a creature not yet won over to modern ideas of progress, and the journey is interrupted by a series of Socratic disputations; the ass's method being that of Euclid, demanding a reason for every step; the guide's, of *ad baculum* appeals and weightiest arguments. Ruminating upon these (though not a ruminant) he feels their full force; concluding like Shakspeare's philosopher

> "These are counsellors
> That feelingly persuade me what I am."

If the ascent be made in the early spring—the most delightful time—nothing can equal the rich and varied character of the journey, in the way of both sight and sound, scenery and song. The newly leaved groves of chestnut-trees through which for the first hour or two you slowly wend your way, are crowded with nightingales that make the sweet morning air ring with their delicious notes. The banks are alternately golden with primroses, snowy with starry anemones,

purple with rich deep-dyed gentians, or white with the pale violets, that scent the air with sweetest perfume. Then, as from the chestnut woods you emerge into the open, the nightingale's note is exchanged for the cuckoo's, which again gives place when you approach the summit to the rich trill of the skylark—

"Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest,
Like a cloud of fire
The blue deep thou wingest
And singing still dost soar,
And soaring ever singest."

Shelley.

You are astonished after climbing an hour and a half or more, and emerging from the woods, near to the Baveno granite quarries, to perceive the immense extent of the operations there. You have ascended nearly two thousand feet, and find you are still only on a level with their tremendous height. You no longer wonder that they have since the time of the Romans supplied so much of Europe as well as Italy with valuable material.

During the ascent you are forced to pause from time to time to pluck the beautiful plants that vary according to the elevation, and to look back upon and admire with growing ardour the view over Pallanza towards the S. Gotthard, more and more magnificent as you rise higher.

At last, on reaching the summit, and not till then, there bursts all at once upon the view a

new prospect*—the wide sweeping crescent of the Alps, and the enclosed fertile plains of North Italy—a prospect to the geologist replete with interest, to the poet or painter presenting a sublimity at once his worship, his delight, and his despair; to the historian the scene of all others perhaps in the world of most intensely human interest, an interest many a time agonising to the generation of the period. Of the desperate struggles—each a turning point in the world's history—of which this region has been the scene, the ebb and flow of Roman legions, avenging Carthaginian, hordes of Goths, Huns, Vandals; hosts of Franks, and, later, German and Spaniard, Austrian and French, between these mountain passes and that flat battle-plain of Piedmont and Lombardy, we cannot here speak. Our present concern is with mightier movements still in this same region, compared with which the irruption of conquering armies is but as the rustling of the wind among the fallen leaves of the forest. Standing thus on Motterone in the centre of this amphitheatre, in the arena so to speak of Nature's mighty Colosseum—the loftiest of Alpine peaks in the foreground, Monte Rosa supreme among them, and in the distance the imposing ranges already named, let the geologist read us the story of their birth, from that strata-leaved book of the rocks lying open before

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* According to Murray, "unrivalled."—*Northern Italy.*

us, wherein Nature has written her records. How, in the olden times of earth's convulsive throes, these mighty mountain-ranges resulted from the upheaval of Ocean's first sedimentary deposits, by the agitated furnace of molten granite beneath ;* the burning fluid itself here and there—as at the Baveno quarries of granite at our feet—having burst forth into eruptive hills with its characteristic dykes and veins. To the heat of that contiguous mass is attributed the crystalline character of the gneiss, mica, and other schists of which this vast region is mainly composed, and perhaps also the absence of all vegetable and animal remains in these—the non-fossiliferous or azoic strata—the fossil remains being probably obliterated by crystalline metamorphosis, though the laminated indications of the sedimentary character of the mass remain.

Five lakes are spread out in silvery sheen at our feet, Maggiore occupying the centre. Originally these lakes were all connected. Their waters stood immensely higher than now. The legend tells how San Giulio sailed from Maggiore to the beautiful Lago d'Orta. From

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* Some geologists teach a *succession* of such upheavals, alternated with submersions again beneath the sea; and so account for the various stratifications. Others explain the phenomena by supposing that as the once molten earth cooled by the loss of heat that it has always been and still is undergoing, it *contracted unequally;* and that in this manner its stratifications became, so to speak, *crumpled* into their present immense irregularities.

Maggiore to the lovely little tarn Margozzo, it is possible to do so still, by taking a shallow boat up a tiny stream. All the land behind Pallanza between the hills Castagnola and Monte Rosso was once submerged; part of the lake, indeed, and its soil is principally lake deposit. Castagnola was an island in those days. Between Maggiore and lake Varese the evidences are numerous of their old connection. And indications are not wanting that seem to point to the fact that the old outlet of Maggiore was through Varese lake and along the hollow between two low-lying hills that can be seen from Pallanza in a south-easterly direction. To the thinking spectator how suggestive is the story of the mighty operations and changes effected by the agency of ice and water in the long-ago ages!

Incidentally the mention of the ancient eruption of granite at Baveno reminds one of a modern phenomenon of the reverse character in the same vicinity—the sudden subsidence into the lake of a portion of its coast line. On the evening of the 15th March, 1867, after a sudden rapid agitation of the lake from beneath, resulting in a rising of its level some two feet, about a quarter of Feriolo—the village which you see at the head of the lake—and between fifty and sixty yards of the road sank bodily into the lake, and so suddenly, that, of the occupants of the houses submerged, seventeen persons had no time to escape. From six to thirty fathoms of water now cover the wreck.

It is interesting, standing on Motterone, to recognize some forty miles away, among the numerous cities in the Lombardy plains, the venerable city of Milan by means of its sparkling cathedral, and turning, to see close by in the defile leading from Pallanza towards the Simplon, the marble quarry from which the cathedral was dug.

A little higher up the valley is another quarry, from which was extracted the marble of the imposing Arco della Pace, in Milan, commenced by Napoleon I., to commemorate the victory of Jena. Adjacent to it is a region of syenitic granite, with its characteristic hornblende. Again turning, and looking across the lake eastwards, Laveno, at the foot of the beautiful hill, Sasso del Ferro, is the centre of more recent districts—Dyas on its north side, Eocene formations on the coast south of it, while in its rear is a district of Jurassic Oolite, and then a tract of porphyry extending to the lake of Lugano.

Before descending, one can scarce help contrasting the suddenness of the tremendous upheaval of those immense mountain ranges, with the slow, silent, grinding process that furrowed out these lakes. The fire—the molten mass—consummated its work at once. Age after age was required ere the ice had finished the task that demanded its ceaseless, remorseless, irresistible action. The glacier is but the graving tool in His hands, who, if at times He seems to operate with mysterious slowness, yet has eternity

for His leisure. And these everlasting hills, in thus revealing the story of their instant birth at His fiat, only tell again how "He spake, and they were created: He commanded, and they stood fast." That ancient glacial ploughshare, guided so unflaggingly in its remorseless course, by the hand of the old ploughman, Time, amid the awful silence of old, in the unpeopled earth, half-suggests the yet more ancient Plough of the Northern heavens, in the solemn silence of its everlasting course.

CLIMATE.

"Whose head in wintry grandeur towers,
And whitens with eternal sleet;
While summer, in a vale of flowers
Is sleeping rosy at his feet."

Paradise and the Peri.

RARELY is the traveller to this spot in the spring or autumn otherwise than delighted with its climate; its deep-azure skies and its delicious atmosphere. Sunny days—crowded with unspeakable and ever-varying glories of brilliant colouring and solemn shadows. Romantic nights—the evening spent probably in a skiff with some congenial soul, rowing in

that balmy air, with measured song over the deep waters, watching the oar's feathered spray fired by the moonlight; or pausing in silence to contemplate the starry orbs above, that seem to shine in that deep dark sky with a strangely intense radiance.

But the casual visitor would scarcely suppose then when winter came, it could in an Alpine vicinity such as this, come in with smiling face, and continue to wear the same sunny kindly aspect, till its bright genial stay was over. You naturally conclude that, so near these immense snowy ranges, the winter must be dreary in the extreme, and the cold piercing. You are surprised to be told that the winter climate round the lake is generally wonderfully mild, and always sunny. Any part of its shores is considerably warmer than Milan. Pallanza, basking in a southern sun, and sheltered from the mountain blasts, is incomparably warmer than Florence, and even more equable than Naples. Snow rarely falls—never stays. This equability indeed of warmth, as well as of brightness, is a distinguishing peculiarity of the spot. One of the ancient names of the lake—"*il Verbano*"— has been derived from its *vernal* character, its perennial spring. A delightful old Italian writer—Vagliano—in his "*Rive del Lago Maggiore*," date, 1710, says, "Surely this place seems to me the flowery abode of primal innocence; where flourish and smile the verdant herbage, the fruits of Autumn and the April rose—ay, even in the

heart of frozen January!" But it was his native spot, and the old gentleman was an enthusiast. And yet you will, even in spring, see evidences that he had some foundation for his enthusiasm. How about the sub-tropical vegetation around? How could those countless lemon and orange trees have been golden with fruit through the winter, if it were such as you anticipated?

You will notice the straw cupolas, like parasol roofs, over many of the young trees and shrubs. If you were not observant, you might think it was to keep out the cold: it is not so obvious that it is a necessity arising from the intense clearness of the sky. It is to prevent the loss of heat by radiation. Were there clouds, they would reflect again the heat—the straw roof takes the place of the clouds.

The equilibrium of temperature on the lake-side is owing, not only to its sheltered situation, but also to the extent and great depth of its waters. Their equable warmth imparts itself to the air. Saussure, in 1783, made an examination of the phenomenon. He found, in July, at a depth of 350 feet a temperature of 5°4 centigrade. In the depth of the severest winter it never descended below the freezing point. He writes—"Enfin celui de ces lacs qui doit le plus étonner, non qu'il soit plus froid, mais parce qu'il est sous un climat beaucoup plus chaud que les autres, c'est le Lac Majeur."—*Voyages dans les Alpes*, tom. iii. chap. 18.

Maggiore has never been known to be frozen.

In the severe winter of 1869-70, when the neighbouring lake of Varese was frozen over its entire surface, so that men and carriages could pass over it, Maggiore remained entirely unfrozen.

The ancients had a fable that the Hyperboreans —the dwellers beyond the North winds—had a clime of perennial spring, where they, as favourites of Apollo, enjoyed perpetual youth. And the Greeks had an old myth respecting the "Islands of the Blessed," somewhere on the confines of the Western Ocean; where the beloved of the gods, mortal once, immortal now, enjoyed the same perpetuity of paradise. Now, unless our Arctic explorers do really light upon the first—which is improbable; and unless our British isles are supposed to answer in other respects, as they do in situation, to the second—which is absurd: we may not be far wrong in finding the parallel — in the two respects of antecedent improbability and of actual perennial spring — between Pallanza and the Hyperboreans' home, and between Isola Bella with her sisters, and the "Islands of the Blessed."

No climate, however, is suited to all invalids; there are many to whom this would be felt as too bracing, whose extreme delicacy or debility, or sensibility to cold, makes the warmer air of the Riviera or African Coast obviously preferable.* Just as there are others to whom the

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* Strange to say, the only cold wind in the winter is that from the *South*—the *Inverno*—that blows from

relaxing air of those climates, and their rapid chilling transitions in passing from sun to shade, especially at sunset, are extremely trying; who might readily gather strength and vigour in the cooler and more equal temperature of Pallanza. It is often a matter for experiment whether a case demands a sea or a mountain climate, or one that, as in this spot, has an intermediate character.* Generally speaking, the air here, though sometimes cold in winter, is crisp and tonic—exhilarating without being exciting. The author's own experience may be worth citing, and is briefly told: prolonged effort of the voice in large churches, and an attack of bronchitis, resulted in the distressing malady so frequent in his profession—clergyman's sore throat. To the effects of this climate he has gratefully to ascribe the removal of nearly all trace of delicacy in that organ, as well as the accession of a larger measure of strength and vigour. Similar instances of alleviation have come under his notice, especially cases of an asthmatic and bronchitic character. The usually sunny, cloudless azure tempts even

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the Appenines over the plains of North Italy. It is the cool and refreshing wind of the summer, and is as welcome then as it is disagreeable in the winter. In the latter season the prevalent wind is fortunately the *North*, which, strange as it may sound to English ears, always brings bright and pleasant weather. From its sheltered position, however, Pallanza gets little cold wind.

* The physicians here, in a case where a warmer air is desirable, assist the patient thither with all the information and references they can command.

the delicate abroad, and the instinct for exercise amounts to a craving; while the infinite variety of scenery has a refreshing effect upon all who are receptive of the beautiful. One thing well worth indicating is the exceeding beauty of the effects of colour here in winter. The rich browns of the vegetation on the hills, the peculiar warm glow, and the varying depth of tone and tint on every side make that season, to some eyes, the most enjoyable of any. Certainly, at no time of the year are the sunrise and sunset effects more glorious. Nowhere can be better realised what Shelley, who knew Italy well, intended to convey by a passage in his "Ode to the Skylark," than when at the close of a winter's day here one sees it illustrated—

> "The *pale purple even*
> Melts around thy flight."

To those who can only live amid the excitements of crowded fashionable resorts, this place offers no attractions. But the overwrought with mental strain may find repose and recruiting here. Here, if anywhere, is the spot to soothe it may be the jaded, the anxious, and the sorrowing; to inspire again with hope the convalescent; a spot wherein to muse over the deep thoughts of poet—or perchance to attempt in vain to reproduce with pencil some melting aspect of lake or hill-side, till, with a sigh, the volume or the pencil be laid aside, and you passively, dreamily, drink in the delicious

beauty of the scene, and try to interpret that impassioned song of the nightingale in the rose-bush hard by.

HORTICULTURE.

Excursions to Celebrated Gardens.

"Could Nature's bounties satisfy the breast,
The sons of Italy were surely blest."
Goldsmith's "Traveller."

ONE of the best tests of the winter climate of any spot is its vegetation. Suppose we visit in succession some of the celebrated gardens of this vicinity. We will select a few entirely distinct in character and object. Let us take Rovelli's as the type of a large nursery of trees and flowers; the Marchese Casanova's as conservatories of rare plants; Signor Franzosini's gardens as the most picturesquely laid out; Prince Troubetzkoi's, as containing the widest collection of foreign trees; and "The Islands" as offering a glorious summary of the rest.

(i.) The garden of the Signori Rovelli is immediately opposite the hotel, and the extensive grounds are freely open to all. It is equally remarkable as commanding from the hill at its

summit a most magnificent prospect of mountain and lake, and as being one of the most extensive nursery-grounds in Europe. The catalogue of their flowers seems to exhaust all known varieties. Of Roses, Azaleas, Rhododendrons, Camellias, hardly an existing specimen that is not to be found here; while the variety and magnificence of the trees—the Palms, and above all of Firs and Pines—create astonishment. The walks under their shade, winding up and down the hill-side are as interesting as anything that can be conceived.

You can take your camp-stool, and plant it so as to command some lovely vista through the trees, or revel in the amazing variety in the great shrubs of Camellias, one blaze of flowers ere winter has passed; or, when these have fallen, carpeting thick the ground with their petals, to see the succeeding burst of Rhododendrons, Azaleas, and Magnolias. But as it is principally as nurserymen that the proprietors have gained their wide reputation, so, doubtless, the most interesting feature of the place is their vast collection of young plants of every description, native and exotic. They furnish food for curiosity to naturalist and horticulturist alike. The free access to these delightful grounds is a great boon, especially to those whose time or strength do not allow a more extended walk.

(ii.) Ascending the same hill by another route, we arrive at the conservatories and nursery-grounds of the Marchese di Casanova, an en-

thusiastic botanist, and as eminent for the success of his gardening experiments, as for the perfection of his hot-houses. His gardens are well worth inspection, and have a special interest for botanists, as they contain specimens of rare tropical plants hardly to be met with elsewhere on the continent.

It is worth while afterwards to ascend to the hill-top, passing on the way the church of San Remigio—one of the oldest in Christendom, and occupying the site of an ancient temple of Venus. The summit of the hill is occupied by the villa of the Browne family, whose courtesy grants a ready permission into their well-ordered gardens. Of the magnificent panorama from this site, we have already spoken in our opening chapter. It is the point in Lago Maggiore that corresponds with Serbellone above Bellagio, where are the celebrated gardens from which the view commands in its wide sweep the whole of the outline and surroundings of that lovely lake. So it is here. The whole of the southern bay as far as to Angera—the whole of the western bay and Lago Margozzo above it, connected with it by the river Toce, as by a silver ribbon—and a great part of the northern bay, till its windings are hid by an intervening hill—all lie spread around and beneath, enclosed by awe-inspiring mountains rising from the lake side; and between these, views of distant snowy ranges, dreary ice-slopes, and white avalanche-beds on the mountain sides.

A scene of grandeur that no lapse of time can ever efface from the memory.

(iii.) *Franzosini Gardens.*—The most pleasant way to reach these is by a rowing boat; otherwise you walk or drive through Intra, a manufacturing town of about five thousand inhabitants, designated by Cavour—artfully gilding the pill, a tax, he was about to impose upon it—"the Manchester of Italy." Its factories, especially those of glass, cotton, and felt, are numerous, and repay inspection. A little way beyond the town, we reach the picturesque gardens of Signor Franzosini, which rank amongst the most admirable in Italy in respect of luxuriance, variety, and prospect. The Jesuit missionary to Japan who was the first to import into Europe the "Camellia" that thenceforth took his name—never witnessed in their native habitats more glorious specimens than those which here exhibit their masses of colour in lavish profusion. As for magnolias, those growing here are confessed to be the finest in Europe. One has a stem that two men holding hands can but just clasp round. Laden with glossiest of leaves, or all aglow with flower, their radiating lower branches rest gracefully their extremities on the lawn, enclosing a large area beneath whose shade it is pleasant to sit and listen to the fountains near playing their soothing music. Then the aloes and agaves, palms and tree-ferns, southern myrtles and northern pines, bamboos and bananas, cacti and canes, azaleas and rhododen-

drons, all alike by their vigorous growth and thriving appearance, testify to the genial character of the climate.

(iv.) *The Troubetzkoi Gardens.*—An account of these was written by the eminent German botanist, Karl Koch, and appeared in the "Gardeners' Chronicle," No. 20, 1874. With the Prince's permission, I avail myself of the following extracts :—"Although writing to-day from the shores of Lago Maggiore, the largest of the lakes south of the Alps, instead of from Berlin, I hope to engage the sympathies of your readers, for the subject of my communication is one of the most absorbing interest to botanists and gardeners. A second establishment such as I am about to describe, probably does not exist throughout Europe. The proprietor is the same Prince Peter Troubetzkoi, whose extensive gardens in the neighbourhood of Moscow will be remembered by many of your readers, from the large number of Palms—nearly four-hundred, without counting Cycads, Screw Pines and Carludoviceæ, cultivated there. The Prince by no means belongs to the ordinary race of amateurs, for he is also a connoisseur and carries on his gardening operations with a rare enthusiasm. In Moscow he was the prime mover and the guiding power of all that was undertaken in his garden. The task he has set himself here is to form a collection of trees and shrubs, especially Conifers from the higher Himalayan mountains, the Southern States of the

North American Union, California, the terraces of Mexico, Peru and Chili, Patagonia, Australia, the South Pacific Islands, and China and Japan, so far as they can be successfully cultivated in the open air.

I was astonished at the result in regard to the species, and even more so at the rapid growth of many individual specimens. Unfortunately I have no meteorological observations at my command; but without doubt many spots on the shores of Lago Maggiore are highly favourable to the well-being both of men and plants, and for equability of climate it is probably second in Italy to Genoa alone.

Above all things, perhaps the Palms will afford the greatest interest, as their culture in the open air in England is attended with greater difficulties. True you have *Jubaea spectabilis* (*Chamaerops Fortunei* only) out of doors at Kew; but it suffers more or less every winter from the effects of frost. But here, on Lake Maggiore, there is no trace of a winter influence. The stately though still small specimen belonging to the Prince shows no signs of injury from cold.

At Pallanza, in the garden of the well-known nurserymen, Rovelli, there is perhaps the finest specimen to be found anywhere in the open air. Indeed I have not seen a larger one under glass.

A fine healthy, as yet almost stemless specimen of *Phœnix dactylifera*, has made sixteen leaves, and four more are in course of develop-

ment. The largest of the leaves is eight feet long.

Cycas revoluta is also planted out, and has hitherto withstood the winters without injury. But what astonished me most was to find the Tree Ferns, *Cyathea dealbata* and *Alsophila Australis*, flourishing in the open air. The first is said to be the hardier of the two. *Batantium* (*Dicksonia*) *antarcticum* is likewise hardy. Australia and the neighbouring islands have furnished a considerable number of handsome flowering shrubs and trees. A noble specimen of *Acacia pulverulenta*, which for rapidity of growth exceeds all and everything that has come under my observation, excited my admiration more than anything else from that part of the world. *Acacia paradoxa*, in the form of a show plant as we are accustomed to see it at exhibitions, is just now literally covered with blossoms; its height is above six feet, and its diameter five feet.

The collection of Cypressineæ, especially *Juniperus* and *Cupressus*, is very rich, and represented by many handsome specimens. The species of *Calothamnus* are extremely attractive, displaying every shade of red, violet, and yellow in their flowers, and excite the admiration of both natives and strangers. Australian gum trees, too, are the objects of special care, partly on account of the reputed medicinal properties of these resinous trees, some of which are said to attain the amazing height of 400 feet in their native country. Experiments instituted in France,

and also in Vienna and Griefswald (University of Pomerania), have confirmed the efficacy of the leaves in cases of intermittent fever. In a truly philanthropical spirit, the Prince has exerted himself, though unfortunately hitherto in vain, to induce the authorities to plant *Eucalypti* in the streets and public places, especially in Rome and other fever affected districts in Italy, in order to place a remedy within the reach of the poor man, to supply the place of the costly Peruvian bark.

The Rhododendrons are also great favourites, particularly those from Sikkim and Bhotan, and their allies the Azaleas. Neither of the genera can flourish in greater perfection, either in the Himalayas or China and Japan, than they do here. During the fortnight that I have been enjoying the Prince's hospitality, one of the most beautiful varieties of *Rhododendron Arboreum* has been clothed with hundreds of clusters of its purple blood-red flowers, standing like a guard of honour before the villa, which is built in the Swiss style.

The Chinese and Japanese Bamboos form another group of plants, upon which great store is set. Their real decorative value can only be realised when seen out of doors in such luxuriance as they present here."

THE BORROMEAN ISLANDS.

"Like the Hesperides of old—
Trees of life, with fruits of gold."

THESE have a world-wide reputation for their loveliness, tropical profusion, and beauty of situation. They are four. The first in order from Pallanza is separated from it only by a channel; Isola Madre occupies the middle of the bay. Isola Bella and Isola dei Pescatori are near the opposite coast. The last-mentioned is so called because inhabited by fishermen, whose hereditary freehold it is. The two whose wonders have made the group so celebrated are Isola Madre and Isola Bella. As our boat approaches it is impossible not to be fascinated with the lovely and enchanting aspect they wear, as well as by the noble scenery around. One hardly realises that up to two centuries ago these islands were only barren rocks of schist. The Count Borromeo of that date, 1670, initiated the task that demanded sixty years to accomplish. The design—the creation—were alike magnificent. Terrace was cut above terrace in pyramidal form; and from the luxuriance that now clothes them they sug-

gest the hanging gardens of Babylon. Barges were employed for years in importing the soil to cover the arid rocks. Thus Art cradled Nature then ; how nobly Nature has developed since can only be realised by those who see her wondrous growth and beauty now. Ancient myths, poetic fables of abodes of delight and witchery, have all been drawn upon for comparisons—Tasso's garden island of the sorceress Armida,—Calypso's isle that seduced Ulysses, —the Golden Hesperides. Here might have been the original of the flowery regions that Moore so glowingly describes—"As they sat in the cool fragrance of this delicious spot, Lalla Rookh remarked that she could fancy it the abode of that flower-loving Nymph whom they worship in the temples of Kathay, or one of those Peris, those beautiful creatures of the air who live upon perfumes, and to whom a place like this might make amends for the paradise they have lost."

The two islands have much in common, and yet are very distinct in feature. Both exhibit the same lavish profusion of varied vegetation ; in both there is the same amazing variety of flowers, the blaze of Camellia groves, the bloom of great Magnolias, the rich scent of Rose-beds ; in both splendid specimens of exotics—tea, coffee, camphor, india-rubber, sassafras trees : sugar canes, aloes and cactuses, palms, araucaurias and tree-ferns ; in both the cypress and the myrtle contrast

with Cuban pines and Mexican firs. Both are seen from the passing boat, golden with orange, lemon, and citron trees, that scent the air with their perfume. And from both are obtained most ravishing views of lake and mountain.

Yet these sister islands contrast strangely. Isola Bella is in parts as artificial as a Dutch gardener could desire to see it. Isola Madre, in its beautiful naturalness, is the poet's delight. In the one island trees are planted in lines, and their foliage often carved into strange, fanciful patterns. The flower-beds are laid in rectangular or symmetrical parterres: all is *correct.* In the other, Nature seems to revel at her own sweet will; and Art, that trains her, hides behind her sister. Both islands are beautiful; each has its enthusiastic admirers; but the truer instinct and the finer taste would assuredly turn to Isola Madre as the spot that nearest approaches to perfection. Besides, not only is it the larger of the two, but it is wholly covered with vegetation; whereas Isola Bella is only so in part, the remainder being occupied by a village of fishermen, and by a huge palace. This mansion is thoroughly Italian in its style and noble proportions, and offers much that is interesting—cabinets, marbles, mosaics, Venetian glass; a picture gallery containing some good and many very indifferent pieces; state-rooms and bedrooms,—the guide indicates those once occupied by the first Napoleon just before his victory at

Marengo. A peculiar feature of the place—and in summer a most refreshing one—is presented by the long galleries of grottoes, like cloisters, on the lake margin, adorned with statuary. These as seen from the water form a long series of arches, surmounted by a pyramid of terraced gardens, and crowned at the summit with obelisks, statuary, cypresses and myrtles.

SANTA CATARINA.

EXCURSION TO THE MONASTERY.

"The convent's white walls glisten fair on high;
Rock, forest, lake, and mountain all around."

LOOKING from Pallanza across the lake in a south-easterly direction, the eye is attracted by a white glistening building, romantically perched on the face of a precipice, that rises sheer out of the water. It is the interesting Monastery of Santa Catarina. It seems tiny, but it is five miles away. The distances are deceptive in this clear atmosphere. The excursion is delightful, and the place teems with interest of a phenomenal, historical, and legendary character—a rock seemingly unsupported in mid-air; the enshrined skeleton of the Blessed Hermit; his dark cave; and, most interesting of all, historical associations with

the terrible pestilence, that five centuries ago bid fair to depopulate the world.

The sail to it is pleasant, and offers delightful views, as one's relative positions with the different coast lines alter. Especially striking is the ever-changing, subtle play of tones and colours in the distant haze, and in the water around. The expanding northern bay, with the S. Gothard range in its background, offers a noble spectacle. As we approach the Monastery, and get beneath the cliff on whose side it reposes, the boatmen remind us of the immense depth of the water here. The lake's surface is 646 feet *above* the sea level, the bed of the lake at this spot is no less than 1969 feet *beneath* it, the total depth being 2615 feet. Approaching nearer, one is struck—if the water be still—with the perfect reflection in its surface of the Monastery and its surroundings. Beneath it are to be seen two or three upright rifts in the cliff, one of which communicates with the cave, the residence of the Hermit, of which presently; a little further, a break in the face of the cliff has been converted into a landing-place and staircase to the Monastery.

It nestles on a ledge about half-way to the summit; the ascent only occupies a few minutes. Passing on the way a curious heavy-timbered screw wine-press beneath the huge, over-arching rock; the outlying buildings and offices that invariably attached themselves to a well-ordered old Monastery, in which the monks made or

cultivated all they needed; the library, &c. One is arrested by the ravishing views that fill each vine-trained arch of the winding arcade. Here we get a glimpse of the shoulder of Monte Rosa; from the summit of the hill a little way above, the peak is visible. No spectacle could be more imposing than that around in majesty of feature, more glorious in variety and colour. A long pilgrimage hither would be justifiable if only for the inspiring effects of this grand scene. The church is ornamented externally with frescoes, illustrating the martyrdom of Saint Catherine on her wheel; and the arcade leading to it with some scenes, remains of an old series, showing the "*Dance of Death*," terribly significant when the historical associations of the place with the deadly plague of 1348 are recalled.

The community, originally of Augustinian Monks, later of Carmelites, has shared the fate of the large majority of these institutions in Italy, and been recently dissolved by the authority of Government. A single priest is the sole representative of the old society. He goes through the daily ritual, and acts as the parish priest of the district round. He is a fine specimen of Italian courtesy, and his company adds a charm to the exploration of the place.

The church is very ordinary in character; it encloses, however, an inner chapel, the original nucleus indeed of the Monastery; and here a wonderful phenomenon presents itself. A huge rock protrudes downwards from the roof, to

all appearance unsupported; and seems—like Mahomet's coffin—to be floating in the air. It is long, and the whole of its length is exposed. One is afraid to touch, fearing a catastrophe: examining more closely, bewilderment increases. Above it, some four or five other rocks are seen to be pressing down upon it. Originally, all these crags fell three hundred feet from the hill crest above, crashed through the roof, and then—as though the laws of gravity were suddenly suspended—remained in their present position. A closer inspection betrays the secret—a very curious one, however; and none are more astonished than those whose profession—the engineer's for example—teaches them how utterly impossible it would be to repeat the phenomenon artificially. The lowest rock is pinned laterally, so to speak, at its upper extremity, one corner being caught by a fragment of what seems to have been a wall of flimsy brickwork, and the whole held in its place by the pressure of the superincumbent rocks. Even when the explanation is seen, however, the result seems none the less astonishing. The local superstition has always held it as a miracle—"the body of the old hermit was temporarily occupying that recess in the wall behind the altar that then stood here, and before the altar a priest was in the act of praying; the fall of the rocks was suspended by the interposition of the Virgin."

Close at hand is the showy gilt shrine in

which lies exposed to view the skeleton of the saintly anchorite, resting in the odour of sanctity —and varnish. A brown coating of the latter is seen to cover it where the skull, the joints, and some of the bones have been artfully disclosed through folds in their tawdry enveloping robe.

The entrance to his cave is just by in the floor of the chapel. The first few yards you crawl on hands and knees through a dark opening in the rock, and then with care and faith let yourself down some feet to the irregular and shelving floor of a narrow natural crevice. Then you grope your way a few yards lower to a little opening that admits some light. Looking out through this the prospect is enchanting, and all the more so after emerging from the darkness. The lake is all around, and laving the feet of the rocks under us; and in the distance, its beautiful Piedmontese shores are basking beneath the deep azure; while beyond and above all, sublimely towers the Monte Rosa range.

Then turning to the dungeon cave again and creeping a few yards down, we pause in time at a sudden and dangerous fall between some irregular masses of rock. Here, striking a light, we see that no small skill is needed to let oneself down the ten feet or so of insecure footing on the rock-projections, to get to the floor of the lower cavern, or rather cleft. This floor slopes uncomfortably, and is formed of

rocky débris, which often yield to the foot and roll down with a rumble and a crash to the lake. It is best *not* to go down with it; for the lake, as I have already intimated, is here quite deep enough to drown. Now try to realize that in this cave for thirty-four years the hermit lived, and that here he died. The story of the man whose iron will and enthusiastic faith induced him to quit every luxury for this den and semi-starvation, should be worth the telling. As it is associated with one of the most terrible passages in the world's history we will give it a separate chapter.

THE HERMIT OF THE ROCK.

"O God! methought, how hard it is to drown."—
Shakspeare.

"And how felt he, that guilty man,
. . . . while memory ran
O'er many a year of guilt and strife,
Flew o'er the dark flood of his life
Nor found one sunny resting place,
Nor brought him back one branch of grace."
Paradise and the Peri.

ALBERTO BESOZZO was of gentle birth, and reared in affluence. Scarce arrived at man's estate, he found himself uncontrolled master of a considerable patrimony.

Most accounts say he lived a dissolute life: others, as Vagliano, represent him as having married while young a virtuous and affectionate wife, but that having no children, home ties weakened, and he became absorbed by a passion for increasing his wealth. His avarice grew to be unscrupulous, then cruel. He ground down the poor.

One day while crossing the lake on one of his extortionate errands, he was suddenly overtaken near this spot by a fearful hurricane.* Only a few moments before the whole landscape was basking in sweet repose. Now, the storm-cloud is seen passing darkly, with sharply defined edge, over the smiling coast opposite, raising clouds of dust. One moment the boat is still in the sunny calm—the next, the dark tempest is upon it with an awful burst of fury. Soon the frail barque went to pieces, the crew were battling with the dark waves, the miser just heard in the roar of the storm their last despairing cries; and he himself, sinking and sickening, felt his soul die within him. For the moment came in which that strange phenomenon of memory occurs to drowning men, the instant in which the whole previous life passes in review to the minutest incident—like the mountain landscape at night,

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* The storms on the lake are often severe, and their suddenness at times something appalling, especially to those who happen to be, as the writer was once, surprised by one while in a frail skiff.

lit up by the lightning's vivid flash, that reveals each hill, each tree, each leaf. One agonised "*de profundis*" escaped him, a prayer for mercy on his passing soul. Even while he was praying, a mighty wave flung him ashore, and gave him wherein to repent, not dying moments, but years of life. He found himself at the entrance to the cave. His resolution was instantly formed. His future he would devote to God, his fortune to the poor. That cave he never afterwards quitted. There for thirty-four years, his austerities and his prayers shewed his penitence. All his subsistence was derived from passing boats, to which he used to let down by a rope a rush basket for a dole of bread. His reputation for sanctity spread; faith grew in the efficacy of his prayers for the diseased.

About that time broke out a most appalling plague. Never before—never since—has the world undergone scourge like this. The human race seemed threatened with extermination.* This pestilence broke out in China, whose teeming millions it terribly thinned. Then, by the caravan route, it stalked over the west of Asia. Ere it passed, the victims outnumbered the survivors. Then the deadly thing passed over Africa, and, simultaneously by way of the Black Sea, Constantinople, and Italy into Europe, no part of which escaped its withering breath. Half

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* The account is vividly told in the Decameron of Boccaccio, who lived at the time, A.D. 1348.

the population of the continent was stricken and died. Death was inevitable when once appeared the fatal symptom—the black spots, and the black palsied tongue, that gave the pestilence its dread name, "the Black Death."* Often the stricken would in despair avert by suicide the coming torment.

Over the sea, too, the horrid pestilence swept. Ships, nay fleets, were stricken, and encountered drifting with crews of corpses. The conception of Coleridge's Death-ship in the "Ancient Mariner" might have been derived from this history.

Commerce ceased, husbandry was suspended. "Harvests were allowed to rot, and the untended cattle strayed through the corn," says the old chronicle. All social bonds, all human ties were dissolved. Huge pits were insufficient for the dead—the rivers were consecrated for their reception. In England one-half the population—the invariable proportion of victims—perished. The lesser London of that day lost a hundred thousand souls. On the continent, superstition fixed a horrible suspicion on the Jews. They were accused of originating the plague, by poisoning the wells; and popular

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* One of the most touching of Luino's adjuncts to his wonderful crucifixion fresco at Lugano, is the representation of San Roque preaching to the plague-smitten at Piacenza, ceasing not his consolatory ministrations till he himself was prostrated by the contagion. To the fatal sign—the black boil in his flesh—he is drawing the multitude's attention.

fury aimed at their extermination. In Mayence alone twelve thousand were put to death with torture. In many places they evaded the malignity of their enemies by immolating themselves in crowds.

Italy had its full share of the horrors of the time. The plague-cloud was literally *seen* hovering over the devoted population. "A dense and awful fog was seen in the heavens, rising in the East, and descending upon Italy," chronicled a writer of the time. Everywhere, of two, "*one was taken, and the other left.*"

Then it was, that in the neighbourhood of our hermit, his prayers were besought by the multitudes. His cave became the Mecca of the province—the caravans being the boats that brought the devotees from all the skirts of the lake. The survivors of that terrible time attributed their safety to his intercessions, and thus his name "*il beato Alberto*" and his remains have been treasured for five centuries. Over his body his pious venerators reared successively the shrine, the chapel dedicated to Santa Catarina, the outer church, and the Monastery. The whole history enables us to realise the origin and terrible meaning of the passage in the golden Litany—

From plague, pestilence, and famine, Good Lord deliver us."

PALLANZA.

" Far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flushed ; and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse."

Tennyson's "Lotos Eaters."

THE scenery of this part of the lake of which we have been principally speaking is approached by four of the most magnificent of the Alpine passes, the Via Mala with the S. Bernadino, the S. Gotthard, the Simplon, and the Monte Moro, with the Val Anzaska. These all converge towards Pallanza. The Val Anzaska—the Chamounix of Monte Rosa—offers one of the noblest excursions in the whole range of the Alps. Macugnaga at its upper extremity, at the foot of Monte Rosa, which rises sublimely and almost perpendicularly above it, is within a day's reach of Pallanza. The drive to Lago d'Orta, and again, the ascent of Sasso del Ferro, form each a delightful day's journey. The steamers also afford a variety of excursions, almost every landing-place being a good starting point. Cannobio with the Orrido, Laveno and its abandoned Austrian fortresses are specially worth visiting this way.

Pallanza itself is a town of great antiquity ; deriving its name according to some from an old

temple of Pallas. It is thoroughly Italian in its character. It has a local and patriotic history, and contains a number of ancient monuments, one of which, a rectangular sculptured block of marble, is inserted in the wall of the Church of San Stefano, and is so contrived that all its faces can be seen. It was discovered in 1601 amongst old ruins. Originally it stood alone, and was reared by Narcissus the freedman of Claudius to commemorate the recovery of that Emperor* from sickness. He is the Claudius Cæsar mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, xi. 28. The inscription runs,—

MATRONIS SACRUM
PRO SALUTE C. CÆSARIS
AUGUSTI GERMANICI
NARCISSUS C. CÆSARIS.

Beneath is the representation of a priest, habited and preparing for the sacrifice, about to pour on the altar the libation from the patera in his hand; one acolyte is leading the victim—a bull—to the altar, and another is playing upon the *tibicen*—the double pipe—"*ne quid infaustum exaudiretur.*" Round the stone is sculptured a group of females, hand in hand, dancing.

If, as Dr. Johnson remarks, "the noblest of landscapes is improved by having in its foreground a good inn," certainly the Italian lakes are not wanting in this respect. On Lago

* Some antiquaries refer it to Caligula.

Maggiore the Hotel Belle Vue at Baveno, the Hotel des Isles Borromées at Stresa, and the new Hotel at Locarno, are amongst the best in Italy. As a type of these we may select the

Grand Hotel, Pallanza.—This noble building, a triumph of enterprise and engineering skill, is every way worthy of its splendid situation. Adequate in the spring to meet the demands of the great tide northwards of travellers from Italy and the Riviera, and the return tide in the autumn, it is no less a valuable winter resort for those who have made the discovery of the salubrity and genial character of its winter climate. It was erected in 1869-70, at an expense of a million francs, in the short space of fourteen months, five hundred workmen being employed, from the designs and under the superintendence of Signor Pompeo Azari, Syndic of Pallanza; the general plan being the suggestion of the proprietor, M. George Seyschab, whose previous extensive experience well qualified him for the undertaking. The furnishing cost another half million.

Its position is certainly the most commanding on the lake, as might have been conjectured from the numerous villas and mansions that occupy its vicinity. It may be questioned if there be such a panorama in prospect from the grounds of any other hotel in Europe. Situated on the promontory already described as occupying the centre of the lake, and surrounded by

all the varied scenery of its three bays, it is impossible to look in any direction without being arrested by some view of the most captivating character. Its length fronts south, and from the principal terrace, you turn your gaze east, south, and west, over a succession of wondrous scenes of rarest beauty, that fix themselves in the memory for ever. On your left, is the beautiful Sasso del Ferro, a hill the most graceful in outline perhaps of any on the lakes. Further south on the same coast is the interesting Monastery of S. Catarina, the account of which is given on another page. Then the bay opens southwards; carrying the eye across, Motterone demands the attention, with the villages Stresa and Baveno nestling among the chestnuts at his feet; and nearer in the foreground the enchanting Borromean Islands in smiling repose on the glassy lake. Still turning, we see the jagged granite quarries of Baveno and Monte Orfano; then the massive Monte Cerano, frowning over the passage to Lago d'Orta. Lastly, the valley of Domo d'Ossola opens westward, disclosing shoulder after shoulder of peaks, like a procession of giants in double file, that seem to be opening a passage for their king—colossal Mischabel—with the mighty Pizzo Leone at his side, and the snowy peaks of Simplon in his train.

Thus we have, on one side, vistas of bewitching tenderness, the whole scene bathed in a warm, soft haze that blends in its delicious

melting blue, lake, island, hill-side, and sky; on the other side, the awe-striking Mischabel and his peers towering so sublimely above that wilderness of ice-fields and never melting snows. There—a polar scene, a region and a clime as of Lapland; here, around us—vineyards and gardens of almost tropical luxuriance.

The hotel is separated from the lake by its garden, in which, though of so recent formation, there are to be seen in the open air in winter, orange, lemon, and citron trees ripening; and the blossoming of magnolias, camellias, *Edgeworthia*, the fragrant *Calicanthus*, *Daphne Indica*, *Onicera Chinensis* and *odoratissima*, and oleanders. The extensive garden itself is no mean specimen of labour and skill, built up as it is from the rocky foreshore of the lake: all its area being so much reclaimed and enclosed in a huge frontage of granite pier, elegantly designed; the garden itself consisting of material and soil imported, and built up to its present level. There are baths on one front of the pier, and on two others landing-places for boats, canoes, etc., each consisting of a twin flight of granite steps. The boat service is complete, and it need scarcely be said that the excursions by water are infinite. The tariff is fixed and inexpensive; the boats and the boatmen are retained exclusively for the hotel. It is worth mentioning, too, that the older boatmen are full of interesting reminiscences and anecdote of the Austrian occupation, and Garibaldian exploits, for which

every nook and corner of the lake supplies them with a text.

The interior of the hotel is as imposing as it is commodious. Entering beneath a fine granite portico, you find yourself in a magnificent atrium, forty-five feet square, lit from the roof by an equal area of glass boldly contrived to bridge the expanse. The floor of mosaic of this great hall is on the level of the high road, but is the third floor on the side of the lake. Looking up between the imposing pile of seventy monolith granite columns, you see the commencing broad and lofty corridors of five successive floors; these corridors meeting in their respective square galleries that correspond with the sides of the atrium. The first flight of steps are of Carrara marble, and of noble breadth; the remainder of gneiss from the valley of Domo d'Ossola.

The granite of the monolith columns of which I have just spoken, as well as the rest of that material so largely used in the construction of the hotel, is the white granite of Monte Orfano, from the same quarries that supplied the columns that form the majestic nave of the Basilica of St. Paul's at Rome;* and that speckled with hornblende, from the Baveno quarries. The terraces of the hotel consist of good specimen of the gneiss (*beola*) already mentioned, many of

* The telegraph posts along this coast of the lake are monoliths of the same white granite.

them containing as many as sixty square feet in a single piece.

Altogether the hotel is massively built. It contains in all some two hundred and eighty rooms, and accommodates, with the chalet dependance, about three hundred persons. It is replete with contrivances for comfort, among which may be mentioned a powerful lift to the different floors.

On the ground floor are found the reading-room, supplied with the English *Times* and the principal continental papers, and containing a library; the *salle-à-manger*, capable of dining two hundred persons; the music-room; a billiard-room; the bureau; a large and elegant *salle de réunion:* and a neatly appointed church.

This last is worthy of special attention. It is well lighted from a circular apse with three windows. It has a raised chancel, enclosed in a walnut railing; and all the usual furniture of an English church; conspicuously, a first-rate organ in oak, with two manuals, swells, pedals, couplers, &c., built by the eminent maker, Adolphe Ibach, of Bonn, at a cost of four thousand francs, subscribed by visitors.

A clergyman in connection with the Colonial and Continental Church Society conducts services all the year round. A German pastor also resides, and regularly holds Divine Service in the Lutheran mode. The fact of the church being in the hotel is a great convenience to delicate invalids.

The resident physician, Dr. Scharrenbroich, kindly and with rare skill, presides at the organ at both the German and English Services. It is a matter of gratitude to have in this fine instrument so noble and elevating an accessory to the dignity of Divine Service.

It is worth while to accompany the genial proprietor through the immense range of rooms and cellars in the lower stories, and to see in succession, the great kitchen with its extensive apparatus for cooking and for supplying the house with hot water at every floor; the ice-cellars; the wine-cellars; the magazines for storing food, fruit, and vegetables; the bakery, where all the bread of the establishment is made; and lastly, the calorifers* for heating the hotel in winter. A little way from the hotel is a small gasometer in connection with an apparatus for making from petroleum the gas required by the hotel.

THE UPPER LAKE.

THOUGH the western bay be unquestionably the most magnificent part of the lake, it is impossible to ignore the

* The hot air from these is made to pass over steaming water in order to impart to it the requisite degree of moisture.

claims of the splendid and interesting scenery of its northern portions. It is difficult to say which is the better way of exploring it, whether by taking the steamer, which not only traverses its length, but in doing so crosses the lake from station to station, and thus varies the character of the scenery at every turn; or by driving along the length of the high road that skirts the western shore of the lake. The best plan is to adopt both, either by going one way and returning the other; or better still by making two distinct excursions of it. If we adopt the road it will suffice, leaving Pallanza, to go as far as to Cannobio and return; a convenient day's drive, and one that embraces some of the loveliest glimpses of lake and near and distant mountain anywhere to be obtained. The road itself is a fine piece of Italian engineering, being cut with great ingenuity in the narrow intervening space between mountain's side and lake. Wild flowers in profusion attract your attention as you pass; trellised vineyards on terrace above terrace; the fig-tree and the pomegranate, the olive and the myrtle; lemons and oranges, either as trees, or ripening on countless sunny walls. Above on the hill-sides, succeeds forest after forest of fine trees. But the noblest feature of all is the constant succession of ever-varying prospects of lake and mountain, of peak and snowy chains. The Sasso del Ferro, seen across the lake for some time after you pass Intra, is an especially striking object, lifting its precipitous sides from

the still waters, in which is reflected its majestic outline. The peeps of the valleys and gorges by which you drive are beautiful in the extreme. There is one especially charming passage—an old convent perched on a most picturesque little hill, that itself lies seemingly wedged between two steep beautifully wooded mountain sides. The river above the convent seems to divide there, and playfully to pour down in two channels so as to enclose the convent hill as an island. As you approach the fishing village of Cannero—without exception the most charmingly picturesque and sheltered village on the lake—you are struck by the richness of the vegetation, and especially by the fruit-trees. This feature alone would make the drive from Cannero to Cannobio especially interesting, but when is added its rich and imposing scenery, distant and near, it becomes easy to fall in with the opinion frequently expressed—even by those familiar with the celebrated Cornice road of the Riviera—that here we have one of the finest passages of road scenery in Europe.

Of course if we go by the steamer, which crosses repeatedly from one side of the lake to the other on its route, the prospects are necessarily more varied. From Intra we cross to Laveno, the noble view from which is described in the account of the ascent of the mountain at whose foot it so prettily nestles. From Laveno the steamer crosses again to Ghiffa on the opposite shore, then it passes Oggebbio, and on to

Cannero, of which we have spoken. From Cannero it again crosses to Luino; and on the way a new view northwards bursts upon us, of a still further reach of the lake, hitherto concealed by the promontory between Cannero and Cannobio. A striking object on the lake as we cross is presented by the ancient and dilapidated castle occupying some islets opposite Cannero. They have a picturesque effect; though doubtless if their stones could speak, they would tell many a dismal tale of rapine and of bloodshed. They were the stronghold of a family of barons, who long dominated and levied their black mail upon the villages and hamlets that lay along the coast. I suppose there was something of a recognition of feudalism in it, but if the legends be true they were simply robbers who carried out their villanies systematically and on a scale so grand, that they were entitled to the appellation of barons, not vulgar robbers, of course.

From some points of view the ruins are very suggestive of the Castle of Chillon, and like that spot may yet furnish to poet or novelist materials for thrilling romance. A very tempting subject is furnished by one story that clings to these ruins, of their occupation some four centuries ago, by the five brothers Mazzarda. Ruins as they are, the inhabitants of the neighbourhood regard them doubtless with more complacency than their forefathers did, when they were perfect fortresses. Luino is principally interesting

as being the birthplace of the great painter who derived thence his epithet, " Luini."

Many of his paintings and frescoes are found in the old churches of this part of Italy. From Luino we again cross the lake to reach Cannobio. Here you should decide whether to land to view the interesting Orrido, or pursue your way to finish the exploration of the lake. In the latter case the steamer almost at once crosses the Swiss frontier, and after staying at Brissago long enough to give you time to admire its fruit-laden hill sides, its cypress avenue, and its terraced vineyards, it takes you up to Locarno at the head of the lake ; for the present the terminus of the S. Gotthard railway. If you have the time, do not fail to make the picturesque ascent to the ancient church of the Madonna del Sasso, if it be only to admire the wonderful modern painting therein contained, that of " the Entombment," by Ciseri.

It is an exceptionally fine composition, and there is something wonderfully pathetic in the expression and attitude of each one of the group. The chapel itself, by its tawdry splendour, might challenge the attention of some, but you soon weary of it, and rest your eyes instead on the delightful prospect around. Locarno lies at the mouth of the Maggia, and the exploration of the valley of that name forms a most pleasant excursion, and one I should strongly urge upon those who have the time for it.

If instead of proceeding to Locarno you had

decided to land at Cannobio, what time you have to spare is spent best in exploring the Orrido; it is half an hour's walk from the landing-place, and on the way you cannot help admiring the intensely beautiful Cannobio valley in which it is situated. What is called the Orrido is a tremendous chasm in a ravine, with a most imposing waterfall—or rather a succession of heavy cascades—pouring down between the immense broken cliffs. You can either look down upon it in part from a romantic bridge that spans the chasm, or what is much better enter it in a boat from beneath. At first, you see no sign of either the opening in the rocks or the waterfall, you only see the pool upon which you are moving, and look down into its pure depths of vivid green.

You soon enter, in an unexpected place, the yawning cavernous seeming rift in the rocks, but what strikes you most still is the intensely clear emerald-green water beneath you. The rocks above, descend irregularly and steeply into these waters, and though their depth is very considerable, you trace their steep broken sides deep down and scan with delight the banks beneath, and, swimming about between you and them, myriads of fish. The passage between the cliffs is very sinuous, and in places there is barely room for the boat to pass. The difficulty is increased by the strength of the stream against you from the great fall higher up, which you now hear but still cannot see. Each moment the

chasm becomes wilder, and it is curious to see how the strongly marked strata on the opposite sides of the rift correspond. There is a general fitting also, so to speak, of the projections and hollows, on the opposite sides, as though they had fallen away from each other in some tremendous convulsion of nature, reminding one of Coleridge's lines :—

> "Like cliffs that have been rent asunder,
> A dreary sea now flows between ;
> But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder
> Can wholly do away I ween
> The marks of that which once hath been."
>
> *Christabel.*

At length a turn in the passage reveals the heavy waterfall itself. It is difficult for the boatman to hold his own here against the heavy bubbling torrent, and if you wish to stay to admire or to sketch the spot you must step out of the boat on to the rocks. To describe the fall itself one would require all the stock of adverbs and adjectives that Southey's fancy and skill weaved together in conveying

> "How the waters came down at Lodore."

You leave the spot stunned by the roar, and almost grateful to escape to the stillness of that green deep pool further down once again, and undecided which most to admire, the pool, the chasm, or the waterfall itself.

BAVENO—STRESA.

"A glossy bower
Of coolest foliage, musical with birds,—
And every air was heavy with the sighs
Of orange groves, and music from sweet lutes,
And murmurs of low fountains that gush forth
I' the midst of roses!"

"Lady of Lyons."

THE view from these two villages—virtually the same as a stand-point—is pronounced by many to be the finest on the lakes. And certainly it would be difficult to mention any one as absolutely surpassing it. Apart, too, from the magnificent outlook there are attractions of a most seductive character in the woods in their rear, that clothe the hill-sides of Motterone. These are countless, as are the pathways through them, over green slopes and by tempting ravines. The trees are for the most part chestnut and walnut. One thing seems to be lacking here to those who are fresh from the Pallanza side of the lake,—viz., the view of the grand snowy chain of the Simplon. But perhaps it is compensated by the distant vision of parts of San Gotthard and Splugen ranges. And in other respects, no element of the graceful and majestic seems wanting. The semicircular sweep includes a great variety of succeeding passages, in strong

mutual contrast, yet with the effect of a most harmonious whole. At the left we begin with the tremendous granite quarries of Baveno and Monte Orfano, of which we have already spoken; then the beautiful opening of the valley leading towards the Simplon by the pretty little lake of Margozzo; over this last the imposing line of hills that have the local epithet of "*i denti Annibali*," "Hannibal's teeth"—why *his* I cannot imagine, except it be from the dread his name inspired even in regions he never reached. Then over the low-lying hill Monte Rosso, we get a glimpse of the sharp square-pointed peak, Pizzo Marone; then in the centre of the picture the pretty projecting little hill-promontory of Castagnola sheltering Pallanza. Beyond, over Intra with its glistening campanile, rise the hills of Cimola and Premeno, dotted over with tiny villages. Then away in the distance Monte Cenere, shortly to be pierced by the line in continuation of that through the S. Gotthard tunnel, by one almost as formidable. Beyond, and more remote, the white line of peaks that form part of the chains of S. Gotthard and the Splugen. Carrying next the vision across the lake towards the right the graceful outline of Sasso del Ferro woos and wins admiration, with Laveno lying couched at its foot, and near it the once-dreaded Austrian fort. Then comes the pretty village of Cerro, and lastly the Monastery of Santa Catarina, already described, snugly perched on the face of a rock overhanging the

lake. Between us and all this stretch of scenery the lake intervenes, and on its placid bosom seem to float dreamily the charming Borromean islands.

So queenly a spot is worthy even of a Queen's retreat; and this is the site whose majesty and sweetness have made it the chosen retreat of our own gentle-hearted Queen.

I might, had I the space, be tempted to describe the stately mansion she occupied, with the unique gem of a church in its grounds, were it not intrusive. The scene itself, however suffices; and would suffice did it present itself only in outline in black and white so to speak; or in the sober English greys so dear to many sketchers. Every essential of grace and detail necessary to make up the artist's ideal of "composition" are here offered. But Nature is not content with outline here; in artist's phrase, she is not sparing of her colours. She literally steeps her landscape in colour of the richest; yet, lest the vistas should tire, she is for ever changing their hues and tones; and then, lest the views should pall by the intensity of their colouring, she bathes the whole series of prospects in a softening haze that makes by its very dimness one harmonious picture.

If you would see it at its best, watch the sunset effect, from those chestnut woods a little way above us on the hill-side. He must be less than human that could look unmoved upon that touching vision of beauty. One lingers there

till the calm of night surrounds us, and the song of the birds among the branches is hushed. All save one. For the nightingales now commence as the monks of old did—the chaunting of their psalter at vigil, only these are in sweeter voice and tune, and—very unlike those old monks—never seem to be tired when they have got to the end of *their* version of the psalms next morning. Nay, with as lusty a note as ever, they conclude that version, with exactly the same call as that that concludes *our* translation—a fact overlooked by the commentators—the call "Let every thing that hath breath, praise the Lord." So lustily indeed, that the rest of the bird songsters, waking out of the dream that it was again "the morning stars that sang together" respond and make the woods ring with the chorus, "Let every thing that hath breath, praise the Lord."

ASCENT OF SASSO DEL FERRO.

STORY OF THE WAR OF ITALIAN INDEPENDENCE.

" How faintly flush'd, how phantom fair,
Was Monte Rosa hanging there,
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys,
And snowy dells in a golden air."

Tennyson's "Daisy."

" Battle's magnificently stern array !"

. . . . . .

" How that red rain hath made the harvest grow !"

Byron.

THIS is of all the Alpine peaks perhaps the most graceful in outline, and at once, by its beauty, arrests the attention of the observant and unobservant alike. It is, however, not merely an object of beauty in itself, but it offers from base to summit scenes almost unparalleled in natural grandeur and human interest. From the peak of Motterone we hinted at the countless chapters of human history that had their sites in these Lombardy plains at our feet. Let us now from the summit of Sasso take *one* of those chapters, all but the last, and look down upon the scene of Italian history that records the birth of "*Italian Independence.*"

In order to make the ascent we should cross

the lake in the early dawn. You will be amply repaid long before you reach the opposite bank for any reluctant early rising necessary, by the wonderful witchery of the expanse around. As you approach Laveno, charmingly situated at the foot of the mountain, you look back and obtain the noblest view of Monte Rosa to be had on the lake.

If you have been wise you will have timed your excursion, so as to catch here the first signs of the awakening of the light over the extended chain of snowy peaks. At times they show through the softening haze, dimly and dreamily; at times, clear and sharp, but always solemn and stupendous, against the morning sky. Passing through Laveno, and ascending on our way the hill near, crowned by a redoubt, we are in time to witness the glow that begins to suffuse the mighty range, even ere the sun has caught any of the five peaks of Monte Rosa. And already we can recognise, as we see it lit up by the morning "blushing *rosy red*," how that glorious mountain got its name.

We can here rest awhile by the old Austrian redoubt, and watch the growing and intensifying beauty of the sunrise effects, the transfiguration of what was when first we gazed upon it, an awful theatre of silent desolation, of glacier, snow-field and barren rock, into a vision of splendour, such as might arrest a passing angel in his flight "posting o'er land and ocean without rest," at sight of a passage that perhaps

worthily suggests some familiar scene in his heavenly home.

The ascent of the Sasso del Ferro is very different in its character to that of Motterone already described in the chapter on the geology of the district. In the latter case, you do not get a glimpse of Monte Rosa till you arrive at the summit, in the former it is visible throughout the whole ascent. The sunrise effects too are equally distinct; in the one case it is the lit up mountains in the *west* that reflect the glory, in the other it is the sight itself of "the glorious sun uprist." As Motterone is higher too, occupying an hour more in the ascent, so the woods through which you pass add greatly to the interest of one's immediate surroundings. Both have, however, the delicious aerial-seeming lake beneath them, though in very different aspects. But the Sasso, on the whole, offers the most majestic view during the ascent. From their actual summits the prospect is not only similar in character, but it is in reality the same view from points not very distant, and separated only by the lake; though one, the Sasso, is in Lombardy, and the other in Piedmont. On the one hand, the giant Alps, Italy's huge northern walls, and on the other the beautiful plains of Lombardy, "well watered as the Garden of Eden everywhere;" and watered too, alas, in other than Eden fashion by more streams of human blood in desperate battle-fields, than any other spot on the face of this fair earth.

The ascent made—a pause for the contemplation which the panorama inspires—then a lunch worthy of the exercise gone through and the appetising mountain air, and then, reclining, the incense of the cigar, and a chat. The scene itself is, of course, the first engrossing subject; but the interest is still more absorbing if you could contrive to have in your party some genial patriotic Italian who could indicate the sites of the many battle-fields lying below, and tell their pregnant stories. The older boatmen on the lake tell incidents of the time, the years of 1848, 1849, and 1859—incidents in which they took part—as long as you will gratify them by listening. Sometimes, in their excitement, pausing to point to some spot of interest, they will forget to resume their rowing, but with gesticulations or action suited to the word, fight their battles o'er again; and then resume their oars with an accession of '*go*' in the pulling that tells unmistakably of how keenly they feel that that past was a chapter not only in their country's history, but *the* crowning chapter of their own individual lives.

Assuming that a couple of these rowed us over, this morning, they would perhaps have begun with that circular granite fortress which is so picturesque an object as we approach Laveno; or the redoubt by which we rested; and invested them and all their vicinity with stories, true and mythical—equally wonderful—of the exploits of Garibaldi and his volunteers

in his attempts by night surprises to capture them and their hated Austrian occupants ; in the case of the fortress by approaching in the darkness in boats with muffled oars, and in that of the redoubt by stealing round it under cover of the night, and from above on the mountain's side firing fusilades down upon them. They even point out the dairy farm where they say Garibaldi and one of his followers concealed themselves one day after spending the night in attempting to pick off with their fire the sentries of the fort. The suspecting Austrians during the day entered the very shed, and probed with their bayonets the hay beneath which the patriots lay concealed, and yet missed them—missed *discovering* them I mean, though I do not know that the patriots' feelings were hurt at all by what they underwent.

Patriotism is always touching, and whatever be our sympathies, it is only courteous to listen to these Italian recitals with Italian ears. Of course to the legendary part of the history you must lend your ears with as much as possible of goodnatured credulity, even faith if you will. Anyhow, it is impossible to listen to these poor veteran Italians, telling, in the very passion of patriotism, of the struggles in which they took an actual part, without catching something of the infection of their enthusiasm, and generously accepting the adjuncts, half-true, half-fable, that popular fancy has framed the pictures in, like the natural framing of a noble vista of scenery

formed by the trellised vines that enclose it around.

The serious history of that time—and terrible in its seriousness it is—can be told here only in brief outline, and only so much of it as is local, the very scenes of the transactions lying at our feet, as from the mountain's top we look around. Yet if the throes of Mother Italy were at that time so agonising, they were but the birth-pangs of her last and dearest child, "National Unity." Prophets—the countless ones who were made such from witnessing and sharing in the wrongs their country sustained at the hands of regal and priestly tyrannies for generations—prophets had desired it long, and kings had *not* desired it. The national yearning for an Italy "free and undivided" had intensified into a craving the most passionate. The new Pope, Pius IX., "forgetting for the moment that he was Pope, and remembering only that he was an Italian," was the first of those in power to identify himself with the national sympathies. He inaugurated his papacy by an amnesty for political offenders and the adoption of liberal measures. Charles Albert, King of Sardinia, followed his example, and initiated slow but solid reforms, in the way of granting political amnesties, constructing new roads and railways, and above all by giving his people a liberal constitution, with parliamentary representation and popular election.

Later the Pope adopted the opposite extreme, and in a formal encyclical cursed that cause

that he had so recently blessed. The King of Naples and the Duke of Tuscany, like the Pope, at first granted reforms and then rescinded them. This Lombardy at our feet, with Milan yonder its capital, was then, as was also the province and the city of Venice, under the thrall of the Austrians, who repressed with sternest severities any symptoms of the Italian liberal spirit.

At length Milan in the north, and at the same time, Naples in the south, broke out into the insurrection of 1848. On the 17th of March commenced "*the five days*" of close and deadly fighting between the Milanese and the Austrians; the result of those "Cinque Giornate" being that the latter, with their dreaded general, Radetsky, at their head, were driven out of the city. The city of Venice also had uprisen and expelled the Austrians. On the 29th of the same month Charles Albert entered Lombardy at the head of his own troops, and as many volunteers as other States contributed.

At first victory declared for the patriots. On the 8th of April they succeeded, after a severe struggle, in forcing the bridge of Goito near Peschiera, and on the 30th won the victory of Pastrengo. Early in May they sustained grave losses at the battle of Santa Lucia. The second battle of Goito on the 30th resulted in a victory, owing largely to the skill and courage of the young Duke of Savoy, Victor Emmanuel, in restraining his soldiers till the critical moment, and then heading them in an irresistible charge,

without seeming conscious of a wound he had received in the thigh. The same evening came the news that the Duke of Genoa, his brother, had stormed the formidable Peschiera, one of the fortresses that constitute the Quadrilateral.

The victory of Goito just mentioned was rendered possible by the heroic stand made the day before by a body of only 6000 Tuscan volunteers in barring the pass of Curtatone and Montanara against 40,000 Austrians. That incident was the Thermopylæ of Italian history. I know nothing more touching than to hear an Italian tell the story with all the pathos and pride that his memory of the incidents of that glorious day inspires. The noble Tuscans knew the importance of the stand they were making, and with thinned and ever-thinning numbers, remained and fought till they were all but destroyed. The survivors had at last to give way before the overwhelming odds, but the time saved enabled King Carlo Alberto to concentrate his troops at Goito. Later came reverses, crowned by that at Custozza, 25th July. If desperate valour could have saved that field for the Italians, that of their general, the young Victor Emmanuel, might, on that occasion, have turned the scale of victory.

Retreat was inevitable; another vain effort was made to save Milan, which, however, the King had at last to evacuate in the face of forces double his own in number. The armistice of Salasco, 9th of August, brought to a close that

first year of Italy's struggles to win her liberties, the eventful year of '48.

It is not easy to realise the excitement, the alternating hopes and fears of the Italians throughout the Peninsula at the varying news of victory and defeat, won or sustained by the brave Piedmontese and their King on the national behalf. And when the year's efforts seemed thus resultless, a gloom settled over the nation's prospects. Still, however, the ferment was going on, and at the close of the year the excitement was so great in Rome, that the Pope fled to Gaeta, a seaport on the coast of Naples, and the Romans proclaimed their republic. The Duke of Tuscany also fled.

Amid the general confusion, Piedmont continued fixed in the grand resolve to drive the Austrians from Italian soil. The winter was spent in reorganising their forces, and in preparation for a renewal of the struggle in the spring. Had all Italy put its strength in the field, the result might have been different, but poor little Piedmont stood all but alone against the forces that so enormously outnumbered them. The odds were terrible. True, the Venetians in their historic old city, were holding their own against the common enemy. People and parliament, with the heroic dictator, Manin, at their head, rejected all overtures from the enemy at the gates, though cholera and famine were doing their deadly work within, and their forts were half-destroyed.

And thus in the spring of 1849, the one supreme effort was made by both sides at the decisive battle of Novara. Novara is easily distinguishable from where we are reclining, " and the deep thunder peal on peal afar " would be heard distinctly from here on that momentous 29th of March. Utter defeat overtook the Piedmontese ; they were led by a Pole, Chzarnowski, to whom Charles, though taking part in the campaign, resigned the chief command, with an abnegation that deserved nobler results. Italians ascribe the defeat to treachery, or at any rate to disobedience of orders, on the part of General Ramorino; he had abandoned a strong position in the very centre of the line ; and the Austrians, forcing their way through, broke the Italian line in twain, rendering defeat inevitable. He was later tried by court-martial and shot. Whoever might be to blame the rout was complete and the crushed army re-entered Novara. The last to quit the field was the heartsore King himself: and he would have remained, had his devoted followers allowed him, till a ball from the enemy should have given him the soldier's death he would then have welcomed. He was literally forced from the field, one of his generals taking his horse by the bridle. He and his sons had fought throughout ever amongst the foremost and reckless of all peril. Victor Emmanuel rode coolly under the hottest fire, cheering his soldiers on. The Duke of Genoa, after having two horses shot under him led for the fourth time

his troops to the assault, marching on foot at the head of his columns. The rest of that chapter is soon told. The same evening the broken-hearted King called a council of his sons and his generals about him, and seeing that all farther struggles were at present hopeless, that truce with the Austrians must be negotiated, and recognising that his own absolute committal to the Italian national cause was an insuperable obstacle to a solid peace, he abdicated his crown in favour of his son Victor Emmanuel, and declared his resolve to go into exile. And the noble self-sacrificing fellow, after embracing his companions in arms in turn, and lastly his sons, quitted that fatal battle-field. He left Italy and all hope behind him. He sought a retreat in Portugal, and almost as soon as found, that retreat witnessed the end of the patriot King. He died at Oporto, broken-hearted, only four months after that terrible shattering of a nation's hopes on yonder field of Novara.

His end sadly reminds me of that of the legendary King Arthur. The magnificence of his character, his high-souled chivalry, his prowess—these alone might have suggested the resemblance; how much more the common character of their melancholy ending—the deadly battle, the defeat, the darkness, the despair. It makes one almost realise Tennyson's dream

> "There came a bark that blowing forward, bore
> King Arthur, like a modern gentleman

Of stateliest port ; and all the people cried,
'Arthur is *come again* : he cannot die.'
Then those that stood upon the hills behind
Repeated—'Come again, and thrice as fair.'"
Morte d'Arthur.

And now the Austrian held in his terrible grip, not only Lombardy, but also the champion little State of Piedmont. The terms proposed to the young King, who under such gloomy auspices commenced his reign, were hard, hard even as his conqueror the stern, dreaded old warrior Radetsky could dictate. Victor Emmanuel had left his troops at Casale, whither they had retreated, and on the third day after the battle, the interview took place at Novara between these two. An extraordinary and touching scene it must have been. Warriors both, and both with an European fame for courage and generalship, that common fame won by both on the very battle-fields upon which we are looking down—in the one case by a stern veteran of over eighty, and in the other by a youth, the very personification of royal chivalry. Types were they, respectively, of an old, cruel, triumphant tyranny, and of a young impassioned national hope that could survive defeat that seemed so hopeless.

The terms dictated amounted to an abandonment of all that the nation held dearest, and to which the royal house of Savoy through the King's father had sworn allegiance ; namely, "the *Constitution*." The compact betwixt King

and people, represented by the free parliament and proclaimed by the national flag, was to end; and a so-called alliance with Austria, which in reality amounted to being her feudal tributary, was to be imposed.

The fiery answer of the young sovereign to these insulting terms are historical:—"Marshal! Rather than subscribe to such terms, I would lose not merely my crown, but a hundred were they mine. It is not for me to fall short of my father's oath. Ye are making it indeed a war to the death; be it so! I will summon the nation to my side, and ye shall see to what the general uprising of Piedmont shall give birth. If I *must* succumb, it shall be without the need of shame. Our house is familiar with the path of exile, but knows not that of dishonour!"*

Can we wonder at the epithet his country have endearingly bestowed upon him—"Il Re Galantuomo."

Even that rugged stern old dictator was moved by the noble answer. He modified his demands, but exacted the penalty of about three millions sterling, for the expenses of the war. But the independence of Piedmont was left un-

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* "Maresciallo, piuttostochè firmare simili patti, perderei cento corone. Io non verrò meno al giuramento di mio padre. Voi volete una guerra a morte, sia! chiamerò a me la nazione, e vedrete ciò che può nascere da un sollevamento generale del Piemonte. Se io devo soccombere, voglio soccombere senz' onta. La nostra famiglia conosce la via dell' esiglio, non quella del disonore."

touched, and its soil, consecrated by self-sacrifice and patriotism, was left sacred by the retreat of the Austrian : and the little territory, with its constitution, its free parliament, its free press, and the national flag, stood forth to the world as the type, the pledge, the living nucleus of Italian independence.

The first thing the loyal King did on his return to Turin his capital, was to assemble his parliament, and renew his father's oath of allegiance and fidelity to the constitution. And from that allegiance he never swerved. He and his little kingdom seemed fated to be the only survivors of the popular uprising. Venice succumbed less to the Austrian than to his dread allies, plague, pestilence, and famine ;—Rome to the French, but not till after an obstinate defence, and not till borne down by the sheer weight of numbers. The cruelties inflicted upon the defeated made Europe sicken. *Væ victis !*

Ten years passed, and over the history of those ten years we can but cast a glance, and trace the course of events that then brought back the tide of war to these fated Lombardy plains.

It is impossible in a recital of the history of these times to ignore the name and work of Cavour. If the nation's were the heart, and the King its strong right hand, Cavour was the subtle mind that suggested the wise and prudent course to steer in the dark hours of storm and danger. To his sagacity is owing, as much as to the indomitable courage and loyalty of the

sovereign, the national redemption. It was he who originally suggested petitioning Carlo Alberto for the constitution. And it was he who in 1854 advised the alliance of Piedmont with England and France in the Crimean war. How nobly the Piedmontese army distinguished itself then, is a matter of history. To them was largely owing the victory of the Tchernaya. It was their great share in the successes of that war that enforced their recognition as a nation in the councils of Europe. It was thus that at the Congress of Paris at the close of the Crimean war, Cavour, as the representative of Piedmont had the opportunity of exposing the misrule of the Austrian, Papal, and Neapolitan authorities in Italy, and of urging upon France and England to intervene towards securing the reorganisation of the government of Italy, the separation of Ecclesiastical from Political rule, and the evacuation of all foreign troops from Italian soil.

At least one grand result came out of all this, and that was the alliance of France and Piedmont. Now came renewed hopes of a more successful struggle for the national liberties. In the early spring of 1859, Cavour made a formal protest by memorandum against Austrian misrule and insult, and the army reserves were called out. Thousands of volunteers poured in from every part of Italy to serve either in the ranks of the regular army, or to join the corps of irregulars that Garibaldi was rapidly forming, under the title of "The Alpine Hunters."

Events trod rapidly upon each others' heels. In April came the ultimatum from Austria to Piedmont. French troops were hurried on towards the scene. There was one general upheaving through Northern and Central Italy. With almost ludicrous suddenness came the overthrow and flight of the Dukes of Tuscany, Parma, and Modena, of whose states Victor Emmanuel was declared Dictator. And now from all parts of Italy, from city, village, and hill side, light heels carried young hearts and stout arms to the side of the champion King.

The campaign was a glorious one. It was opened by Garibaldi's crossing the Ticino at Sesto Calendo,* yonder, just where you see the river issuing from the lake.

A series of sharp encounters immediately ensued, and now not only the distant thunder of the cannon might be heard from where we stand, but the stirring peal of the drum, the rattle of musketry, and the cries of the combatants. One of the stiffest of the early engagements was fought at Varese, by that beautiful smiling lake of the same name, that lies so placidly and sweetly at our feet. In this affair

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* By the way, this same Sesto Calendo was the scene of a deadly battle fought some fourteen centuries ago, between the orthodox under Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and the Arians. It was regarded at that time as a signal triumph of orthodoxy that the Arians were defeated with a terrible loss, their huge army being all but destroyed.

Garibaldi with about 12,000 men attacked as many Austrians. The fight was changed into a rout, Garibaldi in close pursuit, till he reached and occupied Como. On the last two days of May was fought the deadly duel of Palestro, between the whole forces of the Austrians and the united forces of the French and Italians. The struggles of those two days were of the most desperate. Victor Emmanuel was again the dashing leader. He led in person in one splendid assault a regiment of French Zouaves, and won from them the epithet and title of the "Zouave Corporal." Then there followed in rapid succession victories, and splendid victories, all along the line of the Po, on both its banks. Crushing defeats were sustained by the Austrians at Montebello, at the tremendous battle of Magenta, 4th June, and finally at Melegnano on the 8th. The results of that momentous struggle of Magenta to the Austrians were disastrous, instant, and final. It meant, at one blow, the necessary abandonment of Lombardy to the Italians. It was then that the granite fortress and the redoubt by which we passed on our way this morning were abandoned by their Austrian occupants, whose retreat was all but cut off by the defeat of Magenta. The scene of that tremendous engagement is easily distinguishable from where we stand, as the village of Magenta is just about half-way between Milan and Novara, those sites of deadly struggles that have already painfully occupied our attention.

Does it not seem incredible as we gaze upon these rich, peaceful, glorious plains, that their every locality should have witnessed strife so deadly between man and man, and that in almost every recorded chapter of history that has reference to this spot!

There was a grand triumphal entry of the allies under the French Emperor and the Italian King into Milan, the capital of the Lombardy of which they had at last succeeded in clearing the enemy.

One last and desperate effort was made by the Austrians to repossess themselves of the territory they had lost. They re-crossed the Mincio, and twenty days after the battle of Magenta were again engaged in deadly contest with the allies at the double battle of Solferino and San Martino; the former being the ground occupied by the French, and the latter the village and neighbourhood by which the Italian half of the five miles length of line of battle was occupied. Upwards of 300,000 men were engaged on that bloody field. From early dawn to night-fall were the deadly issues being fought out. The result was so utterly disastrous to the Austrians, that they from that moment abandoned the contest. They were again driven across the Mincio, and that was the last of their occupation of Lombardy.

Splendid as was the campaign, its results were meagre in the extreme. To the amazement and disgust of the Italians, who had hoped so

much, hoped almost everything, as the results of what had been achieved, Napoleon, as commander-in-chief of the united forces, concluded a Treaty of Peace at Villafranca, that made the harvest of the campaign almost nil. It was later conjectured that he feared the formation of a powerful state on his southern frontier, and that he thus gratified his jealousy at the Italian cost. Words cannot tell the exasperation felt throughout Italy. Cavour, especially, was so irritated at this unexpected and undeserved foiling of the efforts and the wise policy of so many years that he threw up his premiership.

In 1866, seven years later, a singular contrast in the result of a campaign was offered; one of losses in battle followed by substantial gains acquired in the subsequent treaty. War had again broken out with Austria; but this time the King had secured as powerful and in the end a far more useful ally, the King of Prussia. A powerful army crossed the Mincio to attack the Austrians, but the result was the humiliating defeat of Custozza, followed later by the still more disastrous naval defeat at Lissa on the Dalmatian coast. Still, the power and the policy of Prussia succeeded in extricating from the wreck of affairs the cession to Italy of the state of Venice, together with the all but impregnable Quadrilateral, that is, the four tremendously fortified positions of Verona, Peschiera, Mantua and Legnago. At the same time was restored a symbol of the new state of things, in the shape

of the ancient historic *Iron Crown* of the Italian kings; so called from the fact that its thin inner circle is of iron, and made, according to tradition, from one of the nails employed in the crucifixion.

Thus was Italy finally cleared of foreign bayonets. I have not mentioned the complementary events that occurred in Central and Southern Italy between the two last campaigns of which we have been speaking, simply because I am confining myself to what happened within or on the edge of the horizon that here surrounds us. To those complementary events we can make only a passing allusion, and indeed there is no need to mention them in detail, as they are familiar historical landmarks. They were, first, the annexation in 1860 of the states of Central Italy by universal acclamation; then Garibaldi's daring attack and easy conquest of Sicily and Naples, and their addition to the young and growing kingdom; the opening in February, 1861, of the first general Italian parliament at Turin, and a week later, on the motion of Cavour, the proclamation of Rome as the capital of Italy. Lastly, at the opportune moment when France and Germany were engaged in the war of 1870, the final blow was struck, and Rome was stormed and entered on the 20th September. There, in 1871, in her eternal capital, was assembled the first general parliament of Italy "one and undivided," and the work was complete.

Thus happily ends the tragedy the acts in which were so terrible, yet whose scenes were laid in a region so lovely as this that we are gazing upon. If the recital has been tedious, it is the writer's fault; he can only plead that it *can* only be perfectly told by the tongue and pen of Italians who witnessed and shared in the struggle. From these the writer has repeatedly refreshed the memory of his earlier reading, and he advises his readers who visit the spot to do the same.

Let us trust that the future of these beautiful plains may be less blood-stained than their past; that the animosities of Austrian and Italian, of French and German, of Russian and Englishman may pass and be forgotten; or if not forgotten, serve even though painful and happily fading memories only to teach the later generations to be wiser than their fathers. Wiser notions of political economy, and of mutual national interdependence for the full harvesting and sharing of earth's treasures and blessings, will do much; religion, pure and undefiled, will do more. Charity, Christ's charity, though not yet the Christian's charity, will yet become in Christ's kingdom to come, not only an individual but a national virtue.

As we begin to descend, we fain cast back another glance at the region whose story is so touching. It is impossible for the imagination to conceive a scene more likely for Peace to choose as her own retreat. The spot—it is the

land of the olive—seems divinely consecrated for her resting-place. Surely this might have been the spot whence her own dove plucked the olive branch in the deluge of human passions, and leaving it in the hands of humanity's noblest representatives, returned here to build her a nest, where she had found "a resting-place for the soles of her feet." The very haze in which the landscape is bathed and softened, seems as the token of some great and gentle spirit dimly seen in presence and blessing; and the solemn hush, the pervading calm that reigns beneath to be the very peace of God Himself.

DRIVES:—

Lago D'Orta, Premeno, Cossogno, Val Anzaska.

IT can easily be imagined that in such an Alpine vicinity the excursions on foot are endless. It is not so easy to realise, however, what a variety of magnificent Alpine scenery is within easy access by carriage. The roads, generally well made, are being fast ex-

tended by lake and valley, over hills, and high along mountain-sides hitherto accessible only to the pedestrian. One of these I have already described—viz., the noble road that skirts the lake from Pallanza to Cannero and Cannobio. (See pp. 54, 58). I propose here to indicate a few others; and, first in interest perhaps, that to

LAGO D'ORTA.

It lies behind Motterone, the mountain described in our second chapter; and is reached in a little over three hours, by the valley that opens between the granite quarries. We pass close enough to these to enable one to judge of the stupendous scale of the operations there. We then cross the fine stone bridge just built over the Toce, that replaces the curious old floating-bridge — or drift-bridge rather — that former visitors will remember. Then past Gravellona, and up the valley till it ends with the quaint old town of Omegna and the lake. The first peep of this interesting lake is charming, and only an earnest of the beauty that awaits its further exploration. We drive along its eastern coast, amid luxuriant vegetation suggestive of a more southern clime, and at every turn of the road the eye is arrested by some new passage: central among these, however, is constantly the picturesque island of San Giulio,

with the beautiful projecting hill promontory—the *Monte Sacro*—that shelters the town of Orta. The carriage puts up at the decent old inn ; and while lunch is preparing, we ascend the "Sacred Mount." It is only a task of a quarter of an hour, and invalids can ascend by *chaise à porteur*. Arrived near the summit, and pausing to rest and admire the bewitching prospect around, you are probably accosted by the quaint guide, who in a dilapidated cassock, and with a huge bunch of keys in his hand, volunteers to show you over some of the many curious chapels scattered over the hill-top. These are beautifully situated on as many grass and moss-covered plateaus or terraces, and overshadowed by some of the noblest trees, principally chestnuts and pines, to be found in this part of Italy. When the trees are in full leaf the walks amongst these chapels are of the most delightful character. The chapels themselves, if such they can really be called, number over twenty, and are filled with as many scenes in painted sculpture—wood and terra-cotta—illustrative of the life of Francis d'Assisi. The figures are life-size, and in some cases there are dozens of individuals introduced. These scenes fill the whole area of the chapels, and the spectator looks in upon them through an iron railing at the chapel entrance. One spectacle is especially peculiar—S. Francis, stripped and bound, is being led through the midst of a jeering rabble in the market-place, to be scourged at the whipping-post. The market

scene is very natural; in one spot a group are wrangling; another group are at play with cards and dice; and the usual complement of children and dogs are occupied after *their* manner in market scenes. In striking contrast with the thoughtless throng is the dignified aspect of the ascetic Francis as he moves on to his voluntary humiliation. Another chapel represents the legend of his receiving the *Stigmata;* another his death; and one, the most showy of all, his canonisation.

The general character of the lake is that of prettiness rather than grandeur, and in this respect it is a perfect contrast with Lago Maggiore. A noticeable feature is the beautiful deep colour of the water; and when it is still, its perfect reflections of the hill-sides.

"All things were calm, and fair, and passive. Earth
Looked as if lulled upon an angel's lap
Into a breathless, dewy sleep, so still
That I could only say of things, they be!
The lakelet, now no longer vexed with gusts,
Replaced upon her breast the pictured moon,
Pearled round with stars."

So calm, so peaceful, so unsuggestive of the stirring human struggles that have made the spot historical. As when, for instance, "that hallowed isle of San Giulio, now so sweetly slumbering on its bosom, was the stronghold of a heroine queen, Gisla, the wife of Berengarius II. king of Italy; who there withstood all the might

of the first Otho, of Germany." (Gallenga's *History of Piedmont.*)

Descending the hill to your inn you find your lunch ready, and the repast is enlivened by details of the neighbourhood from the pleasant host, Ronchetti—an instance, by-the-by, of an Italian who has overcome the serious difficulty of learning English well, without leaving this his native village.

We next take a boat over to the island of San Giulio, principally interesting from its ancient church, occupying the site of one founded there by the missionary of that name some fourteen centuries ago. *He* had no boat to cross; the heathen fishermen refused to row him over from some superstition; whereupon, as the veritable old legend assures us, the saint threw his mantle upon the water, and it served as a bark, and his staff as a paddle, to convey him to the island. There he commenced his work—as St. Patrick is recorded to have begun his, in *his* adopted island—by banishing the serpents, dragons, and reptiles with which the island abounded. A convincing proof of the truth of the legend has long been shown to the credulous and incredulous, in the shape of a veritable bone of one of these monsters—only the bone happens to be that of a whale. Hamlet's "very like a whale" escapes one's lips as innocently and naturally as it did from Polonius.

The church contains much that is admirable as well as interesting; amongst which are a series

of frescoes, some of them by the celebrated Gaudenzio; and a number of paintings, a few of which are fine, out of many that are bad; some interesting shrines and monuments in marble, one of them containing the skeleton of San Giulio. There are, too, some splendid specimens of ancient needlework in silk and gold. Most admirable of all, however, is a magnificent pulpit, said to be more than a thousand years old. It is of serpentine and black marbles, and rests on columns of porphyry. It is nobly designed, and has at its four corners sculptured emblems of the Evangelists.

Emerging from the church and its close atmosphere, the beautiful little lake with its free air again, strikes you as *the* object to win and retain your attention; you half-feel that time spent in dark dusty interiors amidst decayed relics of olden times is time *mis*-spent; and you gladly issue into the actual life and light, the breath and the beauty of God's world without.

To PREMENO.

This is a village on the brow of the mountain of that name, behind Intra. A fair carriage-road enables one to drive there without difficulty.

It is interesting as affording to those who

cannot climb, as well as to the pedestrian, a fine view down upon the four lakes, Maggiore, Varese, Monate, and Comabbio; in another direction a splendid view of Monte Rosa with its five peaks; and in a third, down into the beautiful valley of Intragna. The carriage-road passes through the pretty village of Bee, itself the pleasant goal of a shorter drive and commanding a splendid expanse of lake scenery. The drive to Premeno itself is an ascent of about two hours from Intra, and about two and a half from Pallanza.

The same excursion is an admirable one to make with the aid of donkeys. The route however in this case is a different and a more interesting one, besides being some half-hour shorter; no element of an enjoyable trip being wanting, either in the way of distant scenery, picturesque hamlets near us as we pass, or the countless wild-flowers and ferns constantly about us. For broad and uninterrupted expanse of view, the carriage-road has decidedly the advantage; but it is new, and in its upper part bare of trees. The general advantages however, of the bridle-path are so superior that it should in every possible case be preferred. The whole way lies among sheltering trees; and a great part of it between vineyards, where the vines are generally festooned from laburnum-trees, golden in spring. Besides, as there are two such paths thither, the return offers variety.

Premeno itself is comparatively modern, and

has a startling history. On the way up by the bridle-path you pass at one spot a heap of ruins, once cottages. No roof is left; only a few walls here and there; some of them retaining their old frescoes. This *was* the old Premeno. It was depopulated by the terrible "Black Death" of four centuries ago, described in our history of the Hermit of Santa Catarina (see p. 43). The only survivors were some members of a couple of families. These, deeming a curse was upon the spot, removed to a new site higher up the mountain, and there founded the modern Premeno. This is the tradition. Another even more awful in its suggestiveness, and in the same connection, is told of the town of Intra, beneath us. It too, was all but depopulated; so that after the destroying angel had passed, it was left in dreadful silence, a city as of the dead. So it remained for a time. At last, for its repeopling, notices were affixed to the town entrance, and to the doors of the empty houses, inviting any comers to take possession: thus, "*Entra*, chi vuole," "*Enter*, who will;" and in this awful manner it derived its name "*Intra*." (I am not giving this as the most probable derivation of the name; one equally likely is suggested from its occupying the site '*intra*,' *i.e.*, '*between*' the rivers San Bernardino and San Giovanni.)

As you listen to your peasant guide telling the dreadful story, while you are surveying these terribly eloquent ruins of old Premeno,

you turn away with a sigh of relief to resume your path through the beauteous scenes before you, equally eloquent, but eloquent of life and blessing.

Arriving at Premeno, it is necessary in order to get at the stand-point of its wonderful panorama, to ascend through the village and then to pass some few hundred yards to the left round the brow of the hill, past the effigy of Garibaldi in stone, and as far as the path leads. With startling suddenness the magnificent triple view bursts upon one; and we command at once the lakes to the left; Monte Rosa towering grandly in the centre before us; and the valley of Intragna beneath to the right, where you can count some thirty or forty villages and hamlets, whose roofs and walls of dark pine are baked brown and black in the sun. Altogether it is one of the most wonderful panoramas to be obtained even in this region where they are so many and so celebrated.

Monte Rosa has from here a peculiar aspect that has often struck the writer. It seems curiously suggestive of a huge Gothic cathedral; its immense mass forming the central tower, and the two lofty but lower peaks to the right standing like its twin western towers; while between, a line of ridge seems as the roof of the immense nave of this sacred snowy temple of Nature's uprearing.

To COSSOGNO.

The drive to this village is a most pleasant one, through scenery different in character in many respects to that of those already described. We leave Pallanza by a beautiful chestnut avenue half a mile long, closed by the unique Lombard Church of the Madonna di Compagna. Thence onwards till we cross the fine arched bridge over the San Bernardino, which replaces one that was swept away a few years ago by the swollen stream. The road then passes on through the valley, keeping Monte Rosso on the left. Passing through the village of Trobaso, the road divides a little beyond it, and the wisest plan here is to take first the path to the left, with the intention of returning later to take the other. Meanwhile, the first conducts, in a few minutes, to a most picturesque spot on the river, here spanned, at the entrance of an imposing ravine, by a single lofty arch, called "The Roman Bridge," or the bridge of Santino. This scene is a favourite one for sketchers. Hither the river has been led by a conduit considerably above its natural level, for the purpose of driving the machinery of the paper mills; and the overflow into the river's bed forms a beautiful cascade. At these works blocks of wood are reduced to pulp by friction with granite millstones, and from this pulp a coarse paper is

made. The peasant girls here employed are good specimens of the handsome, healthy colony of the district, a type that in profile and head-dress—gracefully formed by a coloured handkerchief—strongly suggests the Greek. Returning to where the road divided, the path we resume ascends and passes through the hamlet of Unchio. Beyond this a little way the road, still ascending, commands a rare and beautiful view of a sharp bend of the river, which here lies deep down between lofty natural plateaus, carpeted with vegetation, and terraced for the trained vines. The view, from its unique and picturesque character, is one not easily forgotten. Upon arriving at Cossogno, it is well to quit the carriage and descend through the whole length of that curious village, and for a short distance beyond, when a stand-point is reached which commands the romantic Val Intraska beneath.

To VAL ANZASKA AND MONTE ROSA.

This valley offers incomparably the most magnificent excursion in this or any part of North Italy. Few whose experience entitles them to pronounce, would dispute its presenting some of the very finest passages in the whole of the Alps, and its ranking perhaps first amongst the noblest

drives in Europe. If the countless visitors to the lakes could realise only a tithe of the grandeur of its scenery, and the ease with which it is reached, it would become, instead of the unvisited spot it is, the goal of pilgrimage of thousands.

The valley is within a few hours drive of Pallanza, and makes a convenient two days' excursion. There are fairly good inns at Ponte Grande, and at Ceppo Morelli, where the carriage-road ends. At either of these places you can rest for the night. Both of them are beautifully situated, and admirably adapted for seeing the sunrise effects on Monte Rosa, and these are so wonderful that the visitor should make it a religious duty to rise betimes—that is by the *earliest* dawn or before—to witness them. In the case of choosing Ponte Grande for the night's lodging, you should leave word on passing it, and drive on to Ceppo Morelli, an hour further. This, the last portion of the carriage-road, commands some of its noblest scenery. A further rather tiring journey of four hours on foot enables the pedestrians of the party to reach Macugnaga at the foot of Monte Rosa ; and here they have the choice of two decent inns where they can pass the night, rejoining their friends at Ponte Grande or Ceppo next morning.

This is the excursion in outline ; some details should be interesting.

Starting from Pallanza the road skirts the bay westwards, and passes the delightful little lake Margozzo, and through the village of the same

name. As you enter this village you will notice an interesting tiny chapel of Lombard architecture, built of rude square blocks of granite. Leaving Margozzo, the road lies by the side of the river Toce along the noble valley that separates the massive Monte Cerano on the left from the fine range of jagged peaks called '*i denti Annibali*." On the flank of one of these latter are the marble quarries that supplied the material for the whole of the Cathedral of Milan and its thousands of pinnacles and statues. On the face of the mountain on the opposite side of the valley are the quarries that served that identical purpose for Pavia, supplying its cathedral with the whole of its material, its white rosy-veined marble. Those who are familiar with these stupendous structures are astonished at the apparent insignificance of these quarries, "whence they were hewn"—mere breaks, as it would seem, on the mountain's side.

[Parenthetically the drive thus far has not taken more than an hour and a half, and forms, itself, an easy afternoon's excursion from Pallanza. It can be extended by driving on for another half-hour as far as to Cuzzago, and then returning by another route—viz., past the peculiarly Italian village of Ornavasso, and then around Monte Orfano and close to its tremendous quarries.]

Proceeding on our way we at length arrive at Vogogna, at the end of the valley, the entrance to which it commands. Its two picturesque ancient castles and strong fortifications tell of

the old struggles for the possession of so formidable a stronghold. The plain of Domo d'Ossola which spreads out here before us, has three openings besides that by which we reached it—viz., the pass of the Simplon, the Val d'Antigorio, and Val Anzaska, our destination. All these offer imposing drives—the Simplon contests with the San Gotthard the palm of being the most magnificent of all the Alpine passes; and the Val d'Antigorio presents views of the Monte Rosa chain of rare beauty. Our exploration of to-day leads us to the foot of that stupendous mountain by the Val Anzaska.

Leaving Vogogna and crossing the river Toce by the wooden bridge, the road enters that valley at Pie di Mulera. There are here some extensive works in connection with the gold-mining operations of the valley. The material is brought down from Pestarena in the shape of amalgam; and from Val Toppa as ore (previously roughly separated by women from superfluous quartz)—in the latter case on wire ropes for a distance of two miles. The ore is here broken small by powerful crushers and *stamps* (hydraulic piston-hammers), and afterwards ground fine by heavy granite mill-stones. Quicksilver is added to the finely-ground mass, and the grinding continued till the amalgamation is completed; the quicksilver separating the gold from its baser impurities, and uniting itself with it. The amalgam is then subjected to the retorting process for the volatilising of the quick-

silver; and finally the gold is melted into ingots. The works here and at Pestarena are very interesting; the managers are most obliging in showing visitors over both the mines and the mills. These mines are very ancient. The Romans employed slaves for their working. The name Pestarena is doubtless derived from its ancient mills, "*pistrina.*"

At once upon entering the valley, we enter too into the sovereign presence of Monte Rosa, king of mountains. At even the first recognition of it, though still some twenty miles away at the head of the valley, it seems to be towering grandly above us, and near at hand. As we pursue our journey, we rarely or never lose sight of it, and never for long. From the moment of its first appearing it is *felt* as well as seen, as a solemn and mighty presence, of which the valley itself seems dimly and reverently conscious. Yet that valley is invested with a grandeur of its own most inspiring; it is not that a passage here and there astonishes by its impressive beauty, but the whole of its length presents a succession of imposing spectacles, such as startle even those most familiar with Alpine scenes.

The road rapidly ascends upon entering the valley, and follows the windings of the upper face of the mountain on the right, often looking down immense ravines. As we proceed, one cannot but be struck with the happy association of peculiarly Italian features with features peculiarly Swiss. The blue sky, the vineyards

and the fruit-trees, the style of church and cottage, as well as the manners and the tongue of the people—all proclaim Italy. And we need only look up at the peaks and snows and glaciers for suggestions of all that is most imposing of Switzerland.

For details of the journey I refer my reader to the guide-books, though he does not need them to have his attention drawn to the many striking objects of interest on the way. Ponte Grande and Ceppo Morelli have in common the features of fine arched bridges and exceptionally noble outlooks. Doubtless the most glorious feature of the valley itself is presented by the ancient vast forests of pine and larch, chestnut and walnut, beech and birch that everywhere clothe the mountains. Especially beautiful are they in the last hour's drive, between the two villages just mentioned. The glorious effects of colour they present in the late autumn are the most wonderful in the way of foliage the writer has ever seen. No colour, no tone, of all that is rich and warm is wanting—from green and gold, and golden, through all the shades of red and brown, with such a variety and depth as make the spectacle an astonishment.

I have spoken of the vastness of these forests. Centuries of tree-felling seem to have made no impression upon the inexhaustible supply; though in reality the too reckless cutting, especially in the upper part of the valley, has resulted in disastrous inundations by mountain torrents,

the havoc from which is evidenced in many places by the tremendous masses of *débris* they have brought down.

Arrived at Ceppo Morelli, those who are bent upon exploring the upper valley have to quit the carriage and take to their feet if fair walkers ; or if not strong, go through the somewhat arduous part that remains either on mules or by *chaise à porteur*.

The upper valley is as sublime as the lower valley is lovely, and the writer would strongly urge upon all who are not actually invalids to go on. The features of the two parts of the valley are wonderfully in contrast, and the transition is sudden. Almost at once upon quitting the village we are confronted by the barrier between them—an abrupt hill. It is a line of demarcation as well from a colony of different race and tongue — a German-speaking population descended from German immigrants who crossed from the other side of the Monte Moro pass many centuries ago. The ridge that separates the valleys and races is itself of strange formation. It is really a projecting mountain spur, with an accretion of enormous glacial moraines that it arrested in their downward course. It is formed in large part of a conglomeration of *débris* and huge boulders, and is covered by masses of the Alpine rose or rhododendron. You might have observed traces of glacial action in the valley lower down. Here, and from this point upwards, it is strongly marked. The huge

glaciers that we shall presently see at Macugnaga once extended far down the valley, and have, comparatively speaking, only lately retired ; and their present terminal moraines are, in the geologist's eyes, of recent date.

The river also, that has hitherto been our all but constant and turbulent companion, we leave behind at this spot to find its own path—inaccessible to us—round and beneath this all-separating ridge we are crossing. The colder air, too, as well as the scantiness of the new and hardier vegetation, sharply reminds us of the change in the character of the scene we are entering upon. It is as if we had made some magic transition from a land clothed with richest foliage, and carpeted thick with wild-flowers, into a bleak and sterile region, inhabited very fitly by another race, speaking another tongue. But the most wonderful feature in the change is the finding ourselves in the near vicinity of the immense mass of the sovereign mountain. This is not the place to dwell upon the lesser features of what remains of the journey—bleak Pestarena with its gold mines, and the curious village of Borca ; the constant desolation, and the signs of devastation caused by swollen rushing torrents. Altogether this last part of the journey is as dreary as it is wearying.

Arrived at Macugnaga, one is overpowered by the tremendous character of the spot. He must be a strange mortal who could look upon a scene like this for the first time without a deep awe

pervading his whole being. One is growingly conscious too, the longer he gazes, of inability to realise all the vastness of the scene. We find ourselves in an amphitheatre formed by the sheer precipitous sides of the highest mountains in Europe. True, Mont Blanc is some few hundred feet higher; but to none of its valleys does it show anything like this dreary dreadful height of ten thousand feet of abrupt precipice. We are helped in the effort to realise something of its vastness by the very fact that the mountain's face is here so perpendicular that there is often no lodgment for the snow; and these black weather-worn breaks in the snowy mountain's side serve as a ladder by which the dizzy contemplation climbs. Climbs till it reaches and rests, awe-stricken, upon those sky-inhabiting peaks above. We turn, as if for relief, to seek for something lesser at the sides of the amphitheatre in which we stand; something more within the human grasp. But here, too, we are confronted with vastness itself. The beautiful snowy cone of Pizzo Bianco on the left, and Monte Moro and Cima di Jazi on the right, are giants that even the mighty Monte Rosa between them cannot dwarf.

It was the writer's lot to make his first acquaintance with this spot and the valley beneath in *mid-winter*. It is not easy to imagine the accession of wildness and savage grandeur at such a season to the scenes we have been describing. It was an improvised adventure with

a friend and his wife, and met with more success than its seeming rashness deserved. We started at a later hour than was prudent, and consequently had to commence the last and arduous part of the journey in the dark. It was more perilous than we had imagined, as we only realised next day, when we saw how near the path we had taken over some slippery ice had led us to the edge of abysses that in the daylight made us shudder. The guide—a woman of the valley—lost her way, too. I shall not easily forget her involuntary scream at one sudden peril we encountered. But, later on, the moon arose; it was full, I remember, and the romance its gentle light at once imparted to the majestic scene was something thrilling. Countless waterfalls as we passed them seemed, as by fairy magic, to have become arrested and frozen and silent in the very act of falling. The glorious way these ice cataracts reflected the moonbeams, and even more beautifully still, transmitted them through their translucent mass, was something as romantic as mysterious. Of course, these cascades were not frozen in the act of falling, as they seemed; but, arrested as the streams above had been by the frost, there had been successive meltings of their surface day by day in the sun, and these had formed long and lengthening icicles night after night, till the seeming waterfalls were larger than the actual. Their most startling feature now was their *silence*—so real appeared

to be the falling of the down-plunging mass. From the glacier-pinnacles above us too, and from the ice-glazed surface of the rocks about us, were reflected the glittering moonbeams in corruscation and scintillation, as if to outvie the brilliant stars in the indigo sky overhead. And yet more dreamy was the reflection from the quiet surface of the vast snow-fields, and from the solemn forests of pine. Most strange of all was the *softening* effect of the moonlight upon the awful desolation around—a desolation of which we yet were conscious—suffusing the savage grandeur with a *tenderness* which it wholly lacks by day. As when a strong, stern man's face, that nothing strong or stern can move, will melt at times under the tender gaze or touch of a woman loving and beloved. The whole scene—so weird, so silent, so dreamy—seemed to suggest one's having flitted unconsciously into a new state of existence, or obtruded unwittingly into a phantom world.

It was late ere we got to our inn at Macugnaga. Of course we were unexpected, and equally of course there was absolutely nothing in the way of provisions there; fortunately, as we anticipated such a contingency we had taken our own with us. These, with a large fire, and extraordinary efforts on the part of the host, soon made us feel comfortable and content. Tired as I was, I went out before retiring to rest, to look again upon this tremendous amphitheatre of mountains and glaciers. I had deemed that

night would have added an element of dread to the awful solitude, and lo! it bathed and softened the whole in a tender sheen, that like a solemn presence was wooing to the worship of the Creator all spirits that might be there, from the human soul itself to that dim consciousness, mighty but tender, that seemed to pervade the mountain and the valley. Nature's very hush was eloquence, an eloquence inaudible only to dull human ears. As if it were the voice of one crying in this wilderness, "O ye mountains and hills, O ye ice and snow, bless ye the Lord—O ye children of men, O ye spirits and souls of the righteous, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him for ever."

There is a catholicity in that ancient canticle of our Church that is best realised and learned in scenes like this: wider than that even which admits all humanity fallen in Adam and redeemed in Christ, as fellow-worshippers in God's temple: a catholicity that recognises with S. Paul, "the *whole* creation as waiting, yearning, for an adoption."

The psalmist taught it too, nay assumed it, and sang it with all the fervour of his nature. "Praise the Lord all ye deeps—ye mountains and all hills—cattle and feathered fowl—kings of the earth and all people." On behalf of the "feathered fowl" the songbird responds, and all-impassioned sings the same refrain; even to the caged blackbird who has naught else to sing of, no memory of mate, no joy of nest or flight.

Musing thus, I retraced my steps to the inn; and, after a chat with my friends round the blazing fire, we went to rest. Waking, after a short time as it seemed, I thought to look out again upon the night, and opened the shutters; and lo! instead of night, the solemn dawn had begun its silent task. I knew I had not a moment to lose if I wished to witness the whole of the glorious but transient spectacle of the sunrise effects in this wonderful region of peak and snow-field. Hastily dressing, I went out and walked towards the foot of the glacier. The scene was changed—yet the same. Much that night had veiled in mystery now stood revealed. Vastness still, and desolation; more stern and terrible as seen in the hard white light of the first dawn. Yet, while I looked, a flush, delicate as that seen in the blush-rose, seemed to tinge the snow-fields. And, high above all, some light clouds floating about the mighty mountain's top, seemed like the smoke of incense at its first kindling for the morning sacrifice, the mighty mountain itself the snowy altar that Nature here hath builded. And now, as I looked around again, the rosy tinge deepened as it mantled the hitherto pale, chill features of the dreary spot, and the snow that had seemed so suggestive of the coldness of death, warmed into flesh-like tints—in some of the rounded snow-fields half-suggesting the form of a beauteous sleeping giant—like the fabled marble statue that became flesh, warm, and inspired with life.

And still the depth and warmth of the mantling purple intensified; every moment seemed to add a new tenderness to the scene that had been all sternness. I said just now, and said it in thoughtlessness, that the moonlight added to the spot "a tenderness that it wholly lacked by day." I had forgotten that Nature betrays no tenderness in her most melting moments like the blush of Monte Rosa receiving the kiss of the morning sun. Has the reader ever noticed this association of *tenderness* with the dawn in the grand old song, "Through the *tender* mercy of our God, whereby the *day-spring* from on high hath visited us."

And now the sun has caught and fired the loftiest peak, and at once that peak arrests our gaze, and not only ours, but as it would seem the gaze and reverence of his fellow-peaks, as well as of hill and valley—as all Israel, princes and people, stood awe-stricken in the presence of Moses, unable "steadfastly to look upon the glory of his countenance" after he had stood in the light of God.

But now those remaining peaks of the mount are lit up with the same wonderful radiance; and for a few moments the suggestion is vivid of a golden crown of surpassing glory set upon the head of the sovereign mountain, a crown in magnificent keeping with its purple robe.

Soon the valley itself, that has slowly been emerging from the darkness, is steeped in the new, tender light and colour, and the trans-

figuration is complete. All the while the sun itself was unseen, yet how nobly was his glory reflected. A type, methought, of how in the spiritual world the soul is lit up and transfigured by Christ, its Sun; albeit, as yet, we have "not seen His face."

I spoke of the 'Voices of the Night' as calling appealingly upon mountain and hill and all Nature to worship; as though it were the canticle, '*Benedicite*, Omnia Opera,' then. And truly, now, it is Nature responding in a '*Te Deum;*' Creation's joyous, glorious outcry of praise; in which man should lead, but in which man is so laggard. Yet surely it is not for him, upon whose spirit that nobler "light hath shined," a light and a revealing of which this beauteous dawn is but the type, to wait for these stones to be the first to cry out. Nor merely to join in the spontaneous tribute of a lower creation; or if to join, then with a new and deeper tribute of glory than this of Nature's reflecting. Recognising in his Divine Master their common Creator and his Redeemer, how natural to find as the centre and grand culmination of *his* Te Deum

'THOU ART THE KING OF GLORY,
O CHRIST!'

APPENDIX.

A List of some of the Plants which grow wild at Pallanza and in its neighbourhood; arranged according to the Natural System.

N.B.—Plants which are also common in England are not put down.

Clematis recta
Thalictrum minus
,, flavum
Aconitum Lycoctonum
,, Napellus
Bunias Erucago
Diplotaxis muralis
Roripa nasturtioides
Cardamine sylvatica
Viola hirta
,, palustris
Drosera rotundifolia
Polygala Chamæluxus
Dianthus Carthusianorum
,, Seguierii
,, Armeria
,, Prolifer
Saponaria officinalis
Silene nutans
,, rupestris
,, Armeria
Cerastium manticum
Hypericum tetrapterum
Geranium nodosum
,, sanguineum
Impatiens Noli-me-tangere
Genista Germanica
Cytisus nigricans
,, hirsutus
Trifolium montanum
,, Incarnatum
Securigera Coronilla
Vicia lathyroides
Lathyrus Sylvestris
,, Aphaca
,, Sphæricus
Potentilla argentea
,, indica (naturalised)
Mespilus Germanica
Amelanchier vulgaris
Isnardia palustris
Peplis portula
Sedum Cepœa
,, Telephium
,, reflexum
Saxifraga stellaris
,, Cotyledon
,, Cuneifolia
Astrantia major
,, minor
Bupleurum Stellatum
Libanotis montana
Pencedanum Oreoselinum

Chœrophyllum Villarsii
Cornus Mas
Galium Cinereum
,, Sylvaticum
,, palustre
,, vernum
,, Vaillantii
Valeriana triptera
Achyrophorus helveticus
Hieracium sabandum
Barkhansia setosa
Bellidiastrum Michelii
Premanthes purpurea
Bideus bipinnata (naturalised)
Galinsoga parviflora (naturalised)
Aronicum scorpiordes
Archillœa macrophylla
Arnica montana
Senecio nemorensis
Gnaphalium luteo-album
Centaurea Jacea
Phyteuma betonicifolia
,, Schenchzeri
Campanula Cervicaria
,, patula
Erica carnea
Rhododendron ferrugineum
Cynanchum Vincetoxicum
Gentiana asclepiadea
,, acaulis
Verbascum phlonirides
,, Blattaria
,, thapsiforme
,, floccosum
,, nigrum
Gratiola officinalis
Veronica spicata
Pedicularis tuberosa
Orobanche Rapum
,, Caryophyllacea
Mentha Pulegium
Salvia glutinosa
Scutellaria galericulata
Prunella grandiflora
,, alba
Betonica Alopecurus
Anagallis tenella
Primula villosa
Cyclamen Europeum
Amaranthus deflexus
,, retroflexus
Polygonum mite
Euphorbia dulcis
,, Cyparissias
Daphne Mezereum
Aristolochia Clematitis
Alnus viridis
Orchis ustulata
Spiranthes autumnalis
Listera ovata
Platanthera bifolia
Bicchia albida
Serapias longipetala
Crocus vernus
Iris Germanica
Leucojum vernum
Convallaria majalis (lily of the valley)
Convallaria Polygnatum
Maianthemum bifolium
Lilium bulbiferum (tiger lily)
Erythronium Deuscanis
Phalangium Liliago
Paradisia liliastrum
Narcissus poeticus

Muscari cornosum
Ornithogalum umbellatum
Allium angulosum
Hemerocallis flava
Luzula nivea
Ruscus aculeatus
Rhyncospora fusca
,, alba
Blysmus compressus
Heliocharis acicularis
Scirpus mucronatus
,, setaceus
Carex leporina
,, pallescens
,, punctata
Andropogon Gryllus
Digitaria sanguinalis
Panicum Crusgalli
Setaria glauca
,, viridis
Cynodon dactylon
Molinia cœrulea
Eragrostis pilosa
Asplenium septentrionale
Lastræa Oreopteris
Allosorus crispus
Struthiopteris Germanica
Pteris cretica
Adiantum Capillus-Veneris
Lycopodium complanatum
,, clavatum
,, Selago
Selaginella denticulata

P.S.—The foregoing list was kindly given me by a friend, a distinguished botanist. It is not complete, being compiled hurriedly after the rest of the book was in type.

The Writer would be glad to occupy his leisure while in Italy with the care of one or two Pupils, or in reading with Students of Divinity.
He took First Class Honours and was the University Prizeman of his year for Theology.

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