JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE

LETTERS FROM SWITZERLAND AND TRAVELS IN ITALY

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LETTERS FROM SWITZERLAND

When, a few years ago, the copies of the following letters were first made known to us, it was asserted that they had been found among Werther's papers, and it was pretended that before his acquaintance with Charlotte, he had been in Switzerland. We have never seen the originals: however we would not on any account anticipate the judgment and feelings of our readers; for whatever may be their true history, it is impossible to read them without sympathy.

PART THE FIRST

How do all my descriptions disgust me, when I read them over. Nothing but your advice, your command, your injunction could have induced me to attempt anything of the kind. How many descriptions, too, of these scenes had I not read before I saw them. Did these, then, afford me an image of them, – or at best but a mere vague notion? In vain did my imagination attempt to bring the objects before it; in vain did my mind try to think upon them. Here I now stand contemplating these wonders, and what are my feelings in the midst of them? I can think of nothing – I can feel nothing, – and how willingly would I both think and feel. The glorious scene before me excites my soul to its inmost depths, and impels me to be doing; and yet what can I do – what do I? I set myself down and scribble and describe! – Away with you, ye descriptions – delude my friend – make him believe that I am doing something – that he sees and reads something.

Were, then, these Switzers free? Free, these opulent burghers in their little pent-up towns – free, those poor devils on their rocks and crags? What is it that man cannot be made to believe, especially when he cherishes in his heart the memory of some old tale of marvel? Once, forsooth, they did break a tyrant's yoke, and might for the moment fancy themselves free; but out of the carcase of the single oppressor the good sun, by a strange new birth, has hatched a swarm of petty tyrants. And so now they

are ever telling that old tale of marvel: one hears it till one is sick of it. They formerly made themselves free, and have ever since remained free! and now they sit behind their walls, hugging themselves with their customs and laws – their philandering and philistering. And there, too, on the rocks, it is surely fine to talk of liberty, when for six months of the year they, like the marmot, are bound hand and foot by the snow.

Alas! how wretched must any work of man look, in the midst of this great and glorious Nature, but especially such sorry, poverty-stricken works as these black and dirty little towns – such mean heaps of stones and rubbish! Large rubble and other stones on the roofs too, that the miserable thatch may not be carried off from the top of them, – and then the filth, the dung, and the gaping idiots! When here you meet with man and the wretched work of his hands, you are glad to fly away immediately from both.

That there are in man very many intellectual capacities which in this life he is unable to develope, which therefore point to a better future, and to a more harmonious state of existence: on this point we are both agreed. But further than this I cannot give up that other fancy of mine, even though on account of it you may again call me, as you have so often done already, a mere enthusiast. For my part, I do think that man feels conscious also of corporeal qualities, of whose mature expansion he can have no hope in this life. This most assuredly is the case with "*flying.*" How strongly at one time used the clouds, as they drove along

the blue sky, to tempt me to travel with them to foreign lands! and now in what danger do I stand, lest they should carry me away with them from the mountain peak as they sweep violently by. What desire do I not feel to throw myself into the boundless regions of the air – to poise over the terrific abyss, or to alight on some otherwise inaccessible rock. With what a longing do I draw deeper and deeper breath, when, in the dark blue depth below, the eagle soars over rocks and forests, or in company, and in sweet concord with his mate, wheels in wide circles round the eyrie to which he has entrusted his young. Must I then never do more than creep up to the summits? Must I always go on clinging to the highest rocks, as well as to the lowest plain; and when I have at last, with much toil, reached the desired eminence, must I still anxiously grasp at every holding place, shudder at the thought of return, and tremble at the chance of a fall.

Fancies and feelings

With what wonderful properties are we not born, – what vague aspirations rise within us! How rarely do imagination and our bodily powers work in opposition! Peculiarities of my early boyhood again recur. While I am walking, and have a long road before me, my arms go dangling by my side, I often make a grasp, as if I would seize a javelin, and hurl it I know not at whom, or what; and then I fancy an arrow is shot at me which pierces me to the heart; I strike my hand upon my breast, and feel an

inexpressible sweetness; and then after this I soon revert to my natural state. Whence comes this strange phenomenon, – what is the meaning of it? and why does it invariably recur under the same figures, in the same bodily movement, and with the same sensation?

I am repeatedly told that the people who have met me on my journey are little satisfied with me. I can readily believe it, for neither has any one of them contributed to my satisfaction. I cannot tell how it comes to pass, that society oppresses me; that the forms of politeness are disagreeable to me – that what people talk about does not interest me, – that all that they show to me is either quite indifferent, or else produces quite an opposite impression to what they expect. When I am shown a drawing or painting of any beautiful spot, immediately a feeling of disquiet arises within me which is utterly inexpressible. My toes within my shoes begin to bend, as if they would clutch the ground-a cramp-like motion runs through my fingers. I bite my lips, and I hasten to leave the company I am in, and throw myself down in the presence of the majesty of nature on the first seat however inconvenient. I try to take in the scene before me with my eye – to seize all its beauties, and on the spot I love to cover a whole sheet with scratches, which represent nothing exactly, but which, nevertheless, possess an infinite value in my eyes, as serving to remind me of the happy moment, whose bliss even this bungling exercise could not mar. What means, then, this strange effort to pass from art to nature, and then back again from nature to

art: If it gives promise of an artist, why is steadiness wanting to me? If it calls me to enjoyment, wherefore, then, am I not able to seize it? I lately had a present of a basket of fruit. I was in raptures at the sight of it as of something heavenly, – such riches, such abundance, such variety and yet such affinity! I could not persuade myself to pluck off a single berry – I could not bring myself to take a single peach or a fig. Most assuredly this gratification of the eye and the inner sense is the highest and most worthy of man; in all probability it is the design of Nature, when the hungry and thirsty believe that she has exhausted herself in marvels merely for the gratification of their palate. Ferdinand came and found me in the midst of these meditations: he did me justice, and then said, smiling, but with a deep sigh, "Yes, we are not worthy to consume these glorious products of Nature; truly it were a pity. Permit me to make a present of them to my beloved?" How glad was I to see the basket carried off! How did I love Ferdinand – how did I thank him for the feeling he had excited in me – for the prospect he gave me? Aye, we ought to acquaint ourselves with the beautiful; we ought to contemplate it with rapture, and attempt to raise ourselves up to its height. And in order to gain strength for that, we must keep ourselves thoroughly unselfish – we must not make it our own, but rather seek to communicate it: indeed, to make a sacrifice of it to those who are dear and precious to us.

How sedulously are we shaped and moulded in our youth – how constantly are we then called on to lay aside now this, now

that bad feeling! But what, in fact, are our so-called bad feelings but so many organs by means of which man is to help himself in life. How is not the poor child worried, in whom but a little spark of vanity is discovered! and yet what a poor miserable creature is the man who has no vanity at all. I will now tell you what has led me to make all these reflections. The day before yesterday we were joined by a young fellow, who was most disagreeable to me and to Ferdinand. His weak points were so prominent, his emptiness so manifest, and his care for his outward appearance so obvious, that we looked down upon him as far inferior to ourselves, yet everywhere he was better received than we were. Among other of his follies, he wore a waist-coat of red satin, which round the neck was so cut as to look like the ribbon of some order or other. We could not restrain our jokes at this piece of absurdity, but he let them all pass, for he drew a good profit from it, and perhaps secretly laughed at us. For host and hostess, coachman, waiter and chambermaid, and indeed not a few of our fellow-travellers, were taken in by this seeming ornament, and showed him greater politeness than ourselves. Not only was he always first waited upon, but, to our great humiliation, we saw that all the pretty girls in the inns bestowed all their stolen glances upon him; and then, when it came to the reckoning, which his eminence and distinction had enhanced, we had to pay our full shares. Who, then, was the fool in the game? – not he, assuredly.

Conventional education

There is something pretty and instructive about the symbols and maxims which one here sees on all the stoves. Here you have the drawing of one of these symbols which particularly caught my fancy. A horse tethered by his hind foot to a stake is grazing round it as far as his tether will permit; beneath is written, "Allow me to take my allotted portion of food." This, too, will be the case with me, when I come home, and, like the horse in the mill, shall have to work away at your pleasure, and in return, like the horse here on the stove, shall receive a nicely-measured dole for my support. Yes, I am coming back, and what awaits me was certainly well worth all the trouble of climbing up these mountain heights, of wandering through these valleys, and seeing this blue sky – of discovering that there is a nature which exists by an eternal voiceless necessity, which has no wants, no feelings, and is divine, whilst we, whether in the country or in the towns, have alike to toil hard to gain a miserable subsistence, and at the same time struggle to subject everything to our lawless caprice, and call it liberty!

Aye, I have ascended the *Furca*– the summit of S. Gotthard. These sublime, incomparable scenes of nature, will ever stand before my eye. Aye, I have read the Roman history, in order to gain from the comparison a distinct and vivid feeling what a thoroughly miserable being I am.

Never has it been so clear to me as during these last few days, that I too could be happy on moderate means – could be quite as happy as any one else, if only I knew a trade – an exciting one, indeed, but yet one which had no consequences for the morrow, which required nothing but industry and attention at the time, without calling for either foresight or retrospection. Every mechanic seems to me the happiest of mortals: all that he has to do is already settled for him, what he can do is fixed and known. He has not to rack his brains over the task that is set him; he works away without thinking, without exertion or haste, but still with diligence and pleasure in his work, like a bird building its nest, or a bee constructing its cells. He is but a degree above the beasts, and yet he is a perfect man. How do I envy the potter at his wheel, or the joiner behind his bench!

Tilling the soil is not to my liking – this first and most necessary of man's occupations is disagreeable to me. In it man does but ape nature, who scatters her seeds everywhere, whereas man would choose that a particular field should produce none but one particular fruit. But things do not go on exactly so – the weeds spring up luxuriantly – the cold and wet injures the crop, or the hail cuts it off entirely. The poor husbandman anxiously waits throughout the year to see how the cards will decide the game with the clouds, and determine whether he shall win or lose his stakes. Such a doubtful ambiguous condition may be right suitable to man, in his present ignorance, while he knows not whence he came, nor whither he is going. It may then be tolerable

to man to resign all his labours to chance; and thus the parson, at any rate, has an opportunity, when things look thoroughly bad, to remind him of Providence, and to connect the sins of his flock with the incidents of nature.

An Adventure

So then I have nothing to joke Ferdinand about! I too have met with a pleasant adventure. Adventure! why do I use the silly word? There is nothing of adventure in a gentle attraction which draws man to man. Our social life, our false relations, those are adventures, these are monstrosities and yet they come before us as well-known and as nearly akin to us, as Uncle and Aunt.

We had been introduced to Herr Tüdou, and we found ourselves very happy among this family – rich, open-hearted, good-natured, lively people, who in the society of their children, in comfort and without care, enjoy the good which each day brings with it – their property and their glorious neighbourhood. We young folks were not required, as is too often the ease, in so many formal households, to sacrifice ourselves at the card-table, in order to humour the old. On the contrary, the old people, father, mother, and aunts, gathered round us, when for our own amusement, we got up some little games, in which chance, and thought, and wit, had their counteracting influence. Eleonora – for I must now at last mention her name – the second daughter – her image will for ever be present to my mind –

a slim slight-frame, delicately chiselled features, a bright eye – a palish complexion, which in young girls of her age is rather pleasing than disagreeable, as being a sign of no very incurable a malady – on the whole, her appearance was extremely agreeable. She seemed cheerful and lively and every one felt at his ease with her. Soon – indeed I may venture to say at once, – at once, on the very first evening she made me her companion; she sat by my side, and if the game separated us a moment, she soon contrived to find her old place again. I was gay and cheerful – my journey, the beautiful weather, the country – all had contributed to produce in me an immoderate cheerfulness – aye, I might almost venture to say, a state of excitement. I derived it from everything and imparted it to everything; even Ferdinand seemed to forget his fair one. We had almost exhausted ourselves in varying our amusements when we at last thought of the "Game of Matrimony." The names of the ladies and of the gentlemen were thrown separately into two hats, and then the pairs were drawn out one by one. On each couple, as determined by the lot, one of the company whose turn it might happen to be, had to write a little poem. Every one of the party, father, mother, and aunts, were obliged to put their names in the hats; we cast in besides the names of our acquaintances, and to enlarge the number of candidates for matrimony, we threw in those of all the well-known characters of the literary and of the political world. We commenced playing, and the first pairs that were drawn were highly distinguished personages. It

was not every one, however, who was ready at once with his verses. *She*, Ferdinand and myself, and one of the aunts who wrote very pretty verses in French – we soon divided among ourselves the office of secretary. The conceits were mostly good and the verses tolerable. Her's especially, had a touch of nature about them which distinguished them from all others; without being really clever they had a happy turn; they were playful without being bitter, and shewed good will towards every one. The father laughed heartily, and his face was lit up with joy when his daughter's verses were declared to be the best after mine. Our unqualified approbation highly delighted him, – we praised as men praise unexpected merit – as we praise an author who has bribed us. At last out came my lot, and chance had taken honourable care of me. It was no less a personage than the Empress of all the Russias, who was drawn to be my partner for life. The company laughed heartily at the match, and Eleonora maintained that the whole company must try their best to do honour to so eminent a consort. All began to try: a few pens were bitten to pieces; she was ready first, but wished to read last; the mother and the aunt could make nothing of the subject, and although the father was rather matter-of-fact, Ferdinand somewhat humorous, and the aunts rather reserved, still, through all you could see friendship and good-will. At last it came to her turn; she drew a deep breath, her ease and cheerfulness left her; she did not read but rather lisped it out – and laid it before me to read it to the rest. I was astonished, amazed. Thus does the

bud of love open in beauty and modesty! I felt as if a whole spring had showered upon me all its flowers at once! Every one was silent, Ferdinand lost not his presence of mind. "Beautiful," he exclaimed, "very beautiful! he deserves the poem as little as an Empire." "If, only we have rightly understood it," said the father; the rest requested I would read it once more. My eyes had hitherto been fixed on the precious words, a shudder ran through me from head to foot, Ferdinand who saw my perplexity, took the paper up and read it. She scarcely allowed him to finish before she drew out the lots for another pair. The play was not kept up long after this and refreshments were brought in.

Shall I or shall I not? Is it right of me to hide in silence any thing from him to whom I tell so much – nay, all? Shall I keep back from you a great matter, when I yet weary you with so many trifles which assuredly no one would ever read but you who have taken so wonderful a liking for me? or shall I keep back anything from you because it might perhaps give you a false, not to say an ill opinion of me? No – you know me better than I even know myself. If I should do anything which you do not believe possible I could do, you will amend it; if I should do anything deserving of censure, you will not spare me, – you will lead me and guide me whenever my peculiarities entice me off the right road.

Art and nature

My joy, my rapture at works of art when they are true, when

they are immediate and speaking expressions of Nature afford the greatest delight to every collector, to every dilettante. Those indeed who call themselves connoisseurs are not always of my opinion; but I care nothing for their connoisseurship when I am happy. Does not living nature vividly impress itself on my sense of vision? Do not its images remain fixed in my brain? Do not they there grow in beauty, delighting to compare themselves in turn with the images of art which the mind of others has also embellished and beautified? I confess to you that my fondness for nature arises from the fact of my always seeing her so beautiful, so lovely, so brilliant, so ravishing, that the similation of the artist, even his imperfect imitation transports me almost as much, as if it were a perfect type. It is only such works of art, however, as bespeak genius and feeling that have any charms for me. Those cold imitations which confine themselves to the narrow circle of a certain meagre mannerism, of mere painstaking diligence, are to me utterly intolerable. You see, therefore, that my delight and taste cannot well be riveted by a work of art, unless it imitates such objects of nature as are well known to me, so that I am able to test the imitation by my own experience of the originals. Landscape, with all that lives and moves therein – flowers and fruit-trees. Gothic churches, – a portrait taken directly from Nature, all this I can recognize, feel, and if you like, judge of. Honest W – amused himself with this trait of my character, and in such a way that I could not be offended, often made merry with it at my expense. He sees much further in this matter, than I

do, and I shall always prefer that people should laugh at me while they instruct, than that they should praise me without benefitting me. He had noticed what things I was most immediately pleased with, and after a short acquaintance did not hesitate to avow that in the objects that so transported me there might be much that was truly estimable, and which time alone would enable me to distinguish.

But I turn from this subject and must now, however circuitously, come to the matter which, though reluctantly, I cannot but confide to you. I can see you in your room, in your little garden, where, over a pipe of tobacco, you will probably break the seal and read this letter. Can your thoughts follow me into this free and motley world? Will the circumstances and true state of the case become clear to your imagination? And will you be as indulgent towards your absent friend as I have often found you when present?

Studies of the nude

When my artistic friend became better acquainted with me, and judged me worthy of being gradually introduced to better pieces of art, he one day, not without a most mysterious look, took me to a case, which, being opened, displayed a Danæ, of the size of life, receiving in her bosom the golden shower. I was amazed at the splendour of the limbs – the magnificence of the posture and arrangement – the intense tenderness and

the intellectuality of the sensual subject; and yet I did but stand before it in silent contemplation. It did not excite in me *that* rapture, *that* delight, *that* inexpressible pleasure. My friend, who went on descanting upon the merits of the picture, was too full of his own enthusiasm to notice my coldness, and was delighted with the opportunity this painting afforded him of pointing out the distinctive excellences of the Italian School.

But the sight of this picture has not made me happy – it has made me uneasy. How! said I to myself – in what a strange case do we civilized men find ourselves with our many conventional restraints! A mossy rock, a waterfall rivets my eye so long that I can tell everything about it – its heights, its cavities, its lights and shades, its hues, its blending tints and reflections – all is distinctly present to my mind; and whenever I please, comes vividly before me, in a most happy imitation. But of that masterpiece of Nature, the human frame – of the order and symmetry of the limbs, of all this I have but a very general notion – which in fact is no notion at all. My imagination presents to me anything but a vivid image of this glorious structure, and when art presents an imitation of it, to my eye it awakens in me no sensation and I am unable to judge of the merits of the picture. No, I will remain no longer in this state of stupidity. I will stamp on my mind the shape of man, as well as that of a cluster of grapes or of a peach-tree.

I sought an occasion and got Ferdinand to take a swim in the lake. What a glorious shape has my friend; how duly proportioned are all his limbs: what fulness of form; what splendour of youth!

What a gain to have enriched my imagination with this perfect model of manhood! Now I can people the woods, the meadow, and the hills, with similar fine forms! I can see him as Adonis chasing the boar, or as Narcissus contemplating himself in the mirror of the spring.

But alas! my imagination cannot furnish, as yet, a Venus, who holds him from the chace, a Venus who bewails his death, or a beautiful Echo casting one sad look more on the cold corpse of the youth before she vanishes for ever! I have therefore resolved, cost what it will, to see a female form in the state that I have seen my friend.

When, therefore, we reached Geneva, I made arrangements in the character of an artist to complete my studies of the nude figure, and to-morrow evening my wish is to be gratified.

I cannot avoid going to-day with Ferdinand to a grand party. It will form an excellent foil to the studies of this evening. Well enough do I know those formal parties where the old women require you to play at cards with them, and the young ones to ogle with them; where you must listen to the learned, pay respect to the parson, and give way to the noble, where the numerous lights show you scarcely one tolerable form, and that one hidden and buried beneath some barbarous load of frippery. I shall have to speak French, too, – a foreign tongue – the use of which always makes a man appear silly, whatever he may think of himself, since the best he can express in it is nothing but common place, and the most obvious of remarks,

and that, too, only with stammering and hesitating lips. For what is it that distinguishes the blockhead from the really clever man but the peculiar quickness and vividness with which the latter discerns the nicer shades and proprieties of all that come before him, and expresses himself thereon with facility; whereas the former, (just as we all do with a foreign language,) is forced on every occasion to have recourse to some ready found and conversational phrase or other? To-day I will calmly put up with the sorry entertainment, in expectation of the rare scene of nature which awaits me in the evening.

My adventure is over. It has fully equalled my expectation – nay, surpassed it; and yet I know not whether to congratulate, or to blame myself on account of it.

PART THE SECOND

Munster, October 3, 1797.

From Basle you will receive a packet containing an account of my travels up to that point, for we are now continuing in good earnest our tours through Switzerland. On our route to Biel we rode up the beautiful valley of the Birsch, and at last reached the pass which leads to this place.

The valley of the Birsch

Among the ridges of the broad and lofty range of mountains the little stream of the Birsch found of old a channel for itself. Necessity soon after may have driven men to clamber wearily and painfully through its gorges. The Romans in their time enlarged the track, and now you may travel through it with perfect ease. The stream, dashing over crags and rocks, and the road run side by side, and except at a few points, these make up the whole breadth of the pass which is hemmed in by rocks, the top of which is easily reached by the eye. Behind them the mountain chain rose with a slight inclination; the summits, however, were veiled by a mist.

Here walls of rock rise precipitously one above another; there immense strata run obliquely down to the river and the road-

here again broad masses lie piled one over another, while close beside stands a line of sharp-pointed crags. Wide clefts run yawning upwards, and blocks, of the size of a wall, have detached themselves from the rest of the stony mass. Some fragments of the rock have rolled to the bottom; others are still suspended, and by their position alarm you, as also likely at any moment to come toppling down.

Now round, now pointed, now overgrown, now bare are the tops of these rocks among and high above which some single bald summit boldly towers, while along the perpendicular cliffs and among the hollows below, the weather has worn many a deep and winding cranny.

The passage through this defile raised in me a grand but calm emotion. The sublime produces a beautiful calmness in the soul which entirely possessed by it, feels as great as it ever can feel. How glorious is such a pure feeling, when it rises to the very highest, without overflowing. My eye and my soul were both able to take in the objects before me, and as I was pre-occupied by nothing, and had no false tastes to counteract their impression, they had on me their full and natural effect. When we compare such a feeling with that we are sensible of, when we laboriously harass ourselves with some trifle, and strain every nerve to gain as much as possible for it, and as it were, to patch it out, striving to furnish joy and aliment to the mind from its own creation; we then feel sensibly what a poor expedient, after all, the latter is.

A young man, whom we have had for our companion from

Basle, said his feelings were very far from what they were on his first visit, and gave all the honour to novelty. I however would say, when we see such objects as these for the first time, the unaccustomed soul has to expand itself, and this gives rise to a sort of painful joy – an overflowing of emotion which agitates the mind, and draws from us the most delicious tears. By this operation the soul, without knowing it, becomes greater in itself, and is of course not capable of ever feeling again such a sensation, and man thinks in consequence that he has lost something, whereas in fact he has gained. What he loses in delight he gains in inward riches. If only destiny had bidden me to dwell in the midst of some grand scenery, then would I every morning have imbibed greatness from its grandeur, as from a lonely valley I would extract patience and repose.

After reaching the end of the gorge I alighted, and went back alone through a part of the valley. I thus called forth another profound feeling – one by which the attentive mind may expand its joys to a high degree. One guesses in the dark about the origin and existence of these singular forms. It may have happened, when and how it may, – these masses must, according to the laws of gravity and affinity, have been formed grandly and simply by aggregation. Whatever revolutions may subsequently have upheaved, rent and divided them, the latter were only partial convulsions, and even the idea of such mighty commotions gives one a deep feeling of the eternal stability of the masses. Time, too, bound by the everlasting law, has had here greater, here less,

effect upon them.

Internally their colour appears to be yellowish. The air, however, and the weather has changed the surface into a bluish-grey, so that the original colour is only visible here and there in streaks and in the fresh cracks. The stone itself slowly crumbles beneath the influence of the weather, becoming rounded at the edges, as the softer flakes wear away. In this manner have been formed hollows and cavities gracefully shelving off, which when they have sharp slanting and pointed edges, present a singular appearance.

Vegetation maintains its rights on every ledge, on every flat surface, for in every fissure the pines strike root, and the mosses and plants spread themselves over the rocks. One feels deeply convinced that here there is nothing accidental; that here there is working an eternal law which, however slowly, yet surely governs the universe, – that there is nothing here from the hand of man but the convenient road, by means of which this singular region is traversed.

Geneva, October 27, 1779.

La Vallée de Joux

The great mountain-range which, running from Basle to Geneva, divides Switzerland from France, is, as you are aware, named the Jura. Its principal heights run by Lausanne, and reach as far as Rolle and Nyon. In the midst of this summit ridge Nature

has cut out – I might almost say washed out – a remarkable valley, for on the tops of all these limestone rocks the operation of the primal waters is manifest. It is called La Vallée de Joux, which means the Valley of the Rock, since Joux in the local dialect signifies a rock. Before I proceed with the further description of our journey, I will give you a brief geographical account of its situation. Lengthwise it stretches like the mountain range itself almost directly from south to north, and is locked in on the one side by Sept Moncels, and on the other by Dent de Vaulion, which, after the Dole, is the highest peak of the Jura. Its length, according to the statement of the neighbourhood, is nine short leagues, but according to our rough reckoning as we rode through it, six good leagues. The mountainous ridge which bounds it lengthwise on the north, and is also visible from the flat lands, is called the Black Mountain (Le Noir Mont). Towards the west the Risou rises gradually, and slopes away towards Franche Comté. France and Berne divide the valley pretty evenly between them; the former claiming the upper and inferior half, and the latter possessing the lower and better portion, which is properly called La Vallée du Lac de Joux. Quite at the upper part of the valley, and at the foot of Sept Moncels, lies the Lac des Rousses, which has no single visible origin, but gathers its waters from the numerous springs which here gush out of the soil, and from the little brooks which run into the lake from all sides. Out of it flows the Orbe, which after running through the whole of the French, and a great portion of the Bernese territory, forms lower down,

and towards the Dent de Vaulion, the Lac de Joux, which falls on one side into a smaller lake, the waters of which have some subterraneous outlet. The breadth of the valley varies; above, near the Lac des Rousses it is nearly half a league, then it closes in to expand again presently, and to reach its greatest breath, which is nearly a league and a-half. So much to enable you better to understand what follows; while you read it, however, I would beg you now and then to cast a glance upon your map, although, so far as concerns this country, I have found them all to be incorrect.

October 24th. In company with a captain and an upper ranger of the forests in these parts, we rode first of all up Mont, a little scattered village, which much more correctly might be called a line of husbandmen's and vinedressers' cottages. The weather was extremely clear; when we turned to look behind us, we had a view of the Lake of Geneva, the mountains of Savoy and Valais, and could just catch Lausanne, and also, through a light mist, the country round Geneva, Mont Blanc, which towers above all the mountains of Faucigni, stood out more and more distinctly. It was a brilliant sunset, and the view was so grand, that no human eye was equal to it. The moon rose almost at the full, as we got continually higher. Through large pine forests we continued to ascend the Jura, and saw the lake in a mist, and in it the reflection of the moon. It became lighter and lighter. The road is a well-made causeway, though it was laid down merely for the sake of facilitating the transport of the timber to the plains below. We had been ascending for full three leagues before the road

began gently to descend. We thought we saw below us a vast lake, for a thick mist filled the whole valley which we overlooked. Presently we came nearer to the mist, and observed a white bow which the moon formed in it, and were soon entirely enveloped in the fog. The company of the captain procured us lodgings in a house where strangers were not usually entertained. In its internal arrangement it differed in nothing from usual buildings of the same kind, except that the great room in the centre was at once the kitchen, the ante-room, and general gathering-place of the family, and from it you entered at once into the sleeping-rooms, which were either on the same floor with it, or had to be approached by steps. On the one side was the fire, which was burning on the ground on some stone slabs, while a chimney, built durably and neatly of planks, received and carried off the smoke. In the corner were the doors of the oven; all the rest of the floor was of wood, with the exception of a small piece near the window around the sink, which was paved. Moreover, all around, and over head on the beams a multitude of domestic articles and utensils were arranged in beautiful order, and all kept nice and clean.

October 26th.– This morning the weather was cold but clear, the meadows covered with hoar frost, and here and there light clouds were floating in the air. We could pretty nearly survey the whole of the lower valley, our house being situated at the foot of the eastern side of Noir Mont. About eight we set off, and in order to enjoy the sun fully, proceeded on the western side. The

part of the valley we now traversed was divided into meadows, which, towards the lake were rather swampy. The inhabitants either dwell in detached houses built by the side of their farms, or else have gathered closer together in little villages, which bear simple names derived from their several sites. The first of those that we passed through was called "Le Sentier." We saw at a distance the Dent de Vaulion peeping out over a mist which rested on the lake. The valley grew broader, but our road now lay behind a ridge of rock which shut out our view of the lake, and then through another village called "Le Lieu." The mist arose, and fell off highly variegated by the sun. Close hereto is a small lake, which apparently has neither inlet nor outlet of its waters. The weather cleared up completely as we came to the foot of Dent de Vaulion, and reached the northern extremity of the great lake, which, as it turns westward, empties itself into a smaller by a dam beneath the bridge. The village just above is called "Le Pont." The situation of the smaller lake is what you may easily conceive, as being in a peculiar little valley which may be called pretty. At the western extremity there is a singular mill, built in a ravine of the rock which the smaller lake used formerly to fill. At present it is dammed out of the mill which is erected in the hollow below. The water is conveyed by sluices to the wheel, from which it falls into crannies of the rock, and being sucked in by them, does not show itself again till it reaches Valorbe, which is a full league off, where it again bears the name of the Orbe. These outlets (*entonnoirs*) require to be kept clear, otherwise the water

would rise and again fill the ravine, and overflow the mill as it has often done already. We saw the people hard at work removing the worn pieces of the lime-stone and replacing them by others.

Dent de Vaulion

We rode back again over the bridge towards "Le Pont," and took a guide for the Dent du Vaulion. In ascending it we now had the great Lake directly behind us. To the east its boundary is the Noir Mont, behind which the bald peak of the Dole rises up; to the west it is shut in by the mountain ridge, which on the side of the lake is perfectly bare. The sun felt hot: it was between eleven and twelve o'clock. By degrees we gained a sight of the whole valley, and were able to discern in the distance the "Lac des Rousses," and then stretching to our feet the district we had just ridden through and the road which remained for our return. During the ascent my guide discoursed of the whole range of the country and the lordships which, he said, it was possible to distinguish from the peak. In the midst of such talk we reached the summit. But a very different spectacle was prepared for us. Under a bright and clear sky nothing was visible but the high mountain chain, all the lower regions were covered with a white sea of cloudy mist, which stretched from Geneva northwards, along the horizon and glittered brilliantly in the sunshine. Out of it, rose to the east, the whole line of snow and ice-capt mountains acknowledging no distinction of names of either the

Princes or Peoples, who fancied they were owners of them, and owning subjection only to one Lord, and to the glance of the Sun which was tinging them with a beautiful red. Mont Blanc, right opposite to us, seemed the highest, next to it were the ice-crowned summits of Valais and Oberland, and lastly, came the lower mountains of the Canton of Berne. Towards the west, the sea of mist which was unconfined to one spot; on the left, in the remotest distance, appeared the mountains of Solothurn; somewhat nearer those of Neufchatel, and right before us some of the lower heights of the Jura. Just below, lay some of the masses of the Vaulion, to which belongs the Dent, (tooth) which takes from it its name. To the west, Franche-Comté, with its flat, outstretched and wood-covered hills, shut in the whole horizon; in the distance, towards the north-west, one single mass stood out distinct from all the rest. Straight before us, however, was a beautiful object. This was the peak which gives this summit the name of a tooth. It descends precipitously, or rather with a slight curve, inwards, and in the bottom it is succeeded by a small valley of pine-trees, with beautiful grassy patches here and there, while right beyond it lies the valley of the Orbe (Val-orbe), where you see this stream coming out of the rock, and can trace, in thought, its route backwards to the smaller lake. The little town of Valorbe, also lies in this valley. Most reluctantly we quitted the spot. A delay of a few hours longer, (for the mist generally disperses in about that time), would have enabled us to distinguish the low lands with the lake – but in order that our

enjoyment should be perfect, we must always have something behind still to be wished. As we descended we had the whole valley lying perfectly distinct before us. At Le Pont we again mounted our horses, and rode to the east side of the lake, and passed through l'Abbaye de Joux, which at present is a village, but once was a settlement of monks, to whom the whole valley belonged. Towards four, we reached our auberge and found our meal ready, of which we were assured by our hostess that at twelve o'clock it would have been good eating, and which, overdone as it was, tasted excellently.

The Dole

Let me now add a few particulars just as they were told me. As I mentioned just now, the valley belonged formerly to the monks, who having divided it again to feudatories, were with the rest ejected at the Reformation. At present it belongs to the Canton of Berne, and the mountains around are the timber-stores of the Pays de Vaud. Most of the timber is private property, and is cut up under supervision, and then carried down into the plains. The planks are also made here into deal utensils of all kinds, and pails, tubs, and similar articles manufactured.

The people are civil and well disposed. Besides their trade in wood, they also breed cattle. Their beasts are of a small size. The cheese they make is excellent. They are very industrious, and a clod of earth is with them a great treasure. We saw one

man with a horse and car, carefully collecting the earth which had been thrown up out of a ditch, and carrying it to some hollow places in the same field. They lay the stones carefully together, and make little heaps of them. There are here many stone-polishers, who work for the Genevese and other tradesmen, and this business furnishes occupation for many women and children. The houses are neat but durable, the form and internal arrangements being determined by the locality and the wants of the inmates. Before every house there is a running stream, and everywhere you see signs of industry, activity, and wealth. But above all things is the highest praise due to the excellent roads, which, in this remote region, as also in all the other cantons, are kept up by that of Berne. A causeway is carried all round the valley, not unnecessarily broad, but in excellent repair, so that the inhabitants can pursue their avocations without inconvenience, and with their small horses and light carts pass easily along. The air is very pure and salubrious.

View from the Dole

26th Oct.– Over our breakfast we deliberated as to the road we should take on our return. As we heard that the Dole, the highest summit of the Jura, lay at no great distance from the upper end of the valley, and as the weather promised to be most glorious, so that we might to-day hope to enjoy all that chance denied us yesterday, we finally determined to take this

route. We loaded a guide with bread and cheese, and butter and wine, and by 8 o'clock mounted our horses. Our route now lay along the upper part of the valley, in the shade of Noir Mont. It was extremely cold, and there had been a sharp hoar-frost. We had still a good league to ride through the part belonging to Berne, before the causeway which there terminates branches off into two parts. Through a little wood of pine trees we entered the French territory. Here the scene changed greatly. What first excited our attention was the wretched roads. The soil is rather stony; everywhere you see great heaps of those which have been picked off the fields. Soon you come to a part which is very marshy and full of springs. The woods all around you are in wretched condition. In all the houses and people you recognise, I will not say want, but certainly a hard and meagre subsistence. They belong, almost as serfs, to the canons of S. Claude; they are bound to the soil (*glebœ astricti*), and are oppressed with imposts (*sujets à la main-morte et au droit de la suite*), of which we will hereafter have some talk together, as also of a late edict of the king's repealing the droit de la suite, and inviting the owners and occupiers to redeem the main-morte for a certain compensation. But still even this portion of the valley is well cultivated. The people love their country dearly, though they lead a hard life, being driven occasionally to steal the wood from the Bernese, and sell it again in the lowlands. The first division is called the Bois d'Amant; after passing through it, we entered the parish of Les Rousses, where we saw before us the little Lake des Rousses

and Les Sept Moncels, – seven small hills of different shapes, but all connected together, which form the southern limit of the valley. We soon came upon the new road which runs from the Pays de Vaud to Paris. We kept to this for a mile downwards, and now left entirely the valley. The bare summit of the Dole was before us. We alighted from our horses, and sent them on by the road towards S. Cergue while we ascended the Dole. It was near noon; the sun felt hot, but a cool south wind came now and then to refresh us. When we looked round for a halting-place, we had behind us Les Sept Moncels, we could still see a part of the Lac des Rousses, and around it the scattered houses of the parish. The rest of the valley was hidden from our eye by the Noir Mont, above which we again saw our yesterday's view of Franche-Comté, and nearer at hand southwards, the last summits and valleys of the Jura. We carefully avoided taking advantage of a little peep in the hill, which would have given us a glimpse of the country, for the sake of which in reality our ascent was undertaken. I was in some anxiety about the mist; however, from the aspect of the sky above, I drew a favourable omen. At last we stood on the highest summit, and saw with the greatest delight that to-day we were indulged with all that yesterday had been denied us. The whole of the Pays de Vaux and de Gex lay like a plan before us: all the different holdings divided off with green hedges like the beds of a parterre. We were so high that the rising and sinking of the landscape before us was unnoticeable. Villages, little towns, country-houses, vine-

covered hills, and higher up still, where the forests and Alps begin, the cow-sheds mostly painted white, or some other light colour, all glittered in the sunshine. The mist had already rolled off from Lake Leman. We saw the nearest part of the coast on our side, quite clear; of the so-called smaller lake, where the larger lake contracts itself, and turns towards Geneva, which was right opposite to us, we had a complete view; and on the other side the country which shuts it in was gradually clearing. But nothing could vie with the view of the mountains covered with snow and glaciers. We sat down before some rocks to shelter us from the cold wind, with the sunshine fall upon us, and highly relished our little meal. We kept watching the mist, which gradually retired; each one discovered, or fancied he discovered, some object or other. One by one we distinctly saw Lausanne, surrounded with its houses, and gardens; then Bevay, and the castle of Chillon; the mountains, which shut out from our view the entrance into Valais, and extended as far as the lake; from thence the borders of Savoy, Evian, Repaille, and Tonon, with a sprinkling of villages and farm-houses between them. At last Geneva stood clear from the mist, but beyond and towards the south, in the neighbourhood of Monte Credo and Monte Vauche, it still hung immoveable. When the eye turned to the left it caught sight of the whole of the lowlands from Lausanne, as far as Solothurn, covered with a light halo. The nearer mountains and heights, and every spot that had a white house on it, could be closely distinguished. The guides pointed out a glimmering which they said was the castle

of Chauvan, which lies to the left of the Neuberger-See. We were just able to guess whereabouts it lay, but could not distinguish it through the bluish haze. There are no words to express the grandeur and beauty of this view. At the moment every one is scarcely conscious of what he sees: – one does but recall the names and sites of well-known cities and localities, to rejoice in a vague conjecture that he recognizes them in certain white spots which strike his eye in the prospect before him.

And then the line of glittering glaciers was continually drawing the eye back again to the mountains. The sun made his way towards the west, and lighted up their great flat surfaces, which were turned towards us. How beautifully before them rose from above the snow the variegated rows of black rocks: – teeth, – towers, – walls! Wild, vast, inaccessible vestibules! and seeming to stand there in the free air in the first purity and freshness of their manifold variety! Man gives up at once all pretensions to the infinite, while he here feels that neither with thought nor vision is he equal to the finite!

Before us we saw a fruitful and populous plain. The spot on which we were standing was a high, bare mountain rock, which, however, produces a sort of grass as food for the cattle, which are here a great source of gain. This the conceited lord of creation may yet make his own: – but those rocks before his eyes are like a train of holy virgins which the spirit of heaven reserves for itself alone in these inaccessible regions. We tarried awhile, tempting each other in turn to try and discover cities, mountains,

and regions, now with the naked eye, now with the telescope, and did not begin to descend till the setting sun gave permission to the mist, – his own parting breath, – to spread itself over the lake.

With sunset we reached the ruins of the fort of S. Cergue. Even when we got down in the valley, our eyes were still rivetted on the mountain glaciers. The furthest of these, lying on our left in Oberland, seemed almost to be melting into a light fiery vapour; those still nearer stood with their sides towards us, still glowing and red; but by degrees they became white, green, and grayish. There was something melancholy in the sight. Like a powerful body over which death is gradually passing from the extremities to the heart, so the whole range gradually paled away as far as Mont Blanc, whose ampler bosom was still covered all over with a deep red blush, and even appeared to us to retain a reddish tint to the very last, – just as when one is watching the death of a dear friend, life still seems to linger, and it is difficult to determine the very moment when the pulse ceases to beat.

This time also we were very loth to depart. We found our horses in S. Cergue; and that nothing might be wanting to our enjoyment, the moon rose and lighted us to Nyon. While on the way, our strained and excited feelings were gradually calmed, and assumed their wonted tone, so that we were able with keen gratification to enjoy, from our inn window, the glorious moonlight which was spread over the lake.

Geneva

At different spots of our travels so much was said of the remarkable character of the glaciers of Savoy, and when we reached Geneva we were told it was becoming more and more the fashion to visit them, that the Count[1] was seized with a strange desire to bend our course in that direction, and from Geneva to cross Cluse and Salenche, and enter the valley of Chamouni, and after contemplating its wonderful objects, to go on by Valorsine and Trent into Valais. This route, however, which was the one usually pursued by travellers, was thought dangerous in this season of the year. A visit was therefore paid to M. de Saussure at his country-house, and his advice requested. He assured us that we need not hesitate to take that route; there was no snow as yet on the middle-sized mountains, and if on our road we were attentive to the signs of the weather and the advice of the country-people, who were seldom wrong in their judgment, we might enter upon this journey with perfect safety. Here is the copy of the journal of a day's hard travelling.

Cluse, in Savoy, Nov. 3, 1779.

To-day on departing from Geneva our party divided. The Count with me and a huntsman took the route to Savoy. Friend W. with the horses proceeded through the Pays de Vaud for

[1] The Duke Charles Augustus of Weimar, who travelled under the title of Count of…

Valais. In a light four-wheeled cabriolet we proceeded first of all to visit Hüber at his country-seat, – a man out of whom, mind, imagination and imitative tact, oozes at every pore, – one of the very few thorough men we have met with. He saw us well on our way, and then we set off with the lofty snow-capped mountains, which we wished to reach, before our eyes. From the Lake of Geneva the mountain-chains verge towards each other to the point where Bonneville lies, half way between the Mole, a considerable mountain, and the Arve. There we took our dinner. Behind the town the valley closes right in. Although not very broad, it has the Arve flowing gently through it, and is on the southern side well cultivated, and everywhere the soil is put to some profit. From the early morning we had been in fear of its raining some time at least before night, but the clouds gradually quitted the mountains, and dispersed into fleeces, – a sign which has more than once in our experience proved a favourable omen. The air was as warm as it usually is in the beginning of September, and the country we travelled through beautiful. Many of the trees being still green; most of them had assumed a brownish-yellow tint, but only a few were quite bare. The crops were rich and verdant; the mountains caught from the red sunset a rosy hue, blended with violet; and all these rich tints were combined with grand, beautiful, and agreeable forms of the landscape. We talked over much that was good. Towards 5 we came towards Cluse, where the valley closes, and has only one outlet, through which the Arve issues from the mountains, and by

which also we propose to enter them to-morrow. We ascended a lofty eminence, and saw beneath us the city, partly built on the slightly inclined side of a rock, but partly on the flat portion of the valley. Our eyes ranged with pleasure over the valley, and sitting on the granite rocks we awaited the coming of night in calm and varied discourse. Towards seven, as we descended, it was not at all colder than it is usually in summer about nine. At a miserable inn (where, however, the people were ready and willing, and by their patois afforded us much amusement) we are now going, about ten o'clock, to bed, intending to set out early to-morrow, before the morning shall dawn.

Salenche, Nov. 4, 1779. *Noon.*

The cavern of the Col de Balme

Whilst a dinner is being prepared by very willing hands, I will attempt to set down the most remarkable incidents of our yesterday's journey, which commenced with the early morning. With break of day we set out on foot from Cluse, taking the road towards Balme. In the valley the air was agreeably fresh; the moon, in her last quarter, rose bright before the sun, and charmed us with the sight, as being one which we do not often see. Single light vapours rose upwards from all the chasms in the rocks. It seemed as if the morning air were awakening the young spirits, who took pleasure in meeting the sun with expanded bosoms and gilding them in his rays. The upper heaven was perfectly

clear; except where now and then a single cloudy streak, which the rising sun lit up, swept lightly across it. Balme is a miserable village, not far from the spot where a rocky gorge runs off from the road. We asked the people to guide us through the cave for which the place is famous. At this they kept looking at one another, till at last one said to a second, "Take you the ladder, I will carry the rope, – come, gentlemen." This strange invitation did not deter us from following then. Our line of descent passed first of all among fallen masses of limestone rock, which by the course of time had been piled up step by step in front of the precipitous wall of rock, and were now overgrown with bushes of hazel and beech. Over these you reach at last the strata of the rock itself, which you have to climb up slowly and painfully by means of the ladder and of the steps cut into the rock, and by help of branches of the nut-trees, which hung over head, or of pieces of rope tied to them. After this you find yourself, to your great satisfaction, in a kind of portal, which has been worn out of the rock by the weather, and overlooks the valley and the village below. We now prepared for entering the cave; lighted our candles and loaded a pistol which we proposed to let off. The cave is a long gallery, mostly level and on one strand; in parts broad enough for two men to walk abreast, in others only passable by one; now high enough to walk upright, then obliging you to stoop, and sometimes even to crawl on hands and feet. Nearly about the middle a cleft runs upwards and forms a sort of a dome. In one corner another goes downwards. We threw several stones

down it, and counted slowly from seventeen to nineteen before it reached the bottom, after touching the sides many times, but always with a different echo. On the walls a stalactite forms its various devices; however it is only damp in a very few places, and forms for the most part long drops, and not those rich and rare shapes which are so remarkable in Baumann's cave. We penetrated as far as we could for the water, and as we came out let off our pistol, which shook the cave with a strong but dull echo, so that it boomed round us like a bell. It took us a good quarter of an hour to get out again, and on descending the rocks, we found our carriage and drove onwards. At Staubbachs-Art we saw a beautiful waterfall; neither its height was very great nor its volume very large, and yet it was extremely interesting, for the rocks formed around it, as it were, a circular niche in which, its waters fell, and the pieces of the limestone as they were tumbled one over another formed the most rare and unusual groups.

We arrived here at mid-day, not quite hungry enough to relish our dinner, which consisted of warmed fish, cow beef, and very stale bread. From this place there is no road leading to the mountains that is passable for so stately an equipage as we have with us; it therefore returns to Geneva, and I now must take my leave of you, in order to pursue my route a little further. A mule with my luggage will follow us as we pick our way on foot.

Chamouni, Nov. 4, 1779
Evening, about 9 o'clock.

It is only because this letter will bring me for awhile nearer to

yourself that I resume my pen; otherwise it would be better for me to give my mind a little rest.

The Valley of Chamouni-Mont Blanc

We left Salenche behind us in a lovely open valley; during our noonday's rest the sky had become overcast with white fleecy clouds, about which I have here a special remark to make. We had seen them on a bright day rise equally fine, I if not still finer, from the glaciers of Berne. Here too it again seemed to us as if the sun, had first of all attracted the light mists which evaporated from the tops of the glaciers, and then a gentle breeze had, as it were, combed the fine vapours, like a fleece of foam over the atmosphere. I never remember at home, even in the height of summer, (when such phenomena do also occur with us,) to have seen any so transparent, for here it was a perfect web of light. Before long the ice-covered mountains from which it rose lay before us; the valley began to close in; the Arve was gushing out of the rock; we now began to ascend a mountain, and went up higher and higher, with the snowy summits right before us. Mountains and old pine forests, either in the hollows below or on a level with our track, came out one by one before the eye as we proceeded. On our left were the mountain-peaks, bare and pointed. We felt that we were approaching a mightier and more massive chain of mountains. We passed over a dry and broad bed of stones and gravel, which the watercourses tear down from

the sides of the rocks, and in turn flow among and fill up. This brought us into an agreeable valley, flat, and shut in by a circular ridge of rocks, in which lies the little village of Serves. There the road runs round some very highly variegated rocks, and takes again the direction towards the Arve. After crossing the latter you again ascend; the masses become constantly more imposing, nature seems to have begun here with a light hand, to prepare her enormous creations. The darkness grew deeper and deeper as we approached the valley of Chamouni, and when at last we entered it, nothing but the larger masses were discernible. The stars came out one by one, and we noticed above the peaks of the summits right before us, a light which we could not account for. Clear, but without brilliancy, like the milky way, but closer, something like that of the Pleiades; it rivetted our attention until at last, as our position changed, like a pyramid illuminated by a secret light within, which could best be compared to the gleam of a glow-worm, it towered high above the peaks of all the surrounding mountains, and at last convinced us that it must be the peak of Mont Blanc. The beauty of this view was extraordinary. For while, together with the stars which clustered round it, it glimmered, not indeed with the same twinkling light, but in a broader and more continuous mass, it seemed to belong to a higher sphere, and one had difficulty in thought to fix its roots again in the earth. Before it we saw a line of snowy summits, sparkling as they rested on the ridges covered with the black pines, while between the dark forests vast glaciers sloped down

to the valley below.

My descriptions begin to be irregular and forced; in fact, one wants two persons here, one to see and the other to describe.

Here we are in the middle village of the valley called "Le Prieuré," comfortably lodged in a house, which a widow caused to be built here in honour of the many strangers who visited the neighbourhood. We are sitting close to the hearth, relishing our Muscatel wine from the Vallée d'Aost far better than the lenten dishes which were served up to our dinner.

Nov. 5, 1779. *Evening.*

To take up one's pen and write, almost requires as great an effort as to take a swim in the cold river. At this moment I have a great mind to put you off, by referring you to the description of the glaciers of Savoy, given by that enthusiastic climber Bourritt.

Invigorated however by a few glasses of excellent wine, and by the thought that these pages will reach you much sooner than either the travellers or Bourritt's book, I will do my best. The valley of Chamouni, in which we are at present, lies very high among the mountains, and, from six to seven leagues long, runs pretty nearly from south to north. The characteristic features which to my mind distinguish it from all others, are its having scarcely any flat portion, but the whole tract, like a trough, slopes from the Arve gradually up the sides of the mountain. Mont Blanc and the line of mountains which runs off from it, and the masses of ice which fill up the immense ravines, make up the eastern wall of the valley, on which, throughout its entire

length, seven glaciers, of which one is considerably larger than the others, run down to the bottom of the valley.

The Ice-Lake

The guides whom we had engaged to show us to the ice-lake came to their time. One was a young active peasant, the other much older, who seemed to think himself a very shrewd personage, who had held intercourse with all learned foreigners, well acquainted with the nature of the ice-mountains, and a very clever fellow. He assured us that for eight and twenty years, – so long had he acted as guide over the mountains, – this was the first time that his services had been put in requisition so late in the year – after All Saints' Day, and yet that we might even now see every object quite as well as in June. Provided with wine and food we began to ascend Mont Anvert, from which we were told the view of the ice-lake would be quite ravishing. Properly I should call it the ice-valley or the ice-stream; for looking at it from above, the huge masses of ice force themselves out of a deep valley in tolerable smoothness. Right behind it ends a sharp-pointed mountain, from both sides of which waves of ice run frozen into the principal stream. Not the slightest trace of snow was as yet to be seen on the rugged surfaces, and the blue crevices glistened beautifully. The weather by degrees became overcast, and I saw grey wavy clouds, which seemed to threaten snow, more than it had ever yet done. On the spot where we

were standing is a small cabin, built of stones, loosely piled together as a shelter for travellers, which in joke has been named "The Castle of Mont Anvert." An Englishman, of the name of Blaire, who is residing at Geneva, has caused a more spacious one to be built at a more convenient spot, and a little higher up, where, sitting by a fire-side, you catch through the window a view of the whole Ice-Valley. The peaks of the rocks over against you, as also in the valley below, are very pointed and rugged. These jags are called needles, and the Aiguille du Dru is a remarkable peak of this kind, right opposite to Mont Anvert. We now wished to walk upon the Ice Lake itself, and to consider these immense masses close at hand. Accordingly we climbed down the mountain, and took nearly a hundred steps round about on the wave-like crystal cliffs. It is certainly a singular sight, when standing on the ice itself, you see before you the masses pressing upwards, and divided by strangely shaped clefts. However, we did not like standing on this slippery surface, for we had neither come prepared with ice-shoes, nor with nails in our usual ones; on the contrary, those which we ordinarily wore had become smooth and rounded with our long walk; we, therefore, made our way back to the hut, and after a short rest were ready for returning. We descended the mountain, and came to the spot where the ice-stream, step by step, forces its way to the valley below, and we entered the cavern, into which it empties its water. It is broad, deep, and of the most beautiful blue, and in the cave the supply of water is more invariable than further on at the mouth, since

great pieces of ice are constantly melting and dissolving in it.

On our road to the Auberge we passed the house where there were two Albinos, – children between twelve and fourteen, with very white complexions, rough white hair, and with red and restless eyes like rabbits. The deep night which hangs over the valley invites me to retire early to bed, and I am hardly awake enough to tell you, that we have seen a tame young ibex, who stands out as distinctly among the goats as the natural son of a noble prince from the burgher's family, among whom he is privately brought up and educated. It does not suit with our discourses, that I should speak of anything out of its due order. Besides, you do not take much delight in specimens of granite, quartz, or in larch and pine trees, yet, most of all, you would desire to see some remarkable fruits of our botanising. I think I am stupid with sleep, – I cannot write another line.

Chamouni, Nov. 6, 1776. *Early.*

Content with seeing all that the early season allows us to see, we are ready to start again, intending to penetrate as far as Valais to-day. A thick mist covers the whole valley, and reaches half way up the mountains, and we must wait and see what sun and wind will yet do for us. Our guide purposes that we should take the road over the Col-de-Balme, a lofty eminence, which lies on the north side of the valley towards Valais, from the summit of which, if we are lucky, we shall be able to take another survey of the valley of Chamouni, and of all its remarkable objects.

Whilst I am writing a remarkable phenomenon is passing

along the sky. The mists which are shifting about, and breaking in some places, allow you through their openings as through skylights, to catch a glance of the blue sky, while at the same time the mountain peaks, which rising above our roof of vapour, are illuminated by the sun's rays. Even without the hope it gives of a beautiful day, this sight of itself is a rich treat to the eye.

We have at last obtained a standard for judging the heights of the mountains. It is at a considerable height above the valley, that the vapour rests on the mountains. At a still greater height are clouds, which have floated off upwards from the top of the mist, and then far above these clouds you see the summits glittering in the sunshine.

It is time to go. I must bid farewell to this beautiful valley and to you.

Martinac, in Valais,
Nov. 6, 1779. *Evening.*

We have made the passage across without any mishap, and so this adventure is over. The joy of our good luck will keep my pen going merrily for a good half hour yet.

Having packed our luggage on a mule, we set out early (about 9,) from Prieuré. The clouds shifted, so that the peaks were now visible and then were lost again; at one moment the sun's rays came in streaks on the valley, at the next the whole of it was again in shade. We went up the valley, passing the outlet of the ice-stream, then the glacier d'Argentière, which is the highest of the five, the top of it however was hidden from our view by the

clouds. On the plain we held a counsel, whether we should or not take the route over Col de Balme, and abandon the road over Valorsine. The prospect was not the most promising; however, as here there was nothing to lose and much perhaps to gain, we took our way boldly towards the dark region of mists and clouds. As we approached the Glacier du Tour, the clouds parted, and we saw this glacier also in full light. We sat down awhile and drank a flask of wine, and took something to eat. We now mounted towards the sources of the Arve, passing over rugged meadows and patches scantily covered with turf, and came nearer and nearer to the region of mists, until at last we entered right into it. We went on patiently for awhile till at last as we got up higher, it began again to clear above our heads. It lasted for a short time, so we passed right out of the clouds, and saw the whole mass of them beneath us spread over the valley, and were able to see the summits of all the mountains on the right and left that enclosed it, with the exception of Mont Blanc, which was covered with clouds. We were able to point them out one by one, and to name them. In some we saw the glaciers reaching from their summits to their feet, in others we could only discern their tracks, as the ice was concealed from our view by the rocky sides of the gorges. Beyond the whole of the flat surface of the clouds, except at its southern extremity, we could distinctly see the mountains glittering in the sunshine. Why should I enumerate to you the names of summits, peaks, needles, icy and snowy masses, when their mere designations can furnish no idea to your

mind, either of the whole scene or of its single objects?

Col de Balme

It was quite singular how the spirits of the air seemed to be waging war beneath us. Scarcely had we stood a few minutes enjoying the grand view, when a hostile ferment seemed to arise within the mist, and it suddenly rose upwards and threatened once more to envelope us. We commenced stoutly ascending the height, in the hope of yet awhile escaping from it, but it outstripped us and enclosed us on all sides. However, perfectly fresh, we continued to mount, and soon there came to our aid a strong wind, blowing from the mountain. Blowing over the saddle which connected two peaks, it drove the mist back again into the valley. This strange conflict was frequently repeated, and at last, to our joy, we reached the Col de Balme. The view from it was singular, indeed unique. The sky above the peaks was overcast with clouds; below, through the many openings in the mist, we saw the whole of Chamouni, and between these two layers of cloud the mountain summits were all visible. On the east we were shut in by rugged mountains, on the west we looked down on wild valleys, where, however, on every green patch human dwellings were visible. Before us lay the valley of Valais, where at one glance the eye took in mountains piled in every variety of mass one upon another, and stretching as far as Martinac and even beyond it. Surrounded on all sides by mountains which, further

on towards the horizon, seemed continually to multiply and to tower higher and higher, we stood on the confines of Valais and Savoy.

Some contrabandists, who were ascending the mountains with their mules, were alarmed at seeing us, for at this season they did not reckon on meeting with any one at this spot. They fired a shot to intimate that they were armed, and one advanced before the rest to reconnoitre. Having recognised our guide and seen what a harmless figure we made, he returned to his party, who now approached us, and we passed one another with mutual greetings.

The wind now blew sharp, and it began to snow a little as we commenced our descent, which was rough and wild enough, through an ancient forest of pines, which had taken root on the faces of the gneiss. Torn up by the winds, the trunks and roots lay rotting together, and the rocks which were loosened at the same time were lying in rough masses among them.

At last we reached the valley where the river Trent takes its rise from a glacier, and passing the village of Trent, close upon our right, we followed the windings of the valley along a rather inconvenient road, and about six reached Martinac, which lies in the flatter portion of the Valais. Here we must refresh ourselves for further expeditions.

Martinac, Nov. 6, 1779.
Evening.

Just as our travels proceed uninterruptedly, so my letters one after another keep up my conversation with you. Scarcely have

I folded and put aside the conclusion of "Wanderings through Savoy," ere I take up another sheet of paper in order to acquaint you with all that we have further in contemplation.

It was night when we entered a region about which our curiosity had long been excited. As yet we have seen nothing but the peaks of the mountains, which enclose the valley on both sides, and then only in the glimmering of twilight. We crept wearily into our auberge, and saw from the window the clouds shifting. We felt as glad and comfortable to have a roof over our heads, as children do when with stools, table-leaves and carpets, they construct a roof near the stove, and therein say to one another that outside "it is raining or knowing," in order to excite a pleasant and imaginary shudder in their little souls. It is exactly so with us on this autumnal evening in this strange and unknown region.

Valais

We learn from the maps that we are sitting in the angle of an elbow, from which the smaller part of Valais, running almost directly from south to north, and with the Rhone, extends to the lake of Geneva, while the other and the larger portion stretches from west to east, and goes up the Rhone to its source, the Furca. The prospect of riding through the Valais is very agreeable, our only anxiety is how we are to cross over into it. First of all, with the view of seeing the lower portion, it is settled that we

go to-morrow to S. Maurice, where we are to meet our friend, who with the horses has gone round by the Pays de Vaud. To-morrow evening we think of being here again, and then on the next day shall begin to go up the country. If the advice of M. de Saussure prevails, we shall perform the route to the Furca on horseback, and then back to Brieg over the Simplon, where, in any weather, the travelling is good over Domo d'Osula, Lago Maggiore, Bellinzona, and then up Mount Gotthard. The road is said to be excellent, and everywhere passable for horses. We should best prefer going over the Furca to S. Gotthard, both for the sake of the shorter route, and also because this detour through the Italian provinces was not within our original plan, but then what could we do with our horses; they could not be made to descend the Furca, for in all probability the path for pedestrians is already blocked up by the snow.

With regard to the latter contingency, however, we are quite at our ease, and hope to be able, as we have hitherto done, to take counsel, from moment to moment, with circumstances as they arise.

The most remarkable object in this inn is a servant-girl, who with the greatest stupidity gives herself all the airs of one of our would-be delicate German ladies. We had a good laugh, when after bathing our weary feet in a bath of red wine and clay, as recommended by our guide, we had in the affected hoyden to wipe them dry.

Our meal has not refreshed us much, and after supper we hope

to enjoy our beds more.

S. Maurice, Nov. 7, 1779.
Nearly Noon.

On the road it is my way to enjoy the beautiful views, in order that I may call in one by one my absent friends, and converse with them on the subject of the glorious objects. If I come into an inn it is in order to rest myself, to go back in memory and to write something to you, when many a time my overstrained faculties would much rather collapse upon themselves, and recover their tone in a sort of half sleep.

This morning we set off at dawn from Martinac; a fresh breeze was stirring with the day, and we soon passed the old castle which stands at the point where the two arms of Valais make a sort of Y. The valley is narrow, shut in on its two sides by mountains, highly diversified in their forms, and which without exception are of a peculiar and sublimely beautiful character. We came to the spot where the Trent breaks into the valley around some narrow and perpendicular rocks, so that one almost doubts whether the river does not flow out of the solid rock itself. Close by stands the old bridge, which only last year was greatly injured by the stream, while not far from it lie immense masses of rock, which have fallen very recently from the mountains and blocked up the road. The whole group together would make an extremely beautiful picture. At a short distance from the old bridge a new wooden one has been built, and a new road been laid down to it.

The water-fall of Pisse Vache

We were told that we were getting near the famous water-fall of Pisse Vache, and wished heartily for a peep at the sun, while the shifting clouds gave us a good hope that our wish would be gratified. On the road we examined various pieces of granite and of gneiss, which with all their differences seem, nevertheless, to have a common origin. At last we stood before the waterfall, which well deserves its fame above all others. At a considerable height a strong stream bursts from a cleft in the rock, falling downward into a basin, over which the foam and spray is carried far and wide by the wind. The sun at this moment came forth from the clouds, and made the sight doubly vivid. Below in the spray, wherever you go, you have close before you a rainbow. If you go higher up, you still witness no less singular a phenomenon. The airy foaming waves of the upper stream of water, as with their frothy vapour, they come in contact with the angle of vision at which the rainbow is formed, assume a flame-like hue, without giving rise to the pendant form of the bow, so that at this point you have before you a constantly varying play of fire.

We climbed all round, and sitting down near it, wished we were able to spend whole days and many a good hour of our life on this spot. Here too, as in so many other places during our present tour, we felt how impossible is was to enjoy and to be fully impressed with grand objects on a passing visit.

We next came to a village where there were some merry soldiers, and we drank there some new wine. Some of the same sort had been set before us yesterday. It looked like soap and water; however, we had rather drink it than their sour "this year's" and "two years' old" wine. When one is thirsty nothing comes amiss.

We saw S. Maurice at a distance; it lies just at the point where the valley closes in, so much as to cease to be anything more than a mere pass. Over the city, on the left, we saw a small church with a hermitage close to it, and we hope to have an opportunity yet of visiting them both.

We found in the inn a note from our friend, who has stopped at Bec, which is about three quarters of a league from this place; we have sent a messenger to him. The Count is gone out for a walk to see the country before us. I shall take a morsel to eat, and then set out towards the famous bridge and the pass.

After 1 o'clock.

I have at last got back from the spot where one could be contented to spend whole days together, lounging and loitering about without once getting tired, holding converse with oneself.

If I had to advise any one as to the best route into Valais, I should recommend the one from the Lake of Geneva up the Rhone. I have been on the road to Bec over the great bridge, from which you step at once into the Bernese territory. Here the Rhone flows downwards, and the valley near the lake becomes a little broader. As I turned round again I saw that the rocks near

S. Maurice pressed together from both sides, and that a small light bridge, with a high arch, was thrown boldly across from them over the Rhone, which rushes beneath it with its roaring and foaming stream. The numerous angles and turrets of a fortress stands close to the bridge, and a single gateway commands the entrance into Valais. I went over the bridge back towards S. Maurice, and even beyond it, in search of a view which I had formerly seen a drawing of at Huber's house, and by good luck found it.

The count is come back. He had gone to meet the horses and mounting his grey had outstripped the rest. He says the bridge is so light and beautiful that it looks like a horse in the act of leaping a ditch. Our friend too is coming, and is quite contented with his tour. He accomplished the distance from the Lake of Geneva to Bec in a few days, and we are all delighted to see one another again.

Martinac, towards 9.

We were out riding till late at night, and the road seemed much longer returning than going, as in the morning, our attention had been constantly attracted from one object to another. Besides I am for this day, at least, heartily tired of descriptions and reflections; however, I must try hastily to perpetuate the memory of two beautiful objects. It was deep twilight when on our return we reached the waterfall of the Pisse Vache. The mountains, the valley, and the heavens themselves were dark and dusky. By its greyish tint and unceasing murmur you could distinguish the

falling stream from all other objects, though you could scarcely discern the slightest motion. Suddenly the summit of a very high peak glowed just like molten brass in a furnace, and above it rose a red smoke. This singular phenomenon was the effect of the setting sun which illuminated the snow and the mists which ascended from it.

Sion, Nov. 8, 1779.
about 3 o'clock.

From Martinac to Sion

This morning we missed our way riding, and were delayed in consequence, three hours at least. We set out from Martinac before dawn, in order to reach Sion in good time. The weather was extraordinarily beautiful, only that the sun being low in the heavens was shut out by the mountains, so that the road, as we passed along, was entirely in the shade. The view, however, of the marvellously beautiful valley of Valais brought up many a good and cheerful idea. We had ridden for full three hours along the high road with the Rhone on our left, when we saw Sion before us; and we were beginning to congratulate ourselves on the prospect of soon ordering our noon-day's meal, when we found that the bridge we ought to cross had been carried away. Nothing remained for us, we were told by the people who were busy repairing it, but either to leave our horses and go by a foot-path which ran across the rocks, or else to ride on for about

three miles, and then cross the Rhone by some other bridges. We chose the latter; and we would not suffer any ill-humour to get possession of us, but determined to ascribe this mischance to the interposition of our good genius, who intended to take us a slow ride through this interesting region with the advantage of good day-light. Everywhere, indeed, in this narrow district, the Rhone makes sad havoc. In order to reach the other bridges we were obliged, for more than a league and a half, to ride over sandy patches, which in the various inundations are constantly shifting, and are useful for nothing but alder and willow beds. At last we came to the bridges, which were wretched, tottering, long, and composed of rotten timbers. We had to lead our horses over one by one, and with extreme caution. We were now on the left side of the Valais and had to turn backwards to get to Sion. The road itself was for the most part wretched and stony; every step, however, opened a fresh view, which was well worth a painting. One, however, was particularly remarkable. The road brought us up to a castle, below which there was spread out the most lovely scene that we had seen in the whole road. The mountains nearest to us run down on both sides slantingly to the level ground, and by their shape gave a kind of perspective effect to the natural landscape. Beneath us was the Valais in its entire breadth from mountain to mountain, so that the eye could easily take it in; the Rhone, with its ever varying windings and bushy banks was flowing past villages, meadows, and richly cultivated highlands; in the distance you saw the Castle of Sion, and the various hills

which begin to rise behind it; the farthest horizon was shut in, amphitheatre like, with a semicircular range of snow-capped mountains which, like all the rest of the scene, stood glittering in the sun's meridian splendour. Disagreeable and rough was the road we had to ride over; we therefore enjoyed the more, perhaps, the still tolerably green festoons of the vines which over-arched it. The inhabitants, to whom every spot of earth is precious, plant their grape-vines close against the walls which divide their little holdings from the road, where they grow to an extraordinary thickness, and by means of stakes and trellises are trained across the road so as almost to form one continuous arbour. The lower grounds were principally meadows: in the neighbourhood of Sion, however, we notice? some tillage. Towards this town the scenery is extremely diversified by a variety of hills, and we wished to be able to make a longer stay in order to enjoy it. But the hideousness of the town and of the people fearfully disturb the pleasant impression which the scenery leaves. The most frightful goitres put me altogether out of humour. We cannot well put our horses any further to-day, and therefore we think or going on foot to Seyters. Here in Sion the inn is disgusting, and the whole town has a dirty and revolting appearance.

Seyters, Nov. 8, 1779.
Night.

Sion-Seyters

As evening had begun to fall before we set out from Sion, we reached here at night, with the sky above us clear and starry. We have consequently lost many a good view – that I know well. Particularly we should have liked to have ascended to the Castle of Tourbillon, which is at no great distance from Sion; the view from it must be uncommonly beautiful. A guide whom we took with us skilfully guided us through some wretched low lands, where the water was out. We soon reached the heights, and had the Rhone below us on our right. By talking over some astronomical matters we shortened our road, and have taken up our abode here with some very worthy people, who are doing their best to entertain us. When we think over what we have gone through, so busy a day, with its many incidents and sights, seems almost equal to a whole week. I begin to be quite sorry that I have neither time nor talent to sketch at least the outlines of the most remarkable objects; for that would be much better for the absent than all descriptions.

Seyters, Nov. 9, 1779.

Before we set out I can just bid you good morning. The Count is going with me to the mountains on the left, towards Leukerbad; our friend will, in the meantime, stay here with the horses, and join us to-morrow at Leuk.

Leukerbad, Nov. 9, 1779.
At the Foot of Mount Gemmi.

In a little wooden house where we have been friendlily received by some very worthy people, we are sitting in a small, low room, and trying how much of to-day's highly interesting tour can be communicated in words. Starting from Seyters very early we proceeded for three leagues up the mountains, after having passed large districts laid waste by the mountain torrents. One of these streams will suddenly rise and desolate an extent of many miles, covering with fragments of rock and gravel the fields, meadows, and gardens, which (at least wherever possible) the people laboriously set to work to clear, in order within two generations, perhaps, to be again laid waste. We have had a grey day, with every now and then a glimpse of sunshine. It is impossible to describe how infinitely variegated the Valais here again becomes; the landscape bends and changes every moment, cooking around you all the objects seem to lie close together, and yet they are separated by great ravines and hills. Generally we had had the open part of the valley below us, on the right, when suddenly we came upon a spot which commanded a most beautiful view over the mountains.

In order to render more clear what it is I am attempting to describe, I must say a few words on the geographical position of the district in which we are at present. We had now for three hours been ascending the mountainous region which separates Valais from Berne. This is, in fact, the great track of mountains

which runs in one continuous chain from the Lake of Geneva to Mount S. Gothard, and on which, as it passes through Berne, rest the great masses of ice and snow. Here *above* and *below* are but the relative terms of the moment. I say, for instance, beneath me lies a village – and in all probability the level on which it is built is on a precipitous summit, which is far higher above the valley below, than I am above it.

Inden – The Gemmi

As we turned an angle of the road and rested awhile at a hermitage, we saw beneath us, at the end a lovely green meadowland, which stretched along the brink of an enormous chasm, the village of Inden, with its white church exactly in the middle of the landscape, and built altogether on the slope of the hill-side. Beyond the chasm another line of meadow lands and pine forests went upwards, while right behind the village a vast cleft in the rocks ran up the summit. On the left hand the mountains came right down to us, while those on our right stretched far away into the distance, so that the little hamlet, with its white church, formed as it were the focus towards which the many rocks, ravines, and mountains all converged. The road to Inden is cut out of the precipitous side of the rock, which, on your left going to the village, lines the amphitheatre. It is not dangerous although it looks frightful enough. It goes down on the slope of a rugged mass of rocks, separated from the yawning

abyss on the right, by nothing but a few poor planks. A peasant with a mule, who was descending at the same time as ourselves, whenever he came to any dangerous points caught his beast by the tail, lest the steep descent should cause him to slip, and roll into the rocks below. At last we reached Inden. As our guide was well known there, he easily managed to obtain for us, from a good-natured dame, some bread and a glass of red wine, for in these parts there are no regular inns.

We now ascended the high ravine, behind Inden, where we soon saw before us the Gemmiberg (of which we had heard such frightful descriptions), with Leukerbad at its foot, lying between two lofty, inaccessible, snow-covered mountains, as if it were in the hollow of a hand. It was three o'clock, nearly, when we arrived there, and our guide soon procured us lodgings. There is properly no inn even here, but in consequence of the many visitors to the baths at this place, all people have good accommodations. Our hostess had been put to bed the day before, but her husband with an old mother and a servant girl, did very creditably the honours of the house. We ordered something to eat, and went to see the warm springs, which in several places burst out of the earth with great force, and are received in very clean reservoirs. Out of the village, and more towards the mountains, there are said to be still stronger ones. The water has not the slightest smell of sulphur, and neither at its source nor in its channel does it make the least deposit of ochre or of any other earth or mineral, but like any other clear spring water it leaves

not the slightest trace behind it. As it comes out of the earth it is extremely hot, and is famous for its good qualities. We had still time for a walk to the foot of the Gemmi, which appeared to us to be at no great distance. I must here repeat a remark that has been made so often already; that when one is surrounded with mountain scenery all objects appear to be extremely near. We had a good league to go, amongst fragments of rock which had fallen from the heights, and over gravel brought down by the torrents, before we reached the foot of the Gemmi, where the road ascends along the precipitous crags. This is the only pass into the canton of Berne, and the sick have to be transported along it in sedan chairs.

If the season did not bid us hasten onwards, in all probability we might make an attempt to-morrow to ascend this remarkable mountain; as it is, however, we must content ourselves with the simple view of it. On our return we saw the clouds brewing, which in these parts is a highly interesting sight. The fine weather we have hitherto enjoyed has made us forget almost entirely that it is in November that we are; besides too, as they foretold us in Berne, the autumn here is very delightful. The short days, however, and the clouds which threaten snow, warn us how late it is in the year. The strange drift which has been agitating them this evening was singularly beautiful. As we came back from the foot of the Gemmi, we saw light mists come up the ravine from Inden, and move with great rapidity. They continually changed their direction, going now forwards, now backwards, and at last,

as they ascended, they came so near to Leukerbad that we saw clearly that we must double our steps if we would not before nightfall be enveloped in the clouds. We reached our quarters, however, without accident, and whilst I write this it is snowing in earnest. This is the first fall of snow that we have yet had, and when we call to mind our warm ride yesterday, from Martinach to Sion, beneath the vine-arbours, which were still pretty thick with leaves, the change does appear sudden indeed. I have been standing some time at the door, observing the character and look of the clouds, which are beautiful beyond description. It is not yet night, but at intervals the clouds veil the whole sky and make it quite dark. They rise out of the deep ravines until they reach the highest summits of the mountains; attracted by these they appear to thicken, and being condensed by the cold they fall down in the shape of snow. It gives you an inexpressible feeling of loneliness to find yourself here at this height, as it were, in a sort of well, from which you scarcely can suppose that there is even a footpath to get out by, except down the precipice before you. The clouds which gather here in this valley, at one time completely hiding the immense rocks, and absorbing them in a waste impenetrable gloom, or at another letting a part of them be seen like huge spectres, give to the people a cast of melancholy. In the midst of such natural phenomena the people are full of presentiments and forebodings. Clouds – a phenomenon remarkable to every man from his youth up – are, in the plain countries, generally looked upon at most as something foreign – something super-

terrestrial. People regard them as strangers, as birds of passage, which, hatched under a different climate, visit this or that country for a moment or two in passing – as splendid pieces of tapestry wherewith the gods part off their pomp and splendour from human eyes. But here, where they are hatched, man is inclosed in them from the very first, and the eternal and intrinsic energy of his nature feels itself at every nerve moved to forebode and to indulge in presentiments.

To the clouds, which, with us even produce these effects, we pay little attention; moreover as they are not pushed so thickly and directly before our eyes, their economy is the more difficult to observe. With regard to all such phenomena one's only wish is to dwell on them for a while, and to be able to tarry several days in the spots where they are observable. If one is fond of such observations the desire becomes the more vivid the more one reflects that every season of the year, every hour of the day, and every change of weather produces new phenomena which we little looked for. And as no man, not even the most ordinary character, was ever a witness, even for once, of great and unusual events, without their leaving behind in his soul some traces or other, and making him feel himself also to be greater for this one little shred of grandeur, so that he is never weary of telling the whole tale of it over again, and has gained at any rate a little treasure for his whole life; just so is it with the man who has seen and become familiar with the grand phenomena of nature. He who manages to preserve these impressions, and to combine

them with other thoughts and emotions, has assuredly a treasury of sweets wherewith to season the most tasteless parts of life, and to give a pervading relish to the whole of existence.

I observe that in my notes I make very little mention of human beings. Amid these grand objects of nature, they are but little worthy of notice, especially where they do but come and go. I doubt not but that on a longer stay we should meet with many worthy and interesting people. One fact I think I have everywhere observed; the farther one moves from the highroad and the busy marts of men, the more people are shut in by the mountains, isolated and confined to the simplest wants of life, the more they draw their maintenance from simple, humble, and unchangeable pursuits: so much the better, the more obliging, the more friendly, unselfish, and hospitable are they.

Leukerbad, Nov. 10, 1779.

We are getting ready by candle-light, in order to descend the mountain again as soon as day breaks. I have had rather a restless night. Scarcely had I got into bed before I felt as if I was attacked all over with the nettle rash. I soon found, however, that it was a swarm of crawling insects, who, ravenous of blood, had fallen upon the new comer. These insects breed in great numbers in these wooden houses. The night appeared to me extremely long, and I was heartily glad when in the morning a light was brought in.

Leuk., about 10 o'clock.

We have not much time to spare; however, before we set out, I will give you an account of the remarkable breaking up of our company, which has here taken place, and also of the cause of it. We set out from Leukerbad with daybreak this morning, and had to make our way over the meadows through the fresh and slippery snow. We soon came to Inden, where, leaving above us on our right the precipitous road which we came down yesterday, we descended to the meadow lands along the ravine which now lay on our left. It is extremely wild and overgrown with trees, but a very tolerable road runs down into it. Through the clefts in the rock the water which comes down from Leukerbad has its outlets into the Valais. High up on the side of the hill, which yesterday we descended, we saw an aqueduct skilfully cut out of the rock, by which a little stream is conducted from the mountain, then through a hollow into a neighbouring village.

Leuk

Next we had to ascend a steep height, from which we soon saw the open country of Valais, with the dirty town of Valais lying beneath us. These little towns are mostly stuck on the hill sides; the roofs inelegantly covered with coarsely split planks, which within a year become black and overgrown with moss; and when you enter them, you are at once disgusted, for everything is dirty; want and hardship are everywhere apparent among these highly privileged and free burghers.

We found here our friend, who brought the unfavourable report that it was beginning to be injudicious to proceed further with the horses. The stables were everywhere small and narrow, being built only for mules or sumpter horses; oats too were rarely to be procured; indeed he was told that higher up among the mountains there were none to be had. Accordingly a council was held. Our friend with the horses was to descend the Valais and go by Bee, Bevay, Lausanne, Freiburg, and Berne, to Lucerne, while the Count and I pursued our course up the Valais, and endeavoured to penetrate to Mount Gotthard, and then through the Canton of Uri, and by the lake of the Forest Towns, likewise make for Lucerne. In these parts you may anywhere procure mules, which are better suited to these roads than horses, and to go on foot invariably proves the most agreeable in the end. Our friend is gone, and our portmanteaus packed on the back of a mule, and so we are now ready to set off and make our way on foot to Brieg. The sky has a motley appearance, still I hope that the good luck which has hitherto attended us, and attracted us to this distant spot, will not abandon us at the very point where we have the most need of it.

Brieg, Nov. 10, 1779.
Evening.

Of to-day's expedition I have little to tell you, unless you would like to be entertained with a long circumstantial account of the weather. About 11 o'clock we set off from Leuk., in company with a Suabian butcher's boy, who had run away hither, and

had found a place where he served somewhat in the capacity of Hanswurst (Jack-Pudding), and with our luggage packed on the back of a mule, which its master was driving before him. Behind us, as far as the eye could reach, thick snow clouds, which came driving up the lowlands, covered everything. It had really a threatening aspect. Without expressing my fears I felt anxious lest, even though right before us it looked as clear as it could do in the land of Goshen, the clouds might nevertheless overtake us, and here, perhaps in the territory of the Valais, shut in on both sides by mountains, we might be covered with the clouds, and in one night snowed up. Thus whispered alarm which got possession almost entirely of one ear; at the other good courage was speaking in a confident tone, and reproving me for want of faith, kept reminding me of the past, and called my attention to the phenomena of the atmosphere before us. Our road went continually on towards the fine weather. Up the Rhone all was clear, and as a strong west wind kept driving the clouds behind us, it was little likely that they would reach us.

The following was the cause of this. Into the valley of Valais there are, as I have so often remarked already, many ravines running down from the neighbouring mountain-chains, which fall into it like little brooks into a great stream, as indeed all their waters flow off into the Rhone. Out of each of these openings rushes a current of wind, which has been forming in the inner valleys and nooks of the rocks. When now the principal drift of the clouds up the valley reaches one of these ravines, the current

of the wind does not allow the clouds to pass, but contends with them, and with the wind which is driving them, and thus detains them, and disputes with them for whole hours the passage up the valley. This conflict we often witnessed, and when we believed we should surely be overtaken by the clouds, an obstacle of this kind would again arise, and after we had gone a good league, we found they had scarcely stirred from the spot.

Brieg

Towards evening the sky was uncommonly beautiful. As we arrived at Brieg, the clouds got there almost as soon as we did; however, as the sun had set, and a driving east wind blew against them, they were obliged to come to a halt, and formed a huge crescent from mountain to mountain across the valley. The cold air had greatly condensed them, and where their edge stood out against the blue sky, it presented to the eye many beautiful, light, and elegant forms. It was quite clear that they were heavy with snow; however, the fresh air seemed to us to promise that much would not fall during the night.

Here we are in a very comfortable inn, and what greatly tends to make us contented, we have found a roomy chamber with a stove in it, so that we can sit by the fire-side and take counsel together as to our future travels. Through Brieg runs the usual road to Italy over the Simplon; should we, therefore, give up our plan of going over the Furca to Mont S. Gothard, we shall go

with hired horses and mules to Domo d'Ossula, Margozro, pass up Lago Maggiore, and then to Bellinzona, and then on to S. Gotthard, and over Airolo to the monastery of the Capuchins. This road is passable all the winter through, and is good travelling for horses; however, to our minds it is not very inviting, especially as it was not in our original plan, and will not bring us to Lucerne till five days after our friend. We wish rather to see the whole of the Valais up to its extreme limit, whither we hope to come by to-morrow evening, and, if fortune favours, we shall be sitting by about the same time next day in Realp, in the canton of Uri, which is on Mont Gotthard, and very near to its highest summit. If we then find it impossible to cross the Furca, the road back to this spot will still be open to us, and then we can take of necessity the route which of free choice we are disinclined to.

You can well believe that I have here closely examined the people, whether they believe that the passage over the Furca is open, for that is the one idea with which I rise up, and lie down to sleep, and occupy myself all day long. Hitherto our route may be compared to a march to meet an enemy, and now it is as if we were approaching to the spot where he has entrenched himself, and we must give him battle. Besides our mule two horses are ordered to be ready by the evening.

Munster, Nov. 11, 1779.
Evening, 6 o'clock.

Again we have had a pleasant and prosperous day. This morning as we set out early and in good time from Brieg our

host, when we were already on the road said, "If the mountain (so they call the Furca here,) should prove too fearful, you can easily come back and take another route." With our two horses and mule we soon came upon some pleasant meadows, where the valley becomes so narrow that it is scarcely some gun-shots wide. Here are some beautiful pasture lands, on which stand large trees, while pieces of rock lie scattered about which have rolled down from the neighbouring mountains. The valley gradually grows narrower, and the traveller is forced to ascend along the side of the mountain, having the while the Rhone below him in a rugged ravine on his left. Above him, however, the land is beautifully spread out; on the variously undulating hills are verdant and rich meadows and pretty hamlets, which, with their dark-brown wooden houses, peep out prettily from among the snow. We travelled a good deal on foot, and we did so in turns to accommodate one another. For although riding is safe enough, still it excites one's alarm to see another riding before you along so narrow a track, and on so weak an animal, and just on the brink of so rugged a precipice; and as too there are no cattle to be seen on the meadows, (for the people here shut them all up in sheds at this season,) such a region looks lonely, and the thought that one is continually being hemmed in closer and closer by the vast mountains, fills the imagination with sombre and disagreeable fancies, enough to make you fall from your seat, if you are not very firm in the saddle. Man is never perfectly master of himself. As he lives in utter ignorance of the future, as indeed what the

next moment may bring forth is hidden from him, consequently, when anything unusual falls beneath his notice, he has often to contend with involuntary sensations, forebodings, and dream-like fancies, at which shortly afterwards he may laugh outright, but which at the decisive moment are often extremely oppressive.

The legend of S. Alexis

In our noonday quarters we met with some amusement. We had taken up our lodgings with a woman in whose house everything looked neat and orderly. Her room, after the fashion of the country, was wainscotted, the beds ornamented with carving; the cupboards, tables, and all the other little repositories which were fastened against the walls or to the corners, had pretty ornaments of turner's work or carving. From the portraits which hung around the room, it was easy to see that several members of the family had devoted themselves to the clerical profession. We also observed a collection of bound books over the door, which we took to be the endowment of one of these reverend personages. We took down the Legends of the Saints, and read it while our meal was preparing. On one occasion of our hostess entering the room, she asked us if we had ever read the history of S. Alexis? We said no, and took no further notice of her question, but went on reading the chapter we each had begun. When, however, we had sat down to table, she placed herself by our sides, and began again to talk of S. Alexis. We

asked her whether he was the patron saint of herself, or of her family; which she denied, affirming at the same time, however, that this saintly person had undergone so much for the love of God, that his history always affected her more than any other's. When she saw that we knew nothing about him, she began to narrate to us his history. "S. Alexis," she said, "was the son of noble, rich, and God-fearing parents in Rome, and in the practice of good works he delighted to follow their example, for they did extraordinary good to the poor. All this, however, did not appear enough to Alexis; but secretly in his own heart he devoted himself entirely to God's service, and took a vow to Christ of perpetual virginity. When, then, in the course of time, his parents wished to marry him to a lovely and amiable maiden, he did not oppose their will. When, however, the marriage ceremony was concluded, instead of retiring to his bed in the nuptial chamber, he went on board a vessel which he found ready to sail, and with it passed over to Asia. Here he assumed the garb of a wretched mendicant, and became thereby so thoroughly disguised that the servants of his father who had been sent after him failed to recognise him. Here he posted himself near the door of the principal church, invariably attending the divine services, and supporting himself on the alms of the faithful. After two or three years various miracles took place, betokening the special favour of the Almighty. The bishop heard a voice in the church, bidding him to summon into the sacred temple that man whose prayer was most acceptable to God, and to keep him by his side

while he celebrated divine worship. As the bishop did not at once know who could be meant, the voice went on to point out to him the beggar, whom, to the great astonishment of the people, he immediately fetched into the church. The saintly Alexis, embarrassed by having the attention of the people directed towards himself, quietly and silently departed thence, also on ship-board, intending to proceed still further in foreign lands. But by a tempest and other circumstances he was compelled to land in Italy. The saint seeing in all this the finger of God, was rejoiced to meet with an opportunity of exercising self-denial in the highest degree. He therefore set off direct for his native town, and placed himself as a beggar at the door of his parents' house. With their usual pious benevolence did they receive him, and commanded one of their servants to furnish him with lodging in the castle and with all necessary sustenance. This servant, annoyed at the trouble he was put to, and displeased with his master's benevolence, assigned to this seeming beggar a miserable hole under some stone steps, where he threw to him, as to a dog, a sorry pittance of food. The saint instead of suffering himself to be vexed thereat, first of all thanked God sincerely for it in his heart, and not only bore with patient meekness all this which he might easily have altered, but with incredible and superhuman fortitude, endured to witness the lasting grief of his parents and his wife for his absence. For he heard his much-loved parents and his beautiful spouse invoke his name a hundred times a day, and pray for his return, and he saw

them wasting their days in sorrow for his supposed absence." At this passage of her narrative our good hostess could not refrain her tears, while her two daughters, who during the story had crept close to her side, kept steadily looking up in their mother's face. "But," she continued, "great was the reward which the Almighty bestowed on his constancy, giving him, at his death, the greatest possible proofs of his favour in the eyes of the faithful. For after living several years in this state, daily frequenting the service of God with the most fervent zeal, he at last fell sick, without any particular heed being given to his condition by any one. One morning shortly after this, while the pope was himself celebrating high mass, in presence of the emperor and all the nobles, suddenly all the bells in the whole city of Rome began to toll as if for the passing knell of some distinguished personage. Whilst every one was full of amazement, it was revealed to the pope that this marvel was in honour of the death of the holiest person in the whole city, who had but just died in the house of the noble Patrician. – The father of Alexis being interrogated, thought at once of the beggar. He went home and found him beneath the stairs quite dead. In his folded hands the saintly man clutched a paper, which his old father sought in vain to take from him. He returned to the church and told all this to the emperor and the pope, who thereupon, with their courtiers and clergy, set off to visit the corpse of the saint. When they reached the spot, the holy father took it without difficulty out of the hands of the dead man, and handed it to the emperor, who thereupon caused

it to be read aloud by his chancellor. The paper contained the history of the saint. Then you should have seen the grief of his parents and wife, which now became excessive, to think that they had had near to them a son and husband so dear; for whom there was nothing too good that they would not have done; and then too to know how ill he had been treated! They fell upon his corpse and wept so bitterly that there was not one of the bystanders who could refrain from tears. Moreover, among the multitude of the people who gradually flocked to the spot, there were many sick, who were brought to the body and by its touch were made whole."

The legend of S. Alexis

Our fair story-teller affirmed over and over again, as she dried her eyes, that she had never heard a more touching history, and I too was seized with so great a desire to weep that I had the greatest difficulty to hide and to suppress it. After dinner I looked out the legend itself in Father Cochem, and found that the good dame had dropped none of the purely human traits of the story, while she had clean forgotten all the tasteless remarks of this writer.

We keep going continually to the window watching the weather; and are at present very near offering a prayer to the winds and clouds. Long evenings and universal stillness are the elements in which writing thrives right merrily, and I am convinced that if, for a few months only, I could contrive, or were

obliged, to stay at a spot like this, all my unfinished dramas would of necessity be completed one after another.

We have already had several people before us, and questioned them with regard to the pass over the Furca; but even here we have been unable to gain any precise information, although the mountain is only two or three leagues distant. We must, however, rest contented, and we shall set out ourselves at break of day to reconnoitre, and see how destiny will decide for us. However, in general, I may be disposed to take things as they go, it would, I must confess, be highly annoying to me if we should be forced to retrace our steps again. If we are fortunate we shall be by to-morrow evening at Realp or S. Gotthard, and by noon the next day among the Capuchins at the summit of the mountain. If things go unfortunately we nave two roads open for a retreat. Back through the whole of Valais, and by the well-known road over Berne to Lucerne; or back to Brieg, and then by a wide detour to S. Gotthard. I think in this short letter I have told you that three times. But in fact it is a matter of great importance to us. The issue will decide which was in the right, our courage, which gave us a confidence that we must succeed, or the prudence of certain persons who were very earnest in trying to dissuade us from attempting this route. This much, at any rate, is certain, that both prudence and courage must own chance to be over them both. And now that we have once more examined the weather, and found the air to be cold, the sky bright, and without any signs of a tendency to snow, we shall go calmly to bed.

Munster, Nov. 12, 1776.
Early. 6 o'clock.

We are quite ready, and all is packed up in order to set out from hence with the break of day. We have before us two leagues to Oberwald, and from there the usual reckoning makes six leagues to Realp. Our mule is to follow us with the baggage as far as it is possible to take him.

Realp, Nov. 12, 1779.
Evening.

The passage of the Furca

We reached this place just at nightfall. We have surmounted all difficulties, and the knots which entangled our path have been cut in two. Before I tell you where we are lodged, and before I describe to you the character of our hosts, allow me the gratification of going over in thought the road that we did not see before us without anxiety, and which, however, we have left behind us without accident, though not without difficulty. About seven we started from Munster, and saw before us the snow-covered amphitheatre of mountain summits, and took to be the Furca, the mountain which in the background stood obliquely before it. But as we afterwards learned, we made a mistake; it was concealed from our view by the mountains on our left and by high clouds. The east wind blew strong and fought with

some snow-clouds, chasing the drifts, now over the mountains, now up the valley. But this only made the snow drifts deeper on the ground, and caused us several times to miss our way; although shut in as we were on both sides, we could not fail of reaching Oberwald eventually. About nine we actually got there, and dropping in at an auberge, its inmates were not a little surprised to see such characters appearing there this time of the year. We asked whether the pass over the Furca were still practicable, and they answered that their folk crossed it for the greater part of the winter, but whether we should be able to get across they could not tell. We immediately sent to seek for one of these persons as a guide. There soon appeared a strong thick-set peasant, whose very look and shape inspired confidence. With him we immediately began to treat: if he thought the pass was practicable for us, let him say so; and then take one or more comrades and come with us. After a short pause he agreed, and went away to get ready himself and to fetch the others. In the meantime we paid our muleteer the hire of his beast, since we could no longer make any use of his mule; and having eaten some bread and cheese and drank a glass of red wine, felt full of strength and spirits, as our guide came back, followed by another man who looked still bigger and stronger than himself, and seeming to have all the strength and courage of a horse, he quickly shouldered our portmanteau. And now we set out, a party of five, through the village, and soon reached the foot of the mountain, which lay on our left, and began gradually to ascend it.

At first we had a beaten track to follow which came down from a neighbouring Alp; soon, however, this came to an end, and we had to go up the mountain side through the snow. Our guides, with great skill, tracked their way among the rocks, around which the usual path winds, although the deep and smooth snow had covered all alike. Next our road lay through a forest of pines, while the Rhone flowed beneath us in a narrow unfruitful valley. Into it we also, after a little while, had to descend, and by crossing a little foot-bridge we came in sight of the glacier of the Rhone. It is the hugest we have as yet had so full a view of. Of very great breadth, it occupies the whole saddle of the mountain, and descends uninterruptedly down to the point where, in the valley, the Rhone flows out of it. At this source the people tell us it has for several years been decreasing; but that is as nothing compared with all the rest of the huge mass. Although everything was full of snow, still the rough crags of ice, on which the wind did not allow the snow to lie, were visible with their glass blue fissures, and you could see clearly where the glacier ended and the snow-covered rock began. To this point, which lay on our left, we came very close. Presently we again reached a light foot-bridge over a little mountain stream, which flowed through a barren trough-shaped valley to join the Rhone. After passing the glacier, neither on the right, nor on the left, nor before you, was there a tree to be seen, all was one desolate waste; no rugged and prominent rocks-nothing but long smooth valleys, slightly inclining eminences, which now, in the snow which levelled all inequalities, presented

to us their simple unbroken surfaces. Turning now to the left we ascended a mountain, sinking at every step deep in the snow. One of our guides had to go first, and boldly treading down the snow break the way by which we were to follow.

The passage over the Furca

It was a strange sight, when turning for a moment your attention from the road, you directed it to yourself and your fellow travellers. In the most desolate region of the world, in a boundless, monotonous wilderness of mountains enveloped in snow, where for three leagues before and behind, you would not expect to meet a living soul, while on both sides you had the deep hollows of a web of mountains, you might see a line of men wending their way, treading each in the deep footsteps of the one before him, and where, in the whole of the wide expanse thus smoothed over, the eye could discern nothing but the track they left behind them. The hollows as we left them lay behind us gray and boundless in the mist. The changing clouds continually passed over the pale disc of the sun, and spread over the whole scene a perpetually moving veil. I am convinced that any one who, while pursuing this route, allowed his imagination to gain the mastery, would even, in the absence of all immediate danger, fall a victim to his own apprehensions and fears. In reality, there is little or no risk of a fall here; the great danger is from the avalanches, when the snow has become deeper than it is

at present, and begins to roll. However our guide told us that they cross the mountains throughout the winter, carrying from Valais to S. Gotthard skins of the chamois, in which a considerable trade is here carried on. But then to avoid the avalanches, they do not take the route that we did, but remain for some time longer in the broad valley, and then go straight up the mountain. This road is safer, but much more inconvenient. After a march of about three hours and a-half, we reached the saddle of the Furca, near the cross which marks the boundary of Valais and Uri. Even here we could not distinguish the double peak from which the Furca derives its name. We now hoped for an easier descent, but our guides soon announced to us still deeper snow, as we immediately found it to be. Our march continued in single file as before, and the foremost man who broke the path often sank up to his waist in the snow. The readiness of the people, and their light way of speaking of matters, served to keep up our courage; and I will say, for myself, that I have accomplished the journey without fatigue, although I cannot say that it was a mere walk. The huntsman Hermann asserted that he had often before met with equally deep snow in the forests of Thuringia, but at last he could not help bursting out with a loud exclamation, "The Furca is a – ."

A vulture or lammergeier swept over our heads with incredible rapidity: it was the only living thing that we had met with in this waste. In the distance we saw the mountains of the Ursi lighted up with the bright sunshine. Our guides wished to enter a

shepherd's hut which had been abandoned and snowed up, and to take something to eat, but we urged them to go onwards, to avoid standing still in the cold. Here again is another groupe of valleys, and at last we gained an open view into the valley of the Ursi.

The capuchins at Realp

We now proceeded at a shorter pace, and after travelling about three leagues and a-half from the Cross, we saw the scattered roofs of Realp. We had several times questioned our guides as to what sort of an inn, and what kind of wine we were likely to find in Realp. The hopes they gave us were anything but good, but they assured us that the Capuchins there, although they had not, like those on the summit of S. Gotthard, an hospice, were in the habit of entertaining strangers. With them we should get some good red wine, and better food than at an inn. We therefore sent one of our party forwards to inform the Capuchins of our arrival, and to procure a lodging for us. We did not loiter long behind, and arrived very soon after him, when we were received at the door by one of the fathers – a portly, good-looking man. With much friendliness of manner he invited us to enter, and at the threshold begged that we would put up with such entertainment they could alone offer, as at no time and least of all at this season of the year, were they prepared to receive such guests. He therefore led us into a warm room, and was very diligent in waiting upon us, while we took off our boots, and changed our linen. He

begged us once for all to make ourselves perfectly at home. As to our meat, we must, he said, be indulgent, for they were in the middle of their long fast, which would last till Christmas-day. We assured him that a warm room, a bit of bread, and a glass of red wine would, in our present circumstances, fully satisfy all our wishes. He procured us what we asked for, and we had scarcely refreshed ourselves a little, ere he began to recount to us all that concerned the establishment, and the settlement of himself and fellows on this waste spot. "We have not," he said, "an hospice like the fathers on Mont S. Gotthard, – we are here in the capacity of parish priests, and there are three of us. The duty of preaching falls to my lot; the second father has to look after the school, and the brother to look after the household." He went on to describe their hardships and toils; here, at the furthest end of a lonely valley, separated from all the world, and working hard to very little profit. This spot, like all others, was formerly provided with a secular priest, but an avalanche having buried half of the village, the last one had run away, and taken the pix with him, whereupon he was suspended, and they, of whom more resignation was expected, were sent there in his place.

In order to write all this I had retired to an upper room, which is warmed from below by a hole in the floor; and I have just received an intimation that dinner is ready, which, notwithstanding our luncheon, is right welcome news.

About 9.

The fathers, priests, servants, guides and all, took their

dinner together at a common table; the brother, however, who superintended the cooking, did not make his appearance till dinner was nearly over. Out of milk, eggs, and flour he had compounded a variety of dishes, which we tasted one after another, and found them all very good. Our guides, who took a great pleasure in speaking of the successful issue of our expedition, praised us for our uncommon dexterity in travelling, and assured us that it was not every one that they would have undertaken the task of being guides to. They even confessed also that this morning, when their services were required, one had gone first to reconnoitre, and to see if we looked like people who would really go through all difficulties with them; for they were particularly cautious how they accompanied old or weak people at this time of the year, since it was their duty to take over in safety every one they had once engaged to guide, being bound in case of his falling sick, to carry him, even though it should be at the imminent risk of their own lives, and if he were to die on the passage, not to leave his body behind. This confession at once opened the flood-gates to a host of anecdotes, and each in turn had his story to tell of the difficulties and dangers of wandering over the mountains amidst which the people had here to live as in their proper element, so that with the greatest indifference they speak of mischances and accidents to which they themselves are daily liable. One of them told a story of how, on the Candersteg, on his way to Mount Gemmi, he and a comrade with him (he is mentioned on every occasion with both Christian and surname)

found a poor family in the deep snow, the mother dying, her boy half dead, and the father in that state of indifference which verges on a total prostration of intellect. He took the woman on his back, and his comrade her son, and thus laden, they had driven before them the father, who was unwilling to move from the spot.

The Capuchins at Realp

During the descent of Gemmi the woman died on his back, but he brought her dead as she was to Leukerbad. When we asked what sort of people they were, and what could have brought them at such a season into the mountains, he said they were poor people of the canton of Berne, who, driven by want, had taken to the road at an unseasonable period of the year, in the hope of finding some relations either in Valais or the Italian canton, and had been overtaken by a snow-storm. Moreover, they told many anecdotes of what had happened to themselves during the winter journeys over the Furca with the chamois-skins, on which expeditions, however, they always travelled in companies. Every now and then our reverend host would make excuses for the dinner, and we redoubled our assurances that we wished for nothing better. We also found that he contrived to bring back the conversation to himself and his own matters, observing that he had not been long in this place. He began to talk of the office of preaching, and of the dexterity that a preacher ought to have. He compared the good preacher to a

chapman who cleverly puffs his wares, and by his pleasant words makes himself agreeable to his customers. After dinner he kept up the conversation, and, as he stood with his left hand leaning on the table, he accompanied his remarks with his right, and while he discoursed most eloquently on eloquence, appeared at the moment as if he wished to convince us that he himself was the dexterous chapman. We assented to his observations, and he came from the lecture to the thing itself. He panegyrized the Roman Catholic religion. "We must," he said, "have a rule of faith; and the great value of it consists in its being fixed, and as little liable as possible to change, We," he said, "had made Scripture the foundation of our faith, but it was insufficient. We ourselves would not venture to put it into the hands of common men: for holy as it is, and full as every leaf is of the Spirit of God, still the worldly-minded man is insensible of all this, and finds rather perplexities and stumbling-blocks throughout. What good can a mere layman extract from the histories of sinful men, which are contained therein, and which the Holy Ghost has there recorded for the strengthening of the faith of the tried and experienced children of God? What benefit can a common man draw from all this, when he is unable to consider the whole context and connection? How is such a person to see his way clear out of the seeming contradictions which occasionally occur? – out of the difficulties which arise from the ill arrangement of the books, and the differences of style, when the learned themselves find it so hard, and while so many

passages make them hold their reason in abeyance? What ought we therefore to teach? A rule of faith founded on Scripture, and proved by the best of commentaries? But who then is to comment upon the Scripture? Who is to set up this rule? I, perhaps, or some other man? By no means. Every man has his own way of taking and seeing things, and represents them after his own ideas. That would be to give to the people as many systems of doctrines as there are are heads in the world, and to produce inexplicable confusion as indeed had already been done. No, it remains for the Holy Church alone to interpret Scripture to determine the rule of faith by which the souls of men are to be guided and governed. And what is the church? It is not any single supreme head, or any particular member alone. No! it is all the holiest, most learned, and most experienced men of all times, who, with the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, have successively combined together in building up that great, universal, and agreeing body, which has its great councils for its members to communicate their thoughts to one another, and for mutual edification; which banishes error, and thereby imparts to our holy religion a certainty and a stability such as no other profession can pretend to, and gives it a foundation and strengthens it with bulwarks which even hell itself cannot overthrow. And just so is it also with the text of the sacred scriptures. We have," he said, "the Vulgate, moreover an approved version of the Vulgate, and of every sentence a commentary which the church itself has accredited. Hence arises that uniformity of our teaching

which surprises every one. Whether," he continued, "you hear me preaching in this most remote corner of the world, or in the great capital of a distant country are listening to the dullest or cleverest of preachers, all will hold one and the same language; a Catholic Christian will always hear the same doctrine; everywhere will he be instructed and edified in the same manner. And this it is which constitutes the certainty of our faith; which gives us the peace and confidence by which each one in life holds sure communion with his brother Catholics, and at death can calmly part in the sure hope of meeting one another again."

In his speech, as in a sermon, he let the subjects follow in due order, and spoke more from an inward feeling of satisfaction that he was exhibiting himself under a favourable aspect than from any bigotted anxiety for conversion. During the delivery he would occasionally change the arm he rested upon, or draw them both into the arms of his gown, or let them rest on his portly stomach; now and then he would, with much grace, draw his snuff-box out of his capote, and after using it replace it with a careless ease. We listened to him attentively, and he seemed to be quite content with our way of receiving his instructions. How greatly amazed would he have been if an angel had revealed to him, at the moment, that he was addressing his peroration to a descendant of Frederick the Wise.

November 13, 1779.

Among the Capuchins, on the summit of Mont S. Gotthard,

Morning, about 10 o'clock.

Mount S. Gotthard

At last we have fortunately reached the utmost limits of our journey. Here it is determined we shall rest awhile, and then turn our steps towards our dear fatherland. Very strange are my feelings here, on this summit, where four years ago I passed a few days with very different anxieties, sentiments, plans, and hopes, and at a very different season of the year, when, without any foreboding of my future fortunes, but moved by I know not what, I turned my back upon Italy, and ignorantly went to meet my present destiny. I did not even recognise the house again. Some time ago it was greatly injured by an avalanche, and the good fathers took advantage of this opportunity, and made a collection throughout the canton for enlarging and improving their residence. Both of the two fathers who reside here at present are absent, but, as I hear, they are still the same that I met four years ago. Father Seraphin, who has now passed fourteen years in this post is at present at Milan, and the other is expected to-day from Airolo. In this clear atmosphere the cold is awful. As soon as dinner is over I will continue my letter; for, I see clearly we shall not go far outside the door.

After dinner.

It becomes colder and colder; one does not like to stir from

the stove. Indeed it is most delightful to sit upon it, which in this country, where the stoves are made of stone-tiles, it is very easy to do. First of all, therefore, we will tell you of our departure from Realp, and then of our journey hither.

Yesterday evening before we retired to our beds, the good father would shew us his sleeping cell, where everything was in nice order, in a very small space. His bed, which consisted of a bag of straw, with a woollen coverlid, did not appear to us to be anything very meritorious, as we ourselves had often put up with no better. With great pleasure and internal satisfaction he showed us everything – his bookcase and all other things. We praised all that we saw, and parting on the best terms with each other, we retired for the night. In furnishing our room, in order that two beds might stand against one wall, both had been made unusually small. This inconvenience kept me long awake, until I thought of remedying it by placing four chairs together. It was quite broad daylight before we awoke this morning. When we went down we found nothing but happy and friendly faces. Our guides, on the point of entering upon their return over yesterday's beautiful route, seemed to look upon it as an epoch, and as a history with which hereafter they would be able to entertain other strangers, and as they were well paid the idea of an adventure became complete in their minds. After this we made a capital breakfast and departed.

Our road now lay through the valley of the Uri, which is remarkable as having, at so great an elevation, such beautiful

meadows and pasturage for cattle. They make here a cheese which I prefer to all others. No trees, however, grow here. Sally bushes line all the brooks, and on the mountains little shrubs grow thickly together. Of all the countries that I know, this is to me the loveliest and most interesting, – whether it is that old recollections make it precious to me, or that the perception of such a long chain of nature's wonders excites within me a secret and inexpressible feeling of enjoyment. I take it for granted that you bear in mind that the whole country through which I am leading you is covered with snow, and that rock and meadow alike are snowed over. The sky has been quite clear, without a single cloud; the hue far deeper than one is accustomed to see in low and flat countries, and the white mountain ridges, which stood out in strong contrast to it, were either glittering in the sunshine, or else took a greyish tint in the shade.

In a hour and a half we reached Hôpital, – a little village within the canton of Uri, which lies on the road to S. Gotthard. Here at last I regained the track of my former tour. We entered an inn, and though it was as yet morning, ordered a dinner, and soon afterward began to ascend the summit. A long train of mules with their bells enlivened the whole region. It is a sound which awakens all one's recollections of mountain scenery. The greater part of the train was in advance of us, and with their sharp iron shoes had pretty well cut up the smooth icy road. We also saw some labourers who were employed in covering the slippery ice with fresh earth, in order to render it passable. The wish which I

formerly gave utterance to, that I might one day be permitted to see this part of the world under snow, is now at last gratified. The road goes up the Reuss as it dashes down over rocks all the way, and forms everywhere the most beautiful waterfalls. We stood a long while attracted by the singular beauty of one which in considerable volume was dashing over a succession of dark black rocks. Here and there in the cracks, and on the flat ledges pieces of ice had formed, and the water seemed to be running over a variegated black and white marble. The masses of ice glistened like veins of crystal in the sun, and the water flowed pure and fresh between them.

Mount S. Gotthard

On the mountains there is no more tiresome a fellow-traveller than a train of mules; they have so unequal a pace. With a strange instinct they always stop a while at the bottom of a steep ascent, and then dash off at a quick pace up it, to rest again at the top. Very often too they will stop at the level spots which do occur now and then, until they are forced on by the drivers or by other beasts coming up. And so the foot passenger, by keeping a steady pace, soon gains upon them, and in the narrow road has to push by them. If you stand still a little while to observe any object, they in their turn will pass by you, and you are pestered with the deafening sound of their bells, and hard brushed with their loads, which project to a good distance on each side of them. In this

way we at last reached the summit of the mountain, which you can form some idea of by fancying a bald skull surrounded with a crown. Here one finds oneself on a perfect flat surrounded with peaks. Far and near the eye falls on nothing but bare and mostly snow-covered peaks and crags.

It is scarcely possible to keep oneself warm, especially as they have here no fuel but brushwood, and of that too they are obliged to be very sparing, as they have to fetch it up the mountains, from a distance of at least three leagues, for at the summit, they tell us, scarcely any kind of wood grows. The reverend father is returned from Airolo, so frozen that on his arrival he could scarcely, utter a word. Although here the Capuchins are allowed to clothe themselves a little more comfortably than the rest of their order, still their style of dress is by no means suited for such a climate as this. All the way up from Airolo the road was frozen perfectly smooth, and he had the wind in his face; his beard was quite frozen, and it was a long while before he recovered himself. We had some conversation together on the hardships of their residence here; he told us how they managed to get through the year, their various occupations, and their domestic circumstances. He could speak nothing but Italian, and so we had an opportunity of putting to use the exercises in this language which we had taken during the spring. Towards evening we went for a moment outside the house-door that the good father might point out to us the peak which is considered to be the highest summit of Mont Gotthard; but we could scarcely endure to stay

out a very few minutes, so searching and pinching was the cold. This time, therefore, we shall remain close shut up within doors, and shall have time enough before we start to-morrow, to travel again in thought over all the most remarkable parts of this region.

A brief geographical description will enable you to understand how remarkable the point is at which we are now sitting. S. Gothard is not indeed the highest mountain of Switzerland; in Savoy, Mont Blanc has a far higher elevation and yet it maintains above all others the rank of a king of mountains, because all the great chains converge together around him, and all rest upon him as their base. Indeed; if I do not make a great mistake, I think I was told at Berne, by Herr Wyttenbach, who, from its highest summit, had seen the peaks of all the others, that the latter all leaned towards it. The mountains of Schweitz and Unterwalden, joined by those of Uri range from the north, from the east those of the Grisons, from the south those of the Italian cantons, while from the east, by means of the Furca, the double line of mountains which enclose Valais, presses upon it. Not far from this house, there are two small lakes, one of which sends forth the Ticino through gorges and valleys into Italy, while from the other, in like manner, the Reuss proceeds till it empties itself in the Lake of the Forest towns.[2] Not far from this spot are the sources of the Rhine, which pursue an easterly course, and if then we take in the Rhone which rises at the foot of the Furca and runs westward through Valais, we shall find ourselves at the

[2] Lake Lucerne.

point of a cross, from which mountain ranges and rivers proceed towards the four cardinal points of heaven.

TRAVELS IN ITALY

I TOO IN ARCADIA!

FROM CARLSBAD TO THE BRENNER

Ratisbon, September 4, 1786.

As early as 3 o'clock in the morning I stole out of Carlsbad, for otherwise I should not have been allowed to depart quietly. The band of friends who, on the 28th of August, rejoiced to celebrate my birthday, had in some degree acquired a right to detain me. However, it was impossible to stay here any longer. Having packed a portmanteau merely, and a knapsack, I jumped alone into a post-chaise, and by half past 8, on a beautifully calm but foggy morning, I arrived at Zevoda. The upper clouds were streaky and fleecy, the lower ones heavy. This appeared to me a good sign. I hoped that, after so wretched a summer, we should enjoy a fine autumn. About 12, I got to Egra, under a warm and shining sun, and now, it occurred to me, that this place had the same latitude as my own native town, and it was a real pleasure to me once more to take my midday meal beneath a bright sky, at the fiftieth degree.

On entering Bavaria one comes at once on the monastery of Waldsassen, with the valuable domain of the ecclesiastical lords, who were wise sooner than other men. It lies in a dish-like, not to say cauldron-like hollow, in beautiful meadow-land, inclosed on all sides by slightly ascending and fertile heights.

This cloister also possesses property in the neighbouring districts. The soil is decomposed slate-clay. The quartz, which is found in this mineral formation, and which does not dissolve nor crumble away, makes the earth loose and extremely fertile. The land continues to rise until you come to Tirschenreuth, and the waters flow against you, to fall into the Egra and the Elbe. From Tirschenreuth it descends southwards, and the streams run towards the Danube. I can form a pretty rapid idea of a country as soon as I know by examination which way even the least brook runs, and can determine the river to whose basin it belongs. By this means, even in those districts which it is impossible to take a survey of, one can, in thought, form a connection between lines of mountains and valleys. From the last-mentioned place begins an excellent road formed of granite. A better one cannot be conceived, for, as the decomposed granite consists of gravelly and argillaceous earths, they bind excellently together, and form a solid foundation, so as to make a road as smooth as a threshing floor. The country through which it runs looks so much the worse; it also consists of a granite-sand, lies very flat and marshy, and the excellent road is all the more desirable. And as, moreover, the roads descend gradually from this plane, one gets on with a rapidity that strikingly contrasts with the general snail's pace of Bohemian travelling. The inclosed billet will give you the names of the different stages. Suffice it to say, that on the second morning I was at Ratisbon, and so I did these twenty-

four miles[3] and a half in thirty-nine hours. As the day began to dawn I found myself between Schwondorf and Begenstauf, and I observed here a change for the better in the cultivation of the land. The soil was no longer the mere debris of the rock, but a mixed alluvial deposit. The inundation by which it was deposited must have been caused by the ebb and flood, from the basin of the Danube into all the valleys which at present drain their water into it. In this way were formed the natural bolls (*pölder*), on which the tillage is carried on. This remark applies to all lands in the neighbourhood of large or small streams, and with this guide any observer may form a conclusion as to the soils suited for tillage.

Ratisbon

Ratisbon is, indeed, beautifully situated. The country could not but invite men to settle and build a city in it, and the spiritual lords have shown their judgment. All the land around the town belongs to them; in the city itself churches crowd churches, and monastic buildings are no less thick. The Danube reminds me of the dear old Main. At Frankfort, indeed, the river and bridges have a better appearance; here, however, the view of the northern suburb, Stadt-am-hof, looks very pretty, as it lies before you

[3] A German mile is exactly equal to four English geographical, and to rather more than four and a quarter ordinary miles. The distance in the text may, therefore, he roughly set down as one hundred and four miles English. [A. J. W. M.]

across the river.

Immediately on my arrival I betook myself to the College of the Jesuits, where the annual play was being acted by the pupils. I saw the end of the opera, and the beginning of the tragedy. They did not act worse than many an unexperienced company of amateurs, and their dresses were beautiful, almost too superb. This public exhibition also served to convince me still more strongly of the worldly prudence of the Jesuits. They neglect nothing that is likely to produce an effect, and contrive to practise it with interest and care. In this there is not merely prudence, such as we understand the term abstractedly; it is associated with a real pleasure in the matter in hand, a sympathy and a fellow feeling, a taste, such as arises from the experience of life. As this great society has among its members organ builders, sculptors, and gilders, so assuredly there are some who patronise the stage with learning and taste; and just as they decorate their churches with appropriate ornaments, these clear-sighted men take advantage of the world's sensual eye by an imposing theatre.

To-day I am writing in latitude forty-nine degrees. The weather promises fair, and even here the people complain of the coldness and wet of the past summer. The morning was cool, but it was the beginning of a glorious and temperate day. The mild atmosphere which the mighty river brings with it is something quite peculiar. The fruits are nothing very surprising. I have tasted, indeed, some excellent pears, but I am longing for grapes and figs.

My attention is rivetted by the actions and principles of the Jesuits. Their churches, towers, and buildings, have a something great and perfect in their plan, which imposes all beholders with a secret awe. In the decoration, gold, silver, metal, and polished marble, are accumulated in such splendour and profusion as must dazzle the beggars of all ranks. Here and there one fails not to meet with something in bad taste, in order to appease and to attract humanity. This is the general character of the external ritual of the Roman Catholic Church; never, however, have I seen it applied with so much shrewdness, tact, and consistency, as among the Jesuits. Here all tends to this one end; unlike the members of the other spiritual orders, they do not continue an old worn-out ceremonial, but, humouring the spirit of the age, continually deck it out with fresh pomp and splendour.

A rare stone is quarried here into blocks. In appearance it is a species of conglomerate; however, it must be held to be older, more primary, and of a porphyritic nature. It is of a greenish color, mixed with quartz, and is porous; in it are found large pieces of very solid jasper, in which, again, are to be seen little round pieces of a kind of Breccia. A specimen would have been very instructive, and one could not help longing for one; the rock, however, was too solid, and I had taken a vow not to load myself with stones on this journey.

Munich, September 6, 1786.

At half past 12, on the 5th of September, I set off for Ratisbon. At Abbach the country is beautiful, while the Danube dashes

against limestone rocks as far as Saal. The limestone, somewhat similar to that at Osteroda, on the Hartz, close, but, on the whole, porous. By 6 A.M. I was in Munich, and, after having looked about me for some twelve hours, I will notice only a few points. In the Sculpture Gallery I did not find myself at home. I must practise my eye first of all on paintings. There are some excellent things here. The sketches of Reubens from the Luxembourg Gallery caused me the greatest delight.

Here, also, is the rare toy, a model of Trajan's Pillar. The material Lapis Lazuli, and the figures in gilt. It is, at any rate, a rare piece of workmanship, and, in this light, one takes pleasure in looking at it.

In the Hall of the Antiques I soon felt that my eye was not much practised on such objects. On this account I was unwilling to stay long there, and to waste my time. There was much that did not take my fancy, without my being able to say why. A *Drusus* attracted my attention; two Antonines pleased me, as also did a few other things. On the whole, the arrangement of the objects was not happy, although there is an evident attempt to make a display with them, and the hall, or rather the museum, would have a good appearance if it were kept in better repair and cleaner. In the Cabinet of Natural History I saw beautiful things from the Tyrol, which, in smaller specimens, I was already acquainted with, and, indeed, possessed.

Munich-Mittelwald

I was met by a woman with figs, which, as the first, tasted delicious. But the fruit in general is not good considering the latitude of forty-eight degrees. Every one is complaining here of the wet and cold. A mist, which might well be called a rain, overtook me this morning early before I reached Munich. Throughout the day the wind has continued to blow cold from off the Tyrolese mountains. As I looked towards them from the tower I found them covered, and the whole heavens shrouded with clouds. Now, at setting, the sun is shining on the top of the ancient tower, which stands right opposite to my window. Pardon me that I dwell so much on wind and weather. The traveller by land is almost as much dependent upon them as the voyager by sea, and it would be a sad thing if my autumn in foreign lands should be as little favoured as my summer at home.

And now straight for Innspruck. What do I not pass over, both on my right and on my left, in order to carry out the one thought which has become almost too old in my soul.

Mittelwald, September 7, 1786.

It seems as if my guardian-spirit had said "Amen" to my "Credo," and I thank him that he has brought me to this place on so fine a day. My last postilion said, with a joyous exclamation, it was the first in the whole summer. I cherish in quiet my superstition that it will long continue so; however, my friends

must pardon me if again I talk of air and clouds.

As I started from Munich about 5 o'clock, the sky cleared up. On the mountains of the Tyrol the clouds stood in huge masses. The streaks, too, in the lower regions did not move. The road lies on the heights over hills of alluvial gravel, while below one sees the Isar flowing slowly. Here the work of the inundations of the primal oceans become conceivable. In many granite-rubbles I found the counterparts of the specimens in my cabinet, for which I have to thank Knebel.

The mists from the river and the meadows hung about for a time, but, at last, they, too, dispersed. Between these gravelly hills, which you must think of as extending, both in length and breadth, for many leagues, is a highly beautiful and fertile region like that in the basin of the Regen. Now one comes again upon the Isar, and observe, in its channel, a precipitous section of the gravel hills, at least a hundred and fifty feet high. I arrived at Wolfrathshausen and reached the eight-and-fortieth degree. The sun was scorching hot; no one relies on the fine weather; every one is complaining of the past year, and bitterly weeping over the arrangements of Providence.

And now a new world opened upon me. I was approaching the mountains which stood out more and more distinctly.

Benedictbeuern has a glorious situation and charms one at the first sight. On a fertile plain is a long and broad white building, and, behind it, a broad and lofty ridge of rocks. Next, one ascends to the Kochel-see, and, still higher on the mountains, to the

Walchen-see. Here I greeted the first snow-capt summit, and, in the midst of my admiration at being so near the snowy mountains, I was informed that yesterday it had thundered in these parts, and that snow had fallen on the heights. From these meteoric tokens people draw hopes of better weather, and from this early snow, anticipate change in the atmosphere. The rocks around me are all of limestone, of the oldest formation, and containing no fossils. These limestone mountains extend in vast, unbroken ranges from Dalmatia to Mount St. Gothard. Hacquet has travelled over a considerable portion of the chain. They dip on the primary rocks of the quartz and clay.

The road up the Brenner

I reached the Wallen-see about half past 4. About three miles from this place I met with a pretty adventure. A harper came before me with his daughter, a little girl, of about eleven years, and begged me to take up his child. He went on with his instrument; I let her sit by my side, and she very carefully placed at her feet a large new box. A pretty and accomplished creature, and already a great traveller over the world. She had been on a pilgrimage on foot with her mother to Maria Einsiedel, and both had determined to go upon the still longer journey to S. Jago of Compostella, when her mother was carried off by death, and was unable to fulfil her vow. It was impossible, she thought, to do too much in honor of the Mother of God. After

a great fire, in which a whole house was burnt to the lowest foundation, she herself had seen the image of the Mother of God, which stood over the door beneath a glass frame-image and glass both uninjured – which was surely a palpable miracle. All her journeys she had taken on foot; she had just played in Munich before the Elector of Bavaria, and altogether her performances had been witnessed by one-and-twenty princely personages. She quite entertained me. Pretty, large, hazel eyes, a proud forehead, which she frequently wrinkled by an elevation of the brows. She was natural and agreeable when she spoke, and especially when she laughed out loud with the free laugh of childhood. When, on the other hand, she was silent, she seemed to have a meaning in it, and, with her upper lip, had a sinister expression. I spoke with her on very many subjects, she was at home with all of them, and made most pertinent remarks. Thus she asked me once, what tree one we came to, was. It was a huge and beautiful maple, the first I had seen on my whole journey. She narrowly observed it, and was quite delighted when several more appeared, and she was able to recognize this tree. She was going, she told me, to Botzen for the fair, where she guessed I too was hastening. When she met me there I must buy her a fairing, which, of course, I promised to do. She intended to put on there her new coif which she had had made out of her earnings at Munich. She would show it to me beforehand. So she opened the bandbox and I could not do less than admire the head-gear, with its rich embroidery and beautiful ribbons.

Over another pleasant prospect we felt a mutual pleasure. She asserted that we had fine weather before us. For they always carried their barometer with them and that was the harp. When the treble-string twanged it was sure to be fine weather, and it had done so yesterday. I accepted the omen, and we parted in the best of humours, and with the hope of a speedy meeting.

On the Brenner, September 8, 1786,
Evening.

Hurried, not to say driven, here by necessity, I have reached at last a resting-place, in a calm, quiet spot, just such as I could wish it to be. It has been a day which for many years it will be a pleasure to recall. I left Mittelwald about 6 in the morning, and a sharp wind soon perfectly cleared the sky. The cold was such as one looks for only in February. But now, in the splendour of the setting sun, the dark foreground, thickly planted with fig-trees, and peeping between them the grey limestone rocks, and behind all, the highest summit of the mountain covered with snow, and standing out in bold outline against the deep blue sky, furnish precious and ever-changing images.

One enters the Tyrol by Scharnitz. The boundary line is marked by a wall which bars the passage through the valley, and abuts on both sides on the mountains. It looks well: on one side the rocks are fortified, on the other they ascend perpendicularly. From Seefeld the road continually grew more interesting, and if from Benedictbeuern to this place it went on ascending, from height to height, while all the streams of the neighbouring

districts were making for the Isar, now one caught a sight over a ridge of rocks of the valley of the Inn, and Inzingen lay before us. The sun was high and hot, so that I was obliged to throw off some of my coats, for, indeed, with the varying atmosphere of the day, I am obliged frequently to change my clothing.

At Zierl one begins to descend into the valley of the Inn. Its situation is indescribably beautiful, and the bright beams of the sun made it look quite cheerful. The postilion went faster than I wished, for he had not yet heard mass, and was anxious to be present at it at Innspruck, where, as it was the festival of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, he hoped to be a devout participant. Accordingly, we rattled along the banks of the Inn, hurrying by Martinswand, a vast, precipitous, wall-like rock of limestone. To the spot where the Emperor Maximilian is said to have lost himself, I ventured to descend and came up again without a guide, although it is, in any case, a rash undertaking.

Innsbruck-Meteorology

Innsbruck is gloriously situated in a rich, broad valley, between high rocks and mountains. Everybody and everything was decked out in honour of the Virgin's Nativity. At first I had some wish to stop there, but it promised neither rest nor peace. For a little while I amused myself with the son of my host. At last the people who were to attend to me came in one by one. For the sake of health and prosperity to the flocks, they had all gone

on a pilgrimage to Wilden, a place of worship on the mountains, about three miles and a half from the city. About 2 o'clock, as my rolling carriage divided the gay, merry throng, every one was in holiday garb and promenade.

From Innsbruck the road becomes even still more beautiful; no powers of description can equal it. The most frequented road, ascending a gorge which empties its waters into the Inn, offers to the eye innumerable varieties of scenery. While the road often runs close to the most rugged rocks – indeed is frequently cut right through them – one sees the other side above you slightly inclining, and cultivated with the most surprising skill. On the high and broad-ascending surface lie valleys, houses, cottages, and cabins, whitewashed, glittering among the fields and hedges. Soon all changed; the land becomes available only for pastime, until it, too, terminates on the precipitous ascent. I have gained some ideas for my scheme of a creation; none, however, perfectly new and unexpected. I have also dreamed much of the model I have so long talked about, by which I am desirous to give a notion of all that is brooding in my own mind, and which, in nature itself, I cannot point out to every eye.

Now it grew darker and darker; individual objects were lost in the obscurity; the masses became constantly vaster and grander; at last, as the whole moved before me like some deeply mysterious figure, the moon suddenly illuminated the snow-capt summits; and now I am waiting till morning shall light up this rocky chasm in which I am shut up on the boundary line of the

north and south.

I must again add a few remarks on the weather, which, perhaps, favours me so highly, in return for the great attention I pay to it. On the lowlands one has good or bad weather when it is already settled for either; on the mountains one is present with the beginning of the change. I have so often experienced this when on my travels, or walks, or hunting excursions, I have passed days and nights between the cliffs in the mountain forests. On such occasions, a conceit occurred to me, which I give you as nothing better, but which, however, I cannot get rid of, as indeed, generally, such conceits are, of all things, most difficult to get rid of. I altogether look upon it as a truth, and so I will now give utterance to it, especially as I have already so often had occasion to prove the indulgence of my friends.

When we look at the mountains, either closely or from a distance, and see their summits above us at one time glittering in the sunshine, at another enveloped in mist, swept round with strong clouds, or blackened with showers, we are disposed to ascribe it all to the atmosphere, as we can easily with the eye see and discern its movements and changes. The mountains, on the other hand, with their glorious shapes lie before our outward senses immoveable. We take them to be dead because they are rigid, and we believe them to be inactive because they are at rest. For a long while, however, I cannot put off the impulse to ascribe, for the most part, to their imperceptible and secret influence the changes which are observable in the atmosphere. For instance,

I believe that the mass of the earth generally, and, therefore, also in an especial way its more considerable continents do not exercise a constant and invariable force of attraction, but that this attractive force manifests itself by a certain pulse which, according to intrinsic, necessary, and probably also accidental, external causes, increases or decreases. Though all attempts by other objects to determine this oscillation may be too limited and rude, the atmosphere furnishes a standard both delicate and large enough to test their silent operations. When this attractive force decreases never so little, immediately the decrease in the gravity and the diminished elasticity of the air indicates this effect. The atmosphere is now unable to sustain the moisture which is diffused throughout it either chemically or mechanically; the clouds lower, and the rain falls and passes to the lowlands. When, however, the mountains increase their power of attraction, then the elasticity of the air is again restored, and two important phenomena result. First of all, the mountains collect around their summits vast masses of clouds; hold them fast and firm above themselves like second heads, until, as determined by the contest of electrical forces within them, they pour down as thunder-showers, rain or mist, and then, on all that remains the electricity of the air operates, which is now restored to a capacity of retaining more water, dissolving and elaborating it. I saw quite clearly the dispersion of a cloudy mass of this kind. It was hanging on the very highest peak; the red tints of the setting sun still illuminated it. Slowly and slowly pieces detached themselves

from either end. Some fleecy nebulæ were drawn off and carried up still higher, and then disappeared, and in this manner, by degrees, the whole mass vanished, and was strangely spun away before my eyes, like a distaff, by invisible hands.

Meteorology-Vegetation

If my friends are disposed to laugh at the itinerant meteorologist and his strange theories, I shall, perhaps, give them more solid cause for laughter by some other of my remarks, for I must confess that, as my journey was, in fact, a flight from all the unshapely things which tormented me in latitude 51°, I hoped, in 48°, to meet with a true Goshen. But I found myself disappointed; for latitude alone does not make a climate and fine weather, but the mountain-chains – especially such as intersect the land from east to west. In these, great changes are constantly going on, and the lands which lie to the north have most to suffer from them. Thus, further north, the weather throughout the summer was determined by the great Alpine range on which I am now writing. Here, for the last few months, it has rained incessantly, while a south-east or south-west wind carried the showers north-wards. In Italy they are said to have had fine weather, indeed, a little too dry.

And now a few words on a kindred subject – the vegetable world, which, in so many ways, depends on climate and moisture, and the height of the mountain-ranges. Here, too, I have noticed

no remarkable change, but still an improvement. In the valley before Innspruck, apples and pears are abundant, while the peaches and grapes are brought from the Welsh districts, or, in other words, the Southern Tyrol. Near Innspruck they grow a great deal of Indian corn and buck wheat, which they call *blende.* On the Brenner I first saw the larch, and near Schemberg the pine. Would the harper's daughter have questioned me about them also?

As regards the plants, I feel still more how perfect a tyro I am. Up to Munich I saw, I believed, none but those I was well accustomed to. In truth, my hurried travelling, by day and night, was not favorable to nicer observation on such objects. Now, it is true, I have my *Linnæus* at hand, and his Terminology is well stamped on my brain; but whence is the time and quiet to come for analysing, which, if I at all know myself, will never become my forte? I, therefore, sharpen my eye for the more general features, and when I met with the first Gentiana near the Walchensee, it struck me that it was always near the water, that I had hitherto noticed any new plants.

What made me still more attentive was the influence which the altitude of the mountain region evidently had on plants. Not only did I meet there with new specimens, but I also observed that the growth of the old ones was materially altered. While in the lower regions branches and stalks were stronger and more sappy, the buds stood closer together, and the leaves broader; the higher you got on the mountains the stalks and branches became more

fragile, the buds were at greater intervals, and the leaves thinner and more lanceolate. I noticed this in the case of a Willow and of a Gentiana, and convinced myself that it was not a case of different species. So also, near the Walchensee, I noticed longer and thinner rushes than anywhere else.

The limestone of the Alps, which I have as yet travelled over, has a greyish tint, and beautiful, singular, irregular forms, although the rock is divisible into blocks and strata. But as irregular strata occur, and the rock in general does not crumble equally under the influence of the weather, the sides and the peaks have a singular appearance. This kind of rock comes up the Brenner to a great height. In the region of the Upper Lake I noticed a slight modification. On a micaceous slate of dark green and grey colours, and thickly veined with quartz, lay a white, solid limestone, which, in its detritus, sparkled and stood in great masses, with numberless clefts. Above it I again found micaceous slate, which, however, seemed to me to be of a softer texture than the first. Higher up still there was to be seen a peculiar kind of gneiss, or rather a granitic species which approximated to gneiss, as is in the district of Ellbogen. Here at the top, and opposite the Inn, the rock is micaceous slate. The streams which come from the mountains leave deposits of nothing but this stone, and of the grey limestone.

Geology – My fellow travellers

Not far from here must be the granitic base on which all rests. The maps show that one is on the side of the true great Brenner, from which the streams of a wide surrounding district take their rise.

The following is my external judgment of the people. They are active and straightforward. In form they are pretty generally alike: hazel, well-opened eyes; with the women brown and well-defined eyebrows, but with the men light and thick. Among the grey rocks the green hats of the men have a cheerful appearance. The hats are generally ornamented with ribbons or broad silk-sashes, and with fringes which are prettily sewn on. On the other hand, the women disfigure themselves with white, undressed cotton caps of a large size, very much like men's nightcaps. These give them a very strange appearance; but abroad, they wear the green hats of the men, which become them very much.

I have opportunity of seeing the value the common class of people put upon peacock's feathers, and, in general, how every variegated feather is prized. He who wishes to travel through these mountains will do well to take with him a lot of them. A feather of this kind produced at the proper moment will serve instead of the ever-welcome "something to drink."

Whilst I am putting together, sorting, and arranging these sheets, in such a way that my friends may easily take a review

of my fortunes up to this point, and that I may, at the same time, dismiss from my soul all that I have lately thought and experienced, I have, on the other hand, cast many a trembling look on some packets of which I must give a good but brief account. They are to be my fellow travellers; may they not exercise too great an influence on my next few days.

I brought with me to Carlsbad the whole of my MSS. in order to complete the edition of my works, which Goschen has undertaken. The unprinted ones I had long possessed in beautiful transcripts, by the practised hand of Secretary Vögel. This active person accompanied me on this occasion, in order that I might, if necessary, command his dexterous services. By this means, and with the never-failing co-operation of Herder, I was soon in a condition to send to the printer the first four volumes, and was on the point of doing the same with the last four. The latter consisted, for the most part, of mere unfinished sketches, indeed of fragments; for, in truth, my perverse habit of beginning many plans, and then, as the interest waned, laying them aside, had gradually gained strength with increasing years, occupations, and duties.

As I had brought these scraps with me, I readily listened to the requests of the literary circles of Carlsbad, and read out to them all that before had remained unknown to the world, which already was bitter enough in its complaints that much with which it had entertained itself still remained unfinished.

The celebration of my birthday consisted mainly in sending

me several poems in the name of my commenced but unfinished works. Among these, one was distinguished above the rest. It was called the *Birds.* A deputation of these happy creatures being sent to a true friend earnestly entreat him to found at once and establish the kingdom so long promised to them. Not less obvious and playful were the allusions to my other unfinished pieces, so that, all at once, they again possessed a living interest for me, and I related to my friends the designs I had formed, and the entire plans. This gave rise to the expression of wishes and urgent requests, and gave the game entirely into Herder's hands, while he attempted to induce me to take back these papers, and, above all, to bestow upon the *Iphigenia* the pains it well deserved. The fragment which lies before me is rather a sketch than a finished piece; it is written in poetical prose, which occasionally falls into a sort of Iambical rhythm, and even imitates other syllabic metres. This, indeed, does great injury to the effect unless it is read well, and unless, by skilful turns, this defect is carefully concealed. He pressed this matter on me very earnestly, and as I concealed from him as well as the rest the great extent of my intended tour, and as he believed I had nothing more in view than a mountain trip, and as he was always ridiculing my geographical and mineralogical studies, he insisted I should act much wiser if, instead of breaking stones, I would put my hand to this work. I could not but give way to so many and well-meant remonstrances; but, as yet, I have had no opportunity to turn my attention to these matters. I now detach *Iphigenia* from the bundle and take her with

me as my fellow-traveller into the beautiful and warm country of the South. The days are so long, and there will be nothing to disturb reflection, while the glorious objects of the surrounding scenery by no means depress the poetic nerve; indeed, assisted by movement and the free air, they rather stimulate and call it forth more quickly and more vividly.

FROM THE BRENNER TO VERONA

Trent, morning of the 11th Sept.

After full fifty hours, passed in active and constant occupation, I reached here about 8 o'clock yesterday evening, and soon after retired to rest, so that I now find myself in condition to go on with my narrative. On the evening of the 9th, when I had closed the first portion of my diary, I thought I would try and draw the inn and post-house on the Brenner, just as it stood. My attempt was unsuccessful, for I missed the character of the place; I went home therefore in somewhat of an ill-humor. Mine host asked me if I would not depart, telling me it was moon-light and the best travelling. Although I knew perfectly well that, as he wanted his horses early in the morning to carry in the after-crop (*Grummet*), and wished to have them home again in time for that purpose, his advice was given with a view to his own interest, I nevertheless took it, because it accorded with my own inclination. The sun reappeared, the air was tolerable, I packed up, and started about 7 o'clock. The blue atmosphere triumphed over the clouds, and the evening was most beautiful.

Trent

The postilion fell asleep, and the horses set off at a quick trot

down-hill, always taking the well-known route. When they came to a village they went somewhat slower. Then the driver would wake up, and give them a fresh stimulus, and thus we descended at a good pace with high rocks on both sides of us, or by the banks of the rapid river Etsch. The moon arose and shed her light upon the massive objects around. Some mills, which stood between primæval pine-trees, over the foaming stream, seemed really everlasting.

When, at 9 o'clock, I had reached Sterzingen, they gave me clearly to understand, that they wished me off again. Arriving in Mittelwald, exactly at 12 o'clock, I found everybody asleep except the postilion, and we were obliged to go on to Brixen, where I was again taken off in like manner, so that at the dawn of day I was in Colman. The postilions drove so fast that there was neither seeing nor hearing, and although I could not help being sorry at travelling through this noble country with such frightful rapidity; and at night, too, as though I was flying the place, I nevertheless felt an inward joy, that a favorable wind blew behind me, and seemed to hurry me towards the object of my wishes. At day-break I perceived the first vineyard. A woman with pears and peaches met me, and thus we went on to Teutschen, where I arrived at 7 o'clock, and then was again hurried on. After I had again travelled northwards for a while, I at last saw in the bright sunshine the valley where Botzen is situated. Surrounded by steep and somewhat high mountains, it is open towards the south, and sheltered towards the north by the Tyrolese range. A mild, soft air

pervaded the spot. Here the Etsch again winds towards the south. The hills at the foot of the mountain are cultivated with vines. The vinestocks are trained over long but low arbourwork; the purple grapes are gracefully suspended from the top, and ripen in the warmth of the soil, which is close beneath them. In the bottom of the valley, which for the most part consists of nothing but meadows, the vine is cultivated in narrow rows of similar festoons, at a little distance from each other, while between grows the Indian corn, the stalks of which at this time are high. I have often seen it ten feet high. The fibrous' male blossom is not yet cut off, as is the case when fructification has ceased for some time.

I came to Botzen in a bright sunshine. A good assemblage of mercantile faces pleased me much. Everywhere one sees the liveliest tokens. An existence full of purpose, and highly comfortable. In the square some fruit-women were sitting with round fiat baskets, above four feet in diameter, in which peaches were arranged side by side, so as to avoid pressure. Here I thought of a verse, which I had seen written on the window of the inn at Ratisbon:

> Comme les pêches et les melons
> Sont pour la bouche d'un Baron,
> Ainsi les verges et les bâtons
> Sont pour les fous, dit Salomon.

It is obvious that this was written by a northern baron, and no

less clear is it that if he were in this country, he would alter his notions.

At the Botzen fair a brisk silk-trade is carried on. Cloths are also brought here, and as much leather as can be procured from the mountain districts. Several merchants, however, came chiefly for the sake of depositing their money, taking orders, and opening new credits. I felt I could have taken great delight in examining the various products that were collected here; but the impulse, the state of disquiet, which keeps urging me from behind, would not let me rest, and I must at once hasten from the spot. For my consolation, however, the whole matter is printed in the statistical papers, and we can, if we require it, get such instructions from books. I have now to deal only with the sensible impressions, which no book or picture can give. In fact, I am again taking interest in the world, I am testing my faculty of observation, and am trying how far I can go with my science and my acquirements, how far my eye is clear and sharp, how much I can take in at a hasty glance, and whether those wrinkles, that are imprinted upon my heart, are ever again to be obliterated. Even in these few days, the circumstance that I have had to wait upon myself, and have always been obliged to keep my attention and presence of mind on the alert, has given me quite a new elasticity of intellect. I must now busy myself with the currency, must change, pay, note down, write, while I formerly did nothing but think, will, reflect, command, and dictate.

Botzen – Trent

From Botzen to Trent the stage is nine leagues and runs through a valley, which constantly increases in fertility. All that merely struggles into vegetation on the higher mountains, has here more strength and vitality; the sun shines with warmth, and there is once more belief in a Deity.

A poor woman cried out to me to take her child into my vehicle, as the hot soil was burning its feet. I did her this little service out of honour to the strong light of heaven. The child was strangely decked out, but I could get nothing from it in any way.

The Etsch flows more gently in these parts, and it makes broad deposits of gravel in many places. On the land, near the river and up the hills, the planting is so thick and close, that one fancies one thing will suffocate the other. It is a regular thicket of vineyards, maize, mulberry trees, apples, pears, quinces, and nuts. The danewort (*Attig*) thrives luxuriantly on the walls. Ivy with solid stems runs up the rocks, on which it spreads itself; the lizards glide through the interstices, and whatever has life or motion here, reminds one of the most charming works of art. The braided top-knots of the women, the bared breasts and light jackets of the men, the fine oxen which you see driven home from market, the laden asses, – all combine to produce one of Heinrich Roos's animated pictures. And when evening draws on, and through the calmness of the air, a few clouds rest upon the

mountains, rather standing than running against the sky, and, as immediately after sunset, the chirp of the grasshoppers begins to grow loud, one feels quite at home in the world, and not a mere exile. I am as reconciled to the place as if I were born and bred in it, and had now just returned from a whaling expedition to Greenland. Even the dust, which here as in our fatherland often plays about my wheels, and which has so long remained strange to me, I welcome as an old friend. The bell-like voice of the cricket is most piercing, and far from unpleasant. A cheerful effect is produced, when playful boys whistle against a field of such singers, and you almost fancy that the sound on each side is raised by emulation. The evening here is perfectly mild no less than the day.

If any one who lived in the South, or came from the South, heard my enthusiasm about these matters, he would consider me very childish. Ah, what I express here, I long ago was conscious of, while ruffling under an unkindly sky; and now I love to experience as an exception the happiness which I hope soon to enjoy as a regular natural necessity.

Trent, the evening of the 10th Sept.

I have wandered about the city, which has an old, not to say a very primitive look, though there are new and well-built houses in some of the streets. In the church there is a picture in which the assembled council of the Jesuits is represented, listening to a sermon delivered by the general of the order. I should like to know what he is trying to palm upon them. The church of

these fathers may at once be recognised from the outside by pilasters of red marble on the façade. The doors are covered by a heavy curtain, which serves to keep off the dust. I raised it, and entered a small vestibule. The church itself is parted off by an iron grating, but so that it can be entirely overlooked. All was as silent as the grave, for divine service is no longer performed here. The front door stood open, merely because all churches must be open at the time of Vespers.

Trent

While I stood considering the architecture, which was, I found, similar to other Jesuit churches, an old man stepped in, and at once took off his little black cap. His old faded black coat indicated that he was a needy priest. He knelt down before the grating, and rose again after a short prayer. When he turned round, he said to himself half-aloud: "Well, they have driven out the Jesuits, but they ought to have paid them the cost of the church. I know how many thousands were spent on the church and the seminary." As he uttered this he left the spot, and the curtain fell behind him. I, however, lifted it again, and kept myself quiet. He remained a while standing on the topmost step, and said: "The Emperor did not do it; the Pope did it." With his face turned towards the street, so that he could not observe me, he continued: "First the Spaniards, then we, then the French. The blood of Abel cries out against his brother Cain!" And thus he

went down the steps and along the street, still talking to himself. I should conjecture he is one who, having been maintained by the Jesuits, has lost his wits in consequence of the tremendous fall of the order, and now comes every day to search the empty vessel for its old inhabitants, and, after a short prayer, to pronounce a curse upon their enemies.

A young man, whom I questioned about the remarkable sights in the town, showed me a house, which is called the "Devil's house," because the devil, who is generally too ready to destroy, is said to have built it in a single night, with stones rapidly brought to the spot. However, what is really remarkable about the house, the good man had not observed, namely, that it is the only house of good taste that I have yet seen in Trent, and was certainly built by some good Italian, at an earlier period. At 5 o'clock in the evening I again set off. The spectacle of yesterday evening was repeated, and at sun-set the grasshoppers again began to sing. For about a league the journey lies between walls, above which the grape-espaliers are visible. Other walls, which are not high enough, have been eked out with stones, thorns, &c., to prevent passengers from plucking off the grapes. Many owners sprinkle the foremost rows with lime, which renders the grapes uneatable, but does not hurt the wine, as the process of fermentation drives out the heterogeneous matter.

Evening of September 11.

I am now at Roveredo, where a marked distinction of language begins; hitherto, it has fluctuated between German and Italian.

I have now, for the first time, had a thoroughly Italian postilion, the inn-keeper does not speak a word of German, and I must put my own linguistic powers to the test. How delighted I am that the language I have always most loved now becomes living – the language of common usage.

Torbole, 12th September (after dinner).

How much do I wish that my friends were with me for a moment to enjoy the prospect, which now lies before my eyes.

I might have been in Verona this evening but a magnificent natural phenomenon was in my vicinity – Lake Garda, a splendid spectacle, which I did not want to miss, and now I am nobly rewarded for taking this circuitous route. After 5 o'clock I started from Roveredo, up a side valley, which still pours its waters into the Etsch. After ascending this, you come to an immense rocky bar, which you must cross in descending to the lake. Here appeared the finest calcareous rocks for pictorial study. On descending you come to a little village on the northern end of the lake, with a little port, or rather landing-place, which is called Torbole. On my way upwards I was constantly accompanied by fig-trees, and, descending into the rocky atmosphere, I found the first olive-tree full of fruit. Here also, for the first time, I found as a common fruit those little white figs, which the Countess Lanthieri had promised me.

A door opens from the chamber in which I sit into the court-yard below. Before this I have placed my table, and taken a rough sketch of the prospect. The lake may be seen for its whole length,

and it is only at the end, towards the left, that it vanishes from our eyes. The shore, which is inclosed on both sides by hill and mountain, shines with a countless number of little hamlets.

After midnight the wind blows from north to south, and he who wishes to go down the lake must travel at this time, for a few hours before sunset the current of air changes, and moves northward. At this time, the afternoon, it blows strongly against me, and pleasantly qualifies the burning heat of the sun. Volkmann teaches me that this lake was formerly called "Benacus," and quotes from Virgil a line in which it was mentioned:

"Fluctibus et fremiter resonans, Benace, marino."

This is the first Latin verse, the subject of which ever stood visibly before me, and now, in the present moment, when the wind is blowing stronger and stronger, and the lake casts loftier billows against the little harbour, it is just as true as it was hundreds of years ago. Much, indeed, has changed, but the wind still roars about the lake, the aspect of which gains even greater glory from a line of Virgil's.

The above was written in a latitude of 45° 50'.

I went out for a walk in the cool of the evening, and now I really find myself in a new country, surrounded by objects entirely strange. The people lead a careless, sauntering life. In the first place, the doors are without locks, but the host assured me that I might be quite at ease, even though all I had about me consisted of diamonds. In the second place, the

windows are covered with oiled paper instead of glass. In the third place, an extremely necessary convenience is wanting, so that one comes pretty close to a state of nature. When I asked the waiter for a certain place, he pointed down into the court-yard: "Qui, abasso puo servirsi!" "Dove?" asked I. "Da per tutto, dove vuol," was the friendly reply. The greatest carelessness is visible everywhere, but still there is life and bustle enough. During the whole day there is a constant chattering and shrieking of the female neighbors, all have something to do at the same time. I have not yet seen an idle woman.

Lago Di Garda

The host, with Italian emphasis, assured me, that he felt great pleasure in being able to serve me with the finest trout. They are taken near Torbole, where the stream flows down from the mountains, and the fish seeks a passage upwards. The Emperor farms this fishery for 10,000 gulden. The fish, which are large, often weighing fifty pounds, and spotted over the whole body to the head, are not trout, properly so called. The flavour, which is between that of trout and salmon, is delicate and excellent.

But my real delight is in the fruit. – in the figs, and in the pears, which must, indeed, be excellent, where citrons are already growing.

Evening of September 13.

At 3 o'clock this morning I started from Torbole, with a couple

of rowers. At first the wind was so favorable that we put up a sail. The morning was cloudy but tine, and perfectly calm at day-break. We passed Limona, the mountain-gardens of which, laid out terrace-fashion, and planted with citron-trees, have a neat and rich appearance. The whole garden consists of rows of square white pillars placed at some distance from each other, and rising up the mountain in steps. On these pillars strong beams are laid, that the trees planted between them may be sheltered in the winter. The view of these pleasant objects was favored by a slow passage, and we had already passed Malsesine when the wind suddenly changed, took the direction usual in the day-time, and blew towards the north. Rowing was of little use against this superior power, and, therefore, we were forced to land in the harbour of Malsesine. This is the first Venetian spot on the eastern side of the lake. When one has to do with water we cannot say, "I will be at this or that particular place to-day." I will make my stay here as useful as I can, especially by making a drawing of the castle, which lies close to the water, and is a beautiful object. As I passed along I took a sketch of it.

Sept. 11th.

The wind, which blew against me yesterday, and drove me into the harbour of Malsesine, was the cause of a perilous adventure, which I got over with good humour, and the remembrance of which I still find amusing. According to my plan, I went early in the morning into the old castle, which having neither gate nor guard, is accessible to everybody. Entering the court-yard,

I seated myself opposite to the old tower, which is built on and among the rocks. Here I had selected a very convenient spot for drawing; – a carved stone seat in the wall, near a closed door, raised some three or four feet high, such as we also find in the old buildings in our own country.

An incident at Malsesine

I had not sat long before several persons entered the yard, and walked backwards and forwards, looking at me. The multitude increased, and at last so stood as completely to surround me. I remarked that my drawing had excited attention; however, I did not allow myself to be disturbed, but quietly continued my occupation. At last a man, not of the most prepossessing appearance, came up to me, and asked me what I was about. I replied that I was copying the old tower, that I might have some remembrance of Malsesine. He said that this was not allowed, and that I must leave off. As he said this in the common Venetian dialect, so that I understood him with difficulty, I answered, that I did not understand him at all. With true Italian coolness he took hold of my paper, and tore it, at the same time letting it remain on the pasteboard. Here I observed an air of dissatisfaction among the by-standers; an old woman in particular said that it was not right, but that the podestà ought to be called, who was the best judge of such matters. I stood upright on the steps, having my back against the door, and surveyed the assembly,

which was continually increasing. The fixed eager glances, the good humoured expression of most of the faces, and all the other characteristics of a foreign mob, made the most amusing impression upon me. I fancied that I could see before me the chorus of birds, which, as Treufreund, I had often laughed at, in the Ettersburg theatre. This put me in excellent humour, and when the podestà came up with his actuary, I greeted him in an open manner, and when he asked me why I was drawing the fortification, modestly replied, that I did not look upon that wall as a fortification. I called the attention of him and the people to the decay of the towers and walls, and to the generally defenceless position of the place, assuring him that I thought I only saw and drew a ruin.

I was answered thus: "If it was only a ruin, what could there be remarkable about it?" As I wished to gain time and favour, I replied very circumstantially, that they must be well aware how many travellers visited Italy, for the sake of the ruins only, that Rome, the metropolis of the world, having suffered the depredations of barbarians, was now full of ruins, which had been drawn hundreds of times, and that all the works of antiquity were not in such good preservation as the amphitheatre at Verona, which I hoped soon to see.

The podestà, who stood before me, though in a less elevated position, was a tall man, not exactly thin, of about thirty years of age. The flat features of his spiritless face perfectly accorded with the slow constrained manner, in which he put his questions.

Even the actuary, a sharp little fellow, seemed as if he did not know what to make of a case so new, and so unexpected. I said a great deal of the same sort; the people seemed to take my remarks good naturedly, and on turning towards some kindly female faces, I thought I could read assent and approval.

When, however, I mentioned the amphitheatre at Verona, which in this country, is called the "Arena," the actuary, who had in the meanwhile collected himself, replied, that this was all very well, because the edifice in question was a Roman building, famed throughout the world. In these towers, however, there was nothing remarkable, excepting that they marked the boundary between the Venetian domain and Austrian Empire, and therefore *espionage* could not be allowed. I answered by explaining at some length, that not only the Great and Roman antiquities, but also those of the Middle-Ages were worth attention. They could not be blamed, I granted, if, having been accustomed to this building from their youth upwards, they could not discern in it so many picturesque beauties as I did. Fortunately the morning sun, shed the most beautiful lustre on the tower, rocks, and walls, and I began to describe the scene with enthusiasm. My audience, however, had these much lauded objects behind them, and as they did not wish to turn altogether away from me, they all at once twisted their heads, like the birds, which we call "wry necks" (Wendehälse), that they might see with their eyes, what I had been lauding to their ears. Even the podestà turned round towards the picture I had been describing,

though with more dignity than the rest. This scene appeared to me so ridiculous that my good humour increased, and I spared them nothing – least of all, the ivy, which had been suffered for ages to adorn the rocks and walls.

The actuary retorted, that this was all very good, but the Emperor Joseph was a troublesome gentleman, who certainly entertained many evil designs against Venice; and I might probably have been one of his subjects, appointed by him, to act as a spy on the borders.

"Far from belonging to the Emperor," I replied, "I can boast, as well as you, that I am a citizen of a republic, which also governs itself, but which is not, indeed, to be compared for power and greatness to the illustrious state of Venice, although in commercial activity, in wealth, and in the wisdom of its rulers, it is inferior to no state in Germany. I am a native of Frankfort-on-the-Main, a city, the name and fame of which has doubtless reached you."

An incident at Malsesine

"Of Frankfort-on-the-Main!" cried a pretty young woman, "then, Mr. Podestà, you can at once see all about the foreigner, whom I look upon as an honest man. Let Gregorio be called; he has resided there a long time, and will be the best judge of the matter."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.