A TRAMP ABROAD

PART 7

MARK TWAIN

CHAPTER XLIII

CHAMONIX—CONTRASTS—MAGNIFICENT SPECTACLE—THE GUILD OF GUIDES—THE GUIDE—IN—CHIEF—THE RETURNED TOURIST—GETTING DIPLOMA—RIGID RULES—UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO PROCURE A DIPLOMA—THE RECORD-BOOK—THE CONQUEROR OF MONT BLANC—PROFESSIONAL JEALOUSY — TRIUMPH OF TRUTH—MOUNTAIN MUSIC—ITS EFFECT—A HUNT FOR A NUISANCE.

Everybody was out-of-doors; everybody was in the principal street of the village—not on the sidewalks, but all over the street; everybody was lounging, loafing, chatting, waiting, alert, expectant, interested—for it was train-time. That is to say, it was diligence-time—the half-dozen big diligences would soon be arriving from Geneva, and the village was interested, in many ways, in knowing how many people were coming and what sort of folk they might be. It was altogether the livest-looking street we had seen in any village on the continent.

The hotel was by the side of a booming torrent, whose music was loud and strong; we could not see this torrent, for it was dark, now, but one could locate it without a light. There was a large enclosed yard in front of the hotel, and this was filled with groups of villagers waiting to see the diligences arrive, or to hire themselves to excursionists for the morrow. A telescope stood in the yard, with its huge barrel canted up toward the lustrous evening star. The long porch of the hotel was populous with tourists, who sat in shawls and wraps under the vast overshadowing bulk of Mont Blanc, and gossiped or meditated.

Never did a mountain seem so close; its big sides seemed at one's very elbow, and its majestic dome, and the lofty cluster of slender minarets that were its neighbors, seemed to be almost over one's head. It was night in the streets, and the lamps were sparkling everywhere; the broad bases and shoulders of the mountains were in a deep gloom, but their summits swam in a strange rich glow which was really daylight, and yet had a mellow something about it which was very different from the hard white glare of the kind of daylight I was used to. Its radiance was strong and clear, but at the same time it was singularly soft, and spiritual, and benignant. No, it was not our harsh, aggressive, realistic daylight; it seemed properer to an enchanted land—or to heaven.

I had seen moonlight and daylight together before, but I had not seen daylight and black night elbow to elbow before. At least I had not seen the daylight resting upon an object sufficiently close at hand, before, to make the contrast startling and at war with nature.

The daylight passed away. Presently the moon rose up behind some of those sky-piercing fingers or pinnacles of bare rock of which I have spoken—they were a little to the left of the crest of Mont Blanc, and right over our heads—but she couldn't manage to climb high enough toward heaven to get entirely above them. She would show the glittering arch of her upper third, occasionally, and scrape it along behind the comblike row; sometimes a pinnacle stood straight up, like a statuette of ebony, against that glittering white shield, then seemed to glide out of it by its own volition and power, and become a dim specter, while the next pinnacle glided into its place and blotted the spotless disk with the black exclamation-point of its presence. The top of one pinnacle took the shapely, clean-cut form of a rabbit's head, in the inkiest silhouette, while it rested against the moon. The unillumined peaks and minarets, hovering vague and phantom-like above us while the others were painfully white and strong with snow and moonlight, made a peculiar effect.

But when the moon, having passed the line of pinnacles, was hidden behind the stupendous white swell of Mont Blanc, the masterpiece of the evening was flung on the canvas. A rich greenish radiance sprang into the sky from behind the mountain, and in this some airy shreds and ribbons of vapor floated about, and being flushed with that strange tint, went waving to and fro like pale green flames. After a while, radiating bars—vast broadening fan-shaped shadows—grew up and stretched away to the zenith from behind the mountain. It was a spectacle to take one's breath, for the wonder of it, and the sublimity.

Indeed, those mighty bars of alternate light and shadow streaming up from behind that dark and prodigious form and occupying the half of the dull and opaque heavens, was the most imposing and impressive marvel I had ever looked upon. There is no simile for it, for nothing is like it. If a child had asked me what it was, I should have said, "Humble yourself, in this presence, it is the glory flowing from the hidden head of the Creator." One falls shorter of the truth than that, sometimes, in trying to explain mysteries to the little people. I could have found out the cause of this awe-compelling miracle by inquiring, for it is not infrequent at Mont Blanc,—but I did not wish to know. We have not the reverent feeling for the rainbow that a savage has, because we know how it is made. We have lost as much as we gained by prying into the matter.

We took a walk down street, a block or two, and a place where four streets met and the principal shops were clustered, found the groups of men in the roadway thicker than ever—for this was the Exchange of Chamonix. These men were in the costumes of guides and porters, and were there to be hired.

The office of that great personage, the Guide-in-Chief of the Chamonix Guild of Guides, was near by. This guild is a close corporation, and is governed by strict laws. There are many excursion routes, some dangerous and some not, some that can be made safely without a guide, and some that cannot. The bureau determines these things. Where it decides that a guide is necessary, you are forbidden to go without one. Neither are you allowed to be a victim of extortion: the law states what you are to pay. The guides serve in rotation; you cannot select the man who is to take your life into his hands, you must take the worst in the lot, if it is his turn. A guide's fee ranges all the way up from a half-dollar (for some trifling excursion of a few rods) to twenty dollars, according to the distance traversed and the nature of the ground. A guide's fee for taking a person to the summit of Mont Blanc and back, is twenty dollars—and he earns it. The time employed is usually three days, and there is enough early rising in it to make a man far more "healthy and wealthy and wise" than any one man has any right to be. The porter's fee for the same trip is ten dollars. Several fools—no, I mean several tourists—usually go together, and divide up the expense, and thus make it light; for if only one f—tourist, I mean—went, he would have to have several guides and porters, and that would make the matter costly.

We went into the Chief's office. There were maps of mountains on the walls; also one or two lithographs of celebrated guides, and a portrait of the scientist De Saussure.

In glass cases were some labeled fragments of boots and batons, and other suggestive relics and remembrances of casualties on Mount Blanc. In a book was a record of all the ascents which have ever been made, beginning with Nos. 1 and 2—being those of Jacques Balmat and De Saussure, in 1787, and ending with No. 685, which wasn't cold yet. In fact No. 685 was standing by the official table waiting to receive the precious official diploma which should prove to his German household and to his descendants that he had once been indiscreet enough to climb to the top of Mont Blanc. He looked very happy when he got his document; in fact, he spoke up and said he was happy.

I tried to buy a diploma for an invalid friend at home who had never traveled, and whose desire all his life has been to ascend Mont Blanc, but the Guide-in-Chief rather insolently refused to sell me one. I was very much offended. I said I did not propose to be discriminated against on the account of my nationality; that he had just sold a diploma to this German gentleman, and my money was a good as his; I would see to it that he couldn't keep his shop for Germans and deny his produce to Americans; I would have his license taken away from him at the dropping of a handkerchief; if France refused to break him, I would make an international matter of it and bring on a war; the soil should be drenched with blood; and not only that, but I would set up an opposition show and sell diplomas at half price.

For two cents I would have done these things, too; but nobody offered me two cents. I tried to move that German's feelings, but it could not be done; he would not give me his diploma, neither would he sell it to me. I told him my friend was sick and could not come himself, but he said he did not care a verdammtes pfennig, he wanted his diploma for himself—did I suppose he was going to risk his neck for that thing and then give it to a sick stranger? Indeed he wouldn't, so he wouldn't. I resolved, then, that I would do all I could to injure Mont Blanc.

In the record-book was a list of all the fatal accidents which happened on the mountain. It began with the one in 1820 when the Russian Dr. Hamel's three guides were lost in a crevice of the glacier, and it recorded the delivery of the remains in the valley by the slow-moving glacier forty-one years later. The latest catastrophe bore the date 1877.

We stepped out and roved about the village awhile. In front of the little church was a monument to the memory of the bold guide Jacques Balmat, the first man who ever stood upon the summit of Mont Blanc. He made that wild trip solitary and alone. He accomplished the ascent a number of times afterward. A stretch of nearly half a century lay between his first ascent and his last one. At the ripe old age of seventy-two he was climbing around a corner of a lofty precipice of the Pic du Midi—nobody with him—when he slipped and fell. So he died in the harness.

He had grown very avaricious in his old age, and used to go off stealthily to hunt for non-existent and impossible gold among those perilous peaks and precipices. He was on a quest of that kind when he lost his life. There was a statue to him, and another to De Saussure, in the hall of our hotel, and a metal plate on the door of a room upstairs bore an inscription to the effect that that room had been occupied by Albert Smith. Balmat and De Saussure discovered Mont Blanc—so to speak—but it was Smith who made it a paying property. His articles in Blackwood and his lectures on Mont Blanc in London advertised it and made people as anxious to see it as if it owed them money.

As we strolled along the road we looked up and saw a red signal-light glowing in the darkness of the mountainside. It seemed but a trifling way up—perhaps a hundred yards, a climb of ten minutes. It was a lucky piece of sagacity in us that we concluded to stop a man whom we met and get a light for our pipes from him instead of continuing the climb to that lantern to get a light, as had been our purpose. The man said that that lantern was on the Grands Mulets, some sixty-five hundred feet above the valley! I know by our Riffelberg experience, that it would have taken us a good part of a week to go up there. I would sooner not smoke at all, than take all that trouble for a light.

Even in the daytime the foreshadowing effect of this mountain's close proximity creates curious deceptions. For instance, one sees with the naked eye a cabin up there beside the glacier, and a little above

and beyond he sees the spot where that red light was located; he thinks he could throw a stone from the one place to the other. But he couldn't, for the difference between the two altitudes is more than three thousand feet. It looks impossible, from below, that this can be true, but it is true, nevertheless.

While strolling around, we kept the run of the moon all the time, and we still kept an eye on her after we got back to the hotel portico. I had a theory that the gravitation of refraction, being subsidiary to atmospheric compensation, the refrangibility of the earth's surface would emphasize this effect in regions where great mountain ranges occur, and possibly so even-handed impact the odic and idyllic forces together, the one upon the other, as to prevent the moon from rising higher than 12,200 feet above sea-level. This daring theory had been received with frantic scorn by some of my fellow-scientists, and with an eager silence by others. Among the former I may mention Prof. H——y; and among the latter Prof. T——l. Such is professional jealousy; a scientist will never show any kindness for a theory which he did not start himself. There is no feeling of brotherhood among these people. Indeed, they always resent it when I call them brother. To show how far their ungenerosity can carry them, I will state that I offered to let Prof. H——y publish my great theory as his own discovery; I even begged him to do it; I even proposed to print it myself as his theory. Instead of thanking me, he said that if I tried to fasten that theory on him he would sue me for slander. I was going to offer it to Mr. Darwin, whom I understood to be a man without prejudices, but it occurred to me that perhaps he would not be interested in it since it did not concern heraldry.

But I am glad now, that I was forced to father my intrepid theory myself, for, on the night of which I am writing, it was triumphantly justified and established. Mont Blanc is nearly sixteen thousand feet high; he hid the moon utterly; near him is a peak which is 12,216 feet high; the moon slid along behind the pinnacles, and when she approached that one I watched her with intense interest, for my reputation as a scientist must stand or fall by its decision. I cannot describe the emotions which surged like tidal waves through my breast when I saw the moon glide behind that lofty needle and pass it by without exposing more than two feet four inches of her upper rim above it; I was secure, then. I knew she could rise no higher, and I was right. She sailed behind all the peaks and never succeeded in hoisting her disk above a single one of them.

While the moon was behind one of those sharp fingers, its shadow was flung athwart the vacant heavens—a long, slanting, clean-cut, dark ray—with a streaming and energetic suggestion of force about it, such as the ascending jet of water from a powerful fire-engine affords. It was curious to see a good strong shadow of an earthly object cast upon so intangible a field as the atmosphere.

We went to bed, at last, and went quickly to sleep, but I woke up, after about three hours, with throbbing temples, and a head which was physically sore, outside and in. I was dazed, dreamy, wretched, seedy, unrefreshed. I recognized the occasion of all this: it was that torrent. In the mountain villages of Switzerland, and along the roads, one has always the roar of the torrent in his ears. He imagines it is

music, and he thinks poetic things about it; he lies in his comfortable bed and is lulled to sleep by it. But by and by he begins to notice that his head is very sore—he cannot account for it; in solitudes where the profoundest silence reigns, he notices a sullen, distant, continuous roar in his ears, which is like what he would experience if he had sea-shells pressed against them—he cannot account for it; he is drowsy and absent-minded; there is no tenacity to his mind, he cannot keep hold of a thought and follow it out; if he sits down to write, his vocabulary is empty, no suitable words will come, he forgets what he started to do, and remains there, pen in hand, head tilted up, eyes closed, listening painfully to the muffled roar of a distant train in his ears; in his soundest sleep the strain continues, he goes on listening, always listening intently, anxiously, and wakes at last, harassed, irritable, unrefreshed. He cannot manage to account for these things.

Day after day he feels as if he had spent his nights in a sleeping-car. It actually takes him weeks to find out that it is those persecuting torrents that have been making all the mischief. It is time for him to get out of Switzerland, then, for as soon as he has discovered the cause, the misery is magnified several fold. The roar of the torrent is maddening, then, for his imagination is assisting; the physical pain it inflicts is exquisite. When he finds he is approaching one of those streams, his dread is so lively that he is disposed to fly the track and avoid the implacable foe.

Eight or nine months after the distress of the torrents had departed from me, the roar and thunder of the streets of Paris brought it all back again. I moved to the sixth story of the hotel to hunt for peace. About midnight the noises dulled away, and I was sinking to sleep, when I heard a new and curious sound; I listened: evidently some joyous lunatic was softly dancing a "double shuffle" in the room over my head. I had to wait for him to get through, of course. Five long, long minutes he smoothly shuffled away—a pause followed, then something fell with a thump on the floor. I said to myself "There—he is pulling off his boots—thank heavens he is done." Another slight pause—he went to shuffling again! I said to myself, "Is he trying to see what he can do with only one boot on?" Presently came another pause and another thump on the floor. I said "Good, he has pulled off his other boot—now he is done." But he wasn't. The next moment he was shuffling again. I said, "Confound him, he is at it in his slippers!" After a little came that same old pause, and right after it that thump on the floor once more. I said, "Hang him, he had on two pair of boots!" For an hour that magician went on shuffling and pulling off boots till he had shed as many as twenty-five pair, and I was hovering on the verge of lunacy. I got my gun and stole up there. The fellow was in the midst of an acre of sprawling boots, and he had a boot in his hand, shuffling it—no, I mean polishing it. The mystery was explained. He hadn't been dancing. He was the "Boots" of the hotel, and was attending to business.

CHAPTER XLIX

LOOKING AT MONT BLANC—TELESCOPIC EFFECT—A PROPOSED TRIP—DETERMINATION AND COURAGE—THE COST ALL COUNTED——ASCENT OF MONT BLANC BY TELESCOPE—SAFE AND RAPID RETURN—DIPLOMAS ASKED FOR AND REFUSED—DISASTER OF 1866—THE BRAVE BROTHERS—WONDERFUL ENDURANCE AND PLUCK—LOVE MAKING ON MONT BLANC—FIRST ASCENT OF A WOMAN—SENSIBLE ATTIRE.

After breakfast, that next morning in Chamonix, we went out in the yard and watched the gangs of excursioning tourists arriving and departing with their mules and guides and porters; then we took a look through the telescope at the snowy hump of Mont Blanc. It was brilliant with sunshine, and the vast smooth bulge seemed hardly five hundred yards away. With the naked eye we could dimly make out the house at the Pierre Pointue, which is located by the side of the great glacier, and is more than three thousand feet above the level of the valley; but with the telescope we could see all its details. While I looked, a woman rode by the house on a mule, and I saw her with sharp distinctness; I could have described her dress. I saw her nod to the people of the house, and rein up her mule, and put her hand up to shield her eyes from the sun. I was not used to telescopes; in fact, I had never looked through a good one before; it seemed incredible to me that this woman could be so far away. I was satisfied that I could see all these details with my naked eye; but when I tried it, that mule and those vivid people had wholly vanished, and the house itself was become small and vague. I tried the telescope again, and again everything was vivid. The strong black shadows of the mule and the woman were flung against the side of the house, and I saw the mule's silhouette wave its ears.

The telescopulist—or the telescopulariat—I do not know which is right—said a party were making a grand ascent, and would come in sight on the remote upper heights, presently; so we waited to observe this performance. Presently I had a superb idea. I wanted to stand with a party on the summit of Mont Blanc, merely to be able to say I had done it, and I believed the telescope could set me within seven feet of the uppermost man. The telescoper assured me that it could. I then asked him how much I owed him for as far as I had got? He said, one franc. I asked him how much it would cost to make the entire ascent? Three francs. I at once determined to make the entire ascent. But first I inquired if there was any danger? He said no—not by telescope; said he had taken a great many parties to the summit, and never lost a man. I asked what he would charge to let my agent go with me, together with such guides and porters as might be necessary. He said he would let Harris go for two francs; and that unless we were unusually timid, he should consider guides and porters unnecessary; it was not customary to take them, when going by

telescope, for they were rather an encumbrance than a help. He said that the party now on the mountain were approaching the most difficult part, and if we hurried we should overtake them within ten minutes, and could then join them and have the benefit of their guides and porters without their knowledge, and without expense to us.

I then said we would start immediately. I believe I said it calmly, though I was conscious of a shudder and of a paling cheek, in view of the nature of the exploit I was so unreflectingly engaged in. But the old daredevil spirit was upon me, and I said that as I had committed myself I would not back down; I would ascend Mont Blanc if it cost me my life. I told the man to slant his machine in the proper direction and let us be off.

Harris was afraid and did not want to go, but I heartened him up and said I would hold his hand all the way; so he gave his consent, though he trembled a little at first. I took a last pathetic look upon the pleasant summer scene about me, then boldly put my eye to the glass and prepared to mount among the grim glaciers and the everlasting snows.

We took our way carefully and cautiously across the great Glacier des Bossons, over yawning and terrific crevices and among imposing crags and buttresses of ice which were fringed with icicles of gigantic proportions. The desert of ice that stretched far and wide about us was wild and desolate beyond description, and the perils which beset us were so great that at times I was minded to turn back. But I pulled my pluck together and pushed on.

We passed the glacier safely and began to mount the steeps beyond, with great alacrity. When we were seven minutes out from the starting-point, we reached an altitude where the scene took a new aspect; an apparently limitless continent of gleaming snow was tilted heavenward before our faces. As my eye followed that awful acclivity far away up into the remote skies, it seemed to me that all I had ever seen before of sublimity and magnitude was small and insignificant compared to this.

We rested a moment, and then began to mount with speed. Within three minutes we caught sight of the party ahead of us, and stopped to observe them. They were toiling up a long, slanting ridge of snow—twelve persons, roped together some fifteen feet apart, marching in single file, and strongly marked against the clear blue sky. One was a woman. We could see them lift their feet and put them down; we saw them swing their alpenstocks forward in unison, like so many pendulums, and then bear their weight upon them; we saw the lady wave her handkerchief. They dragged themselves upward in a worn and

weary way, for they had been climbing steadily from the Grand Mulets, on the Glacier des Bossons, since three in the morning, and it was eleven, now. We saw them sink down in the snow and rest, and drink something from a bottle. After a while they moved on, and as they approached the final short dash of the home-stretch we closed up on them and joined them.

Presently we all stood together on the summit! What a view was spread out below! Away off under the northwestern horizon rolled the silent billows of the Farnese Oberland, their snowy crests glinting softly in the subdued lights of distance; in the north rose the giant form of the Wobblehorn, draped from peak to shoulder in sable thunder-clouds; beyond him, to the right, stretched the grand processional summits of the Cisalpine Cordillera, drowned in a sensuous haze; to the east loomed the colossal masses of the Yodelhorn, the Fuddelhorn, and the Dinnerhorn, their cloudless summits flashing white and cold in the sun; beyond them shimmered the faint far line of the Ghauts of Jubbelpore and the Aiguilles des Alleghenies; in the south towered the smoking peak of Popocatapetl and the unapproachable altitudes of the peerless Scrabblehorn; in the west-south the stately range of the Himalayas lay dreaming in a purple gloom; and thence all around the curving horizon the eye roved over a troubled sea of sun-kissed Alps, and noted, here and there, the noble proportions and the soaring domes of the Bottlehorn, and the Saddlehorn, and the Shovelhorn, and the Powderhorn, all bathed in the glory of noon and mottled with softly gliding blots, the shadows flung from drifting clouds.

Overcome by the scene, we all raised a triumphant, tremendous shout, in unison. A startled man at my elbow said:

"Confound you, what do you yell like that for, right here in the street?"

That brought me down to Chamonix, like a flirt. I gave that man some spiritual advice and disposed of him, and then paid the telescope man his full fee, and said that we were charmed with the trip and would remain down, and not reascend and require him to fetch us down by telescope. This pleased him very much, for of course we could have stepped back to the summit and put him to the trouble of bringing us home if we wanted to.

I judged we could get diplomas, now, anyhow; so we went after them, but the Chief Guide put us off, with one pretext or another, during all the time we stayed in Chamonix, and we ended by never getting them at all. So much for his prejudice against people's nationality. However, we worried him enough to make him remember us and our ascent for some time. He even said, once, that he wished there was a lunatic asylum in Chamonix. This shows that he really had fears that we were going to drive him mad. It was what we intended to do, but lack of time defeated it.

I cannot venture to advise the reader one way or the other, as to ascending Mont Blanc. I say only this: if he is at all timid, the enjoyments of the trip will hardly make up for the hardships and sufferings he will have to endure. But, if he has good nerve, youth, health, and a bold, firm will, and could leave his family comfortably provided for in case the worst happened, he would find the ascent a wonderful experience, and the view from the top a vision to dream about, and tell about, and recall with exultation all the days of his life.

While I do not advise such a person to attempt the ascent, I do not advise him against it. But if he elects to attempt it, let him be warily careful of two things: chose a calm, clear day; and do not pay the telescope man in advance. There are dark stories of his getting advance payers on the summit and then leaving them there to rot.

A frightful tragedy was once witnessed through the Chamonix telescopes. Think of questions and answers like these, on an inquest:

CORONER. You saw deceased lose his life?

WITNESS. I did.

C. Where was he, at the time?

W. Close to the summit of Mont Blanc.

C. Where were you?

W. In the main street of Chamonix.

C. What was the distance between you?

W. A little over five miles, as the bird flies.

This accident occurred in 1866, a year and a month after the disaster on the Matterhorn. Three adventurous English gentlemen, [1] of great experience in mountain-climbing, made up their minds to ascend Mont Blanc without guides or porters. All endeavors to dissuade them from their project failed. Powerful telescopes are numerous in Chamonix. These huge brass tubes, mounted on their scaffoldings and pointed skyward from every choice vantage-ground, have the formidable look of artillery, and give the town the general aspect of getting ready to repel a charge of angels. The reader may easily believe that the telescopes had plenty of custom on that August morning in 1866, for everybody knew of the dangerous undertaking which was on foot, and all had fears that misfortune would result. All the morning the tubes remained directed toward the mountain heights, each with its anxious group around it; but the white deserts were vacant.

1. Sir George Young and his brothers James and Albert.

At last, toward eleven o'clock, the people who were looking through the telescopes cried out "There they are!"—and sure enough, far up, on the loftiest terraces of the Grand Plateau, the three pygmies appeared, climbing with remarkable vigor and spirit. They disappeared in the "Corridor," and were lost to sight during an hour. Then they reappeared, and were presently seen standing together upon the extreme summit of Mont Blanc. So, all was well. They remained a few minutes on that highest point of land in Europe, a target for all the telescopes, and were then seen to begin descent. Suddenly all three vanished. An instant after, they appeared again, two thousand feet below!

Evidently, they had tripped and been shot down an almost perpendicular slope of ice to a point where it joined the border of the upper glacier. Naturally, the distant witness supposed they were now looking upon three corpses; so they could hardly believe their eyes when they presently saw two of the men rise to their feet and bend over the third. During two hours and a half they watched the two busying themselves over the extended form of their brother, who seemed entirely inert. Chamonix's affairs stood still; everybody was in the street, all interest was centered upon what was going on upon that lofty and isolated stage five miles away. Finally the two—one of them walking with great difficulty—were seen to begin descent, abandoning the third, who was no doubt lifeless. Their movements were followed, step by step, until they reached the "Corridor" and disappeared behind its ridge. Before they had had time to traverse the "Corridor" and reappear, twilight was come, and the power of the telescope was at an end.

The survivors had a most perilous journey before them in the gathering darkness, for they must get down to the Grands Mulets before they would find a safe stopping-place—a long and tedious descent, and perilous enough even in good daylight. The oldest guides expressed the opinion that they could not succeed; that all the chances were that they would lose their lives.

Yet those brave men did succeed. They reached the Grands Mulets in safety. Even the fearful shock which their nerves had sustained was not sufficient to overcome their coolness and courage. It would appear from the official account that they were threading their way down through those dangers from the closing in of twilight until two o'clock in the morning, or later, because the rescuing party from Chamonix reached the Grand Mulets about three in the morning and moved thence toward the scene of the disaster under the leadership of Sir George Young, "who had only just arrived."

After having been on his feet twenty-four hours, in the exhausting work of mountain-climbing, Sir George began the reascent at the head of the relief party of six guides, to recover the corpse of his brother. This was considered a new imprudence, as the number was too few for the service required. Another relief party presently arrived at the cabin on the Grands Mulets and quartered themselves there to await events. Ten hours after Sir George's departure toward the summit, this new relief were still scanning the snowy altitudes above them from their own high perch among the ice deserts ten thousand feet above the level of the sea, but the whole forenoon had passed without a glimpse of any living thing appearing up there.

This was alarming. Half a dozen of their number set out, then early in the afternoon, to seek and succor Sir George and his guides. The persons remaining at the cabin saw these disappear, and then ensued another distressing wait. Four hours passed, without tidings. Then at five o'clock another relief, consisting of three guides, set forward from the cabin. They carried food and cordials for the refreshment of their predecessors; they took lanterns with them, too; night was coming on, and to make matters worse, a fine, cold rain had begun to fall.

At the same hour that these three began their dangerous ascent, the official Guide-in-Chief of the Mont Blanc region undertook the dangerous descent to Chamonix, all alone, to get reinforcements. However, a couple of hours later, at 7 P.M., the anxious solicitude came to an end, and happily. A bugle note was heard, and a cluster of black specks was distinguishable against the snows of the upper heights. The watchers counted these specks eagerly—fourteen—nobody was missing. An hour and a half later they were all safe under the roof of the cabin. They had brought the corpse with them. Sir George Young tarried there but a few minutes, and then began the long and troublesome descent from the cabin to Chamonix. He probably reached there about two or three o'clock in the morning, after having been afoot among the rocks and glaciers during two days and two nights. His endurance was equal to his daring.

The cause of the unaccountable delay of Sir George and the relief parties among the heights where the disaster had happened was a thick fog—or, partly that and partly the slow and difficult work of conveying the dead body down the perilous steeps.

The corpse, upon being viewed at the inquest, showed no bruises, and it was some time before the surgeons discovered that the neck was broken. One of the surviving brothers had sustained some unimportant injuries, but the other had suffered no hurt at all. How these men could fall two thousand feet, almost perpendicularly, and live afterward, is a most strange and unaccountable thing.

A great many women have made the ascent of Mont Blanc. An English girl, Miss Stratton, conceived the daring idea, two or three years ago, of attempting the ascent in the middle of winter. She tried it—and she succeeded. Moreover, she froze two of her fingers on the way up, she fell in love with her guide on the summit, and she married him when she got to the bottom again. There is nothing in romance, in the way of a striking "situation," which can beat this love scene in midheaven on an isolated ice-crest with the thermometer at zero and an Artic gale blowing.

The first woman who ascended Mont Blanc was a girl aged twenty-two—Mlle. Maria Paradis—1809. Nobody was with her but her sweetheart, and he was not a guide. The sex then took a rest for about thirty years, when a Mlle. d'Angeville made the ascent—1838. In Chamonix I picked up a rude old lithograph of that day which pictured her "in the act."

However, I value it less as a work of art than as a fashion-plate. Miss d'Angeville put on a pair of men's pantaloons to climb it, which was wise; but she cramped their utility by adding her petticoat, which was idiotic.

One of the mournfulest calamities which men's disposition to climb dangerous mountains has resulted in, happened on Mont Blanc in September 1870. M. D'Arve tells the story briefly in his Histoire Du Mont Blanc. In the next chapter I will copy its chief features.

CHAPTER XLV

A CATASTROPHE WHICH COST ELEVEN LIVES—ACCIDENT OF 1870—A PARTY OF ELEVEN—A FEARFUL STORM—NOTE-BOOKS OF THE VICTIMS—WITHIN FIVE MINUTES OF SAFETY—FACING DEATH RESIGNEDLY.

On the 5th of September, 1870, a caravan of eleven persons departed from Chamonix to make the ascent of Mont Blanc. Three of the party were tourists; Messrs. Randall and Bean, Americans, and Mr. George Corkindale, a Scotch gentleman; there were three guides and five porters. The cabin on the Grands Mulets was reached that day; the ascent was resumed early the next morning, September 6th. The day was fine and clear, and the movements of the party were observed through the telescopes of Chamonix; at two o'clock in the afternoon they were seen to reach the summit. A few minutes later they were seen making the first steps of the descent; then a cloud closed around them and hid them from view.

Eight hours passed, the cloud still remained, night came, no one had returned to the Grands Mulets. Sylvain Couttet, keeper of the cabin there, suspected a misfortune, and sent down to the valley for help. A detachment of guides went up, but by the time they had made the tedious trip and reached the cabin, a raging storm had set in. They had to wait; nothing could be attempted in such a tempest.

The wild storm lasted more than a week, without ceasing; but on the 17th, Couttet, with several guides, left the cabin and succeeded in making the ascent. In the snowy wastes near the summit they came upon five bodies, lying upon their sides in a reposeful attitude which suggested that possibly they had fallen asleep there, while exhausted with fatigue and hunger and benumbed with cold, and never knew when death stole upon them. Couttet moved a few steps further and discovered five more bodies. The eleventh corpse—that of a porter—was not found, although diligent search was made for it.

In the pocket of Mr. Bean, one of the Americans, was found a note-book in which had been penciled some sentences which admit us, in flesh and spirit, as it were, to the presence of these men during their last hours of life, and to the grisly horrors which their fading vision looked upon and their failing consciousness took cognizance of:

TUESDAY, SEPT. 6. I have made the ascent of Mont Blanc, with ten persons—eight guides, and Mr. Corkindale and Mr. Randall. We reached the summit at half past 2. Immediately after quitting it, we were enveloped in clouds of snow. We passed the night in a grotto hollowed in the snow, which afforded us but poor shelter, and I was ill all night.

SEPT. 7—MORNING. The cold is excessive. The snow falls heavily and without interruption. The guides take no rest.

EVENING. My Dear Hessie, we have been two days on Mont Blanc, in the midst of a terrible hurricane of snow, we have lost our way, and are in a hole scooped in the snow, at an altitude of 15,000 feet. I have no longer any hope of descending.

They had wandered around, and around, in the blinding snow-storm, hopelessly lost, in a space only a hundred yards square; and when cold and fatigue vanquished them at last, they scooped their cave and lay down there to die by inches, unaware that five steps more would have brought them into the true path. They were so near to life and safety as that, and did not suspect it. The thought of this gives the sharpest pang that the tragic story conveys.

The author of the Histoire Du Mont Blanc introduced the closing sentences of Mr. Bean's pathetic record thus:

"Here the characters are large and unsteady; the hand which traces them is become chilled and torpid; but the spirit survives, and the faith and resignation of the dying man are expressed with a sublime simplicity."

Perhaps this note-book will be found and sent to you. We have nothing to eat, my feet are already frozen, and I am exhausted; I have strength to write only a few words more. I have left means for C's education; I know you will employ them wisely. I die with faith in God, and with loving thoughts of you. Farewell to all. We shall meet again, in Heaven. ... I think of you always.

It is the way of the Alps to deliver death to their victims with a merciful swiftness, but here the rule failed. These men suffered the bitterest death that has been recorded in the history of those mountains, freighted as that history is with grisly tragedies.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE HOTEL DES PYRAMIDS—THE GLACIER DES BOSSONS—ONE OF THE SHOWS—PREMEDITATED CRIME—SAVED AGAIN—TOURISTS WARNED—ADVICE TO TOURISTS—THE TWO EMPRESSES—THE GLACIER TOLL COLLECTOR—PURE ICE WATER—DEATH RATE OF THE WORLD—OF VARIOUS CITIES—A PLEASURE EXCURSIONIST—A DILIGENCE RIDE—A SATISFIED ENGLISHMAN.

Mr. Harris and I took some guides and porters and ascended to the Hotel des Pyramides, which is perched on the high moraine which borders the Glacier des Bossons. The road led sharply uphill, all the way, through grass and flowers and woods, and was a pleasant walk, barring the fatigue of the climb.

From the hotel we could view the huge glacier at very close range. After a rest we followed down a path which had been made in the steep inner frontage of the moraine, and stepped upon the glacier itself. One of the shows of the place was a tunnel-like cavern, which had been hewn in the glacier. The proprietor of this tunnel took candles and conducted us into it. It was three or four feet wide and about six feet high. Its walls of pure and solid ice emitted a soft and rich blue light that produced a lovely effect, and suggested enchanted caves, and that sort of thing. When we had proceeded some yards and were entering darkness, we turned about and had a dainty sunlit picture of distant woods and heights framed in the strong arch of the tunnel and seen through the tender blue radiance of the tunnel's atmosphere.

The cavern was nearly a hundred yards long, and when we reached its inner limit the proprietor stepped into a branch tunnel with his candles and left us buried in the bowels of the glacier, and in pitch-darkness. We judged his purpose was murder and robbery; so we got out our matches and prepared to sell our lives as dearly as possible by setting the glacier on fire if the worst came to the worst—but we soon perceived that this man had changed his mind; he began to sing, in a deep, melodious voice, and woke some curious and pleasing echoes. By and by he came back and pretended that that was what he had gone behind there for. We believed as much of that as we wanted to.

Thus our lives had been once more in imminent peril, but by the exercise of the swift sagacity and cool courage which had saved us so often, we had added another escape to the long list. The tourist should

visit that ice-cavern, by all means, for it is well worth the trouble; but I would advise him to go only with a strong and well-armed force. I do not consider artillery necessary, yet it would not be unadvisable to take it along, if convenient. The journey, going and coming, is about three miles and a half, three of which are on level ground. We made it in less than a day, but I would counsel the unpracticed—if not pressed for time—to allow themselves two. Nothing is gained in the Alps by over-exertion; nothing is gained by crowding two days' work into one for the poor sake of being able to boast of the exploit afterward. It will be found much better, in the long run, to do the thing in two days, and then subtract one of them from the narrative. This saves fatigue, and does not injure the narrative. All the more thoughtful among the Alpine tourists do this.

We now called upon the Guide-in-Chief, and asked for a squadron of guides and porters for the ascent of the Montanvert. This idiot glared at us, and said:

"You don't need guides and porters to go to the Montanvert."

"What do we need, then?"

"Such as you?—an ambulance!"

I was so stung by this brutal remark that I took my custom elsewhere.

Betimes, next morning, we had reached an altitude of five thousand feet above the level of the sea. Here we camped and breakfasted. There was a cabin there—the spot is called the Caillet—and a spring of ice-cold water. On the door of the cabin was a sign, in French, to the effect that "One may here see a living chamois for fifty centimes." We did not invest; what we wanted was to see a dead one.

A little after noon we ended the ascent and arrived at the new hotel on the Montanvert, and had a view of six miles, right up the great glacier, the famous Mer de Glace. At this point it is like a sea whose deep swales and long, rolling swells have been caught in mid-movement and frozen solid; but further up it is broken up into wildly tossing billows of ice.We descended a ticklish path in the steep side of the moraine, and invaded the glacier. There were tourists of both sexes scattered far and wide over it, everywhere, and it had the festive look of a skating-rink.

The Empress Josephine came this far, once. She ascended the Montanvert in 1810—but not alone; a small army of men preceded her to clear the path—and carpet it, perhaps—and she followed, under the protection of sixty-eight guides.

Her successor visited Chamonix later, but in far different style.

It was seven weeks after the first fall of the Empire, and poor Marie Louise, ex-Empress was a fugitive. She came at night, and in a storm, with only two attendants, and stood before a peasant's hut, tired, bedraggled, soaked with rain, "the red print of her lost crown still girdling her brow," and implored admittance—and was refused! A few days before, the adulations and applauses of a nation were sounding in her ears, and now she was come to this!

We crossed the Mer de Glace in safety, but we had misgivings. The crevices in the ice yawned deep and blue and mysterious, and it made one nervous to traverse them. The huge round waves of ice were slippery and difficult to climb, and the chances of tripping and sliding down them and darting into a crevice were too many to be comfortable.

In the bottom of a deep swale between two of the biggest of the ice-waves, we found a fraud who pretended to be cutting steps to insure the safety of tourists. He was "soldiering" when we came upon him, but he hopped up and chipped out a couple of steps about big enough for a cat, and charged us a franc or two for it. Then he sat down again, to doze till the next party should come along.

He had collected blackmail from two or three hundred people already, that day, but had not chipped out ice enough to impair the glacier perceptibly. I have heard of a good many soft sinecures, but it seems to me that keeping toll-bridge on a glacier is the softest one I have encountered yet.

That was a blazing hot day, and it brought a persistent and persecuting thirst with it. What an unspeakable luxury it was to slake that thirst with the pure and limpid ice-water of the glacier! Down the sides of every great rib of pure ice poured limpid rills in gutters carved by their own attrition; better still, wherever a rock had lain, there was now a bowl-shaped hole, with smooth white sides and bottom of ice, and this bowl was brimming with water of such absolute clearness that the careless observer would not see it at all, but would think the bowl was empty. These fountains had such an alluring look that I often stretched myself out when I was not thirsty and dipped my face in and drank till my teeth ached. Everywhere among the Swiss mountains we had at hand the blessing—not to be found in Europe except in the

mountains—of water capable of quenching thirst. Everywhere in the Swiss highlands brilliant little rills of exquisitely cold water went dancing along by the roadsides, and my comrade and I were always drinking and always delivering our deep gratitude.

But in Europe everywhere except in the mountains, the water is flat and insipid beyond the power of words to describe. It is served lukewarm; but no matter, ice could not help it; it is incurably flat, incurably insipid. It is only good to wash with; I wonder it doesn't occur to the average inhabitant to try it for that. In Europe the people say contemptuously, "Nobody drinks water here." Indeed, they have a sound and sufficient reason. In many places they even have what may be called prohibitory reasons. In Paris and Munich, for instance, they say, "Don't drink the water, it is simply poison."

Either America is healthier than Europe, notwithstanding her "deadly" indulgence in ice-water, or she does not keep the run of her death-rate as sharply as Europe does. I think we do keep up the death statistics accurately; and if we do, our cities are healthier than the cities of Europe. Every month the German government tabulates the death-rate of the world and publishes it. I scrap-booked these reports during several months, and it was curious to see how regular and persistently each city repeated its same death-rate month after month. The tables might as well have been stereotyped, they varied so little. These tables were based upon weekly reports showing the average of deaths in each 1,000 population for a year. Munich was always present with her 33 deaths in each 1,000 of her population (yearly average), Chicago was as constant with her 15 or 17, Dublin with her 48—and so on.

Only a few American cities appear in these tables, but they are scattered so widely over the country that they furnish a good general average of city health in the United States; and I think it will be granted that our towns and villages are healthier than our cities.

Here is the average of the only American cities reported in the German tables:

Chicago, deaths in 1,000 population annually, 16; Philadelphia, 18; St. Louis, 18; San Francisco, 19; New York (the Dublin of America), 23.

See how the figures jump up, as soon as one arrives at the transatlantic list:

Paris, 27; Glasgow, 27; London, 28; Vienna, 28; Augsburg, 28; Braunschweig, 28; Königsberg, 29; Cologne, 29; Dresden, 29; Hamburg, 29; Berlin, 30; Bombay, 30; Warsaw, 31; Breslau, 31; Odessa, 32;

Munich, 33; Strasburg, 33, Pesth, 35; Cassel, 35; Lisbon, 36; Liverpool, 36; Prague, 37; Madras, 37; Bucharest, 39; St. Petersburg, 40; Trieste, 40; Alexandria (Egypt), 43; Dublin, 48; Calcutta, 55.

Edinburgh is as healthy as New York—23; but there is no city in the entire list which is healthier, except Frankfort-on-the-Main—20. But Frankfort is not as healthy as Chicago, San Francisco, St. Louis, or Philadelphia.

Perhaps a strict average of the world might develop the fact that where one in 1,000 of America's population dies, two in 1,000 of the other populations of the earth succumb.

I do not like to make insinuations, but I do think the above statistics darkly suggest that these people over here drink this detestable water "on the sly."

We climbed the moraine on the opposite side of the glacier, and then crept along its sharp ridge a hundred yards or so, in pretty constant danger of a tumble to the glacier below. The fall would have been only one hundred feet, but it would have closed me out as effectually as one thousand, therefore I respected the distance accordingly, and was glad when the trip was done. A moraine is an ugly thing to assault head-first. At a distance it looks like an endless grave of fine sand, accurately shaped and nicely smoothed; but close by, it is found to be made mainly of rough boulders of all sizes, from that of a man's head to that of a cottage.

By and by we came to the Mauvais Pas, or the Villainous Road, to translate it feelingly. It was a breakneck path around the face of a precipice forty or fifty feet high, and nothing to hang on to but some iron railings. I got along, slowly, safely, and uncomfortably, and finally reached the middle. My hopes began to rise a little, but they were quickly blighted; for there I met a hog—a long-nosed, bristly fellow, that held up his snout and worked his nostrils at me inquiringly. A hog on a pleasure excursion in Switzerland—think of it! It is striking and unusual; a body might write a poem about it. He could not retreat, if he had been disposed to do it. It would have been foolish to stand upon our dignity in a place where there was hardly room to stand upon our feet, so we did nothing of the sort. There were twenty or thirty ladies and gentlemen behind us; we all turned about and went back, and the hog followed behind. The creature did not seem set up by what he had done; he had probably done it before.We reached the restaurant on the height called the Chapeau at four in the afternoon. It was a memento-factory, and the stock was large, cheap, and varied. I bought the usual paper-cutter to remember the place by, and had Mont Blanc, the Mauvais Pas, and the rest of the region branded on my alpenstock; then we descended to the valley and walked home without being tied together. This was not dangerous, for the valley was five miles wide, and quite level.

We reached the hotel before nine o'clock. Next morning we left for Geneva on top of the diligence, under shelter of a gay awning. If I remember rightly, there were more than twenty people up there. It was so high that the ascent was made by ladder. The huge vehicle was full everywhere, inside and out. Five other diligences left at the same time, all full. We had engaged our seats two days beforehand, to make sure, and paid the regulation price, five dollars each; but the rest of the company were wiser; they had trusted Baedeker, and waited; consequently some of them got their seats for one or two dollars. Baedeker knows all about hotels, railway and diligence companies, and speaks his mind freely. He is a trustworthy friend of the traveler.

We never saw Mont Blanc at his best until we were many miles away; then he lifted his majestic proportions high into the heavens, all white and cold and solemn, and made the rest of the world seem little and plebeian, and cheap and trivial.

As he passed out of sight at last, an old Englishman settled himself in his seat and said:

"Well, I am satisfied, I have seen the principal features of Swiss scenery—Mont Blanc and the goiter—now for home!"

CHAPTER XLVII

GENEVA—SHOPS OF GENEVA—ELASTICITY OF PRICES—PERSISTENCY OF SHOP-WOMEN—THE HIGH PRESSURE SYSTEM—HOW A DANDY WAS BROUGHT TO GRIEF—AMERICAN MANNERS—GALLANTRY—COL BAKER OF LONDON—ARKANSAW JUSTICE—SAFETY OF WOMEN IN AMERICA—TOWN OF CHAMBERY—A LIVELY PLACE—AT TURIN—A RAILROAD COMPANION—AN INSULTED WOMAN—CITY OF TURIN—ITALIAN HONESTY—A SMALL MISTAKE —ROBBING A BEGGAR WOMAN.

We spent a few pleasant restful days at Geneva, that delightful city where accurate time-pieces are made for all the rest of the world, but whose own clocks never give the correct time of day by any accident.

Geneva is filled with pretty shops, and the shops are filled with the most enticing gimcrackery, but if one enters one of these places he is at once pounced upon, and followed up, and so persecuted to buy this, that, and the other thing, that he is very grateful to get out again, and is not at all apt to repeat his experiment. The shopkeepers of the smaller sort, in Geneva, are as troublesome and persistent as are the salesmen of that monster hive in Paris, the Grands Magasins du Louvre—an establishment where ill-mannered pestering, pursuing, and insistence have been reduced to a science.

In Geneva, prices in the smaller shops are very elastic—that is another bad feature. I was looking in at a window at a very pretty string of beads, suitable for a child. I was only admiring them; I had no use for them; I hardly ever wear beads. The shopwoman came out and offered them to me for thirty-five francs. I said it was cheap, but I did not need them.

"Ah, but monsieur, they are so beautiful!"

I confessed it, but said they were not suitable for one of my age and simplicity of character. She darted in and brought them out and tried to force them into my hands, saying:

"Ah, but only see how lovely they are! Surely monsieur will take them; monsieur shall have them for thirty francs. There, I have said it—it is a loss, but one must live."

I dropped my hands, and tried to move her to respect my unprotected situation. But no, she dangled the beads in the sun before my face, exclaiming, "Ah, monsieur cannot resist them!" She hung them on my coat button, folded her hand resignedly, and said: "Gone,—and for thirty francs, the lovely things—it is incredible!—but the good God will sanctify the sacrifice to me."

I removed them gently, returned them, and walked away, shaking my head and smiling a smile of silly embarrassment while the passers-by halted to observe. The woman leaned out of her door, shook the beads, and screamed after me:

"Monsieur shall have them for twenty-eight!"

I shook my head.

"Twenty-seven! It is a cruel loss, it is ruin—but take them, only take them."

I still retreated, still wagging my head.

"Mon Dieu, they shall even go for twenty-six! There, I have said it. Come!"

I wagged another negative. A nurse and a little English girl had been near me, and were following me, now. The shopwoman ran to the nurse, thrust the beads into her hands, and said:

"Monsieur shall have them for twenty-five! Take them to the hotel—he shall send me the money tomorrow—next day—when he likes." Then to the child: "When thy father sends me the money, come thou also, my angel, and thou shall have something oh so pretty!"

I was thus providentially saved. The nurse refused the beads squarely and firmly, and that ended the matter.

The "sights" of Geneva are not numerous. I made one attempt to hunt up the houses once inhabited by those two disagreeable people, Rousseau and Calvin, but I had no success. Then I concluded to go home. I found it was easier to propose to do that than to do it; for that town is a bewildering place. I got lost in a tangle of narrow and crooked streets, and stayed lost for an hour or two. Finally I found a street which looked somewhat familiar, and said to myself, "Now I am at home, I judge." But I was wrong; this was "Hell street." Presently I found another place which had a familiar look, and said to myself, "Now I am at home, sure." It was another error. This was "Purgatory street." After a little I said, "now I've got the right place, anyway ... no, this is 'Paradise street'; I'm further from home than I was in the beginning." Those were queer names—Calvin was the author of them, likely. "Hell" and "Purgatory" fitted those two streets like a glove, but the "Paradise" appeared to be sarcastic.

I came out on the lake-front, at last, and then I knew where I was. I was walking along before the glittering jewelry shops when I saw a curious performance. A lady passed by, and a trim dandy lounged across the walk in such an apparently carefully timed way as to bring himself exactly in front of her when she got to him; he made no offer to step out of the way; he did not apologize; he did not even notice her. She had to stop still and let him lounge by. I wondered if he had done that piece of brutality purposely. He strolled to a chair and seated himself at a small table; two or three other males were sitting at similar tables sipping sweetened water. I waited; presently a youth came by, and this fellow got up and served him the same trick. Still, it did not seem possible that any one could do such a thing deliberately. To satisfy my curiosity I went around the block, and, sure enough, as I approached, at a good round speed, he got up and lounged lazily across my path, fouling my course exactly at the right moment to receive all my weight. This proved that his previous performances had not been accidental, but intentional.

I saw that dandy's curious game played afterward, in Paris, but not for amusement; not with a motive of any sort, indeed, but simply from a selfish indifference to other people's comfort and rights. One does not see it as frequently in Paris as he might expect to, for there the law says, in effect, "It is the business of the weak to get out of the way of the strong." We fine a cabman if he runs over a citizen; Paris fines the citizen for being run over. At least so everybody says—but I saw something which caused me to doubt; I saw a horseman run over an old woman one day—the police arrested him and took him away. That looked as if they meant to punish him.

It will not do for me to find merit in American manners—for are they not the standing butt for the jests of critical and polished Europe? Still, I must venture to claim one little matter of superiority in our manners; a lady may traverse our streets all day, going and coming as she chooses, and she will never be molested by any man; but if a lady, unattended, walks abroad in the streets of London, even at noonday, she will be pretty likely to be accosted and insulted—and not by drunken sailors, but by men who carry the look and wear the dress of gentlemen. It is maintained that these people are not gentlemen, but are a lower sort, disguised as gentlemen. The case of Colonel Valentine Baker obstructs that argument, for a man cannot

become an officer in the British army except he hold the rank of gentleman. This person, finding himself alone in a railway compartment with an unprotected girl—but it is an atrocious story, and doubtless the reader remembers it well enough. London must have been more or less accustomed to Bakers, and the ways of Bakers, else London would have been offended and excited. Baker was "imprisoned"—in a parlor; and he could not have been more visited, or more overwhelmed with attentions, if he had committed six murders and then—while the gallows was preparing—"got religion"—after the manner of the holy Charles Peace, of saintly memory. Arkansaw—it seems a little indelicate to be trumpeting forth our own superiorities, and comparisons are always odious, but still—Arkansaw would certainly have hanged Baker. I do not say she would have tried him first, but she would have hanged him, anyway.

Even the most degraded woman can walk our streets unmolested, her sex and her weakness being her sufficient protection. She will encounter less polish than she would in the old world, but she will run across enough humanity to make up for it.

The music of a donkey awoke us early in the morning, and we rose up and made ready for a pretty formidable walk—to Italy; but the road was so level that we took the train.. We lost a good deal of time by this, but it was no matter, we were not in a hurry. We were four hours going to Chamb`ery. The Swiss trains go upward of three miles an hour, in places, but they are quite safe.

That aged French town of Chambèry was as quaint and crooked as Heilbronn. A drowsy reposeful quiet reigned in the back streets which made strolling through them very pleasant, barring the almost unbearable heat of the sun. In one of these streets, which was eight feet wide, gracefully curved, and built up with small antiquated houses, I saw three fat hogs lying asleep, and a boy (also asleep) taking care of them.

From queer old-fashioned windows along the curve projected boxes of bright flowers, and over the edge of one of these boxes hung the head and shoulders of a cat—asleep. The five sleeping creatures were the only living things visible in that street. There was not a sound; absolute stillness prevailed. It was Sunday; one is not used to such dreamy Sundays on the continent. In our part of the town it was different that night. A regiment of brown and battered soldiers had arrived home from Algiers, and I judged they got thirsty on the way. They sang and drank till dawn, in the pleasant open air.

We left for Turin at ten the next morning by a railway which was profusely decorated with tunnels. We forgot to take a lantern along, consequently we missed all the scenery. Our compartment was full. A ponderous tow-headed Swiss woman, who put on many fine-lady airs, but was evidently more used to washing linen than wearing it, sat in a corner seat and put her legs across into the opposite one, propping them intermediately with her up-ended valise. In the seat thus pirated, sat two Americans, greatly

incommoded by that woman's majestic coffin-clad feet. One of them begged, politely, to remove them. She opened her wide eyes and gave him a stare, but answered nothing. By and by he proferred his request again, with great respectfulness. She said, in good English, and in a deeply offended tone, that she had paid her passage and was not going to be bullied out of her "rights" by ill-bred foreigners, even if she was alone and unprotected.

"But I have rights, also, madam. My ticket entitles me to a seat, but you are occupying half of it."

"I will not talk with you, sir. What right have you to speak to me? I do not know you. One would know you came from a land where there are no gentlemen. No gentleman would treat a lady as you have treated me."

"I come from a region where a lady would hardly give me the same provocation."

"You have insulted me, sir! You have intimated that I am not a lady—and I hope I am not one, after the pattern of your country."

"I beg that you will give yourself no alarm on that head, madam; but at the same time I must insist—always respectfully—that you let me have my seat."

Here the fragile laundress burst into tears and sobs.

"I never was so insulted before! Never, never! It is shameful, it is brutal, it is base, to bully and abuse an unprotected lady who has lost the use of her limbs and cannot put her feet to the floor without agony!"

"Good heavens, madam, why didn't you say that at first! I offer a thousand pardons. And I offer them most sincerely. I did not know—I could not know—anything was the matter. You are most welcome to the seat, and would have been from the first if I had only known. I am truly sorry it all happened, I do assure you."

But he couldn't get a word of forgiveness out of her. She simply sobbed and sniffed in a subdued but wholly unappeasable way for two long hours, meantime crowding the man more than ever with her undertaker-furniture and paying no sort of attention to his frequent and humble little efforts to do something for her comfort. Then the train halted at the Italian line and she hopped up and marched out of the car with as firm a leg as any washerwoman of all her tribe! And how sick I was, to see how she had fooled me.

Turin is a very fine city. In the matter of roominess it transcends anything that was ever dreamed of before, I fancy. It sits in the midst of a vast dead-level, and one is obliged to imagine that land may be had for the asking, and no taxes to pay, so lavishly do they use it. The streets are extravagantly wide, the paved squares are prodigious, the houses are huge and handsome, and compacted into uniform blocks that stretch away as straight as an arrow, into the distance. The sidewalks are about as wide as ordinary European streets, and are covered over with a double arcade supported on great stone piers or columns. One walks from one end to the other of these spacious streets, under shelter all the time, and all his course is lined with the prettiest of shops and the most inviting dining-houses.

There is a wide and lengthy court, glittering with the most wickedly enticing shops, which is roofed with glass, high aloft overhead, and paved with soft-toned marbles laid in graceful figures; and at night when the place is brilliant with gas and populous with a sauntering and chatting and laughing multitude of pleasure-seekers, it is a spectacle worth seeing.

Everything is on a large scale; the public buildings, for instance—and they are architecturally imposing, too, as well as large. The big squares have big bronze monuments in them. At the hotel they gave us rooms that were alarming, for size, and parlor to match. It was well the weather required no fire in the parlor, for I think one might as well have tried to warm a park. The place would have a warm look, though, in any weather, for the window-curtains were of red silk damask, and the walls were covered with the same fire-hued goods—so, also, were the four sofas and the brigade of chairs. The furniture, the ornaments, the chandeliers, the carpets, were all new and bright and costly. We did not need a parlor at all, but they said it belonged to the two bedrooms and we might use it if we chose. Since it was to cost nothing, we were not averse to using it, of course.

Turin must surely read a good deal, for it has more book-stores to the square rod than any other town I know of. And it has its own share of military folk. The Italian officers' uniforms are very much the most beautiful I have ever seen; and, as a general thing, the men in them were as handsome as the clothes. They were not large men, but they had fine forms, fine features, rich olive complexions, and lustrous black eyes.

For several weeks I had been culling all the information I could about Italy, from tourists. The tourists were all agreed upon one thing—one must expect to be cheated at every turn by the Italians. I took an evening walk in Turin, and presently came across a little Punch and Judy show in one of the great squares. Twelve or fifteen people constituted the audience. This miniature theater was not much bigger than a man's coffin stood on end; the upper part was open and displayed a tinseled parlor—a good-sized handkerchief would have answered for a drop-curtain; the footlights consisted of a couple of candle-ends an inch long; various manikins the size of dolls appeared on the stage and made long speeches at each other, gesticulating a good deal, and they generally had a fight before they got through. They were worked by strings from above, and the illusion was not perfect, for one saw not only the strings but the brawny hand that manipulated them—and the actors and actresses all talked in the same voice, too. The audience stood in front of the theater, and seemed to enjoy the performance heartily.

When the play was done, a youth in his shirt-sleeves started around with a small copper saucer to make a collection. I did not know how much to put in, but thought I would be guided by my predecessors. Unluckily, I only had two of these, and they did not help me much because they did not put in anything. I had no Italian money, so I put in a small Swiss coin worth about ten cents. The youth finished his collection trip and emptied the result on the stage; he had some very animated talk with the concealed manager, then he came working his way through the little crowd—seeking me, I thought. I had a mind to slip away, but concluded I wouldn't; I would stand my ground, and confront the villainy, whatever it was. The youth stood before me and held up that Swiss coin, sure enough, and said something. I did not understand him, but I judged he was requiring Italian money of me. The crowd gathered close, to listen. I was irritated, and said—in English, of course:

"I know it's Swiss, but you'll take that or none. I haven't any other."

He tried to put the coin in my hand, and spoke again. I drew my hand away, and said:

"No, sir. I know all about you people. You can't play any of your fraudful tricks on me. If there is a discount on that coin, I am sorry, but I am not going to make it good. I noticed that some of the audience didn't pay you anything at all. You let them go, without a word, but you come after me because you think I'm a stranger and will put up with an extortion rather than have a scene. But you are mistaken this time—you'll take that Swiss money or none."

The youth stood there with the coin in his fingers, nonplused and bewildered; of course he had not understood a word. An English-speaking Italian spoke up, now, and said:

"You are misunderstanding the boy. He does not mean any harm. He did not suppose you gave him so much money purposely, so he hurried back to return you the coin lest you might get away before you discovered your mistake. Take it, and give him a penny—that will make everything smooth again."

I probably blushed, then, for there was occasion. Through the interpreter I begged the boy's pardon, but I nobly refused to take back the ten cents. I said I was accustomed to squandering large sums in that way—it was the kind of person I was. Then I retired to make a note to the effect that in Italy persons connected with the drama do not cheat.

The episode with the showman reminds me of a dark chapter in my history. I once robbed an aged and blind beggar-woman of four dollars—in a church. It happened this way. When I was out with the Innocents Abroad, the ship stopped in the Russian port of Odessa and I went ashore, with others, to view the town. I got separated from the rest, and wandered about alone, until late in the afternoon, when I entered a Greek church to see what it was like. When I was ready to leave, I observed two wrinkled old women standing stiffly upright against the inner wall, near the door, with their brown palms open to receive alms. I contributed to the nearer one, and passed out. I had gone fifty yards, perhaps, when it occurred to me that I must remain ashore all night, as I had heard that the ship's business would carry her away at four o'clock and keep her away until morning. It was a little after four now. I had come ashore with only two pieces of money, both about the same size, but differing largely in value—one was a French gold piece worth four dollars, the other a Turkish coin worth two cents and a half. With a sudden and horrified misgiving, I put my hand in my pocket, now, and sure enough, I fetched out that Turkish penny!

Here was a situation. A hotel would require pay in advance—I must walk the street all night, and perhaps be arrested as a suspicious character. There was but one way out of the difficulty—I flew back to the church, and softly entered. There stood the old woman yet, and in the palm of the nearest one still lay my gold piece. I was grateful. I crept close, feeling unspeakably mean; I got my Turkish penny ready, and was extending a trembling hand to make the nefarious exchange, when I heard a cough behind me. I jumped back as if I had been accused, and stood quaking while a worshiper entered and passed up the aisle.

I was there a year trying to steal that money; that is, it seemed a year, though, of course, it must have been much less. The worshipers went and came; there were hardly ever three in the church at once, but there was always one or more. Every time I tried to commit my crime somebody came in or somebody started out, and I was prevented; but at last my opportunity came; for one moment there was nobody in the church but the two beggar-women and me. I whipped the gold piece out of the poor old pauper's palm and dropped my Turkish penny in its place. Poor old thing, she murmured her thanks—they smote me to the heart. Then I sped away in a guilty hurry, and even when I was a mile from the church I was still glancing back, every moment, to see if I was being pursued.

That experience has been of priceless value and benefit to me; for I resolved then, that as long as I lived I would never again rob a blind beggar-woman in a church; and I have always kept my word. The most permanent lessons in morals are those which come, not of booky teaching, but of experience.

CHAPTER XLVIII

IN MILAN—THE ARCADE—INCIDENTS WE MET WITH—THE PEDLAR—CHILDREN—THE HONEST CONDUCTOR—HEAVY STOCKS OF CLOTHING—THE QUARRELSOME ITALIANS—GREAT SMOKE AND LITTLE FIRE—THE CATHEDRAL—STYLE IN CHURCH—THE OLD MASTERS—TINTORETTO'S GREAT PICTURE—EMOTIONAL TOURISTS—BASSON'S FAMED PICTURE—THE HAIR TRUNK.

In Milan we spent most of our time in the vast and beautiful Arcade or Gallery, or whatever it is called. Blocks of tall new buildings of the most sumptuous sort, rich with decoration and graced with statues, the streets between these blocks roofed over with glass at a great height, the pavements all of smooth and variegated marble, arranged in tasteful patterns—little tables all over these marble streets, people sitting at them, eating, drinking, or smoking—crowds of other people strolling by—such is the Arcade. I should like to live in it all the time. The windows of the sumptuous restaurants stand open, and one breakfasts there and enjoys the passing show.

We wandered all over the town, enjoying whatever was going on in the streets. We took one omnibus ride, and as I did not speak Italian and could not ask the price, I held out some copper coins to the conductor, and he took two. Then he went and got his tariff card and showed me that he had taken only the right sum. So I made a note—Italian omnibus conductors do not cheat.

Near the Cathedral I saw another instance of probity. An old man was peddling dolls and toy fans. Two small American children bought fans, and one gave the old man a franc and three copper coins, and both started away; but they were called back, and the franc and one of the coppers were restored to them.

Hence it is plain that in Italy, parties connected with the drama and the omnibus and the toy interests do not cheat.

The stocks of goods in the shops were not extensive, generally. In the vestibule of what seemed to be a clothing store, we saw eight or ten wooden dummies grouped together, clothed in woolen business suits and each marked with its price. One suit was marked forty-five francs—nine dollars. Harris stepped in and said he wanted a suit like that. Nothing easier: the old merchant dragged in the dummy, brushed him off with a broom, stripped him, and shipped the clothes to the hotel. He said he did not keep two suits of the same kind in stock, but manufactured a second when it was needed to reclothe the dummy.

In another quarter we found six Italians engaged in a violent quarrel. They danced fiercely about, gesticulating with their heads, their arms, their legs, their whole bodies; they would rush forward occasionally with a sudden access of passion and shake their fists in each other's very faces. We lost half an hour there, waiting to help cord up the dead, but they finally embraced each other affectionately, and the trouble was over. The episode was interesting, but we could not have afforded all the time to it if we had known nothing was going to come of it but a reconciliation. Note made—in Italy, people who quarrel cheat the spectator.

We had another disappointment afterward. We approached a deeply interested crowd, and in the midst of it found a fellow wildly chattering and gesticulating over a box on the ground which was covered with a piece of old blanket. Every little while he would bend down and take hold of the edge of the blanket with the extreme tips of his fingertips, as if to show there was no deception—chattering away all the while—but always, just as I was expecting to see a wonder feat of legerdemain, he would let go the blanket and rise to explain further. However, at last he uncovered the box and got out a spoon with a liquid in it, and held it fair and frankly around, for people to see that it was all right and he was taking no advantage—his chatter became more excited than ever. I supposed he was going to set fire to the liquid and swallow it, so I was greatly wrought up and interested. I got a cent ready in one hand and a florin in the other, intending to give him the former if he survived and the latter if he killed himself—for his loss would be my gain in a literary way, and I was willing to pay a fair price for the item—but this impostor ended his intensely moving performance by simply adding some powder to the liquid and polishing the spoon! Then he held it aloft, and he could not have shown a wilder exultation if he had achieved an immortal miracle. The crowd applauded in a gratified way, and it seemed to me that history speaks the truth when it says these children of the south are easily entertained.

We spent an impressive hour in the noble cathedral, where long shafts of tinted light were cleaving through the solemn dimness from the lofty windows and falling on a pillar here, a picture there, and a kneeling worshiper yonder. The organ was muttering, censers were swinging, candles were glinting on the distant altar and robed priests were filing silently past them; the scene was one to sweep all frivolous thoughts away and steep the soul in a holy calm. A trim young American lady paused a yard or two from

me, fixed her eyes on the mellow sparks flecking the far-off altar, bent her head reverently a moment, then straightened up, kicked her train into the air with her heel, caught it deftly in her hand, and marched briskly out.

We visited the picture-galleries and the other regulation "sights" of Milan—not because I wanted to write about them again, but to see if I had learned anything in twelve years. I afterward visited the great galleries of Rome and Florence for the same purpose. I found I had learned one thing. When I wrote about the Old Masters before, I said the copies were better than the originals. That was a mistake of large dimensions. The Old Masters were still unpleasing to me, but they were truly divine contrasted with the copies. The copy is to the original as the pallid, smart, inane new wax-work group is to the vigorous, earnest, dignified group of living men and women whom it professes to duplicate. There is a mellow richness, a subdued color, in the old pictures, which is to the eye what muffled and mellowed sound is to the ear. That is the merit which is most loudly praised in the old picture, and is the one which the copy most conspicuously lacks, and which the copyist must not hope to compass. It was generally conceded by the artists with whom I talked, that that subdued splendor, that mellow richness, is imparted to the picture by age. Then why should we worship the Old Master for it, who didn't impart it, instead of worshiping Old Time, who did? Perhaps the picture was a clanging bell, until Time muffled it and sweetened it.

In conversation with an artist in Venice, I asked: "What is it that people see in the Old Masters? I have been in the Doge's palace and I saw several acres of very bad drawing, very bad perspective, and very incorrect proportions. Paul Veronese's dogs to not resemble dogs; all the horses look like bladders on legs; one man had a right leg on the left side of his body; in the large picture where the Emperor (Barbarossa?) is prostrate before the Pope, there are three men in the foreground who are over thirty feet high, if one may judge by the size of a kneeling little boy in the center of the foreground; and according to the same scale, the Pope is seven feet high and the Doge is a shriveled dwarf of four feet."

The artist said:

"Yes, the Old Masters often drew badly; they did not care much for truth and exactness in minor details; but after all, in spite of bad drawing, bad perspective, bad proportions, and a choice of subjects which no longer appeal to people as strongly as they did three hundred years ago, there is a something about their pictures which is divine—a something which is above and beyond the art of any epoch since—a something which would be the despair of artists but that they never hope or expect to attain it, and therefore do not worry about it."

That is what he said—and he said what he believed; and not only believed, but felt.

Reasoning—especially reasoning, without technical knowledge—must be put aside, in cases of this kind. It cannot assist the inquirer. It will lead him, in the most logical progression, to what, in the eyes of artists, would be a most illogical conclusion. Thus: bad drawing, bad proportion, bad perspective, indifference to truthful detail, color which gets its merit from time, and not from the artist—these things constitute the Old Master; conclusion, the Old Master was a bad painter, the Old Master was not an Old Master at all, but an Old Apprentice. Your friend the artist will grant your premises, but deny your conclusion; he will maintain that notwithstanding this formidable list of confessed defects, there is still a something that is divine and unapproachable about the Old Master, and that there is no arguing the fact away by any system of reasoning whatsoever.

I can believe that. There are women who have an indefinable charm in their faces which makes them beautiful to their intimates, but a cold stranger who tried to reason the matter out and find this beauty would fail. He would say of one of these women: This chin is too short, this nose is too long, this forehead is too high, this hair is too red, this complexion is too pallid, the perspective of the entire composition is incorrect; conclusion, the woman is not beautiful. But her nearest friend might say, and say truly, "Your premises are right, your logic is faultless, but your conclusion is wrong, nevertheless; she is an Old Master—she is beautiful, but only to such as know her; it is a beauty which cannot be formulated, but it is there, just the same."

I found more pleasure in contemplating the Old Masters this time than I did when I was in Europe in former years, but still it was a calm pleasure; there was nothing overheated about it. When I was in Venice before, I think I found no picture which stirred me much, but this time there were two which enticed me to the Doge's palace day after day, and kept me there hours at a time. One of these was Tintoretto's three-acre picture in the Great Council Chamber. When I saw it twelve years ago I was not strongly attracted to it—the guide told me it was an insurrection in heaven—but this was an error.

The movement of this great work is very fine. There are ten thousand figures, and they are all doing something. There is a wonderful "go" to the whole composition. Some of the figures are driving headlong downward, with clasped hands, others are swimming through the cloud-shoals—some on their faces, some on their backs—great processions of bishops, martyrs, and angels are pouring swiftly centerward from various outlying directions—everywhere is enthusiastic joy, there is rushing movement everywhere. There are fifteen or twenty figures scattered here and there, with books, but they cannot keep their attention on their reading—they offer the books to others, but no one wishes to read, now. The Lion of St. Mark is there with his book; St. Mark is there with his pen uplifted; he and the Lion are looking each other earnestly in the face, disputing about the way to spell a word—the Lion looks up in rapt admiration while St. Mark spells. This is wonderfully interpreted by the artist. It is the master-stroke of this imcomparable painting.

I visited the place daily, and never grew tired of looking at that grand picture. As I have intimated, the movement is almost unimaginably vigorous; the figures are singing, hosannahing, and many are blowing trumpets. So vividly is noise suggested, that spectators who become absorbed in the picture almost always fall to shouting comments in each other's ears, making ear-trumpets of their curved hands, fearing they may not otherwise be heard. One often sees a tourist, with the eloquent tears pouring down his cheeks, funnel his hands at his wife's ear, and hears him roar through them, "Oh, to be there and at rest!"

None but the supremely great in art can produce effects like these with the silent brush.

Twelve years ago I could not have appreciated this picture. One year ago I could not have appreciated it. My study of Art in Heidelberg has been a noble education to me. All that I am today in Art, I owe to that.

The other great work which fascinated me was Bassano's immortal Hair Trunk. This is in the Chamber of the Council of Ten. It is in one of the three forty-foot pictures which decorate the walls of the room. The composition of this picture is beyond praise. The Hair Trunk is not hurled at the stranger's head—so to speak—as the chief feature of an immortal work so often is; no, it is carefully guarded from prominence, it is subordinated, it is restrained, it is most deftly and cleverly held in reserve, it is most cautiously and ingeniously led up to, by the master, and consequently when the spectator reaches it at last, he is taken unawares, he is unprepared, and it bursts upon him with a stupefying surprise.

One is lost in wonder at all the thought and care which this elaborate planning must have cost. A general glance at the picture could never suggest that there was a hair trunk in it; the Hair Trunk is not mentioned in the title even—which is, "Pope Alexander III. and the Doge Ziani, the Conqueror of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa"; you see, the title is actually utilized to help divert attention from the Trunk; thus, as I say, nothing suggests the presence of the Trunk, by any hint, yet everything studiedly leads up to it, step by step. Let us examine into this, and observe the exquisitely artful artlessness of the plan.

At the extreme left end of the picture are a couple of women, one of them with a child looking over her shoulder at a wounded man sitting with bandaged head on the ground. These people seem needless, but no, they are there for a purpose; one cannot look at them without seeing the gorgeous procession of grandees, bishops, halberdiers, and banner-bearers which is passing along behind them; one cannot see the procession without feeling the curiosity to follow it and learn whither it is going; it leads him to the Pope, in the center of the picture, who is talking with the bonnetless Doge—talking tranquilly, too, although within twelve feet of them a man is beating a drum, and not far from the drummer two persons are blowing horns, and many horsemen are plunging and rioting about—indeed, twenty-two feet of this great work is all a deep and happy holiday serenity and Sunday-school procession, and then we come suddenly upon eleven and one-half feet of turmoil and racket and insubordination. This latter state of

things is not an accident, it has its purpose. But for it, one would linger upon the Pope and the Doge, thinking them to be the motive and supreme feature of the picture; whereas one is drawn along, almost unconsciously, to see what the trouble is about. Now at the very end of this riot, within four feet of the end of the picture, and full thirty-six feet from the beginning of it, the Hair Trunk bursts with an electrifying suddenness upon the spectator, in all its matchless perfection, and the great master's triumph is sweeping and complete. From that moment no other thing in those forty feet of canvas has any charm; one sees the Hair Trunk, and the Hair Trunk only—and to see it is to worship it. Bassano even placed objects in the immediate vicinity of the Supreme Feature whose pretended purpose was to divert attention from it yet a little longer and thus delay and augment the surprise; for instance, to the right of it he has placed a stooping man with a cap so red that it is sure to hold the eye for a moment—to the left of it, some six feet away, he has placed a red-coated man on an inflated horse, and that coat plucks your eye to that locality the next moment—then, between the Trunk and the red horseman he has intruded a man, naked to his waist, who is carrying a fancy flour-sack on the middle of his back instead of on his shoulder—this admirable feat interests you, of course—keeps you at bay a little longer, like a sock or a jacket thrown to the pursuing wolf—but at last, in spite of all distractions and detentions, the eye of even the most dull and heedless spectator is sure to fall upon the World's Masterpiece, and in that moment he totters to his chair or leans upon his guide for support.

Descriptions of such a work as this must necessarily be imperfect, yet they are of value. The top of the Trunk is arched; the arch is a perfect half-circle, in the Roman style of architecture, for in the then rapid decadence of Greek art, the rising influence of Rome was already beginning to be felt in the art of the Republic. The Trunk is bound or bordered with leather all around where the lid joins the main body. Many critics consider this leather too cold in tone; but I consider this its highest merit, since it was evidently made so to emphasize by contrast the impassioned fervor of the hasp. The highlights in this part of the work are cleverly managed, the motif is admirably subordinated to the ground tints, and the technique is very fine. The brass nail-heads are in the purest style of the early Renaissance. The strokes, here, are very firm and bold—every nail-head is a portrait. The handle on the end of the Trunk has evidently been retouched—I think, with a piece of chalk—but one can still see the inspiration of the Old Master in the tranquil, almost too tranquil, hang of it. The hair of this Trunk is real hair—so to speak—white in patches, brown in patches. The details are finely worked out; the repose proper to hair in a recumbent and inactive attitude is charmingly expressed. There is a feeling about this part of the work which lifts it to the highest altitudes of art; the sense of sordid realism vanishes away—one recognizes that there is soul here.

View this Trunk as you will, it is a gem, it is a marvel, it is a miracle. Some of the effects are very daring, approaching even to the boldest flights of the rococo, the sirocco, and the Byzantine schools—yet the master's hand never falters—it moves on, calm, majestic, confident—and, with that art which conceals art, it finally casts over the tout ensemble, by mysterious methods of its own, a subtle something which refines, subdues, etherealizes the arid components and endures them with the deep charm and gracious witchery of poesy.

Among the art-treasures of Europe there are pictures which approach the Hair Trunk—there are two which may be said to equal it, possibly—but there is none that surpasses it. So perfect is the Hair Trunk that it moves even persons who ordinarily have no feeling for art. When an Erie baggagemaster saw it two years ago, he could hardly keep from checking it; and once when a customs inspector was brought into its presence, he gazed upon it in silent rapture for some moments, then slowly and unconsciously placed one hand behind him with the palm uppermost, and got out his chalk with the other. These facts speak for themselves.

CHAPTER XLIX

IN VENICE—ST MARK'S CATHEDRAL—DISCOVERY OF AN ANTIQUE—THE RICHES OF ST MARK'S—A CHURCH ROBBER—TRUSTING SECRETS TO A FRIEND —THE ROBBER HANGED—A PRIVATE DINNER—EUROPEAN FOOD.

One lingers about the Cathedral a good deal, in Venice. There is a strong fascination about it—partly because it is so old, and partly because it is so ugly. Too many of the world's famous buildings fail of one chief virtue—harmony; they are made up of a methodless mixture of the ugly and the beautiful; this is bad; it is confusing, it is unrestful. One has a sense of uneasiness, of distress, without knowing why. But one is calm before St. Mark's, one is calm within it, one would be calm on top of it, calm in the cellar; for its details are masterfully ugly, no misplaced and impertinent beauties are intruded anywhere; and the consequent result is a grand harmonious whole, of soothing, entrancing, tranquilizing, soul-satisfying ugliness. One's admiration of a perfect thing always grows, never declines; and this is the surest evidence to him that it is perfect. St. Mark's is perfect. To me it soon grew to be so nobly, so augustly ugly, that it was difficult to stay away from it, even for a little while. Every time its squat domes disappeared from my view, I had a despondent feeling; whenever they reappeared, I felt an honest rapture—I have not known any happier hours than those I daily spent in front of Florian's, looking across the Great Square at it. Propped on its long row of low thick-legged columns, its back knobbed with domes, it seemed like a vast warty bug taking a meditative walk.

St. Mark's is not the oldest building in the world, of course, but it seems the oldest, and looks the oldest—especially inside.

When the ancient mosaics in its walls become damaged, they are repaired but not altered; the grotesque old pattern is preserved. Antiquity has a charm of its own, and to smarten it up would only damage it. One day I was sitting on a red marble bench in the vestibule looking up at an ancient piece of apprentice-work, in mosaic, illustrative of the command to "multiply and replenish the earth." The Cathedral itself had seemed very old; but this picture was illustrating a period in history which made the building seem young by comparison. But I presently found an antique which was older than either the battered Cathedral or the date assigned to the piece of history; it was a spiral-shaped fossil as large as the crown of a hat; it was embedded in the marble bench, and had been sat upon by tourists until it was worn smooth. Contrasted with the inconceivable antiquity of this modest fossil, those other things were flippantly modern—jejune—mere matters of day-before-yesterday. The sense of the oldness of the Cathedral vanished away under the influence of this truly venerable presence.

St. Mark's is monumental; it is an imperishable remembrancer of the profound and simple piety of the Middle Ages. Whoever could ravish a column from a pagan temple, did it and contributed his swag to this Christian one. So this fane is upheld by several hundred acquisitions procured in that peculiar way. In our day it would be immoral to go on the highway to get bricks for a church, but it was no sin in the old times. St. Mark's was itself the victim of a curious robbery once. The thing is set down in the history of Venice, but it might be smuggled into the Arabian Nights and not seem out of place there:

Nearly four hundred and fifty years ago, a Candian named Stammato, in the suite of a prince of the house of Este, was allowed to view the riches of St. Mark's. His sinful eye was dazzled and he hid himself behind an altar, with an evil purpose in his heart, but a priest discovered him and turned him out. Afterward he got in again—by false keys, this time. He went there, night after night, and worked hard and patiently, all alone, overcoming difficulty after difficulty with his toil, and at last succeeded in removing a great brick of the marble paneling which walled the lower part of the treasury; this block he fixed so that he could take it out and put it in at will. After that, for weeks, he spent all his midnights in his magnificent mine, inspecting it in security, gloating over its marvels at his leisure, and always slipping back to his obscure lodgings before dawn, with a duke's ransom under his cloak. He did not need to grab, haphazard, and run—there was no hurry. He could make deliberate and well-considered selections; he could consult his esthetic tastes. One comprehends how undisturbed he was, and how safe from any danger of interruption, when it is stated that he even carried off a unicorn's horn—a mere curiosity—which would not pass through the egress entire, but had to be sawn in two—a bit of work which cost him hours of tedious labor. He continued to store up his treasures at home until his occupation lost the charm of novelty and became monotonous; then he ceased from it, contented. Well he might be; for his collection, raised to modern values, represented nearly fifty million dollars!

He could have gone home much the richest citizen of his country, and it might have been years before the plunder was missed; but he was human—he could not enjoy his delight alone, he must have somebody to talk about it with. So he exacted a solemn oath from a Candian noble named Crioni, then led him to his lodgings and nearly took his breath away with a sight of his glittering hoard. He detected a look in his

friend's face which excited his suspicion, and was about to slip a stiletto into him when Crioni saved himself by explaining that that look was only an expression of supreme and happy astonishment. Stammato made Crioni a present of one of the state's principal jewels—a huge carbuncle, which afterward figured in the Ducal cap of state—and the pair parted. Crioni went at once to the palace, denounced the criminal, and handed over the carbuncle as evidence. Stammato was arrested, tried, and condemned, with the old-time Venetian promptness. He was hanged between the two great columns in the Piazza—with a gilded rope, out of compliment to his love of gold, perhaps. He got no good of his booty at all—it was all recovered.

In Venice we had a luxury which very seldom fell to our lot on the continent—a home dinner with a private family. If one could always stop with private families, when traveling, Europe would have a charm which it now lacks. As it is, one must live in the hotels, of course, and that is a sorrowful business. A man accustomed to American food and American domestic cookery would not starve to death suddenly in Europe; but I think he would gradually waste away, and eventually die.

He would have to do without his accustomed morning meal. That is too formidable a change altogether; he would necessarily suffer from it. He could get the shadow, the sham, the base counterfeit of that meal; but it would do him no good, and money could not buy the reality.

To particularize: the average American's simplest and commonest form of breakfast consists of coffee and beefsteak; well, in Europe, coffee is an unknown beverage. You can get what the European hotel-keeper thinks is coffee, but it resembles the real thing as hypocrisy resembles holiness. It is a feeble, characterless, uninspiring sort of stuff, and almost as undrinkable as if it had been made in an American hotel. The milk used for it is what the French call "Christian" milk—milk which has been baptized.

After a few months' acquaintance with European "coffee," one's mind weakens, and his faith with it, and he begins to wonder if the rich beverage of home, with its clotted layer of yellow cream on top of it, is not a mere dream, after all, and a thing which never existed.

Next comes the European bread—fair enough, good enough, after a fashion, but cold; cold and tough, and unsympathetic; and never any change, never any variety—always the same tiresome thing.

Next, the butter—the sham and tasteless butter; no salt in it, and made of goodness knows what.

Then there is the beefsteak. They have it in Europe, but they don't know how to cook it. Neither will they cut it right. It comes on the table in a small, round pewter platter. It lies in the center of this platter, in a

bordering bed of grease-soaked potatoes; it is the size, shape, and thickness of a man's hand with the thumb and fingers cut off. It is a little overdone, is rather dry, it tastes pretty insipidly, it rouses no enthusiasm.

Imagine a poor exile contemplating that inert thing; and imagine an angel suddenly sweeping down out of a better land and setting before him a mighty porterhouse steak an inch and a half thick, hot and sputtering from the griddle; dusted with a fragrant pepper; enriched with little melting bits of butter of the most unimpeachable freshness and genuineness; the precious juices of the meat trickling out and joining the gravy, archipelagoed with mushrooms; a township or two of tender, yellowish fat gracing an outlying district of this ample county of beefsteak; the long white bone which divides the sirloin from the tenderloin still in its place; and imagine that the angel also adds a great cup of American home-made coffee, with a cream a-froth on top, some real butter, firm and yellow and fresh, some smoking hot-biscuits, a plate of hot buckwheat cakes, with transparent syrup—could words describe the gratitude of this exile?

The European dinner is better than the European breakfast, but it has its faults and inferiorities; it does not satisfy. He comes to the table eager and hungry; he swallows his soup—there is an undefinable lack about it somewhere; thinks the fish is going to be the thing he wants—eats it and isn't sure; thinks the next dish is perhaps the one that will hit the hungry place—tries it, and is conscious that there was a something wanting about it, also. And thus he goes on, from dish to dish, like a boy after a butterfly which just misses getting caught every time it alights, but somehow doesn't get caught after all; and at the end the exile and the boy have fared about alike; the one is full, but grievously unsatisfied, the other has had plenty of exercise, plenty of interest, and a fine lot of hopes, but he hasn't got any butterfly. There is here and there an American who will say he can remember rising from a European table d'hôte perfectly satisfied; but we must not overlook the fact that there is also here and there an American who will lie.

The number of dishes is sufficient; but then it is such a monotonous variety of unstriking dishes. It is an inane dead-level of "fair-to-middling." There is nothing to accent it. Perhaps if the roast of mutton or of beef—a big, generous one—were brought on the table and carved in full view of the client, that might give the right sense of earnestness and reality to the thing; but they don't do that, they pass the sliced meat around on a dish, and so you are perfectly calm, it does not stir you in the least. Now a vast roast turkey, stretched on the broad of his back, with his heels in the air and the rich juices oozing from his fat sides ... but I may as well stop there, for they would not know how to cook him. They can't even cook a chicken respectably; and as for carving it, they do that with a hatchet.

This is about the customary table d'hôte bill in summer:

Soup (characterless).

Fish—sole, salmon, or whiting—usually tolerably good.

Roast—mutton or beef—tasteless—and some last year's potatoes.

A pate, or some other made dish—usually good—"considering."

One vegetable—brought on in state, and all alone—usually insipid lentils, or string-beans, or indifferent asparagus.

Roast chicken, as tasteless as paper.

Lettuce-salad—tolerably good.

Decayed strawberries or cherries.

Sometimes the apricots and figs are fresh, but this is no advantage, as these fruits are of no account anyway.

The grapes are generally good, and sometimes there is a tolerably good peach, by mistake.

The variations of the above bill are trifling. After a fortnight one discovers that the variations are only apparent, not real; in the third week you get what you had the first, and in the fourth the week you get what you had the second. Three or four months of this weary sameness will kill the robustest appetite.

It has now been many months, at the present writing, since I have had a nourishing meal, but I shall soon have one—a modest, private affair, all to myself. I have selected a few dishes, and made out a little bill of fare, which will go home in the steamer that precedes me, and be hot when I arrive—as follows:

Radishes. Baked apples, with cream

Fried oysters; stewed oysters. Frogs.

American coffee, with real cream.

American butter.

Fried chicken, Southern style.

Porter-house steak.

Saratoga potatoes.

Broiled chicken, American style.

Hot biscuits, Southern style.

Hot wheat-bread, Southern style.

Hot buckwheat cakes.

American toast. Clear maple syrup.

Virginia bacon, broiled.

Blue points, on the half shell.

Cherry-stone clams.

San Francisco mussels, steamed.

Oyster soup. Clam Soup.

Philadelphia Terapin soup.

Oysters roasted in shell-Northern style.

Soft-shell crabs. Connecticut shad.

Baltimore perch.

Brook trout, from Sierra Nevadas.

Lake trout, from Tahoe.

Sheep-head and croakers, from New Orleans.

Black bass from the Mississippi.

American roast beef.

Roast turkey, Thanksgiving style.

Cranberry sauce. Celery.

Roast wild turkey. Woodcock.

Canvas-back-duck, from Baltimore.

Prairie liens, from Illinois.

Missouri partridges, broiled.

'Possum. Coon.

Boston bacon and beans.

Bacon and greens, Southern style.

Hominy. Boiled onions. Turnips.

Pumpkin. Squash. Asparagus.

Butter beans. Sweet potatoes.

Lettuce. Succotash. String beans.

Mashed potatoes. Catsup.

Boiled potatoes, in their skins.

New potatoes, minus the skins.

Early rose potatoes, roasted in the ashes, Southern style, served hot.

Sliced tomatoes, with sugar or vinegar. Stewed tomatoes.

Green corn, cut from the ear and served with butter and pepper.

Green corn, on the ear.

Hot corn-pone, with chitlings, Southern style.

Hot hoe-cake, Southern style.

Hot egg-bread, Southern style.

Hot light-bread, Southern style.

Buttermilk. Iced sweet milk.

Apple dumplings, with real cream.

Apple pie. Apple fritters.

Apple puffs, Southern style.

Peach cobbler, Southern style

Peach pie. American mince pie.

Pumpkin pie. Squash pie.

All sorts of American pastry.

Fresh American fruits of all sorts, including strawberries which are not to be doled out as if they were jewelry, but in a more liberal way. Ice-water—not prepared in the ineffectual goblet, but in the sincere and capable refrigerator.

Americans intending to spend a year or so in European hotels will do well to copy this bill and carry it along. They will find it an excellent thing to get up an appetite with, in the dispiriting presence of the squalid table d'hôte.

Foreigners cannot enjoy our food, I suppose, any more than we can enjoy theirs. It is not strange; for tastes are made, not born. I might glorify my bill of fare until I was tired; but after all, the Scotchman would shake his head and say, "Where's your haggis?" and the Fijian would sigh and say, "Where's your missionary?"

I have a neat talent in matters pertaining to nourishment. This has met with professional recognition. I have often furnished recipes for cook-books. Here are some designs for pies and things, which I recently prepared for a friend's projected cook-book, but as I forgot to furnish diagrams and perspectives, they had to be left out, of course.

RECIPE FOR AN ASH-CAKE

Take a lot of water and add to it a lot of coarse Indian-meal and about a quarter of a lot of salt. Mix well together, knead into the form of a "pone," and let the pone stand awhile—not on its edge, but the other way. Rake away a place among the embers, lay it there, and cover it an inch deep with hot ashes. When it is done, remove it; blow off all the ashes but one layer; butter that one and eat.

N.B.—No household should ever be without this talisman. It has been noticed that tramps never return for another ash-cake.

RECIPE FOR NEW ENGLISH PIE

To make this excellent breakfast dish, proceed as follows: Take a sufficiency of water and a sufficiency of flour, and construct a bullet-proof dough. Work this into the form of a disk, with the edges turned up some three-fourths of an inch. Toughen and kiln-dry in a couple days in a mild but unvarying temperature. Construct a cover for this redoubt in the same way and of the same material. Fill with stewed dried apples; aggravate with cloves, lemon-peel, and slabs of citron; add two portions of New Orleans sugars, then solder on the lid and set in a safe place till it petrifies. Serve cold at breakfast and invite your enemy.

RECIPE FOR GERMAN COFFEE

Take a barrel of water and bring it to a boil; rub a chicory berry against a coffee berry, then convey the former into the water. Continue the boiling and evaporation until the intensity of the flavor and aroma of the coffee and chicory has been diminished to a proper degree; then set aside to cool. Now unharness the remains of a once cow from the plow, insert them in a hydraulic press, and when you shall have acquired a teaspoon of that pale-blue juice which a German superstition regards as milk, modify the malignity of its strength in a bucket of tepid water and ring up the breakfast. Mix the beverage in a cold cup, partake with moderation, and keep a wet rag around your head to guard against over-excitement.

TO CARVE FOWLS IN THE GERMAN FASHION

Use a club, and avoid the joints.

CHAPTER L

WHY SOME THINGS ARE—ART IN ROME AND FLORENCE—THE FIG LEAF MANIA—TITIAN'S VENUS—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEEING AND DESCRIBING A REAL WORK OF ART—TITIAN'S MOSES—HOME.

I wonder why some things are? For instance, Art is allowed as much indecent license today as in earlier times—but the privileges of Literature in this respect have been sharply curtailed within the past eighty or ninety years. Fielding and Smollett could portray the beastliness of their day in the beastliest language; we have plenty of foul subjects to deal with in our day, but we are not allowed to approach them very near, even with nice and guarded forms of speech. But not so with Art. The brush may still deal freely with any subject, however revolting or indelicate. It makes a body ooze sarcasm at every pore, to go about Rome and Florence and see what this last generation has been doing with the statues. These works, which had stood in innocent nakedness for ages, are all fig-leaved now. Yes, every one of them. Nobody noticed their nakedness before, perhaps; nobody can help noticing it now, the fig-leaf makes it so conspicuous. But the comical thing about it all, is, that the fig-leaf is confined to cold and pallid marble, which would be still cold and unsuggestive without this sham and ostentatious symbol of modesty, whereas warm-blood paintings which do really need it have in no case been furnished with it.

At the door of the Uffizzi, in Florence, one is confronted by statues of a man and a woman, noseless, battered, black with accumulated grime—they hardly suggest human beings—yet these ridiculous creatures have been thoughtfully and conscientiously fig-leaved by this fastidious generation. You enter, and proceed to that most-visited little gallery that exists in the world—the Tribune—and there, against the wall, without obstructing rag or leaf, you may look your fill upon the foulest, the vilest, the obscenest picture the world possesses—Titian's Venus. It isn't that she is naked and stretched out on a bed—no, it is the attitude of one of her arms and hand. If I ventured to describe that attitude, there would be a fine howl—but there the Venus lies, for anybody to gloat over that wants to—and there she has a right to lie, for she is a work of art, and Art has its privileges. I saw young girls stealing furtive glances at her; I saw young men gaze long and absorbedly at her; I saw aged, infirm men hang upon her charms with a pathetic

interest. How I should like to describe her—just to see what a holy indignation I could stir up in the world—just to hear the unreflecting average man deliver himself about my grossness and coarseness, and all that. The world says that no worded description of a moving spectacle is a hundredth part as moving as the same spectacle seen with one's own eyes—yet the world is willing to let its son and its daughter and itself look at Titian's beast, but won't stand a description of it in words. Which shows that the world is not as consistent as it might be.

There are pictures of nude women which suggest no impure thought—I am well aware of that. I am not railing at such. What I am trying to emphasize is the fact that Titian's Venus is very far from being one of that sort. Without any question it was painted for a bagnio and it was probably refused because it was a trifle too strong. In truth, it is too strong for any place but a public Art Gallery. Titian has two Venuses in the Tribune; persons who have seen them will easily remember which one I am referring to.

In every gallery in Europe there are hideous pictures of blood, carnage, oozing brains, putrefaction—pictures portraying intolerable suffering—pictures alive with every conceivable horror, wrought out in dreadful detail—and similar pictures are being put on the canvas every day and publicly exhibited—without a growl from anybody—for they are innocent, they are inoffensive, being works of art. But suppose a literary artist ventured to go into a painstaking and elaborate description of one of these grisly things—the critics would skin him alive. Well, let it go, it cannot be helped; Art retains her privileges, Literature has lost hers. Somebody else may cipher out the whys and the wherefores and the consistencies of it—I haven't got time.

Titian's Venus defiles and disgraces the Tribune, there is no softening that fact, but his "Moses" glorifies it. The simple truthfulness of its noble work wins the heart and the applause of every visitor, be he learned or ignorant. After wearying one's self with the acres of stuffy, sappy, expressionless babies that populate the canvases of the Old Masters of Italy, it is refreshing to stand before this peerless child and feel that thrill which tells you you are at last in the presence of the real thing. This is a human child, this is genuine. You have seen him a thousand times—you have seen him just as he is here—and you confess, without reserve, that Titian was a Master. The doll-faces of other painted babes may mean one thing, they may mean another, but with the "Moses" the case is different. The most famous of all the art-critics has said, "There is no room for doubt, here—plainly this child is in trouble."

I consider that the "Moses" has no equal among the works of the Old Masters, except it be the divine Hair Trunk of Bassano. I feel sure that if all the other Old Masters were lost and only these two preserved, the world would be the gainer by it.

My sole purpose in going to Florence was to see this immortal "Moses," and by good fortune I was just in time, for they were already preparing to remove it to a more private and better-protected place because a fashion of robbing the great galleries was prevailing in Europe at the time.

I got a capable artist to copy the picture; Pannemaker, the engraver of Doré's books, engraved it for me, and I have the pleasure of laying it before the reader in this volume.

We took a turn to Rome and some other Italian cities—then to Munich, and thence to Paris—partly for exercise, but mainly because these things were in our projected program, and it was only right that we should be faithful to it.

From Paris I branched out and walked through Holland and Belgium, procuring an occasional lift by rail or canal when tired, and I had a tolerably good time of it "by and large." I worked Spain and other regions through agents to save time and shoe-leather.

We crossed to England, and then made the homeward passage in the Cunarder Gallia, a very fine ship. I was glad to get home—immeasurably glad; so glad, in fact, that it did not seem possible that anything could ever get me out of the country again. I had not enjoyed a pleasure abroad which seemed to me to compare with the pleasure I felt in seeing New York harbor again. Europe has many advantages which we have not, but they do not compensate for a good many still more valuable ones which exist nowhere but in our own country. Then we are such a homeless lot when we are over there! So are Europeans themselves, for that matter. They live in dark and chilly vast tombs—costly enough, maybe, but without conveniences. To be condemned to live as the average European family lives would make life a pretty heavy burden to the average American family.

On the whole, I think that short visits to Europe are better for us than long ones. The former preserve us from becoming Europeanized; they keep our pride of country intact, and at the same time they intensify our affection for our country and our people; whereas long visits have the effect of dulling those feelings—at least in the majority of cases. I think that one who mixes much with Americans long resident abroad must arrive at this conclusion.