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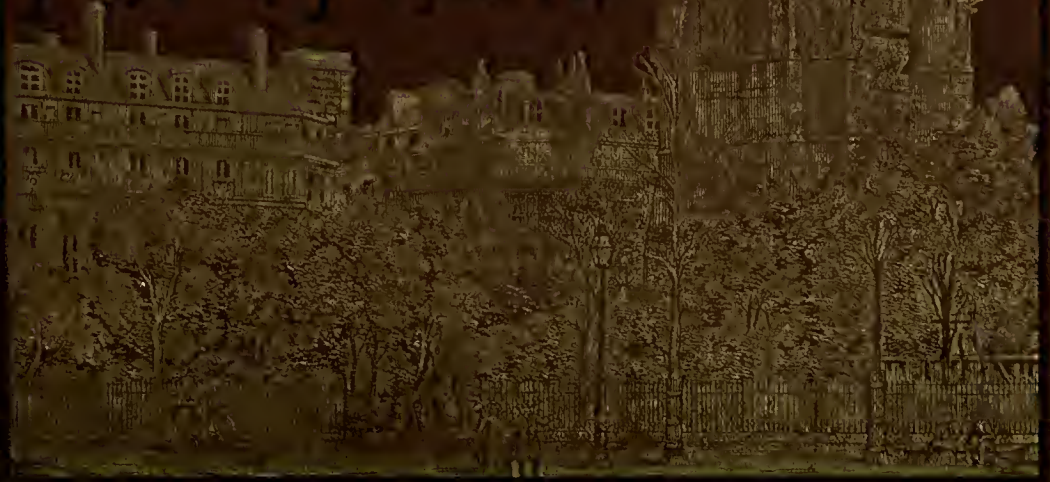


French

Pictures

DRAWN WITH

PEN & PENN





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ALFANOR & BAP

MÉRIEUX

LE PIC DU MIDI D'OSSAU, PYRENEES.



FRENCH PICTURES

DRAWN WITH PEN AND PENCIL.

BY

THE REV. SAMUEL G. GREEN, D.D.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ENGLISH AND FOREIGN ARTISTS.



THE LOUVRE, PARIS.

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,
56 PATERNOSTER ROW, 65 ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD,
AND 164 PICCADILLY.




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GAP, IN THE DAUPHINÉ ALPS.

PREFACE

 AN observation frequently repeated in the course of the following pages, is that as a rule the English people know little or nothing about France. It seems surprising and unaccountable that a country so near to ourselves, so largely associated with the most stirring passages of our history, so closely bound to us by commercial relationship, and with so much that is attractive in its cities and scenery, should yet be as an unknown land to thousands among us; even though they may have visited Paris, or passed through France on their way to Italy or Switzerland.

The sketches and pictures here submitted will prove at least that many parts of France, alike from their intrinsic charm and their historical associations, as well as for the social, political, and religious interests of the present, are fully worthy the attention of the most exacting tourist.

To be fragmentary is an inevitable condition of the task we have attempted. France is too vast for any adequate outline or summary within our prescribed limits. Its extent, says a shrewd writer, "is very seldom realized by English people, unless they are endowed with the special geo-

graphical minds which pay attention to these things. The whole of England and Wales, with Scotland and Ireland and all our smaller islands thrown in, would find easy lodging on the soil of France, and leave vacant spaces for another Scotland and a second Ireland, with Denmark into the bargain: not, of course, in their present shape, but land with an equivalent area. A country of such extent is likely to be greatly varied; and France, as might be expected, is a country of great differences and opposite extremes.”*

The best way, perhaps, of attaining some general notion of a widely-extended and diversified region is to follow the course of its greater rivers; and France is remarkably well adapted to such a method of treatment. To trace the Loire and the Seine, the Saône, Rhone, and Garonne, with their great tributaries, is to have the key to the geography of France; and the system of nomenclature adopted for the Departments is admirably devised to keep the river-courses and the mountain-ranges well in mind.

No attempt, however, has been made in this book to specify departmental divisions. The older distribution of France into provinces is, at least in its main outline, more familiar to English readers; and is of some value besides, not only as more suggestive of historical associations, but as useful in illustrating the great varieties of character with which we meet. “Normandy” means far more to us than “Calvados, Eure, and Seine-Inférieure;” “Provence” awakens reminiscences which can never attach to “Bouches du Rhône, Var, and Basses-Alpes;” and when we traverse the hills and valleys of “Languedoc,” we hardly know the differences between “Tarn and Aude, Hérault and Gard.”

Our aim has been to pass through the whole country rapidly, preserving a certain order in our tours, while of necessity passing over much that would be necessary to a complete and connected delineation. The subjoined rough sketch-map, pointing out the river and mountain systems of France, and most of the places to which reference is made hereafter, may be found convenient and useful.

We have dealt rather with places than with people, though not without some attention to national and local characteristics. Here also we have had occasion to note some popular mistakes about “the French.” For one thing, in the words of a writer already quoted, “writers outside of France speak with much decision about what they call ‘the French character.’ The difference between a Burgundian and a Breton, between a Picard and a Provençal, is as wide as that between the furthest extremities of our

* *Saturday Review*, June 8, 1878.



own islands. The Devonshire man is not more of a foreigner to the inhabitant of Lancashire than the Frenchman of the North to the dweller by the mouths of the Rhône." Generalizations, then, respecting popular character must be hazardous. If we were to say, for instance, that patient industry, frugality, and a love for simple domestic life were marked features of the French people, we should astonish many who have been accustomed to judge, perhaps from the crowds in front of Parisian cafés, that the national characteristics were frivolity, self-indulgence, and a disposition to seek for enjoyment anywhere but at home; and yet the former view would be at least as true to the reality of the case as the latter. The savings of the peasantry and labouring classes in France from year to year are decisive proof that they live for something besides amusement, and can be both industrious and careful.

It would be satisfactory to be able to present a more favourable view of the French people in their relations to a spiritual and intelligent Christian faith. But here there is little to be said. The recent discipline of adversity, the sense of deliverance and freedom, the awakening of the national mind, hardly yet seem to lead heavenward. Where there is religious enthusiasm, it mostly takes the form of superstition; where philosophic inquiry, it too often ends in scepticism. But there are signs of new life; in the Protestant churches there are not a few devout spirits bent upon national evangelization; while, as M. Théodore Monod has recently pointed out, "there is a movement among thinkers and philosophers, convinced that the future welfare of France depends on its becoming, what it might have become in the sixteenth century, a Protestant country."

Words like these are full of hope; and, reading them, may we not say that the fields of *la belle France* also are "white unto the harvest"?



PARIS EXHIBITION, 1878.



CONTENTS.

Le Pic du Midi d'Ossau, Pyrenees	<i>Frontispiece</i>
The Louvre, Paris	<i>Title</i>
Gap, in the Dauphiné Alps	<i>Preface</i>
Sketch Map of France	vii
Paris Exhibition, 1878	viii

ENTERING FRANCE.

THE ROUTE BY CALAIS—VALLEY OF THE SEINE—A DÉTOUR TO THE EAST— TWO GREAT CATHEDRALS *pages 1-14*

Scene on the French Coast <i>page 1</i>	The Pointsman <i>page 8</i>
"La Barre" in the Estuary of the Seine 3	Old Houses, Valenciennes 9
Château d'Arques, near Dieppe 5	Amiens Cathedral 10
Rouen 6	Beauvais Cathedral 12
Valley of Beuzeval, Lower Seine 7	Church of Criquebœuf, near Honfleur 14

NORMANDY AND BRITTANY.

ROUEN—LISIEUX—CAEN, BAYEUX, AND FALAISE—THE NORMAN SEA-COAST AND MONT ST. MICHEL—THE BRETON COAST—TO CARNAC—CELTIC AND ROMAN REMAINS *pages 15-48*

General View of Étretat <i>page 17</i>	Fisherwomen of Cancale <i>page 36</i>
Porte d'Aval 18	Church of Notre Dame, Vitré 38
Étretat: Front of the Casino 18	A Breton "Calvary" 39
Palais de Justice, Rouen 19	Viaduct of Dinan 40
St. Ouen, Rouen 20	Breton Peasant at Home 41
Bernay 21	Tower of Elvin 42
Street Corner, Lisieux 22	Carnac 43
From the Bayeux Tapestry 24, 25	Original Arrangement of Stones at Carnac 44
Falaise Castle 26	Broken Pillar at Locmariaquer 45
Church Porch, Bosc-Bordel, Lower Seine 27	Objects found at Mont St. Michel 45
A School in Northern France 29	City Walls and Constable's Tower, Vannes 46
Caen 31	Sculptures on Interior of Sepulchre at Gavr-Innis 47
Mont St. Michel 34	"Table of Cæsar," Locmariaquer 47
Crypt: Mont St. Michel 35	<i>Tailpiece</i> —Coast of Quiberon 48

UP THE LOIRE BY RAIL.

NANTES—HISTORICAL MEMOIRS—ANGERS—TOURS, POICTIERS, AND METTRAY—
AMBOISE AND THE HUGUENOTS—ORLEANS—THE HIGHER LOIRE—A
FRENCH KILLIECRANKIE—LE PUY. *pages 49-66*

Château d'Amboise, on the Loire	<i>page</i> 49
Nantes	50
Woodland Scene: Banks of the Loire	52
Château de Chambord	54
Aqueduct, Poitiers	56
Rochelle	57

Mettray	<i>page</i> 58
Blois, with Castle	60
Cathedral of Le Puy	64
The "Basaltes" at Prades, on the Ardèche	65
<i>Tailpiece</i> —Château of Chenonceaux	66

AUVERGNE AND THE CÉVENNES.

STARTING-POINT FROM VICHY—CLERMONT-FERRAND, ITS HISTORICAL ASSOCIA-
TIONS—THE PUY DE DÔME—MONT DORE—THE CÉVENNES MOUNTAINS—
CHURCH OF THE DESERT *pages 67-94*

House of Madame de Sévigné, Vichy	<i>page</i> 67
The Needle Rock, Monistrol d'Allier	68
Neighbourhood of the Puy de Dôme	70
Clermont-Ferrand	72
Clermont-Ferrand Cathedral	74
Fountain of St. Allyre, Clermont-Ferrand	75
Geological Sketch Map	76
Royat	77
Val de Fontanat and Puy de Dôme	78

Summit of the Puy de Dôme, with Observatory and Roman Remains	<i>page</i> 79
Fall of Quercilh	82
Mont Dore, and Valley	83
Mont Dore; Entrance to Village	84
The Plat à Barbe	85
St. Ivoine, near Issoire	88
Tower of Maurifolet	89
Rock of Caylus, near St. Affrique, an Old Huguenot Stronghold	92

A VISIT TO THE ALPS OF DAUPHINÉ.

GRENOBLE—VALLEY OF THE ISÈRE—LA GRANDE CHARTREUSE—TO BRIANÇON
—THE VAUDOIS AND FÉLIX NEFF—THE DURANCE—AVIGNON AND
VAUCLUSE *pages 95-114*

Getting Ready for a Start	<i>page</i> 95
View on the River Arc	97
Citadel of Grenoble	100
Alby, in Savoy	101
La Grande Chartreuse	104
The Aiguille Peak, Dauphiné	107

Briançon	<i>page</i> 109
Mont Pelvoux and the Alcfroide, from near Mont Dauphin, in the Valley of the Durance	110
Mont Pelvoux from above La Bessée	111
In the Val d'Alcfroide (Val Louise)	111
Vaison, in Vaucluse	112

SOME ANCIENT CITIES AND THEIR MEMORIES.

AVIGNON AND THE POPES—NÎMES, ARLES, MARSEILLES—UP THE RHONE—
ORANGE, VIENNE, LYONS—RELIGIOUS HOPES AND FEARS. *pages 115-138*

Avignon	<i>page 115</i>	Church of St. Trophimus, Arles	<i>page 123</i>
The Pont du Gard	117	Fountain, Marseilles	124
Amphitheatre, Nîmes	118	Notre Dame de la Garde, Marseilles	125
Maison Carrée, Nîmes	118	Washerwomen on the Paillon, Nice	126
Amphitheatre, Arles	120	Roman Theatre, Orange	127
Roman Cemetery, Arles	121	Lyons	130

SOUTH-WEST FRANCE AND THE PYRENEES.

THE ALPS AND PYRENEES—PICS, PORTES, GAVES, AND CIRQUES—LUCHON—THE
TWO BAGNÈRES—GAVARNIE—CAUTERETS—EAUX BONNES AND CHAUDES—
LOURDES — PAU — BAYONNE AND BIARRITZ — THE LANDES — MÉDOC
pages 139-152

Pau	<i>page 133</i>	Observatory, Pic du Midi de Bigorre	<i>page 145</i>
Vernet and Mont Canigou, Eastern Pyrenees	134	The Cave, Lourdes	146
Fortifications of Carcassone	136	Church at Lourdes	147
Lac d'Oo.	138	Grotto at Lourdes	148
Shepherd Girl	139	Biarritz	150
Baths of St. Sauveur.	140	Roman Circus, Bordeaux	151
Bridge of Hourat, Central Pyrenees	141	Shepherd Dogs of the Pyrenees	152
Peasant of the Pyrenees	144		

THE HILL COUNTRIES OF EASTERN FRANCE.

VALLEY OF THE MEUSE—THE ARDENNES—SÉDAN, DOMREMY, AND THEIR
ASSOCIATIONS—THE VOSGES—OBERLIN—VALLEY OF THE DOUBS—BESANÇON
—GLIMPSE OF THE JURA *pages 153-170*

Hautes-Rivières	<i>page 153</i>	Plombières	<i>page 162</i>
Oratory of St. Remacle, in the Ardennes	154	New Year's Day in the Vosges	163
Woodman's Cabin, in the Ardennes	156	Oberlin's House, Ban de la Roche	164
Scene in the Ardennes	157	Oberlin's Monument	164
Les Dames de Meuse	158	Château of Montbéliard	166
Cathedral of Rheims	159	Roman Theatre, Besançon	168
Woodcutters' Camp in the Ardennes	160	L'Île-sur-le-Doubs	169
Cottage of La Pucelle, Domremy	161	Tailpiece—In the Vosges Mountains	170

FROM LYONS TO PARIS.

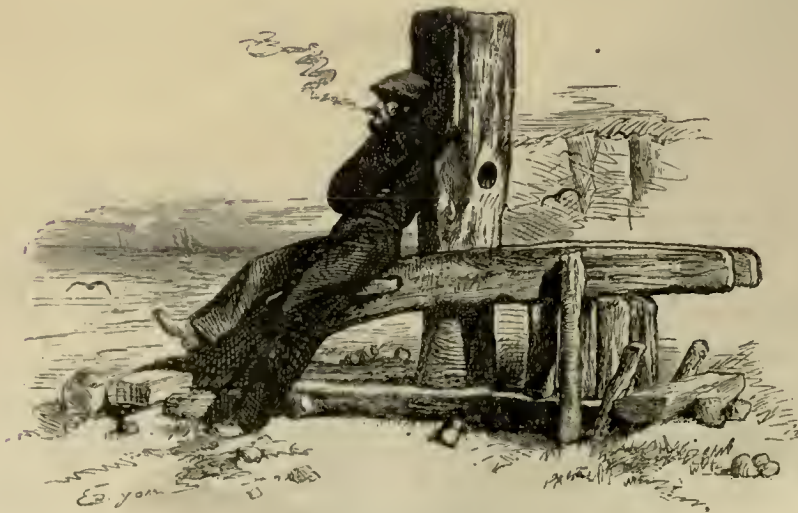
MÂCON AND LAMARTINE—THE CÔTE D'OR—DIJON—CHARTRES AND ITS CATHEDRAL—FONTAINEBLEAU : ITS PALACE AND PARK—TO PARIS *pages 171-190*

Forest, Fontainebleau	<i>page 171</i>	Bourges	<i>page 182</i>
Ruins of St. Vincent, Mâcon	173	Chartres	184
Tomb of Lamartine, St. Point	175	Cathedral, Chartres	185
Abbey of Cluny, in its Prime	176	Tympan of Royal Door, Chartres Cathedral	186
Salles des Gardes, Dijon	180	Fontainebleau	189
Château of Nogent-le-Rotrou	181	The Parterre, Fontainebleau	190

NOTES ON PARIS.

WONDERS OF THE CITY—NEW AND OLD PARIS—GLIMPSES OF HISTORY—HOPES FOR THE FUTURE—NAPOLEON III. AND M. HAUSSMANN—BUTTES CHAUMONT—A VISIT TO BELLEVILLE—CHRISTIAN WORK IN PARIS—AMUSEMENTS—PARIS AND ENGLISH SUNDAYS. *pages 191-212*

Old Paris	<i>page 191</i>	Excursion in the Paris Sewers	202
Paris Exhibition, Front View	191	Canal St. Martin, Paris	203
Palace of the Trocadéro	193	House of Racine, Paris	204
Cathedral of St. Denis ; with North Tower before its demolition	194	Turgot Pavilion of the Louvre	205
Cathedral of Notre Dame	195	Bridge of St. Louis	206
The Sorbonne	197	Paris Bread Carrier	208
Hôtel des Invalides	200	Paris Dépôt of the Religious Tract Society	210
		Tower of St. Jacques, Paris	211



ÉTRETAT FISHERMAN.



SCENE ON THE FRENCH COAST.

ENTERING FRANCE.

THE ROUTE BY CALAIS—VALLEY OF THE SEINE—A DÉTOUR TO THE EAST—TWO GREAT CATHEDRALS.



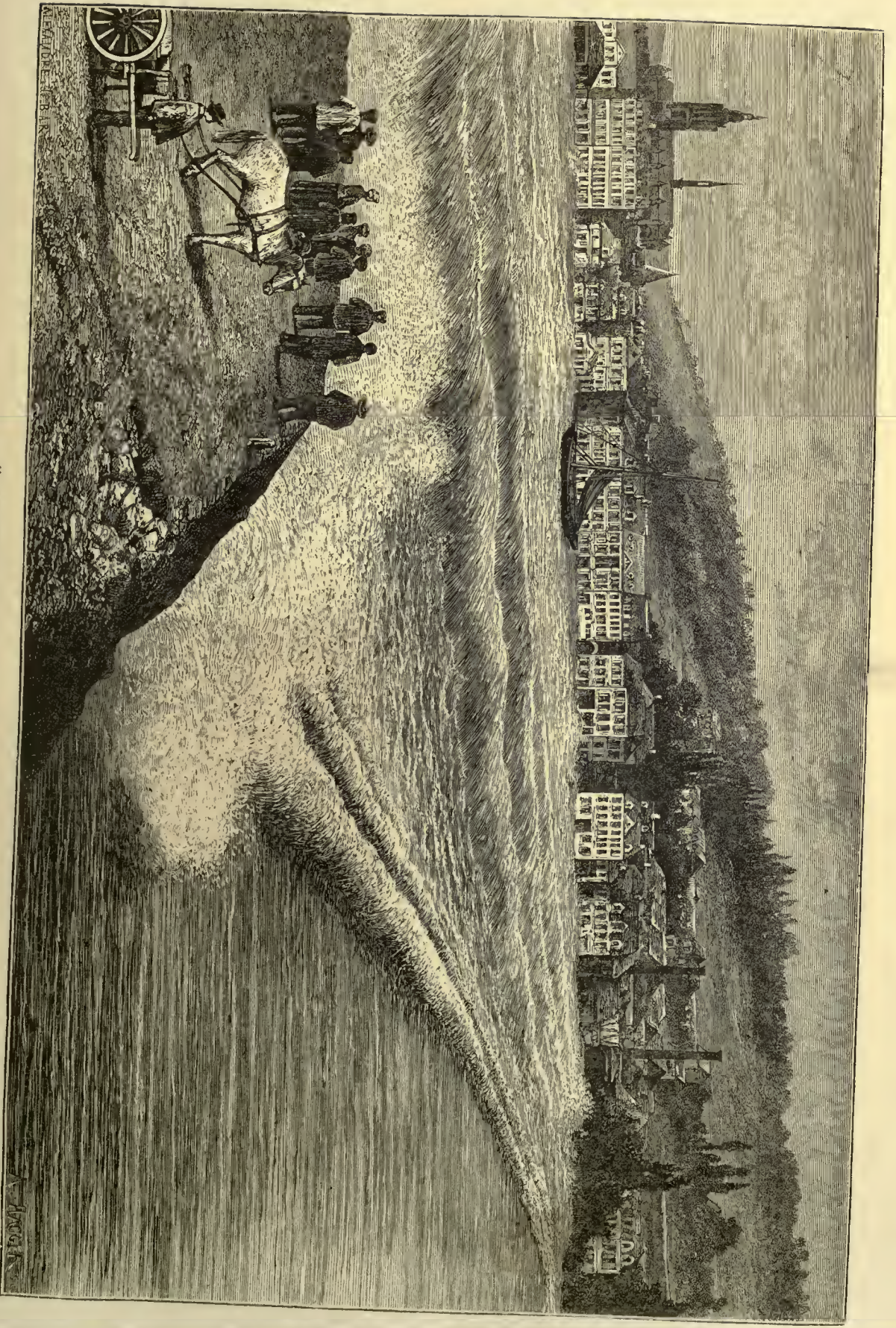
To English travellers in general, France is but a thoroughfare, with one halting-place and bright centre of interest in Paris. Whatever may be the true meaning of the old saying, *Paris is France*, it is certain that to thousands of visitors France stands for little more. They are impatient of the spaces that separate the fair city from Calais or Boulogne in one direction, and from Marseilles, or the Swiss frontier, or the Pyrenees in others. A journey through France means a weary rush through almost interminable poplar-studded plains at the beginning, and perhaps a long night in the train at the end. Again and

again it is explained to the traveller that the phrase *la belle France* is not to be understood at all according to the artist's or the tourist's estimate of beauty. The country is called "fair" because it is fertile; its beauty, such as it is, consists in its low-lying, well-watered meadows, its dusty vine-bearing plains, its vast unenclosed corn-fields, charming to the cultivator's eye, but which the lover of the picturesque would hardly travel far to see.

It must be confessed that the Englishman's customary entrance into France is adapted to confirm these impressions. In the journey from Calais to Paris, one misses the hedgerows and charming woodlands just left behind in Kent; the endless rows of gaunt poplar-trees, and the pollarded willows beside every streamlet, give a dreary impression; and though for some few miles the gleaming blue of the broad river Somme brightens the picture, the general effect is dispiriting. It is even worse, should the misguided traveller have been tempted to stay awhile in Calais to recover from the fatigue and discomposure of the Channel crossing. Something indeed of interest there may be, to those to whom everything foreign is a novelty, in those dull walls and sandy ramparts, and stretches of muddy water, reclaimed as if unwillingly from the sea; in the tall and grimy house-fronts, the quiet open squares, the costumes of the fisher-people, the lofty lighthouse and the breezy pier: but on the whole the stranger will do best to pass on: it was certainly not for the charm of the town itself that Queen Mary, as we all read at school, mourned over its loss so bitterly as to say that when she died, "Calais" would be found written on her heart!

For the traveller who cares for a bright and pleasant first impression of the country he is visiting, and is more careful to enjoy the beauties of the land than to avoid the discomforts of the sea, the entrance by Dieppe or Havre is far to be preferred. These cheerful Norman seaports, with their surrounding heights, the quaint costumes of the people, the busy quays and cafés, and in summer the crowded bathing *établissement* at Frascati, or the *plage* at Dieppe, give at once a charming *foreign* impression, and it is hard to believe that we are but at six hours' distance from Old England! It is worth while to linger at this entrance into France; making excursions by sea from Havre to one or other of the Norman watering-places to the west; or better still, to take Dieppe as the starting-point of a walking tour, by St. Valery, Fécamp, Étretat, and so down to Havre, when the traveller, delighted and refreshed, may strike by way of Rouen up the lovely valley of the Seine to Paris.

This journey at every step is full of charm, and makes the entrance into France as attractive as the Calais route is uninteresting. Rouen especially, as will be shown farther on, is an excellent halting-place, whether for the antiquary or for the lover of the picturesque. Should the traveller have had the leisure and inclination to proceed by the river itself thus far from Havre, his pleasure will have been greatly enhanced. It is astonishing



“ LA BARRE ” IN THE ESTUARY OF THE SEINE.

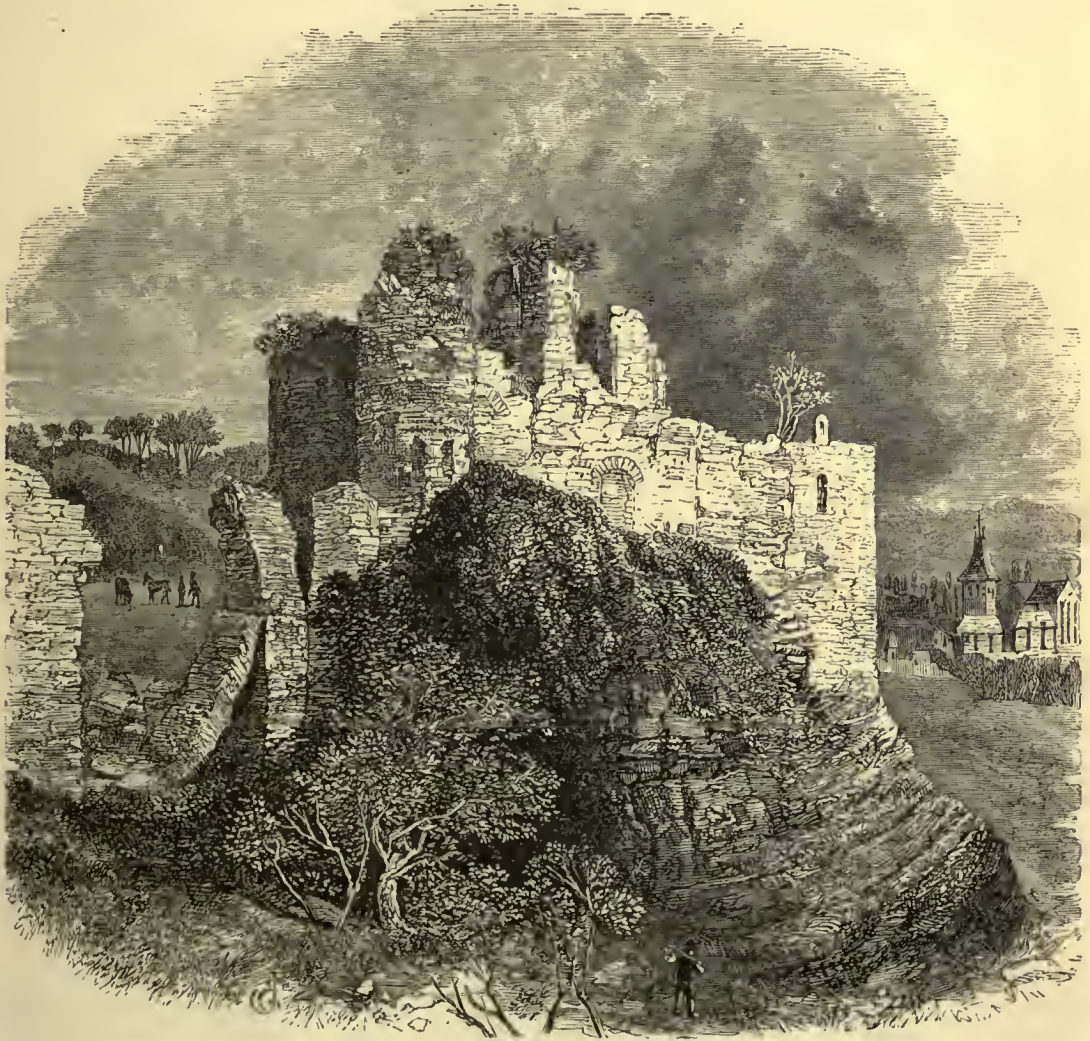
ALEXANDRE LEBLANC

A. JACOB



THE SEINE.

how few people know anything of the Seine, which, in this devious part of its course (Celtic, *Seach-an*, "winding water"), is really lovely when the sunshine is clear upon its gleaming waters, and the green willowy islands and chalky hills are clothed with the first tender beauty of the spring. The first part of the voyage is up a broad estuary, between the ancient ports of Harfleur (now two miles inland, owing to the silting up of the



CHATEAU D'ARQUES, NEAR DIEPPE.

ancient harbour) and Honfleur. At Quillebœuf the river suddenly narrows, and here may be seen at certain seasons the peculiar phenomenon called the *Bore* in English, *la Barre* in French—a sudden rush of the incoming tide, as in the Severn. Then follows a succession of pretty villages, crowned by Norman towers, upon the banks on either side; while here and there are ruined castles, to tell of the old times. No more pleasant excursion

ENTERING FRANCE.

can well be imagined than that to Caudebec, an old-fashioned village, once a fortified town, on the river's edge, with its grand church spire towering from amid the quaint wooden houses; flanked by fair wooded heights, with many a pleasant villa, and a well-watered valley running up between the hills; while a few miles farther from the river is the town of Yvetôt,



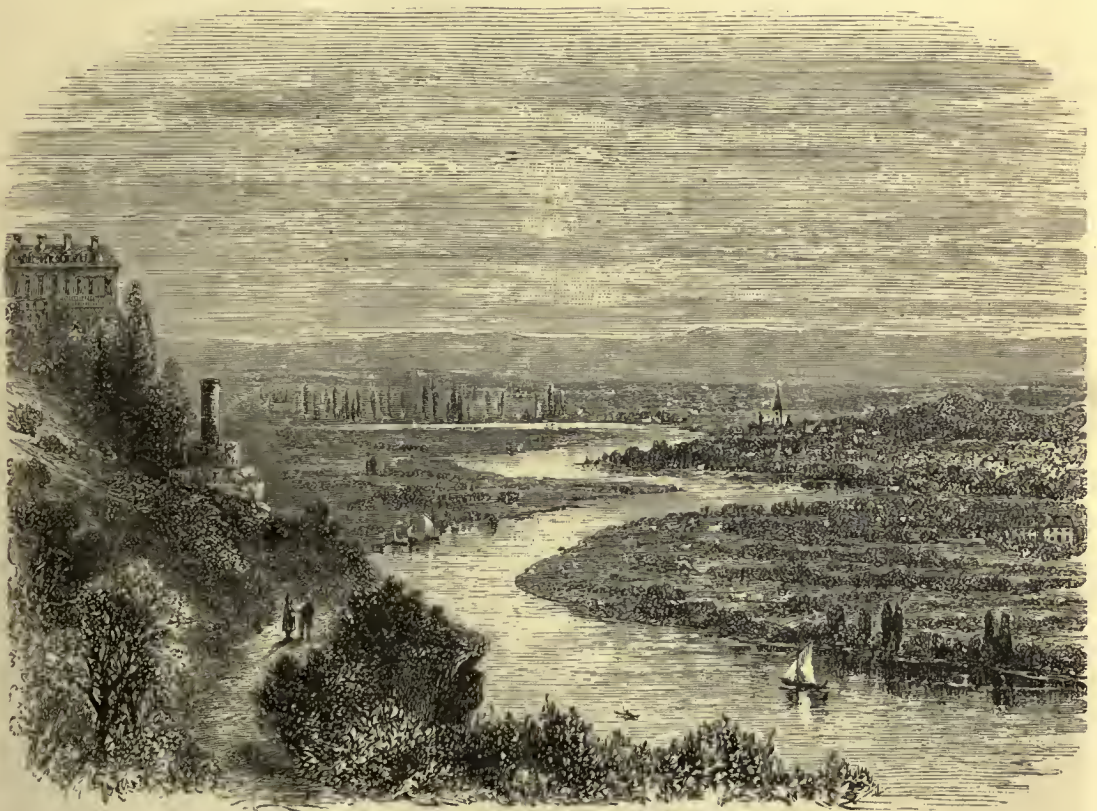
ROUEN.

famous (if the solecism may be pardoned) for its "little-known" king, the lazy personage whom Béranger has so amusingly depicted. Rouen is reached in about eight hours from Havre, and the railway must now be taken, although the valley promises fresh beauties; and boating men will tell you that the best part of the Seine is yet to come. For one, however, I was

FRENCH RAILWAYS.

not sorry to exchange the overcrowded little steamer for the ease and comfort of the railway train.

Enough, perhaps, has been written about the difference between the Continental and the English railway arrangements. The first journey in France will be sufficiently amusing to the unaccustomed traveller. There are the slim wooden palings, for miles and miles, on each side of the line, suggesting scarcity of timber, the incessant tinkling of the telegraph-bells at the stations, the comely dames in blue check dress and shiny black hats, staff in hand, erect at the doors of trim roadside cottages at every crossing,



VALLEY OF BEUZEVAL, LOWER SEINE.

the lithe movements and guttural cries of the blouse-clad porters, the halts for refreshment, notably at Amiens, where your order to the waiter in faultless French will probably be answered in English almost as unexceptionable; and (unless you travel by express) the exceeding and almost provoking leisureliness of everybody concerned. It is long before we can be quite reconciled to those *salles d'attente*, where we have to survey through locked glass doors the preparations making on the platform for our journey; but at any rate it is satisfactory to know that every precaution is taken against our possibly going in the wrong direction; while there are some decided improvements

ENTERING FRANCE.

on our English plans, as in the care taken of the luggage, the double closing of the carriage doors (by latch as well as by the usual handle), and in cold weather the "service" of foot-warmers. In the last respect especially the comfort on a long journey is very great. Instead of one small hot-water tin in each carriage, supplied with an obvious view to a "tip," and often monopolised by a single passenger, two tins are placed as a matter of course in every



THE POINTSMAN.

compartment, extending together across its whole width, and changed at the principal refreshment stations. Why could not a similar plan be adopted in England?

In many parts of France the useful information posted up at the stations is very characteristic. We are not only told the distance of the place from Paris, but its latitude and longitude, with its elevation above the sea level,

NORTHERN CITIES.

and other such particulars. By order also of the "Ministry of Instruction," or "of Commerce," or "of Agriculture," little treatises are provided here and there in the form of placards. Thus, at one place was to be read all about the Colorado Beetle, illustrated by drawings of the creature in its different stages, life-size and coloured after nature, under different headings, as "Description," "Mœurs," "Moyens de Destruction," and so on. In France one is never allowed to forget the Government, Imperial or Republican; it is always before the mind, in one form or another.

After all, however, the visitors to France by way of the Seine Valley



OLD HOUSES, VALENCIENNES.

will always be a minority; the attraction of the short sea route being irresistible. But even thus, a slight détour to the east may make the journey full of interest. Instead of taking the dreary ride from Calais by Boulogne to Amiens, let the traveller who wishes to see some of the most characteristic parts of Northern France make for Lille and Arras, Valenciennes and Cambrai. The names will now, perhaps, suggest chiefly manufacturing associations,—thread, lace, tapestry, "cambric;" and the cities are in fact all centres of busy industry. Nor can the country in which they stand be called picturesque; but the historical associations of these frontier towns are of the highest interest. The fortifications remind the visitor how this north-east corner

ENTERING FRANCE.

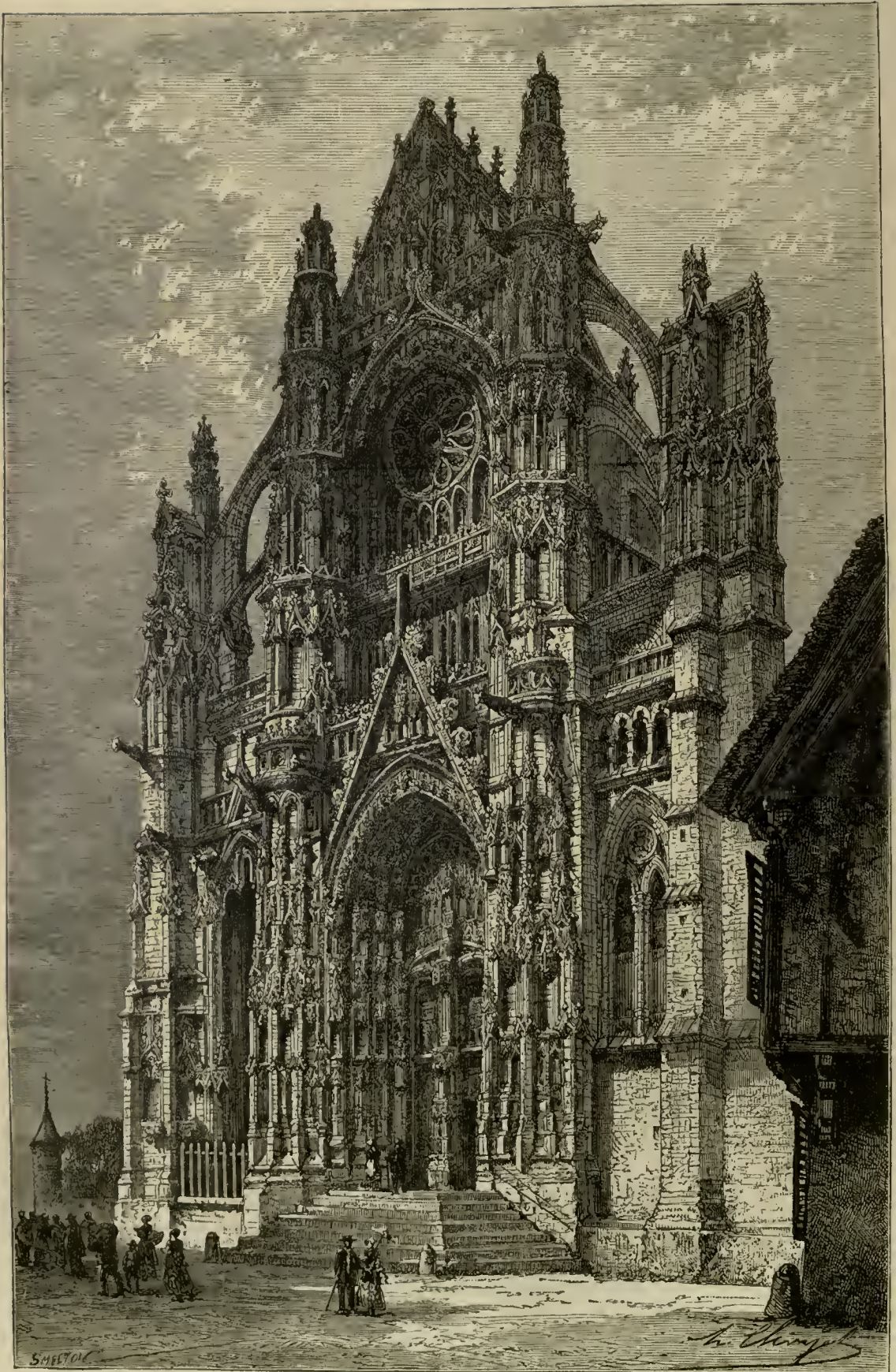
has been again and again a field of strife. France and Spain, France and England, Frenchmen and Frenchmen, have there met again and again in deadly conflict. In troubled ages this great plain, now so peaceful, has been the Armageddon of Western Europe. Then the visitor to Cambrai, at least,



AMIENS CATHEDRAL.

will be glad to forget the storms of war that have raged around the little city, and will only remember how here the saintly Fénelon lived and laboured, proving how from the heart of a corrupt church and a degenerate age the Divine Spirit may evoke the loveliness and power of a holy life.

The tourist may now make his way to Paris by Amiens and Beauvais,



BEAUVAIS CATHEDRAL.

stopping if possible at each of these towns, to see their respective cathedrals. These structures cannot be described here: the vast proportions of Amiens, and the florid, perhaps somewhat overloaded richness of Beauvais, are familiar topics to every reader about Gothic architecture. At a first visit, Amiens Cathedral is apt to disappoint; the height of the nave (141 feet) is too great to be at once apprehended; the mind is bewildered, overpowered, and it is only after ascending to the gallery above the choir, that the visitor adequately feels the vastness of the whole, while even then he may be oppressed by a sense of disproportion, the height being out of harmony with the length and width of the building, and making it difficult to realize the fact that in area this is the largest cathedral in France. After a while, however, the eye becomes accustomed to these proportions, and then the magnificent perspectives of the cathedral, varying at every point, produce their full impression, while a study of the parts brings details of wondrous beauty to light, especially in the carvings which adorn the choir. In passing the pulpit many a visitor will notice the inscription in the open book, as borne by the figure of an angel above the preacher's head, *HOC FAC ET VIVES*, "Do this, and thou shalt live." Is such, then, the "everlasting gospel" which the messenger, "in the midst of heaven," was commissioned to bear to the sons of men? The question carries the mind far away from the architectural splendours of the place; and the thought of the forms of belief which all this sumptuousness and magnificence are employed to commend cannot be other than a saddening one. But it is impossible to linger, and there is yet the wondrous threefold-recessed portal of the cathedral, with the twin towers, to see and to admire. These are universally known by engravings, but are imposing and beautiful beyond expectation.

Beauvais may well be visited in connection with Amiens, and in its magnificent incompleteness will excite both astonishment and—I had almost written sorrow. No fairer monument surely, amongst men, commemorates the failure of a grand design; and this stupendous choir, with its opulence of ornament, suggesting the nave and towers which were to have been the work of generations at the cost of millions, only too plainly illustrate the miscalculation of those who begin to build and are not able to finish. I wonder whether among the dreams of the Papacy the completion of this cathedral of "St. Pierre" on its original scale ever finds a place? It would be more beautiful than Cologne, more imposing than Chartres, and might well become the St. Peter's of the West, the metropolitan cathedral of a retrograde faith. But we trust these are among the happy impossibilities of the future: and *that* hour will never strike—even on this marvellous Beauvais clock, mediæval and grotesque in its conception, but modern in its accuracy and completeness; only recently finished, I was told, and fashioned so as to register, automaton-like, the course of the heavens for generations to come.

Many a traveller visits Northern France solely for the sake of its great

ENTERING FRANCE.

cathedrals, and finds himself amply repaid. But in the village churches, too, there is often a wealth of beauty, as in England; quaint carved porches, ivy-covered walls and high-pitched roofs, with simple rustic interiors, and nothing but the gaudy altar and Madonna pictures to show that we are not in a house of evangelical worship. One such little sanctuary caught our attention on the brow of a cliff, near Honfleur, beside a broad transparent pool where water-lilies were floating; another with a wonderful Norman porch, to be illustrated farther on, was at Bosc-Bordel in the Lower Seine.



CHURCH OF CRIQUEBŒUF, NEAR HONFLEUR.

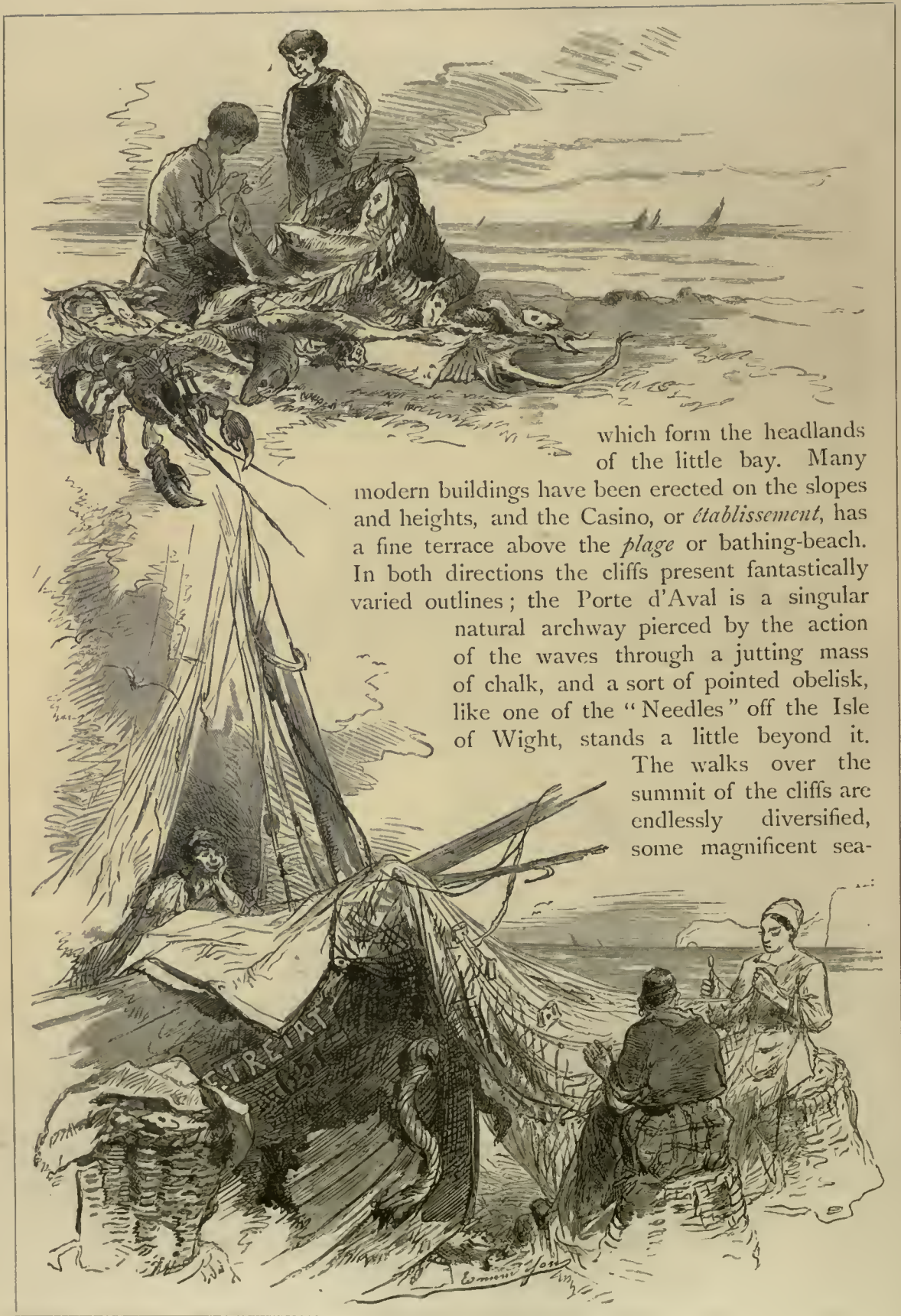


NORMANDY AND BRITTANY.

ROUEN—LISIEUX—CAEN, BAYEUX AND FALAISE
 —THE NORMAN SEA-COAST AND MONT ST.
 MICHEL—THE BRETON COAST—TO
 CARNAC—CELTIC AND ROMAN REMAINS.

THE tour of Normandy may be begun either from one of the many bathing-places on the northern coast, as Dieppe, Étretat, Havre, or Trouville. Which of these to select will mainly depend upon the traveller's taste and purse. With a view to both, he can hardly do better than select Étretat; and he will be happy if he can secure a few days' invigorating rest in this picturesque spot before the summer heats set in. The village itself lies low, between two *falaises*, or wooded chalk cliffs





which form the headlands of the little bay. Many modern buildings have been erected on the slopes and heights, and the Casino, or *établissement*, has a fine terrace above the *plage* or bathing-beach. In both directions the cliffs present fantastically varied outlines; the Porte d'Aval is a singular natural archway pierced by the action of the waves through a jutting mass of chalk, and a sort of pointed obelisk, like one of the "Needles" off the Isle of Wight, stands a little beyond it. The walks over the summit of the cliffs are endlessly diversified, some magnificent sea-



GENERAL VIEW OF ÉTRETAT.

views are obtained; and there is every facility for pleasant inland excursions. To Havre the drive is very fine; but an excursion of greater interest may be made in the opposite direction to Fécamp, also a watering-place, with delightful surroundings, and the additional charm of antiquity. There is a ruined citadel, with a fine abbey church of the thirteenth century, and by the tall lighthouse on the cliff,—a noted place of pilgrimage for sea-faring people. Some persons greatly prefer Fécamp to Étretat; but not those who care for simplicity, economy, and comparative quiet in their visit to the seaside. That the latter is ten miles from a





PORTE D'AVAL.

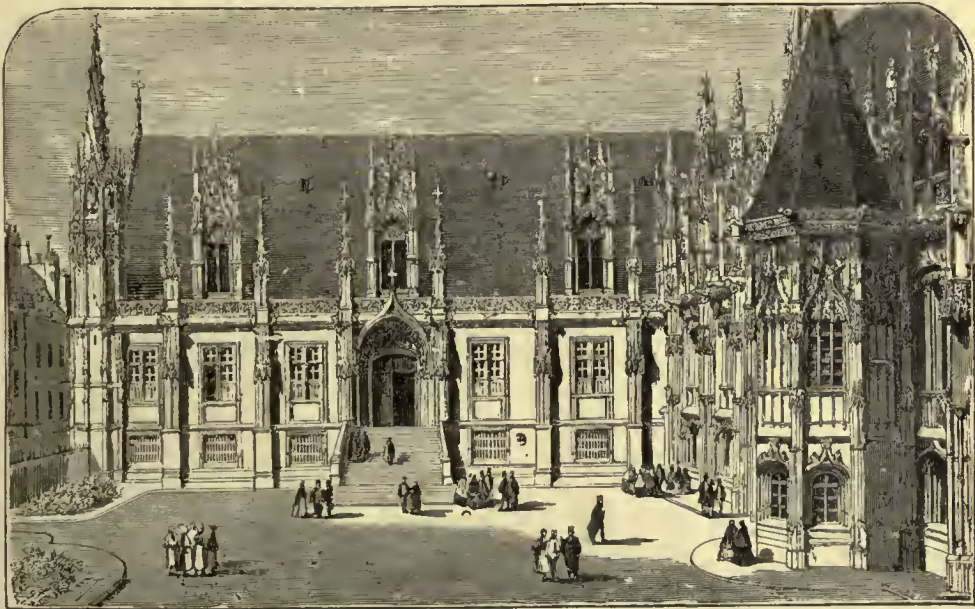
railway station is a point in its favour : but in fact either will yield in a high degree what the weary inhabitant of cities comes to seek, and often fails to find at Dieppe or Trouville, or similar fashionable watering-places—freedom from conventionality, cheerful company, but no excessive crowd. The *Pays de Caux* (*Caletes* in Cæsar), which stretches inland from this part of the coast, is a vast chalky upland, covered in parts by the remnants of ancient forests, with many open downs; also immense cornfields, separated only by ditches or low mounds. It is the district quaintly and truly characterised by Robert Browning as “Red-Cotton-Nightcap country.” The whole district is pierced by many shallow valleys, deepening towards the coast : at the seaward extremity are the fishing villages and little bathing places of the district. St. Valery-en-Caux is said to vie with Étretat or Fécamp in its attractions to the lovers of quietness, bracing air, and good bathing, but I had no opportunity of judging; and as my visit to the neighbourhood was in



ÉTRETAT : FRONT OF THE CASINO.

the early spring, I was left very much to imagination as to what any of these places may be in the height of the season.

But wherever the visitor to Normandy may start, he will, if he wishes to know the country well, soon make his way to Rouen, the capital. There is in fact no brighter or pleasanter introduction to an extended Norman tour than this ancient and modern, inland yet all but maritime, commercial yet historic, and altogether bright, picturesque, and delightful city. The Seine, which here is still a broad flood, is crowded with shipping, steam tramcars run along the busy quays, business activity is at its highest, stately streets in modern style almost emulate Paris; and yet you may pass at once into the quaint, narrow causeways of the past, among gabled houses with strange



PALAIS DE JUSTICE, ROUEN.

carvings, and enter with hushed breath into one, at least—if we may not say two, of the most beautiful Gothic edifices in the world.

Technical description of the Church of St. Ouen I leave to others: in the nobleness of its proportions, discerned from every point in their grand unity, without the interruption of those details which often impair the singleness of impression in Gothic architecture, in its brightness, so strikingly contrasting with the “dim religious light” of ecclesiastical buildings generally, and in the exceeding loveliness of its two great rose-windows, it must surely be unrivalled. The cathedral, too, is very fine, however sternly a cultivated taste may condemn its over-florid adornments, while the openwork iron spire on the summit is an unmitigated meanness. I shall not soon forget the exquisite effect of the chanted matins from a chapel behind the high altar,

the choristers being unseen. "Songs without words," indeed, were to me the joyous and triumphant melodies that floated through nave and aisles; the strain may have been that of an ignorant or mistaken worship, but the heart could link its own highest thoughts and feelings to the entrancing harmony, and when it ceased, the impulse was to kneel with the great silent congregation, which for a while stirred not, as though the enchantment held them still.

The "Lion-heart" of our King Richard I. was formerly buried in this cathedral, and here is still his rough and battered effigy; the dust into which the heart has mouldered is now in the Rouen Museum. But the



ST. OUEN, ROUEN.

English traveller will rather seek out the spot where the Maid of Orleans fell a victim to the stupid and revengeful bigotry of her time. He will find it in the Place de la Pucelle, where on the spot of the heroic girl's martyrdom stands a wretched statue surmounting a tasteless drinking-fountain. Of the statue itself, it need only be said that it may be fitly compared with our statue of Queen Anne at the top of Ludgate Hill. It is wonderful that, in a land of historic monuments, nothing has been produced more worthy to commemorate the character and career of "Joan of Arc" in this city of her martyrdom.

There is much in the city that might well tempt a visitor to linger, but we must hurry on to rural Normandy, taking the direction of Caen, the

best centre perhaps for excursions to those parts of the ancient province most especially connected with the history of our own land.

Évreux is first passed in its narrow valley; then Bernay, one of the most strikingly picturesque of Norman towns—beautiful as seen from the wooded heights above, quaint and curious in its streets of half-timbered gabled houses. It is hardly less remarkable than Lisieux, the next stage in my journey, and another excellent specimen of an old-fashioned Norman town. I alighted again, for a ramble in the streets, much admiring the carved doorways, with their grotesques which could mean nothing but the very sportiveness



BERNAY.

of art, the overhanging gables, from the narrow upper windows of which one could imagine the London 'prentice looking out for the chance of a disturbance in the narrow street beneath. For somehow the house-fronts, the quaint signs, the very garniture of the little shops, carried the thought back to the London of the seventeenth century—the London of *Nigel* and *Pepys's Diary* and of Tudor times. To walk down the Rue des Fèvres was like having a peep at the homes of one's ancestors. The people themselves awakened no such reminiscences; the women especially, in their white tasselled caps and clattering sabots, were distinctively Norman, not to mention the babel of merry voices which filled the old town with liveliness. Some houses of

sham antique were very prominent, in which the builders had ingeniously sacrificed modern comfort without attaining the quaintness or grace of the olden style. More sensibly the majority of recent builders had found refuge in the commonplace; and truth to say, apart from the ancient streets and buildings, Lisieux is as unromantic a town as one could wish to see. A little peep, however, along a stream, between high-roofed houses, where, on frail platforms run out from the back doors, the washerwomen pursued their work, was interesting. But what struck me most in the way of oddity of contrast was the telegraph slung from one antique gabled housetop to another, in the very oldest quarters of the town. The sight carried the mind in an instant across at least three centuries!



STREET CORNER, LISIEUX.

As usual I went into the cathedral, a building comparatively uninteresting. At the entrance of one of the chapels was hanging a detailed account of the apparition at Lourdes, recording "dix-huit apparitions de Marie immaculée à Bernadette depuis le 11 février 1858, jusqu'au 25 mars." There were a picture and a statue, each surmounted with the extraordinary phrase put into the Virgin's mouth by her votary, "Je suis l'immaculée Conception!" A company of young girls, evidently of good station, and apparently from some boarding-school, with their teacher, were sitting close by, all clad in black, as it was Lent, reading silently. What could be the mood of mind in which such words appeared as an oracle of Divine truth?

From Lisieux to the historic city of Caen is but a short railway journey. Arriving at night-fall, I could only observe that the streets were well-lighted and full of busy activity, while the hotel to which I had the good fortune to be directed was most excellent and comfortable. The cost of travelling in Normandy, it may be remarked by the way, is decidedly less than in Central or Southern France, particularly if the traveller is able to fall in with the customs of the country, to suppress his longings for "a cup of tea," and to enjoy thin potations of cider instead.

The first day after arriving in Caen was spent in an excursion to Bayeux, where the tapestry wrought, as is reasonably believed, by the hands of

Matilda, Queen of William the Conqueror, is, or ought to be to every Englishman, the crowning attraction of a Norman tour. The city is reached by rail; it is a quiet, inconsiderable place; the cathedral, however, deserves a visit, if only for the massive twelfth-century circular arches of the nave, and the lovely clustered pillars of the choir. These I could contemplate at leisure, for—a rare occurrence—the cathedral was empty when I visited it; and one could, therefore, traverse every part without fearing to disturb the devotions of even the solitary worshipper. It must be added that this fear is rather felt by the visitor than by the *cicerone*, who walks around and gives his descriptions quite unconcernedly, even though groups hard by may be kneeling, apparently wrapt in meditation or prayer. With but a hasty glance, however, at the cathedral, I passed on to the library, where the tapestry is now kept. Crossing a square court, I entered a lobby, where a locked glass door on the left gave a tantalising glimpse of the treasure within; but on ascending a staircase and trying another door, I found myself in a large library, well furnished with books. Several persons were at the table reading, among them the *concierge* of the establishment, who at once gave me access to the tapestry-room, and left me to study and enjoy the pictures at will. The work of Queen Matilda is on canvas, worn with age, but surprisingly uninjured, about 20 inches in width, and 213 feet in length, stretched within both sides of a glass case, parallel to the four sides of the room, so that the visitor may walk along the whole extent and study it very conveniently.

The story is told with wonderful vigour, and yet with indescribable oddity; the workmanship is that of a school-girl's old-fashioned "sampler;" the horses are crimson and blue, the men brown, yellow, and red, apparently as her majesty's "wools" might serve; but she seems to have cared nothing for small congruities; she had her story to tell, her husband to exalt; and never was record more graphic. One wonders that so much expression could be thrown into the upward or downward turn, sometimes of a single stitch; and though the figures are out of all drawing, proportion or perspective, there is an expressiveness and energy in their form and posture which show that the mind of an artist guided the needle. Rough Latin inscriptions run along the top of the pictures, but are hardly needed to make the story plainer. First we see Edward the Confessor, an aged, emaciated form, sitting on his throne and commissioning Harold, a tall comely personage, to the Duke William. Next Harold appears upon his way, on horseback, with dogs and falcon. He halts at a church by the wayside to pray, then appears in a ship tossed on the sea. His boat reaches land in the dominions of Guy, Count of Ponthieu, who arrests him, and we next are shown the two riding to Guy's castle, each with an immense falcon on the wrist. Messengers pass to and fro between Guy and Duke William. Harold is conveyed to the latter, received by William; and then appears almost the only female figure in the series, Elgiva, William's daughter, handed out from beneath a portico,



FROM THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY.

apparently by a priest, as Harold's destined bride. A warlike expedition follows, against one of the Duke's neighbours, in the course of which the Norman soldiers, crossing to Mont St. Michel, are engulfed in a quicksand, the men and horses floundering in the water being most amusingly depicted, and Harold being shown carrying one of the soldiers "pick-a-back," out of danger. Incidents of warfare follow. On one side the stronghold of Dinan is being attacked, on the other the commandant, overpowered, is holding out the keys of the fortress to the Duke at the end of a lance; the proportions of this comical picture resembling nothing so much as Hogarth's caricature of "Perspective." Then Harold is seen knighted by William, and the two come to Bayeux. Here is the celebrated scene of the oath in the cathedral. Harold again takes ship, crosses to England, and details the result of his mission to Edward the Confessor. The dying king is then shown, borne on a litter to Westminster Abbey, and his death-bed scene, which follows, is really pathetic, with all its oddity. Next Harold is portrayed as receiving the offer of the crown; the coronation scene follows, in which the exquisitely absurd expression of the Archbishop Stigand is conveyed with something more than a touch of caricature. Then comes the most amusing picture of all, a comet blazing in the sky, and people pointing to it in attitudes of grotesque alarm. Some run to tell Harold of the portent, whose attitude of terror is also most comical. From this point the English usurper (as Matilda must have considered him) is studiously depreciated, the Duke correspondingly exalted, by subtle hints of form, attitude, gesture, and even attire. Now another ship appears, this time carrying a messenger to Normandy with the news of Harold's treachery to William. Then follows a scene of activity and energy, perhaps unequalled in the series. The Duke gives his orders, men cut down trees, fashion them into ships, provide the material of war, there being among the stores a mighty cask of wine, as a commodity which the Normans are unlikely to find in Anglia! The fleet is next shown crossing the Channel, the men being out of all proportion to the ships, and the horses' heads showing above the bulwarks, like the "knights" of chess. Very

BAYEUX: THE TAPESTRY.



FROM THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY.

amusingly in the following scene is the landing of the horses portrayed. Then the soldiers are seen traversing the neighbourhood of "Hestinga" for provisions. The food is cooked, the banquet is spread, and the bishop, with a look of complacency most delightful, blesses the meal. A council of war, consisting of three persons, William, Odo, and Robert, is now depicted. Then there is seen a hurrying to and fro of messengers, giving information on both sides; the armies march, a house in the way of the Normans is burned down, mother and child fleeing from it affrighted. William addresses the army in heroic guise, and the rest of the pictures are a confused *mêlée* of horses and men, fighting, wounded, falling, the Normans victorious everywhere, the whole ending abruptly with the death of Harold and the flight of the English. Either Queen Matilda did not finish the series, or the concluding portion has been abstracted; it is indeed said, but on indifferent authority, that there was formerly a concluding representation of William's enthronement as king of England.

Such is a brief description of this unique relic; but the tapestry must be seen to be appreciated. A volume of the *Illustrated London News*, or of the *Graphic*, surviving to A.D. 2690, will be hardly more instructive as to the present times than Queen Matilda's sketches are to us. She has embellished her workmanship by a strange zoological margin, camels and elephants, dragons, griffins and "wonderful wild fowl," up to the landing of William in England, when the interest grows serious, and the border is occupied by soldiers and horses in various contortions of anguish, and last of all by a medley of heads, arms, and trunks, as if lopped off in battle. On the whole, a visit to Bayeux is to be recommended, although the town is dull enough, and except the very noble cathedral there is nothing more to see.

An expedition of almost equal interest is to Falaise, which town also may be easily reached from Caen, and be explored in a single day. If possible, the town itself is duller than Bayeux, but the glimpses of landscape and river between the *falaises*, or wooded cliffs, are truly lovely. The castle, which was most probably the birthplace of William, is a very noble

ruin, though somewhat tastelessly repaired. It stands on the rock from which its square keep and round tower seem to grow, and is almost inaccessible on three sides, where gardens and apple-orchards cling insecurely to the steep slopes. On the third side it is open to the town. A bright-eyed lad at the portal took for granted that I wished to go to the college, which occupies part of the castle enclosure, and in which, if we may judge by the intelligent aspect of the pupils, a really good education is given. On learning that I was only a sight-seer, he directed me to the ramparts while

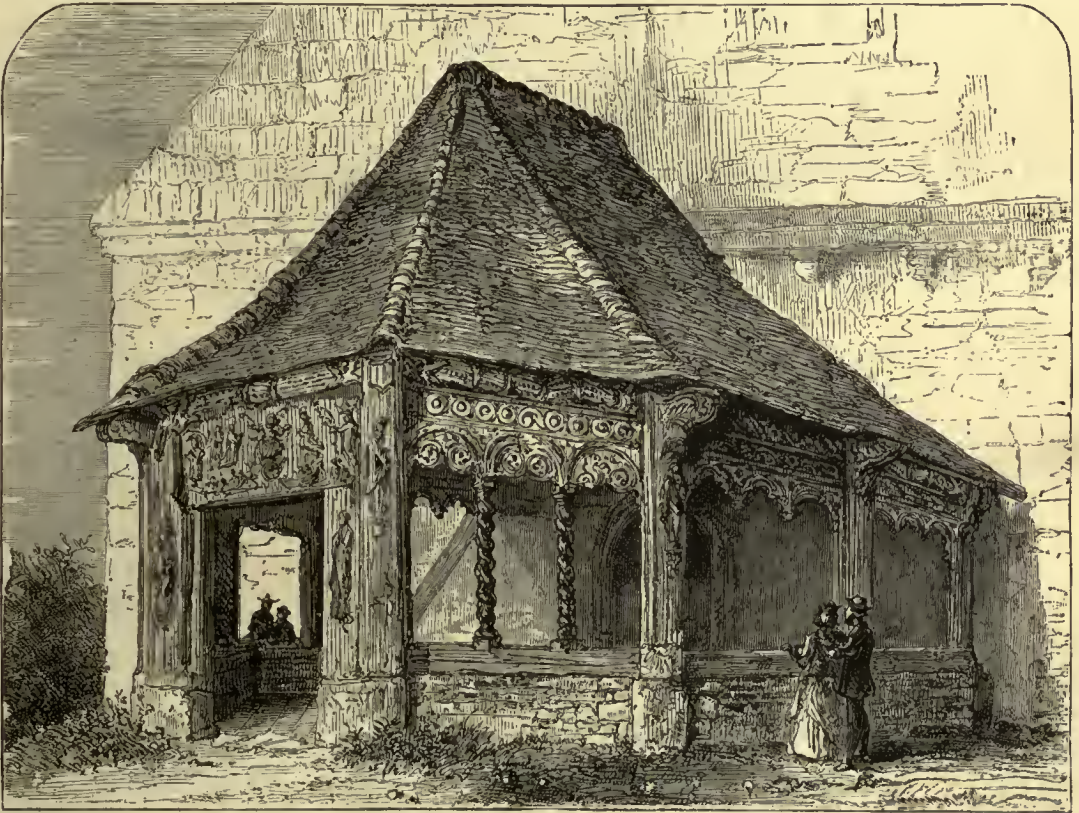


FALAISE CASTLE.

he summoned his father as guide. Never, surely, was conductor more taciturn. With plenty of information to give, he volunteered nothing, but only answered questions; and visitors, if bent on anything more than barren inspection, must prime themselves with knowledge beforehand. From the ramparts overlooking the narrow valley at the foot of the cliff, we climbed to the keep by a safe staircase and balcony, which the genius of restoration has substituted for the old perilous-looking footway of planks. We stood at the window from which the terrible Duke Robert discerned

FALAISE CASTLE.

the fair Arlette, the tanner's daughter, washing clothes in the stream below; and it was strange to see the tannery still there, with maidens of the village suburb occupied in the same work. Such simple ways and customs in their fixity outlast even the proud embattled tower. The distant laughter of the merry river-side group rippled up to the castle heights, even as when it fell bewitchingly on the ears of the lonely chieftain, and in a manner shaped the future history of mankind! Then hard by the window is the grim chamber, or rather cell, in which the future conqueror is said



CHURCH PORCH, BOSC-BORDEL, LOWER SEINE.

to have been born. An odd inscription on a printed placard has been placed here, and I copied it by permission of the uncommunicative *concierge*. Here is the conclusion—

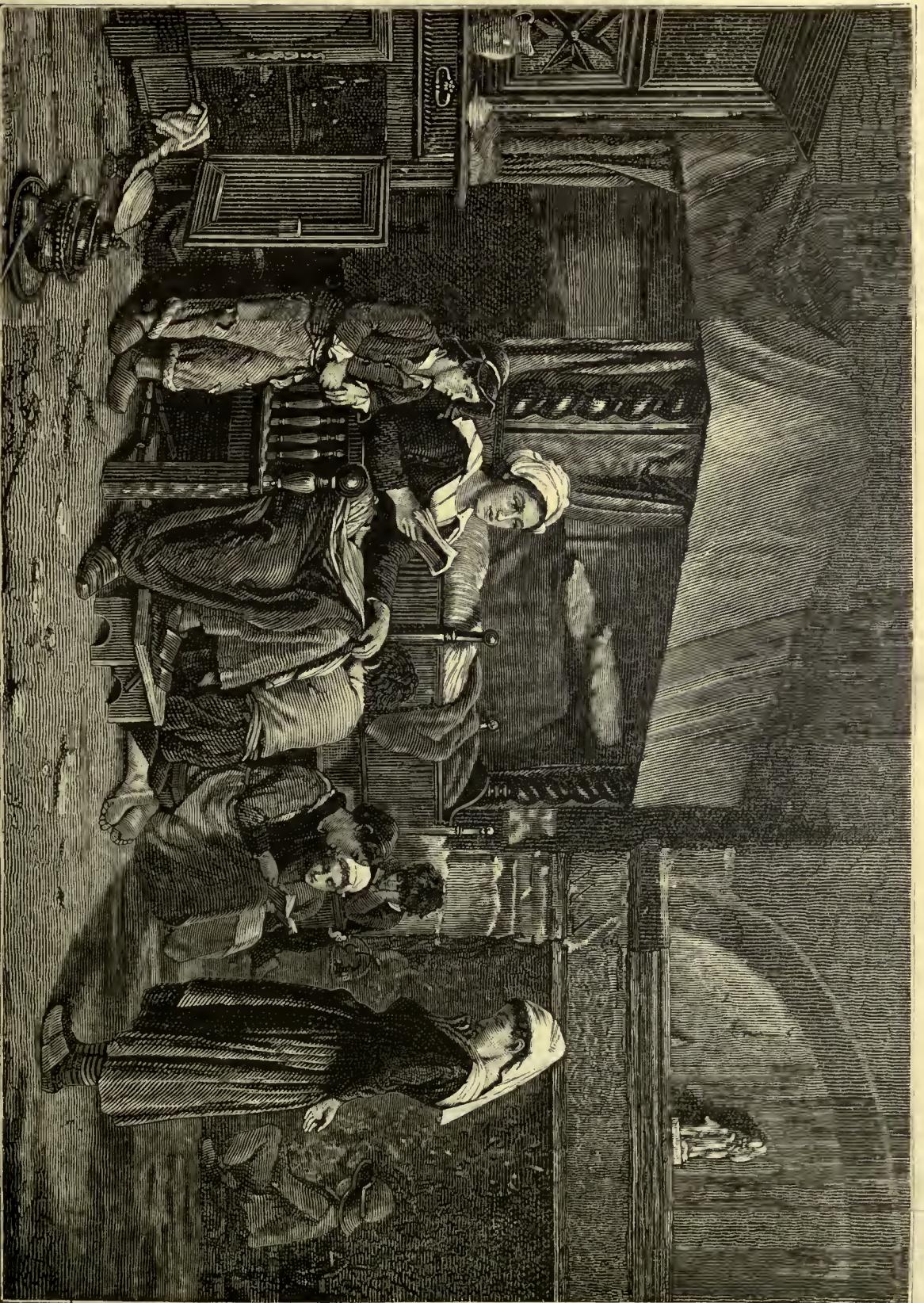
“ Il ne fut qu'un barbare
Si nous le jugeons
D'après les idées de notre siècle ;
Mais il fut un très-grand Homme,
Si nous l'apprécions
D'après les hommes et les événements
Au milieu desquels il a vécu.

Soyons justes, voyageur ;
 Voyons dans Guillaume le génie créateur le plus puissant
 Du XI^e siècle.
 Inclignons-nous respectueusement devant le berceau
 De celui qui sut être à la fois
 Le Conquérant
 Et le Législateur
 De la vieille Angleterre."

After this delicious piece of moral and historical criticism, what could I do but for the sake of "Old England" bow before "the cradle" and pass on? The rest of the castle is too much like other castles to be of any special interest. There are the dreadful oubliettes, the castle well, the mighty walls of Talbot's Tower, with very modern "leads" at the summit, and a magnificent view all around of fair Normandy. Descending again to the town, a very fine equestrian statue of William is passed, the pedestal bearing the inscription, "Guillaume, Duc de Normandie, Roi d'Angleterre." Figures of six Norman dukes are at the foot, and it is interesting to notice the Bayeux tapestry costumes imitated in bronze. Opposite the statue are the cathedral gates. I went in, attracted by the hum of voices, very different from the usual droning of the mass or chant of choristers, and found what to English eyes resembled a veritable Sunday school, though on a week day. Two priests, each with a large class, were giving religious lessons, with great animation—one in the choir to a number of girls, the other in a side chapel to a large and animated "infant class." The rapid questioning and the eager answers, with the evident interest of teachers and taught, had a very homelike effect, and one could only wish that the elder scholars, at least, had been using Bibles to verify the teachings given, instead of receiving the whole lesson on the word of the priest.

Returning to Caen, I found the antique and lively city well deserving of attention for its own sake. The chief interest rests in the two abbey churches or cathedrals at the extremities of the town, one reared by William on his own behalf, the other in memory of the Queen Matilda, and offered to the church as an atonement for their marriage within the prohibited degrees. In the former, the church of St. Étienne, the Conqueror was buried, and it is a not unworthy monument of his fame. The other, the church of the Holy Trinity (or *Abbaye aux Dames*), is less massive, but makes up for want of external grandeur by its interior lightness and beauty. A community of nursing sisters occupies the adjacent building, the choir being screened from the rest of the church for their use.

Another noble church, that of St. Pierre, in an evening's quiet stroll through the city, I saw lighted up, while sounds of music, which evidently were not the ordinary vespers, were heard from within. On entering, to my surprise I found the building brilliantly illuminated, and crowded with people, who were *singing hymns*. It was a "service of song," bright, cheerful, and,



A SCHOOL IN NORTHERN FRANCE.



CAEN.

from the multitude of soft voices, most thrilling. The tunes might have been those of our best modern "Revival" hymns; their general character and effect were precisely the same, the same too was the heartiness with which the vast congregations united in the melodies. It was a novel illustration of the way in which

Romanism enlists the masses. The hymns, moreover, seemed all to be to God and Christ, and, so far as I could ascertain, not at all to the Virgin. A short sermon had preceded, but for this I was too late. The services, I afterwards found, were continued every evening during the week, and were characterised throughout by the same simplicity and heartiness.

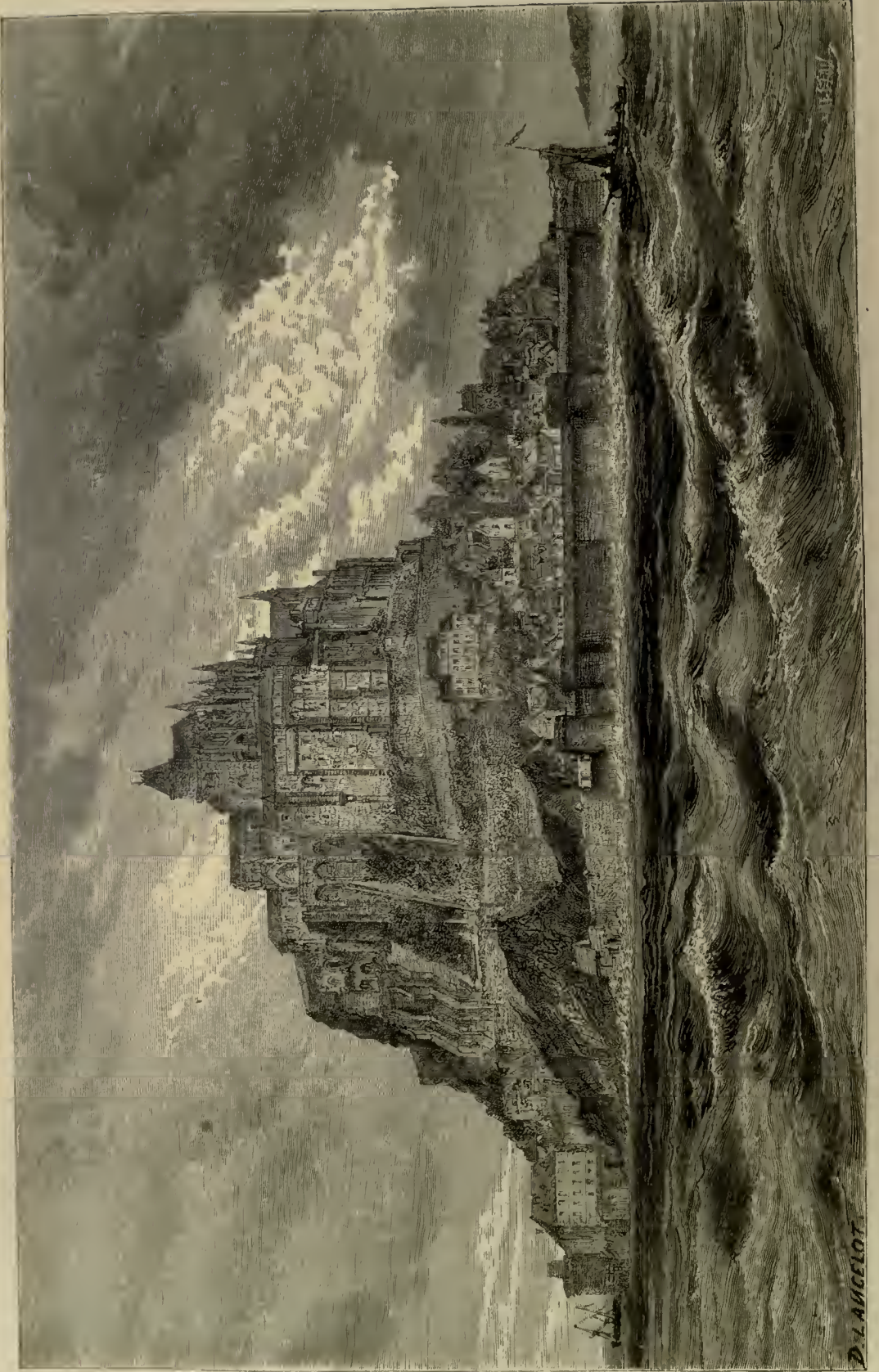
The people of Caen seem much given to sacred song, and the vespers in the Abbaye aux Dames are in another way most exquisite.

The journey from Caen, on a glorious spring morning, gave the opportunity of seeing the Norman landscapes almost at their best. They are on the whole surprisingly like those of England. Caen itself, with its meadows and spires, reminded one of Oxford: the thatched cottages of the villages passed by the leisurely train might have been in Hampshire or Surrey; the primroses and cowslips on the embankment, and the gleam of yellow gorse from the hedgerows, brought the Midland counties to mind; the tender apple-blossom just beginning to appear in sheltered places promised a profusion of flowery beauty that might rival Somerset or Devonshire; and though the country was in general destitute of all the wilder elements of scenery, we came upon one junction (at Berjou) where the wood-clothed hills and narrow valley with its gleaming river were so like the entrance to the Vale of Todmorden from Halifax that I had to rub my eyes to assure myself that I had not wakened up in Yorkshire. The quantity of mistletoe on the trees, especially on the apple trees, was very noticeable; otherwise the orchards and the woods, like the meadows, the cornfields covered with the tender springing blade, and the gently swelling hills, might have confirmed the impression that I was in England. The sight of the white-capped peasant women in their out-of-door work, and the chatter of the bright-eyed boys and girls would, however, speedily dispel the illusion, and the "unhasting," but not "unresting" progress of the railway trains would show plainly enough that I was yet in France.

At length, however, the hedgerows and frequent copses, fringing wild and rocky ravines, showed that we were in the "Bocage" country, so dear to the artist; and when the train stopped at Vire, I felt that the most beautiful part of *la belle Normandie* must surely now be reached. The town stands on a bold escarped hill, round three sides of which sweeps a clear bright river; terraced paths encircle the heights, passing now through shady groves, now out upon the open cliff; and the views over rocky wooded glens to the sweep of upland and green valley beyond, all brilliant with white apple-blossom and yellow furze, were most enchanting. It was matter of regret that I could stay to see so little of the town itself, in which there are numerous quaint old Norman houses and a fine clock-tower. Here, too, one learns a little lesson in etymology. The romantic "Vales of Vire" (*Vaux-de-Vire*) seem to have inspired a native poet, Oliver Basselin, to wild and luxuriant measures, and by a slight change the name *Vaudeville* became applied to lyrical dramatic strains of a light and cheerful character.

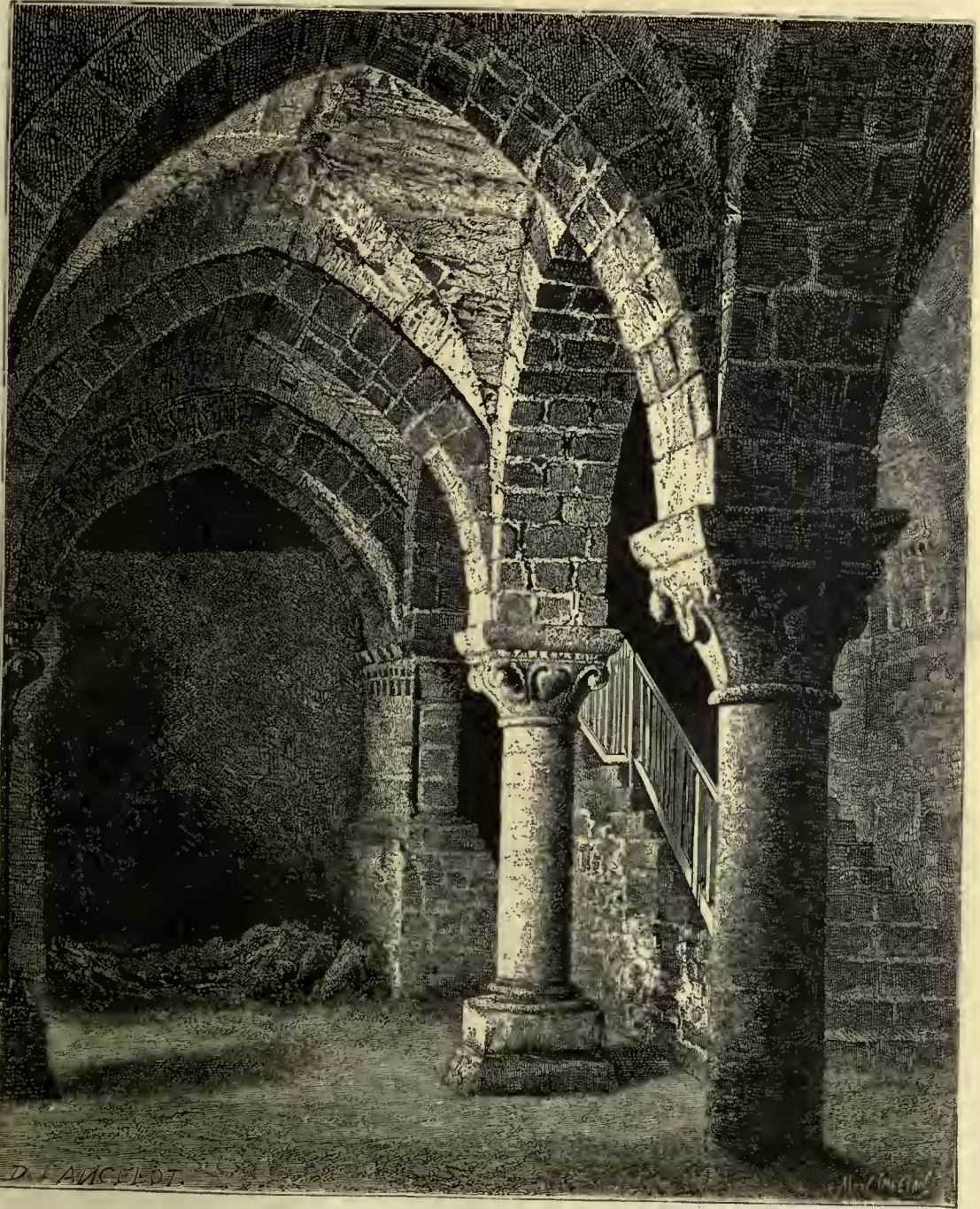
At the next station, the exchange to the Avranches *diligence* was hardly an improvement; but the Rosinante steeds, with their tinkling bells, the crackling of the whip, and the monosyllabic guttural of the Norman driver, inimitable by any known system of orthography, at least diversified the journey.





MONT ST. MICHEL.

Avranches was gained at last, but not for a long halt ; my object being



CRYPT: MONT ST. MICHEL.

to reach Mont St. Michel as speedily as possible. This miniature mountain, in view through many a turn and winding of the road between Avranches

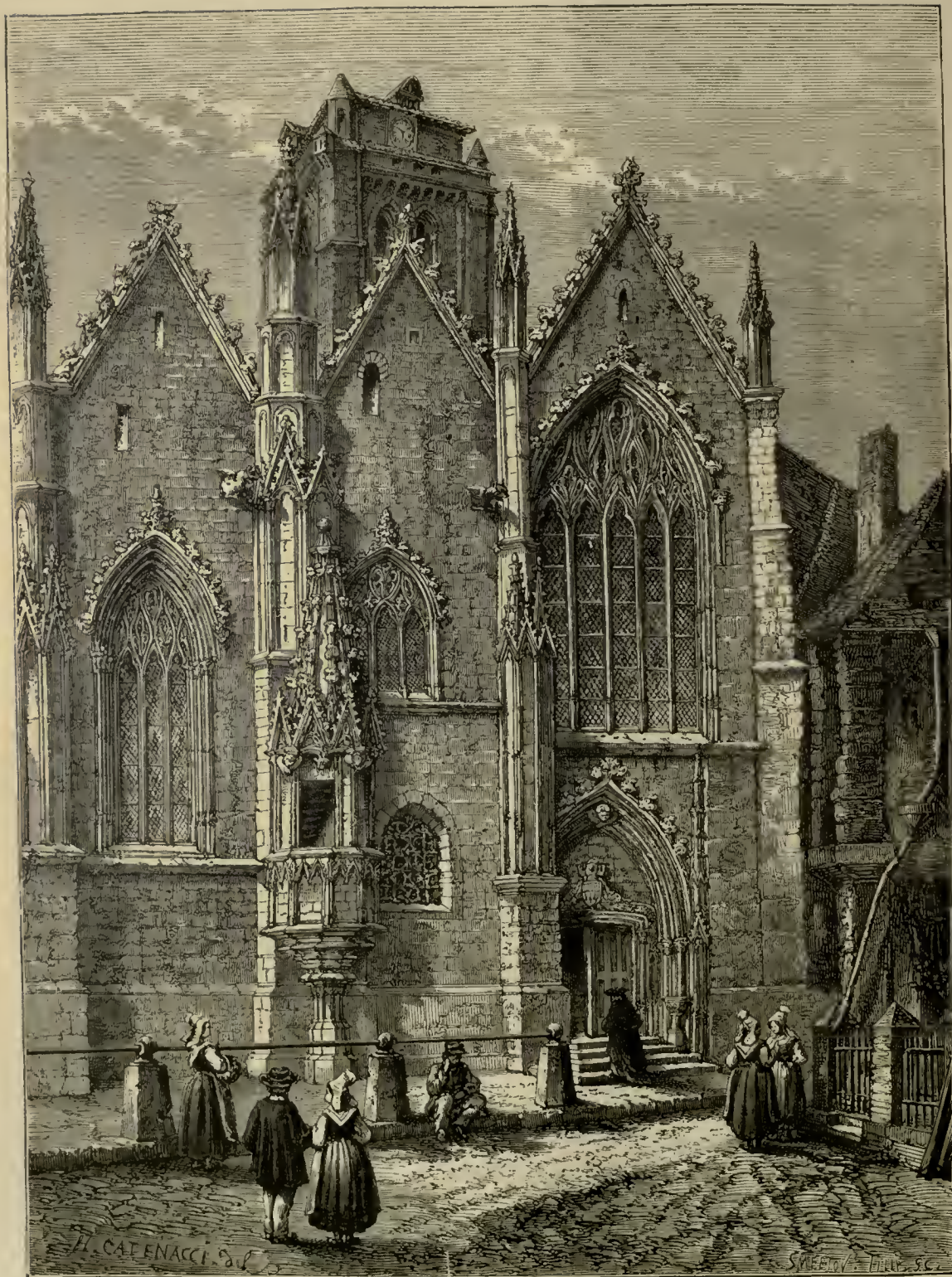
and Pontorson, is strangely impressive. Much larger than its sister mount in Cornwall, it raises its peaked granite summit from the far-spreading sands, crowned with buttresses and towers that seem to grow out of the solid rock. Every part of the mount is of exceeding interest, from the walk or drive over the sands when the tide is down, to the climb through the steep village, up the stony grassy staircase to the convent door, through the dungeon, crypt, and stately hall up to the magnificent cloisters, for whose extraordinary beauty no description had prepared me; then to the summit



FISHERWOMEN OF CANCALE.

of the church, where St. Michael the Archangel was in old time supposed to appear as ruler of the storm. The view over land and sea is splendid, but the elevation is giddy, and one is glad to descend before the returning tide cuts off the pedestrian's access to the shore.

From Pontorson the access is easy to Cancale, on the edge of the bay, with its fine oyster-beds and feminine army of fishers; then to St. Malo, fortified, quaint, odoriferous; then up the river Rance to Dinan, which somehow reminded me of Bridgnorth. A grand viaduct, over which the carriage-road is taken, is evidently the pride of the place, but the walks on the



CHURCH OF NOTRE DAME, VITRÉ.

terraced, well-wooded slopes, and the exceeding beauty of the views over the deep Rance valley, are a yet greater attraction. No introduction to Brittany could be more delightful, and it is not surprising that many English people find their way here, and that not merely as visitors. There is nothing more beautiful in the whole north of France.

An excursion from Dinan to Rennes and Vitré was found very pleasant.



A BRETON "CALVARY."

Rennes, indeed, the old capital of Brittany, was somewhat disappointing; it has too much broken with the past, and except the seventeenth-century Palais de Justice, there was little to detain the traveller. From one pleasant eminence, called Mount Tabor—once the garden of a Benedictine monastery—there is a beautiful view, from walks sheltered by noble trees, and those who have not seen Dinan may gain here a good first impression of Breton valley

able orchards are exchanged for a comparatively sterile region, with great stretches of moorland, covered with gorse and broom, while the jutting granite adds here and there to the wildness of the scene. There is something very fine in the abrupt outlines of the hills, though they never rise to the dignity of mountains; and in many a deep sheltered dell, with its sparkling

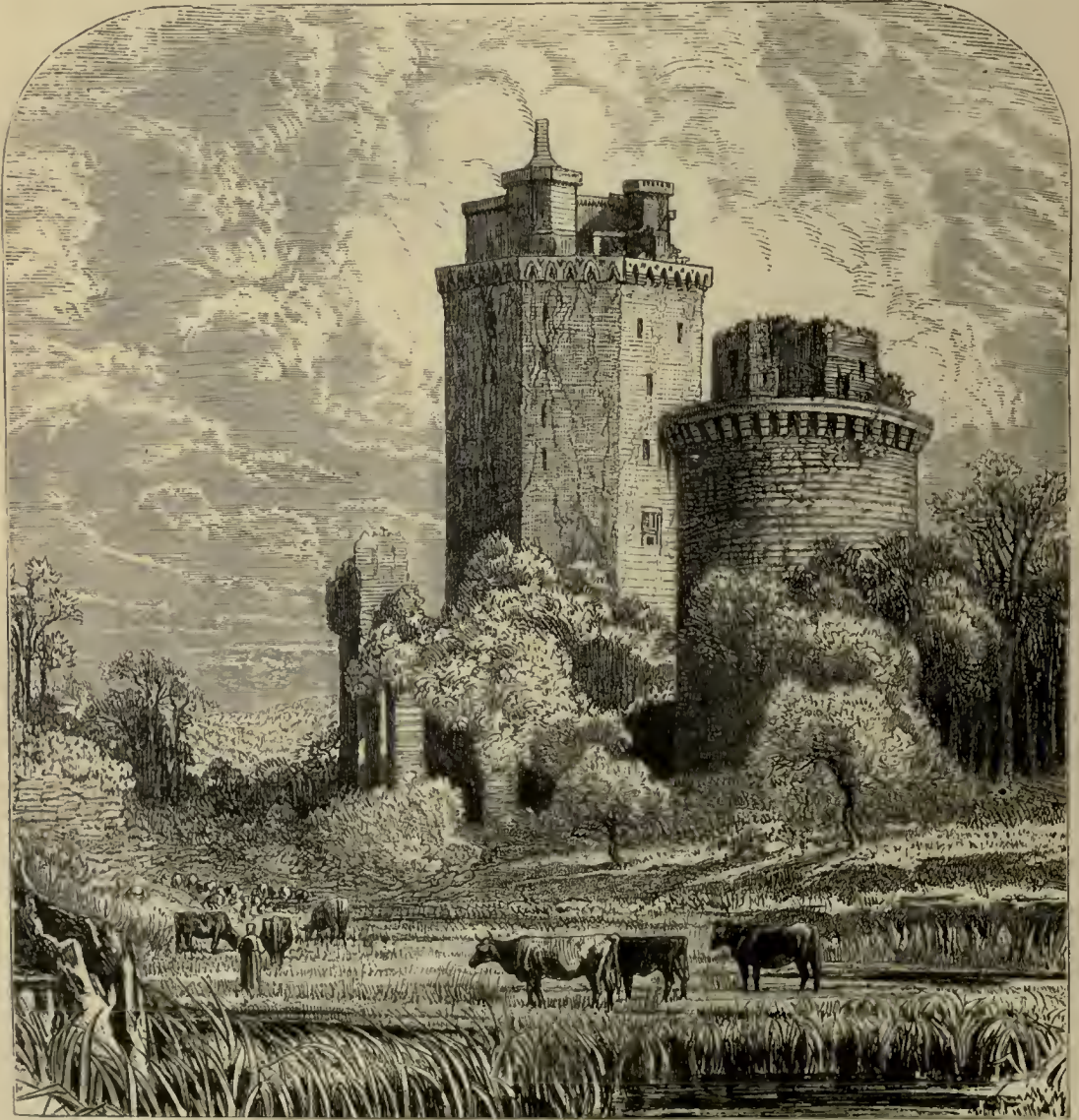


BRETON PEASANT AT HOME.

stream hastening to the not-distant sea, there is the charm of woodland and of flower. In fact, if Normandy is like Devonshire, Brittany resembles Cornwall—a peninsula, too, like the latter,—stretching its granite crags into the Atlantic. The people are as unlike the Normans as neighbours well can be; a settled seriousness rests on their heavy faces, and the sober-going

little people whom one meets in the streets are a great contrast to the bright-eyed, vivacious children of Caen, Falaise, or Avranches.

From Laval an easy railway ride took me again past Vitré and Rennes to St. Brieuc, where I found a devoted young Baptist missionary, bravely



TOWER OF ELVIN.

holding his ground amid a stubbornly superstitious yet, on the whole, tolerant community. The Bretons are slow to change, they have not even yet renounced all the superstitions of the pre-Christian ages; while they seem to cling to their Romanistic practices with peculiar tenacity; but my friend, as he took me into the little "upper room" where he and a few believers worship,

CARNAC.

was full of heart and hope—lonely, but not discouraged, and confident of ultimate success. I should like to have visited Morlaix and Guingamp, with some other places where this mission is carried on, but my business was rather with the past, and I hurried on to Auray and Carnac.

“A great number of English come here every summer,” said the peasant lad who conducted me to the Carnac monuments, “almost every day.” My own impression, I confess, would have been that this wonderful peninsula had been rather neglected by our countrymen, and that the majority of educated Englishmen know “Carnac” better as a city of sepulchres on the Nile than as a region of mystery near to their own shores. This whole Breton district, however, is full of a weird charm to all who have eyes to



CARNAC.

see, and is besides very fairly accessible. A drive of seven or eight miles from Auray over what our Wiltshire friends might call a “fuzzy down”—undulating moorland, all golden with the blossoming gorse, flicked by the dark green of fir copses, and brightened here and there by a solitary apple orchard—ended at a point where across the heath appeared a group of grey stones. A ragged lad, who appeared mysteriously from amid the gorse, volunteered his services as conductor, and we were soon among these “Druidical” remains. Only relics now are left of what must have been the most amazing of Celtic monuments, and what is now the most mysterious. Three main groups of *menhirs* or upright blocks were visited, each separated from the next by the distance of about half a mile, yet with isolated blocks

between, showing that the series was once continuous. In fact, the destructiveness that has for centuries been at work on these monuments makes it difficult to reconstruct the series even in imagination. The inhabitants of the district have regarded them as a standing quarry of building materials, available without the trouble of excavation; and villages, churches, farmhouses, all around are massively constructed of these Celtic spoils. At length,



ORIGINAL ARRANGEMENT OF STONES AT CARNAC.

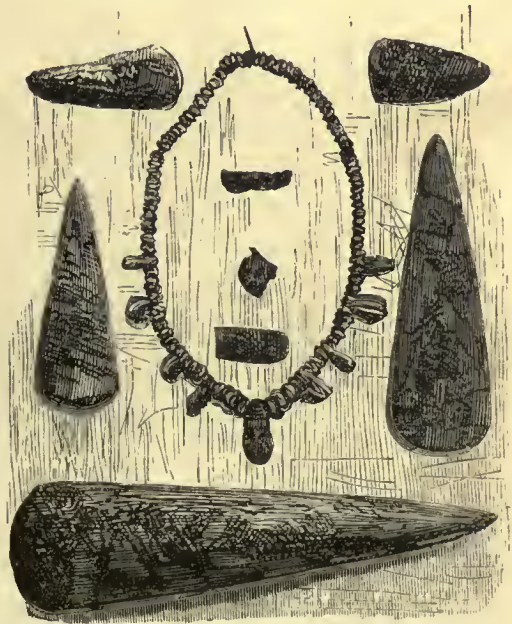
however, the spoliation has ceased, the remains are classed among "historical monuments," and are henceforth comparatively safe.

What they meant, what they were, no man can tell. The tradition is hardly surprising that represents them as an army of heathen warriors stiffened into stone at the adjuration of the patron saint of the district, whom they were pursuing to the sea. Some have seen in them the long-drawn aisles of Druidical worship; but most modern investigators think that they



BROKEN PILLAR AT LOCMARIAQUER.

were ranges of sepulchral monuments; and the disinterred relics from beneath seem to confirm the supposition. But the grey stones have kept their secret well. And whatever may be said of the upright stones, or *menhirs*,* the great stone tables, or *dolmens*, were undoubtedly sepulchral. A distinguished Scottish antiquary, Mr. Milne, with whom I had a little talk on the subject in the village of Carnac, and who has as good a right to speak on the subject as any other living man, will no doubt give the result of his researches to the world. At present one can but traverse the vast and melancholy plain with ever-increasing wonder, striving, however vainly, to read the secret, and listening to the murmur of the sea. I climbed a little hill, Mont St. Michel, an ancient tumulus, now surmounted by a chapel. Here has been found many interesting relics; including a necklace of jasper, with hard cutting-tools of hemolite and other minerals. The former must have been brought from beyond the Alps.



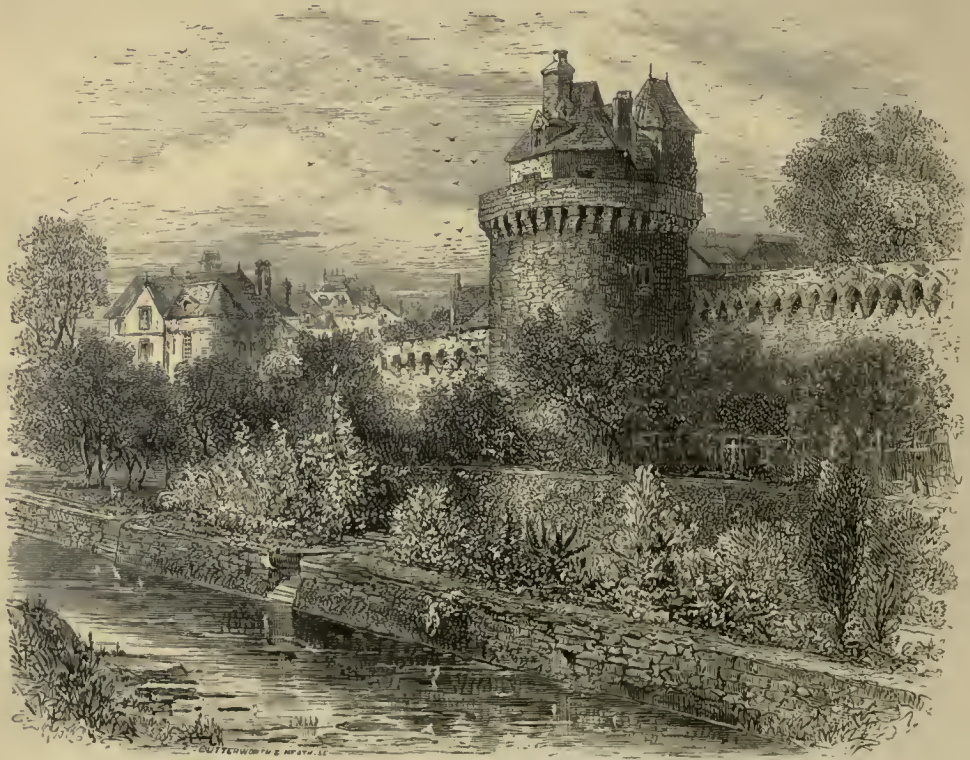
OBJECTS FOUND AT MONT ST. MICHEL.

Not far from this tumulus I visited, what was also a wonder in this lonely spot, the site of a very complete Roman villa, with bath-house and a Temple of Venus, recently disinterred, but in plan and foundations quite discernible. Here, then, is the sign of a civilization and a worship also passed away, super-

* See *Leisure Hour*, 1866, p. 231, "Pillar Worship of the Celts."

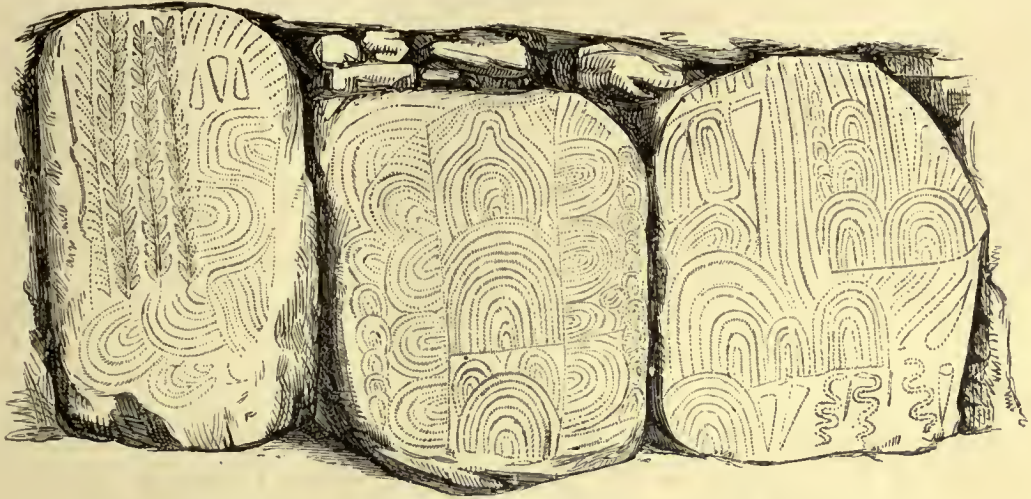
imposed upon these Celtic remains. Cæsar's *Commentaries* afford perhaps the only light; and the name of the *Veneti*, the Celtic tribe overcome by the great Roman, still survives in Vannes, the chief town of the department.

But the wonders of the Morbihan—as the department is called, from the “little sea” which in one direction forms its frontier—are not wholly exhausted, even with Carnac. A week at least may be well spent in exploring the wonders of the peninsula. One excursion is to Locmariaquer, where is the largest of the *menhirs*, though now fallen and broken, with some very imposing *dolmens*, one of which is called the “Table of Cæsar,”



CITY WALLS AND CONSTABLE'S TOWER, VANNES.

though it was already a thing of the long-buried past when the Roman general overran the district with his legions. Then there is the Morbihan itself, with its numerous islands—many yet unexplored, and guarding many a wondrous secret of the past olden world. The chief of these islets (Gavr-innis, “Goat Island”), however, is often visited, for the sake of its cave, which those who have seen it declare to be the most marvellous among all the wonders of this region. A stone gallery, roofed by immense granite slabs, runs east and west for more than fifty feet, the upright stones on either side and the rude ceiling being covered by undecipherable, inexplicable engravings. There seems here and there the attempt to portray some object of simple shape,



SCULPTURES ON INTERIOR OF SEPULCHRE AT GAVR-INNIS.

an axe, or a fern, but the pattern is apparently lost in a convolution of lines to which no meaning has hitherto been attached. Yet it is plain that many hands were once busy here, and heads to guide them, with the purpose to express *something*: but what? Perhaps mere ornamental art. Or if any meaning were expressed, the secret has vanished, with the people themselves, and it is unlikely that the world will ever read the record.

On the shore south-west of Locmariaquer is the mound of "Pierres-Plattes," a large cromlech, and avenue of fourteen vertical stones, two of which are very curiously sculptured. "Observers," says Mr. S. R. Pattison, "have characterised the representations, according to their fancies, either as palm-branches, serpents, or sacred beetles, and attributed them to Phœnician, Egyptian, or Carthaginian colonists;" others have



"TABLE OF CÆSAR," LOCMARIAQUER.

seen in them symbols of worship or the elements of a written language. "But all these surmises or conclusions are simply erroneous; for we can now safely pronounce them to be mere ornamentation in which the celt (or chisel) with its attachments, and the shield, are the chief objects represented, together with some conventional additions, mostly variations of the same things."* A sculpture on the under-surface of the covering-stone

* *Leisure Hour*, 1866, p. 315, "The Sculptured Sepulchres of the Celts in Brittany."

represents a complete hatchet, with a crest denoting the loose ends of the fibres of attachment.

A sail from Locmariaquer across the Bay of Quiberon to the wild promontory, where seabirds scream incessantly, completed the excursion, which would have been less charming had the day been less calm in its perfect loveliness. Thence in the gathering twilight it was a weird walk along the lonely isthmus, scantily shadowed by pine-trees, and with the sea moaning on both sides against the granite rocks below. Plouharnel reached at last, it was pleasant to rest at the quiet little inn,—shop at one side, hotel at the other, where there is quite a museum of antiquities discovered in this neighbourhood; but the key was lost! “Monsieur was the first visitor of the year,” was the excuse: the whole village seemed roused to the search, but it was in vain, and I had to content myself with a walk next morning to see some fine *dolmens* by the roadside: after which I started for Vannes, where in the famous Tour du Connétable there is a museum of Celtic and Roman remains, especially the former, which in its wonderful variety and excellent arrangement only deepens the sense of mystery excited by the grey old-world monuments from which they had been taken, and which will doubtless remain on their wild, lonely, sea-beaten heath to baffle inquiry for many generations to come.



COAST OF QUIBERON, NORTH-WESTERN FRANCE.



CHATEAU D'AMBOISE, ON THE LOIRE.

UP THE LOIRE BY RAIL.

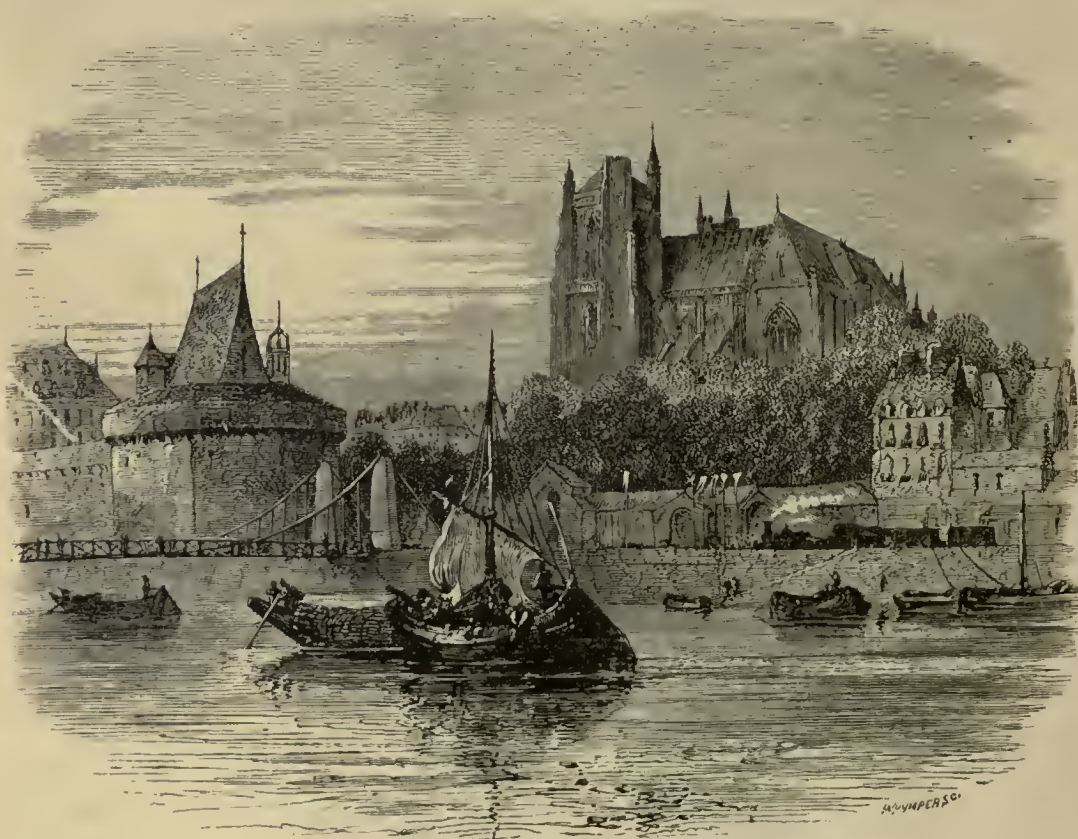
NANTES—HISTORICAL MEMOIRS—ANGERS—TOURS, POICTIERS, AND METTRAY—AMBOISE AND THE HUGUENOTS—ORLEANS—THE HIGHER LOIRE—A FRENCH KILLIECRANKIE—LE PUY.



MY long and interesting Breton journey ended by a pleasant railway ride to Nantes. After the weird scenery of Carnac and the Morbihan, it was something to find oneself again in a stately, well-ordered, stirring city. And the entrance to Nantes is very striking. For a considerable distance the railroad runs along the embankment of the Loire, which here in full flood pursues its way between its level banks to the Atlantic. It was a bright spring evening about sunset. As we approached the city, little family parties were seen strolling along the quays, or sitting beneath the chestnut-trees, in the light of the westering sun. The warm glow was reflected from the waters, and from the windows of the houses on the southern bank of the river. Overhanging the quay, the balconies of the tall houses were occupied by many a lively group. Steamers

UP THE LOIRE BY RAIL.

sped to and fro on the broad bosom of the river, and vessels, in great but not overcrowding numbers, were moored alongside. As the train moved slowly towards its destination, the sounds of a busy city, with the tolling of many bells, fell upon the ear. Nearer the terminus, the river seemed to divide into several channels, and I afterwards found that the city was completely intersected by the parted streams, so that quays and bridges were everywhere upon its lower levels, and, once in the labyrinth, the pedestrian is not a little bewildered. On the whole, the extent, stateliness and activity of



NANTES.

Nantes quite surprised me. It is worthy of the noble river near whose mouth it stands, as well as of the historical associations that the name awakens. The Edict of Nantes, issued by Henry iv. in 1598, remained for nearly a century the charter of Huguenot freedom; its revocation by Louis xiv. in 1685 was one of those acts of blind bigotry which foredoomed the yet distant catastrophe of the Bourbon monarchy, while at the same time, by scattering through other countries many of the wisest, bravest, and most industrious of the French people, it was overruled for the lasting welfare of mankind. It was at Nantes, too, that many of the most horrible excesses



WOODLAND SCENE: BANKS OF THE LOIRE.

of the Revolution were committed, under the infamous Carrier, and thousands of hapless, innocent victims were engulfed in the Loire, that lay so peacefully on this spring evening in the calm sunset glow! All this was but an episode in that most melancholy of civil wars, the desperate uprising of La Vendée against the Republic after the death of Louis xvii.) "It cost, as they reckon in round numbers, the lives of a hundred thousand fellow-mortals, with noyadings, conflagrations by infernal column, which defy arithmetic. This is the La Vendée war."*

In the city itself there was not much to require detailed inspection. The castle and the cathedral everybody visits of course; the latter, heavy and unattractive externally, has a really noble nave. But the chief interest of the city was in its moving crowds, its narrow but well-built, busy streets, and in its open squares or *places*, and at least one splendid arcade in which the well-furnished book-shops show that there must be a good proportion of readers in this ancient city. What it may be religiously, I could not discover. I spent a Sunday there, but found the city apparently given over to pleasure, and the doors of the theatre opposite my hotel were besieged in the evening by eager crowds. According to the bills, the play was *Hamlet*, but whether translated or "adapted," tragedy, opera, or travesty, I did not learn.

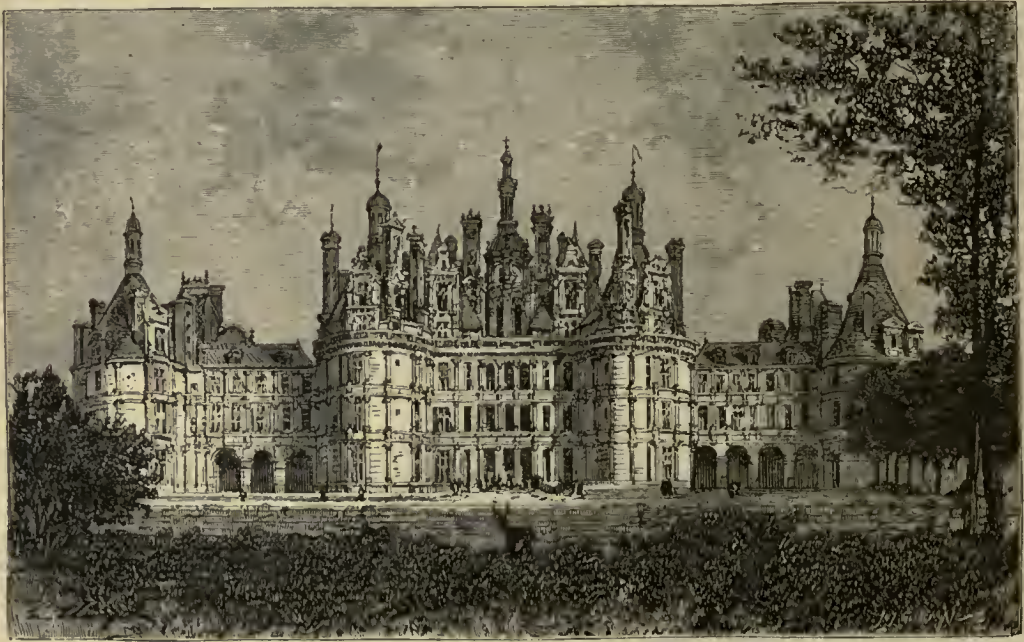
From Nantes my route continued by the Loire along a most charming valley, well watered, of course—the great river often seeming to break up into eccentric and independent divisions, enclosing islands, or spreading itself out over wide expanses, then gathering itself steadily for some miles into its bed, and everywhere carrying freshness and fertility, which now smiled with all the lovely promise of the spring. On both sides of the broad level flood rose swelling hills, not grand or lofty, but beautiful with verdure, and studded with villages and towns. On the opposite or southern side, many a cleft in the hills led up to the Vendean valleys, suggesting scenes of that unhappy war, while the right bank, along which the train was speeding, by many a ruined castle on the heights, recalled the associations of feudal times. Amongst these old fortresses, I was amused to find the chateau of the veritable Blue Beard! It appears that "there was such a person," and that the misdeeds of a *grand seigneur* in the Loire laid the foundation of the English nursery legend.

"Black Angers" is reached at last, the Angiers of Shakspeare's *King John*, the capital of old Anjou; then still along a charming valley, between hills that grow more thickly wooded, and waters that gleam more brightly to where "White Saumur" lies across the river, with its high-roofed, parti-coloured Hôtel de Ville, and castle towering on the heights. Vineyards now appear upon the hill-slopes, as yet bare groves of slender leafless rods, for the time of verdure has not come. But the sunshine floods the air, and the soft exhilarating influence is without suspicion of sudden chill from the east,

* Carlyle, *French Revolution*, Book vii., ch. 3.

as in the fairest spring days at home we have too often experienced. The charm is perfect.

But we must hurry on. Should I turn aside to see yet another dolmen, the largest, it is said, in France, standing mysteriously there alone among the vineyards, almost the sole relic of a vanished history? It is not possible now, for there is not time; and my wanderings in the Morbihan have sufficed—especially as the questions raised by these strange monuments of human strength and something more, of which we can only form conjectures, can never be settled. Somehow, too, the grey relics seem more naturally to belong to yonder dreary plain than to this fair valley. So let us pass on; and now, to say the truth, the Loire becomes less beautiful.



CHATEAU DE CHAMBORD.

Its eccentric wanderings and frequent changes of bed have laid bare great reaches of chalky pebbles and brown sand, which even now lie flat and glaring in the sun, and in summer must give an arid and almost desolate appearance to the "revolutionary stream," as, with reference to these very changes, it was called with grim humour by Barrère. In rainy seasons, however, the torrent rolls broadly and deeply enough, as the many embankments plainly show.

To Tours the route begins to be wearisome; I was glad when the great bridge beyond Cinq-Mars showed that we were nearing the town, where a night's rest in a comfortable hotel was fairly earned. The morning disclosed a fair city on the level river bank, and a walk through the streets was full

of interest. At the extremity of the finest street, on the quay, is a statue of Descartes, a native of Touraine, though not of the city itself. And here it may be noticed, what every traveller in France will observe, how almost every illustrious man, whether in science, arts, or arms, has his monument in the place that claims his birth. There is a noble pride in such commemoration, and it is good to keep such memories alive. Nor is this confined to the larger towns; even in quiet manufacturing Laval I had observed a very striking statue to Ambrose Paré, "restorer of surgery," born there about 1510; and numberless instances might be cited of men who have lived only to benefit mankind without military glory, or royal or lordly names or colossal fortunes, being thus gratefully remembered by their fellow-citizens. Is this a case where the saying holds good, "They do these things better in France?"

Perhaps, however, the name that most readily occurs in connection with Tours is that of the warrior-bishop Martin, in whose career we may discern, through the mist of legend, one of the chief influences which led to the overthrow of idolatry in Gaul, at the end of the fourth century. Succeeding generations were wont to invoke his name, and their frequent cry of *O mihi, Beate Martine!* (perhaps picked up at Poitiers) somehow, it is said, in a slightly altered form, became a popular expression among English apprentices and street-boys for the very extreme of absurdity! But be this as it may, the great battle of Tours, fought on the great plain to the south, between Charles Martel and the advancing Saracen hosts, A.D. 732, has become connected with the brave bishop's name, the clergy of the period attributing the victory to the intercession of the saint.* Details of the battle may be read in Gibbon. Sir Edward Creasy says of it, that "this great victory gave a decisive check to the career of Arab conquest in Western Europe, rescued Christendom from Islam, preserved the relics of ancient and the germs of modern civilisation, and re-established the old superiority of the Indo-European over the Semitic family of mankind."† Similarly, Dr. Arnold writes of the victory as "among those signal deliverances which have affected for centuries the happiness of mankind."‡

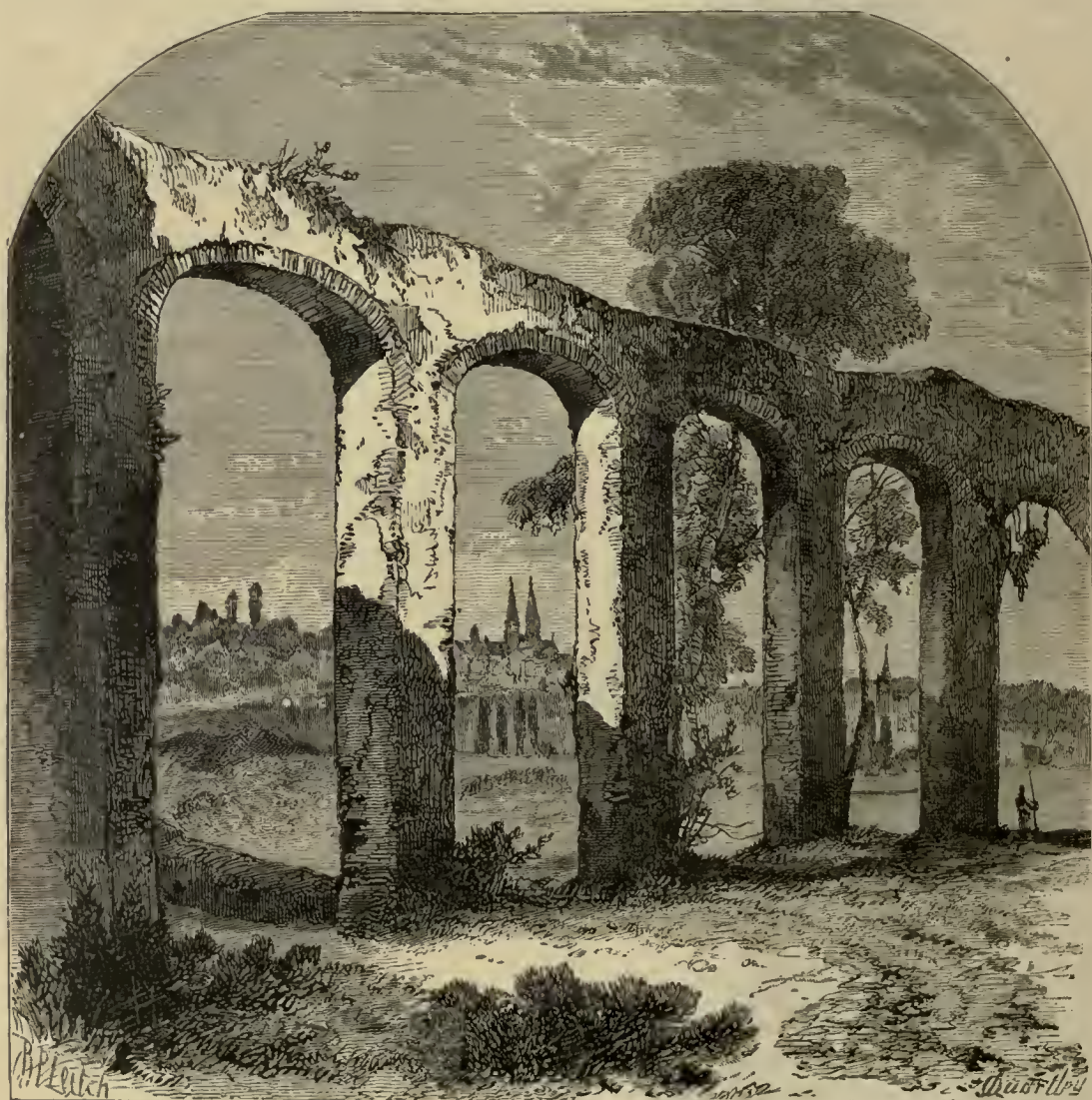
The exact site of this battle-field is unknown; it was at any rate on the great plain between Tours and Poitiers, which latter town is worth visiting, if only in memory of the Black Prince and his brave bowmen, whose triumph against a superior force, barren though it was, brought such renown to England. The place, however, has other attractions. Picturesquely situated, at the extremity of a hilly range, its streets descend on all sides but one

* There is a curious, though probably mistaken, etymology of the word *chapel*, connected with this victory. The cloak or cape (*capella*) of St. Martin, long retained by the Frankish kings as a holy relic, was, it is said, carried to the battle-field in its shrine, and, of course, secured the triumph of the Christian host. It was therefore with peculiar reverence that this *capella* was laid up in the Cathedral at Tours, and the place of its deposit (literally "cloak-room") became a general name for similar depositories.

† *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, ch. vii.

‡ *Later Roman Commonwealth*, ii. 317.

steeply to the plain, a little river sweeps around the base, and the walks along the face of the cliff command many a pleasant view through the winding valley below. In one of the streets there are the remains of a Roman amphitheatre, in another there is an ancient baptistery (now called the Temple



AQUEDUCT, POICTIERS.

de St. Jean), assigned by antiquarians to the seventh century. Little more than a mile from the town there are some fine remains of an ancient aqueduct. Apart from such relics of the past, the position of Poitiers, a natural fortress in the midst of an immense and fruitful plain, seems to mark it out as a theatre for great events.

Very strongly are we now attracted westwards to Rochelle, once the stronghold of French Protestantism—

“Rochelle, our own Rochelle, proud city of the waters.”

Its glory has departed, although its fourteen months' siege by Richelieu, in 1627-8, ranks among the heroic stories of the world. But we cannot now wander so far—at Poitiers we have already left the Loire some sixty miles behind; we return to Tours, and before departing note the only remains of the once famous shrine of St. Martin in two tall towers, the Clock Tower and the



ROCHELLE.

Tower of Charlemagne. The former of these stood at the western entrance of the church, the latter at the end of the northern transept; and their distance apart shows what must have been the size of that building to which for centuries the people of France resorted as to a Delphic shrine. After thus giving the imagination free scope in regard to the past, it was felt to be rather a descent to visit the present cathedral, imposingly as this building, with its two towers, rises above the city, and beautiful almost beyond rivalry as is the coloured glass of its windows. A great company of worshippers, wrapt in silent and apparently heartfelt devotion before a crucifix, brought to mind a

sentence I had lately been reading in the *Memorials* of Dr. McLeod Campbell, who writes of English Ritualism, "It recalls to me what I felt on the Continent in seeing the real feeling manifested in a worship which seemed fed and sustained by the vivid realisation of Christ's sufferings as physical pain, and which recalled the words 'knowing Christ after the flesh.' There does not seem any limit to the emotional religion that may thus be cultivated, which yet may be devoid of spiritual apprehensions of Christ, of what His sufferings for our sins really were, or what His love sought to obtain for us



METTRAY.

through them, even fellowship in His own mind, His own Divine life. There seems, I say, no limit in this emotional religion, as there is none in that which is moral and spiritual; i.e., no limit in progress towards that infinitely distant ideal which is set before us in Christ."*

Before quitting Tours altogether we must take a short excursion from the opposite, or right bank of the river to Mettray, a name now happily of world-wide renown. The buildings, as shown in our cut, are plain and homely,

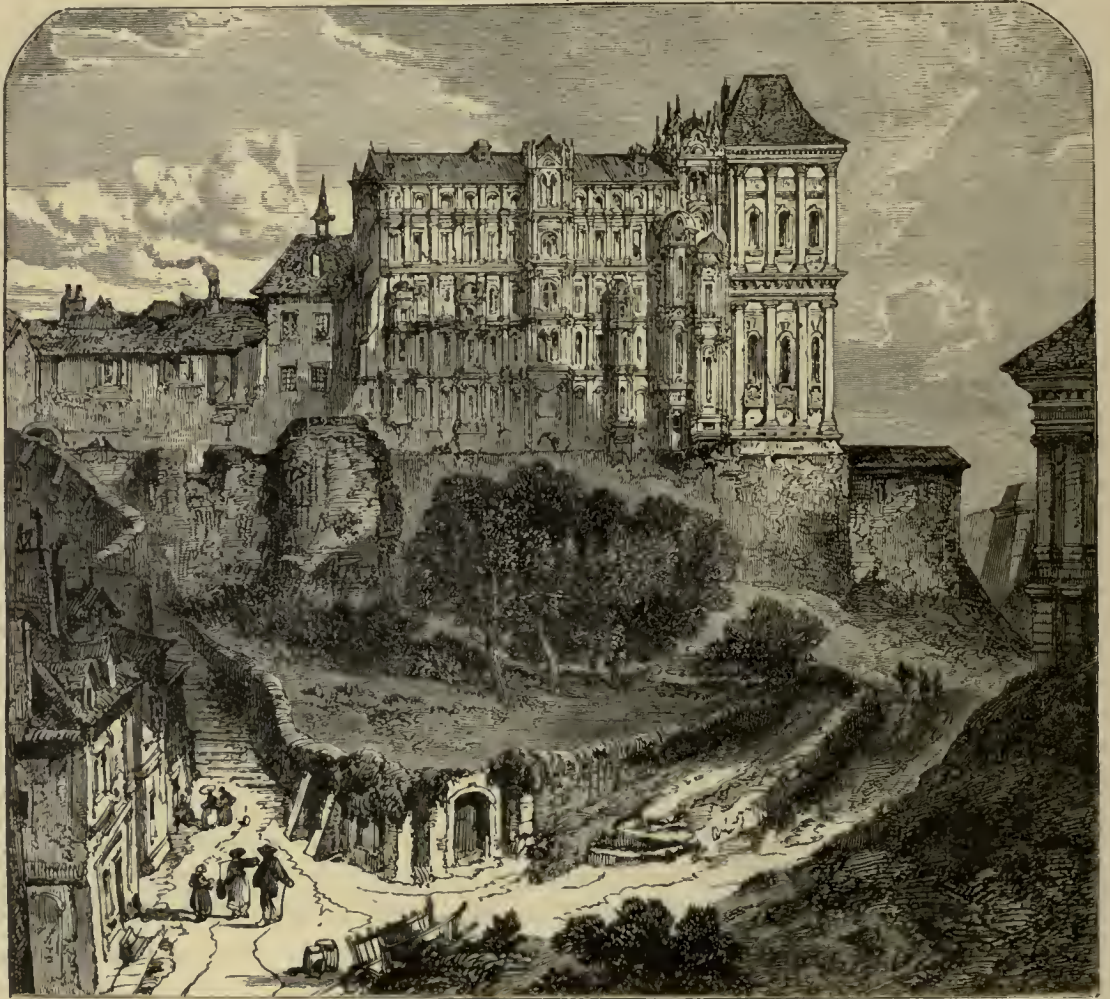
* Vol. ii. p. 144.

compared with the proud structures which we have seen ; but they tell a nobler tale, and had there been but one day to spend, I would rather have gone to Mettray than to Poitiers, and would have prized the view of its unpretending business-like structures far beyond that of fairy-like Chenonceaux, which also may be visited from Tours. So familiar with the idea has the world now become, as to make it scarcely credible that not forty years have yet elapsed since it occurred to a French gentleman of wealth and high position, M. de Metz, that young offenders against the law might be taken in hand and trained, on a family system, to honest ways and useful citizenship. He resolved to make the effort, and after visiting many countries and carefully maturing his plans, having secured the assistance of his friend, M. de Bretignères, who gave the land for the purpose, the two comrades laid the foundation of the institution to which they henceforth dedicated their lives. How nobly the experiment has succeeded it is not for these pages to tell. Nearly eight hundred lads, grouped in twenty "families," are now under training ; nearly five thousand in all have entered the institution from the first, and from this unrivalled and open settlement only one youth has ever run away ! The Reformatory—or as our French neighbours call it "la Colonie"—of Mettray has given a new thought to the world, and the efforts in the same direction which are now made by governments, societies, or individuals, all owe more or less their character and their plans to this voluntary institution.

But we must still ascend the stream (recrossing it some miles beyond Tours), and the next halting-place is Amboise, interesting for its chateau and lovely gardens, once the scene of dark events in Huguenot history. The precise character of the great Amboise "conjunction" is still a little obscure. Thus much at least is clear, that Catherine of Medici, the queen-mother, relentless and unscrupulous, had influenced her foolish son, Francis II., husband of Mary, Queen of Scots, to cruel persecuting edicts against the Protestants, that the latter, led by the Bourbons, especially the Prince of Condé and the Admiral Coligny, sought the alliance of Queen Elizabeth, as well as of the German and Swiss reforming powers ; that Mary's uncles, of the house of Lorraine, and especially the great Duke of Guise, were Condé's bitterest enemies, and that, in the midst of these complications, a Protestant plot was discovered or pretended, to assassinate the duke, to seize the king, and to raise the head of the house of Bourbon to the throne. The tales of the unsparing massacre by which the conspiracy was crushed, and the long and dreary strife which followed, are among the saddest episodes of history. Long did the confederates (German, *Eidgenossen*, whence probably by corruption *Huguenots*) maintain the unequal strife ; but the craft of Catherine, the power of the Guises, and the bigotry of the people, were more than a match for them ; and the murders of Amboise were but a prelude to the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

UP THE LOIRE BY RAIL.

Still beside the river, shrunken between frequent patches of sand and gravel, yet in many of its reaches very bright and beautiful, with low vineyard-covered hills beyond either bank, and many a village on the heights on the river-side, the train pursues its too leisurely course to Blois, a wonderful old town, with its staircase streets, and stately houses in the most narrow and odoriferous of lanes, and above all the magnificent castle, scene of so



BLOIS, WITH CASTLE.

many historic events, but chiefly memorable perhaps for that great and most unkingly crime by which the last of Catherine's ill-fated sons thought to rid himself of a hated rival, but only broke the mother-queen's proud heart and hastened the catastrophe of his own career and of the house of Valois. No crime was perhaps ever more senseless than that assassination of the Duke of Guise; the result was inevitable, in placing Henry of

Navarre upon the throne. Who is not familiar with the noble strain in which Macaulay has celebrated the triumph of Ivry, which crushed the forces of the League?

—“And then we thought on vengeance, and all along our van
 ‘Remember St. Bartholomew!’ was passed from man to man;
 But out spake gentle Henry, ‘No Frenchman is my foe;
 Down, down with every foreigner, but let your brethren go!’
 Oh, was there ever such a knight, in friendship or in war,
 As our sovereign lord King Henry, the soldier of Navarre?”

The words of Henry are historical: “Strike hard on the foreigner (the Spanish auxiliaries), but spare the Frenchman.” But, alas! when the victory was won, he hesitated. He became weary of the strife; his Protestantism had never been a matter of deep conviction, and, it may be, he saw no way to the crown but by a recantation of his faith. There never was a greater disappointment in the history of the world. Kings, indeed, are not omnipotent over a nation’s faith, and the “what might have been” is always a speculation most hazardous. But France at the moment might not have disowned even a heretic king who had proved himself so potent; and the Edict of Nantes was but a poor substitute for the influence which Henry of Navarre might have exercised over the world, had he but remained true to those principles which had inspired the hearts and nerved the hands of those who won for him his early victories.



We now ascend the river, which has become narrower and less wild in its deviations, up to Orleans (Aurelianus, the town of Marcus Aurelius), best known perhaps by name of all French provincial cities. It is a fine town, but disappointing from the want of historical memorials in harmony with its great historical associations. Of the heroic maid there is little save the name to remind the visitor, two fine statues excepted, one the gift of Louis Philippe, and the workmanship of his daughter, the gifted Princess Marie; the other an equestrian figure, with pedestal surrounded by bas-reliefs. The cathedral too should be visited, the gift of Henry iv., to atone for the excesses of his former co-religionists. This edifice, in a mixed and debased style, yet not without points of grandeur, is “remarkable as the only Gothic cathedral erected on the Continent of Europe since the Middle Ages.” The museum is on a par, as to the relics of Joan and her times, with that at Stratford-on-Avon, commemorative of Shakspeare.

A long ride from Orleans to Nevers pursues the upward course of the river, taking a great circuit to the north, and leaving on the southern side

the vast dreary plain of La Sologne (perhaps "Rye-land," from Segale, Segalonia). I did not visit this, but here is a modern description of it, scarcely attractive: "The soil is a stiff, unkindly clay, the surface soil being a thin layer of poor sand, gravel, and flints, wet and sodden all the winter, burnt up in summer. Innumerable ponds and marshes keep the inhabitants—of whom, however, there are only about 80,000 on the whole 1,000,000 acres—in a state of chronic fever. So numerous are these ponds that on the map they seem almost to touch each other; in the portion of Loiret alone there are 800, covering 10,000 acres, and in the district of Romorantin there are 1,000. In spite of its miserable crops of rye and potatoes, and its wretched inhabitants, the country is not without a certain wild charm. In summer the air is musical with the humming of millions of bees, hives of which are brought from the neighbouring departments to feed on the flowers of the heather and the buckwheat; and the ponds are alive with waterfowl—in summer with those that come to breed, and in winter with those that leave their breeding-stations in colder climates."* On the opposite, or right bank of the Loire, the scenery is tranquil, often lovely. The "monuments" which from time to time come into view are those of industry, occasional ironworks, and great canals, connecting the Loire with the Seine and other rivers. One of these canals runs alongside the Loire for many miles on the side opposite to that which the railway takes. Rich pastures, fields of corn, flax, hemp, and vineyards innumerable, have all the beauty of a southern spring, the wild flowers give colour and charm to the landscape, and the full view of the broad bright river completes the beauty. The Nivernois, whose territory we have now entered, are renowned for husbandry; their cattle and their peasantry, too, remind one not unpleasingly of the Yorkshire Wolds. Women here, as elsewhere throughout France, take their share in field labour,—occasionally, perhaps, a little more than their fair proportion.

Near Nevers the Loire seems parted; but the stream to the left is the river; that which comes down with almost equal volume to the right, or from the south, is the Allier, descending from Moulins and Vichy. For awhile we have to travel by the latter river, crossing the Loire at Nevers. The journey is comparatively uninteresting, the stream, though so near, being mostly out of sight. At Moulins, the scene of Sterne's *Maria*, there is nothing to detain us; and, omitting Vichy for the present, we speed across a yet more uninteresting valley to rejoin the Loire at Roanne, a stirring commercial town. The river has much narrowed since we last saw it at Nevers; it ceases here to be navigable; and from Roanne we have to trace its course as it comes down from the hills.

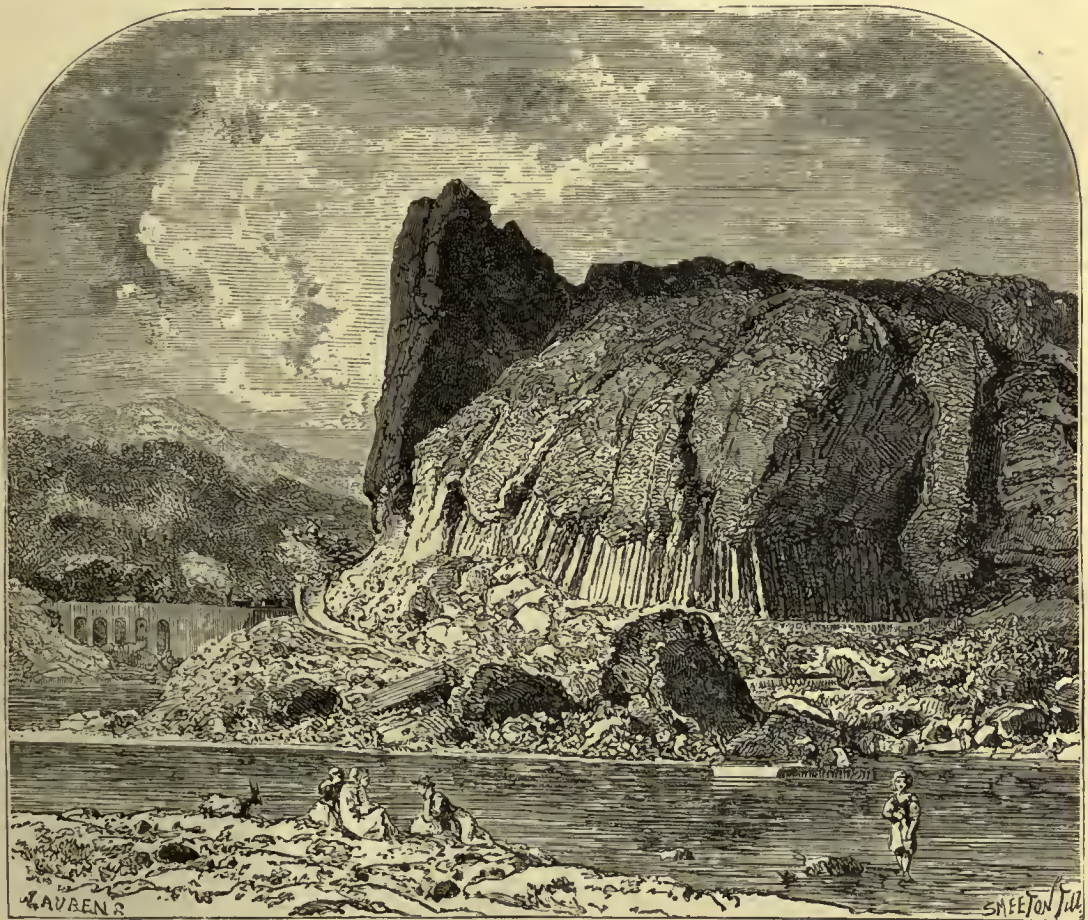
The next fifty miles I found monotonous, especially as the train occupied nearly five hours in accomplishing them. Glimpses of the bright river in its rapid descent were, however, very charming, and the traces of ancient

* Richardson's *Corn and Cattle-producing Districts of France*.



CATHEDRAL OF LE PUY.

importance and of modern industry throughout the valley gave some interest to the scene. But after leaving St. Etienne, with its foundries, forges, and chimneys, the real beauty of the day's journey began. The hills became bolder in outline, many a magnificent sweep of valley was opened up at the turns of the still ascending line, and though large quarries here and there marred the symmetry, and one or two of the loveliest spots have been invaded by manufactories, these hardly impaired the beauty; while the rapid



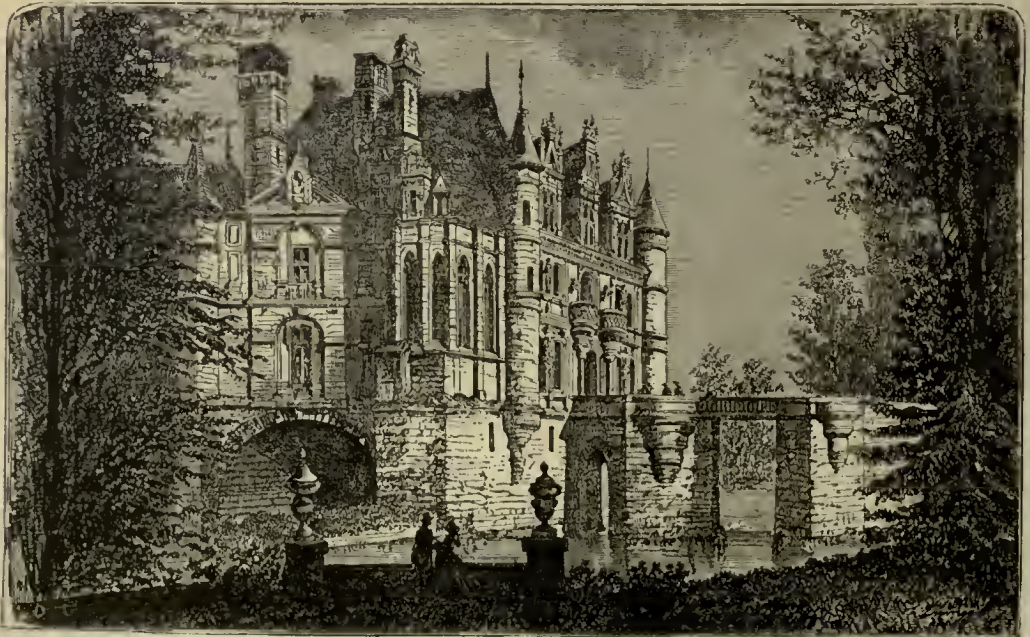
THE "BASALTES" AT PRADES, ON THE ARDÈCHE.

river and its mountain tributaries, crossed and recrossed at intervals, lent animation and loveliness to the scene. By-and-by the rocks seemed to close around the line, which was carried through short tunnels, then out into the glen, high up on the slope, with the torrent dashing below. Ever-changing perspectives of rock, precipice, steep valleys descending to the river's brink, and crossed by us at dizzy heights, were opened up. It was like a prolonged Killiecrankie Pass, only on a more stupendous scale,

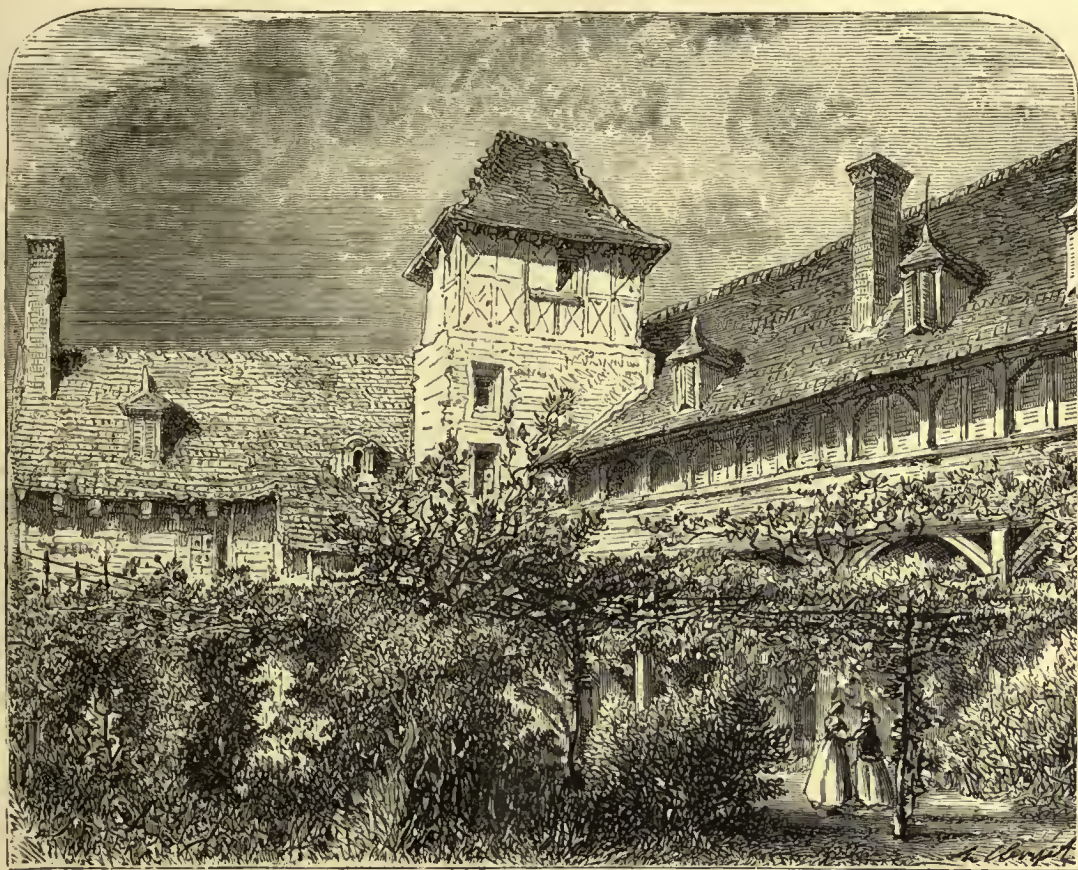
with vines and fig-trees clinging to the sides, as well as the beech and mountain ash, the chestnut and the walnut tree; while the larches and stone-pines above stood out against the sky.

We were now among the extinct volcanoes, of which there will be more to say further on, and at length this most interesting and wonderful railway journey ended at Le Puy with its two basaltic heights, the Rock of St. Michel and the Rock of Corneille. These singular hills, unlike other elevations, have not been thrown up from below, but scooped out from what was once a general level of volcanic débris. This latter in the course of ages has been eroded by the action of water and the atmosphere, leaving the harder parts standing, such as these two rocks and others of less elevation. The statue on the summit of the loftier rock represents the Virgin; it is formed of Sebastopol cannon, and is fifty feet in height. It may be ascended from within by a staircase, and perhaps the climb is worth making, for the sake of the view over the undulating valley with its vineyards on every height, and the white houses on the slopes.

A rough and steep but very beautiful day's walk or drive leads from Le Puy to the source of the Loire. This is 4711 feet above the sea-level and 540 miles from the mouth of the river, as measured along its course.



CHATEAU OF CHENONCEAUX.



HOUSE OF MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ, VICHY.

AUVERGNE AND THE CÉVENNES.

STARTING-POINT FROM VICHY—CLERMONT-FERRAND, ITS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS—THE PUY DE DÔME—MONT DORE—THE CÉVENNES MOUNTAINS—CHURCH OF THE DESERT.



WE have already followed the upward course of the Loire from Nevers, where that river is joined by the Allier, as it comes down from Vichy and Auvergne. A route of even higher interest might be pursued up the Allier itself, to Vichy, Auvergne, and the Cévennes. Vichy I visited in the autumn, when the renowned watering-place had been left by its summer visitors, and apparently had not yet made all snug for the winter. The experience was amusing, almost unique. One seemed to have scarcely the right to disturb the quiet little town *en déshabille*. The roads, bordered by neat châteaux and fanciful villas

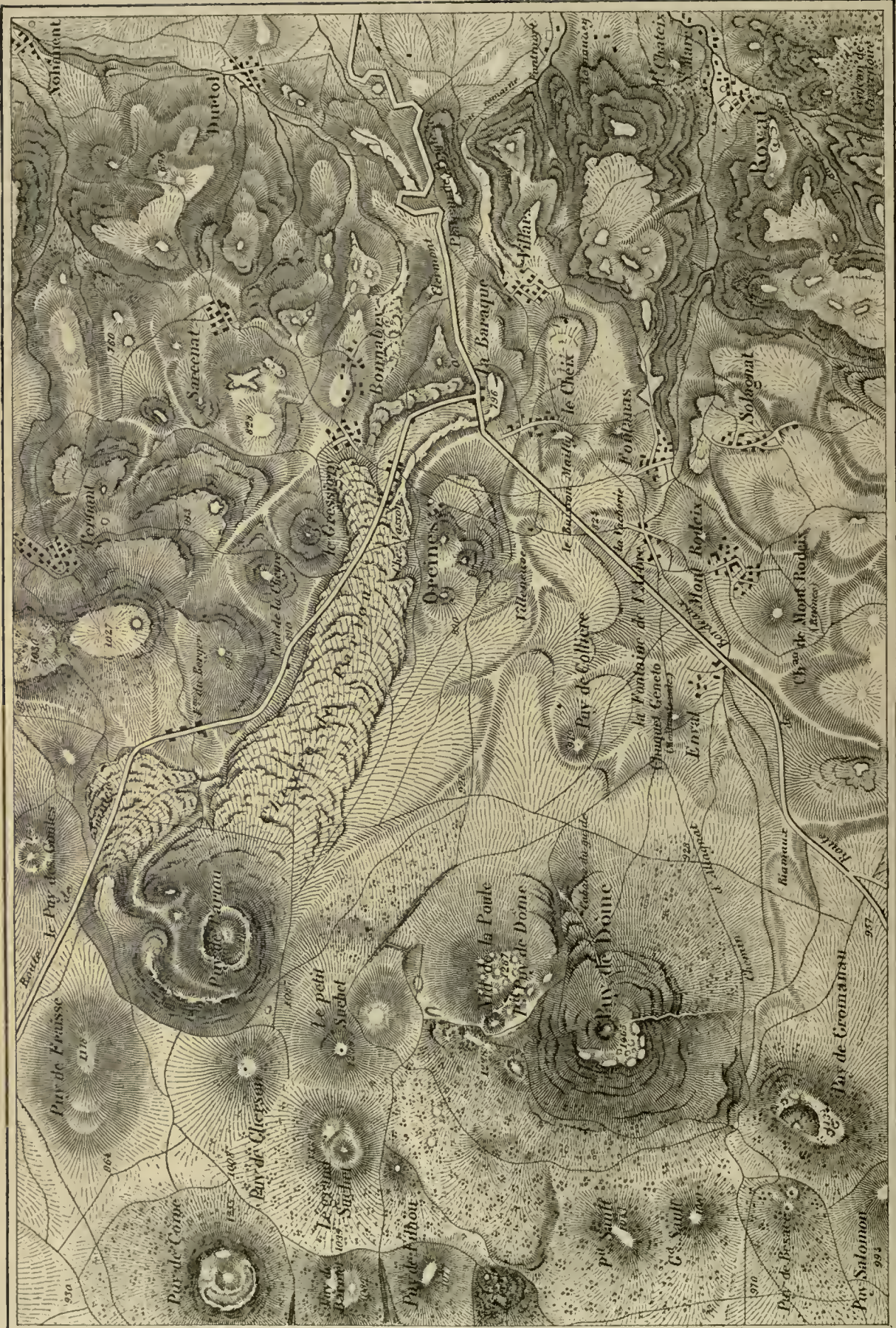
AUVERGNE AND THE CÉVENNES.

of every kind, were strewn with fallen leaves of the plane-trees which stretch in long avenues along the suburbs; the pleasure-grounds by the banks of the river had become a wild, untended woodland; the river



THE NEEDLE ROCK, MONISTROL D'ALLIER.

itself, which in the season is so dammed up at some distance below as to overflow its shallows and appear a stately, magnificent stream, now left those shallows bare in dreary expanses of white gravel; the hotels were



NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE PUY DE DÔME [THE MEASUREMENTS ARE GIVEN IN FRENCH MÈTRES: 3·28 FEET = 1 MÈTRE].

mostly closed, half the shops were shuttered and deserted, and the other half had evidently packed away their best and brightest goods. Announcements of past festivities fluttered, half torn, on walls and gate-posts; the orchestras were dismantled, the casinos barred and bolted. Yet the visit had its charms. The sapphire sky and the perfect climate helped to explain the fascination of the place to its twenty thousand annual visitors, and the famous alkaline springs were bubbling up, copious and steaming, from their mysterious caldron underground, like hot soda water. I visited several of the *sources*, but was not tempted to taste. The place is probably worthy of its fame as the chief alkaline bath in Europe, and the late Emperor Napoleon, whose villa is one of the sights of Vichy, did much to bring it into fashion; but even in the fairest season of the year it can never be very attractive for its scenery. Except for the raised and shaded walk of a mile or more along the river bank, and the ascent to the old town, with its picturesque round tower—relic of the ancient fortifications—there is nothing particularly striking in the situation or environs. The house once tenanted by Madame de Sévigné will attract some: others again will be greatly interested by the extensive arrangements for bottling and packing the inexhaustible waters; millions of bottles being exported annually, so that the healing draught may be had in as genuine a state in Oxford Street or Cheapside as in Vichy itself. How far the accompaniments which cannot be exported contribute to the cure, it must be left for experts to say.

It may be that the subterranean fires which expend their energy now on these perennial streams, are the same that in prehistoric times spread devastation over the whole valley. We have not left Vichy far behind, proceeding south, before signs of ancient volcanic action begin to present themselves. In the province of Auvergne, now the departments of Puy de Dôme, Ardèche, and Haute-Loire, were what have been well called "the Phlegrean Fields of France." To-day, on entering the department of Puy de Dôme, the traveller finds himself on the border of a vast level plain, the Limagne, which geologists judge, from the deposited marls and sands which form its surface, to have been once a freshwater lake in the course of the Allier. This, to an unpractised eye, is also evident from the singular flatness of the far-reaching surface. It was now clothed with all the splendour of the autumn; covered with vineyards, in the gold and purple tints of their decaying foliage, while here and there meadows of rich green were a refreshing contrast to the parched brown herbage of the lower levels. On the border of the plain, irregular hills, little more than mounds, began to appear; soon these became loftier and more numerous, but still forming no connected chain. The crater-like form was very apparent in several, with here and there the peculiar scooped-out shape of the interior of a volcano, broken down at one side. Nor was it difficult to trace broad sloping streams of lava, hardened now, and covered with soil for ages; with sheep and cattle peacefully grazing

AUVERGNE AND THE CÉVENNES.

where the fiery floods had rolled. On the bolder hills ruined castles were seen, or villages, built of the dark lava blocks. The rounded height of the Puy de Dôme now appeared, and at Clermont-Ferrand we had entered the heart of the volcanic country.

No town in France is better worth a visit, whether from the singularity of its position or its historic memories. It was here that, in 1095, the great council was held, which issued in the first Crusade. Peter the Hermit, by his preaching, had already given the impulse; Pope Urban II. resolved to respond to the call; at Clermont, "besides his court and council of Roman cardinals, he was supported by thirteen archbishops, and two hundred and twenty-five bishops; the number of mitred prelates was computed at four



CLERMONT-FERRAND.

hundred; and the fathers of the church were blessed by the saints, and enlightened by the doctors of the age. From the adjacent kingdoms, a martial train of lords and knights of power and renown attended the council, in high expectation of its resolves; and such was the ardour of zeal and curiosity that the city was filled, and many thousands, in the month of November, erected their tents or huts in the open field. . . . When the pope ascended a lofty scaffold in the market-place of Clermont, his eloquence was addressed to a well-prepared and impatient audience. His topics were obvious, his exhortation was vehement, his success inevitable. The orator was interrupted by the shout of thousands, who with one voice and in their rustic idiom exclaimed aloud, *Diex el volt!* 'God wills it, God wills it!' 'It is indeed the will of

God,' replied the pope; 'and let this memorable word, the inspiration surely of the Holy Spirit, be for ever adopted as your cry of battle, to animate the devotion and courage of the champions of Christ. His cross is the symbol of your salvation; wear it, a red, a bloody cross, as an external mark, on your breasts or shoulders, as a pledge of your sacred and irrevocable engagement.' The proposal was joyfully accepted; great numbers, both of the clergy and laity, impressed on their garments the sign of the cross, and solicited the pope to march at their head."* The church, Notre Dame du Port, where the council was held, and at the rear of which the great concourse was gathered, still exists. It was strangely impressive to visit this old-world quiet corner of the town, with its broad grass-grown terrace above the valley, to people it all in imagination with the excited thousands, and to realise the fact that here, for good or evil, had occurred one of those great crises in the life of nations which, more than "decisive battles" or regal edicts, influence the destiny of the world. "In the Crusades," says one, "lies unfolded the secret of modern Europe."

But there are other historical associations with this old lava-built town. One of these was vividly brought to mind as I passed one morning by the *Route de Vercingétorix* to the suburbs, whence a road between vineyards leads to the great barrow-shaped hill of Gergovie, the Gergovia of Julius Cæsar, the famous stronghold of the *Arverni*, B.C. 52, under the leader commemorated in the name of the street just mentioned. The Gauls do well to remember Vercingetorix, for no other of their chieftains so long or so successfully withstood the great conqueror. I ascended by a steep path through a village reeking with the fumes of wine-lees, and foul with grapeskins trampled into ruddy mire—rare banquet for the swine which roved at large through the streets and lanes! The place was ill-smelling and squalid, even beyond all my former experience of French villages; yet there was a handsome drinking-fountain with a monumental inscription to the late emperor, who had visited Mont Gergovia from this spot. From this village the ascent was easy to the wide rough table-land, traversed in places by walls of unhewn stone, with fragments interspersed, evidently from older buildings. A peasant volunteered his services as guide, and led me to the spot where, as he said, "*our* forces defied the Roman *Général Jules-César*, and compelled him to retire." He was as proud of the exploit as though he knew himself to be a descendant of the old *Arverni*, which perhaps he was. "We often find," he said, "among the stones old coins, both Gallic and Roman; fragments of weapons, too, with pieces of pottery; and the stones themselves were once part of a great city." He led me to a point where the views in one direction up to the Puy de Dôme, and in another over the Limagne, were really magnificent; and showed a delight in the scenery as well as a pride in the historic memories of the place which, in so rough-looking, even coarse-featured a man, were at

* Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, c. lviii.

the time surprising. It was not long, however, before I found that under the heavy, dull-looking Auvergnat faces there is much shrewdness and intelligence. The people are proud of their country, and though they seem instinctively to distrust a stranger at first, they become communicative on any sign of sympathy, with or without the prospect of a franc at the end of



CLERMONT-FERRAND CATHEDRAL.

the interview. And, in truth, guides are needed, as the country is most bewildering. Unlike regular hill ranges, the volcanic heights follow no order of arrangement, and the by-paths seemed planned with the utmost ingenuity to lead the pedestrian in any but the apparent direction.

Clermont itself, except the very noble cathedral, of two centuries later date than the memorable council, and the church of St. Jean du Port, notable for its pure Romanesque, has little worth the attention of the traveller, unless a very marvellous petrifying spring be so called; the bridge which spans the stream being formed from the calcareous deposit of the waters. The museum and library, too, are far beyond the usual level of provincial collections. Still the visitor will be chiefly anxious to explore the volcanic district of which Clermont is the centre, and to ponder for himself the extremely curious questions

suggested by the surrounding traces of fiery energy. That subterranean fires are still active is shown by the hot springs at Vichy, Royat, and many places beside; but at what era they raged over the surface is quite unknown. Cæsar makes no mention of volcanoes, as so accurate an observer would certainly have done, had their action in any measure continued to his time. Pliny, who enumerates the volcanoes known in his era, makes no reference to these. Nor, so far as we can ascertain, do any old historic legends or dim traditions

survive to tell of what must have been a scene of flaming terror and desolation only paralleled in modern times by what we have lately been told of volcanoes in the island of Hawaii.* One reference indeed has been quoted † from Sidonius Apollinaris, Bishop of Auvergne (died A.D. 489). Writing to Mamertus, the Bishop of Vienne on the Rhone, concerning the ravages of the Goths, he speaks of a time when "earthquakes demolished the walls (of Vienne), when the mountains opened, and vomited forth torrents of inflamed materials; and when the wild animals, driven from the woods by fire and terror, resorted to the towns." But even if this language has to be taken literally, of a volcanic outburst, it is obvious to remark that Vienne is more than 150 miles from Clermont, separated by valley and mountains, that a

sudden and occasional manifestation of volcanic energy in Dauphiné is quite compatible with its having long ceased in Auvergne, and that, had any such calamities befallen the diocese of Sidonius himself, he would undoubtedly have referred to the fact, especially since he speaks of his people as involved in the greater calam-



FOUNTAIN OF ST. ALLYRE, CLERMONT-FERRAND.

ity of the Gothic invasion; "Huic semper irruptioni nos miseri Arverni janua sumus." The words of the bishop, therefore, throw little light on the period of the volcanic phenomena of the latter district.

On the other hand, it has been argued that the period of volcanic activity in this province must have occurred within the historic era, or at any rate subsequently to the last great diluvial cataclysm. The argument is, that the heaps of scorïæ and loose sand which abound in this district

* See Miss Bird's *Visit to the Sandwich Islands*, and Mrs. Brassey's *Voyage in the Sunbeam*.

† *Quarterly Review*, Oct., 1844, p. 295. The reviewer goes beyond his own data when he writes (p. 294): "During three years (458-460), Auvergne and Dauphiné were convulsed by violent and continued volcanic eruptions—streams of lava, bursting forth from the summits of the mountains, broke down the cones, which ejected continuous ignited showers, attended by earthquakes shaking, as it were, the foundations of the earth. Thunders rolled through the subterraneous caverns," etc.

AUVERGNE AND THE CÉVENNES.

must have been displaced by any rush of waters, or at any rate must have shown traces of the inundation. It is thus concluded either that the volcanoes were active after the Deluge, or that the Deluge was not co-extensive with the earth's surface. "Sir Charles Lyell," writes Mr. S. R. Pattison, "Dr. Daubeny, and others, have given this argument the countenance of their names; a host of writers have adopted it as conclusive. I recollect the late

Dr. Pye-Smith, in conversation, urging it on my attention as conclusive. But on my visit," Mr. Pattison adds, "to these supposed incoherent and crumbling craters, I found them all sufficiently consolidated to bear, not only the winter and summer floods of rain, but the tread of cattle and of men. There is no pretence for saying that they could not bear the rise and fall of diluvial waters without destruction. It is a curious instance of an ingenious hypothesis doing duty as if it were a positive fact."*

The fossil remains found in the beds of clay and gravel underneath the lava-streams are of course a guide to the era at which the latter flowed down. Of one place, the careful observer whose words have been just quoted, says: "In this clay and gravel are found bones of about forty animals, all of *genera* now inhabiting the country, but nearly all of them specifically different from the creatures of the present day. The shells of freshwater snails found in the clay are the same as existing species." In one volcanic stone block, at Mont



GEOLOGICAL SKETCH MAP.

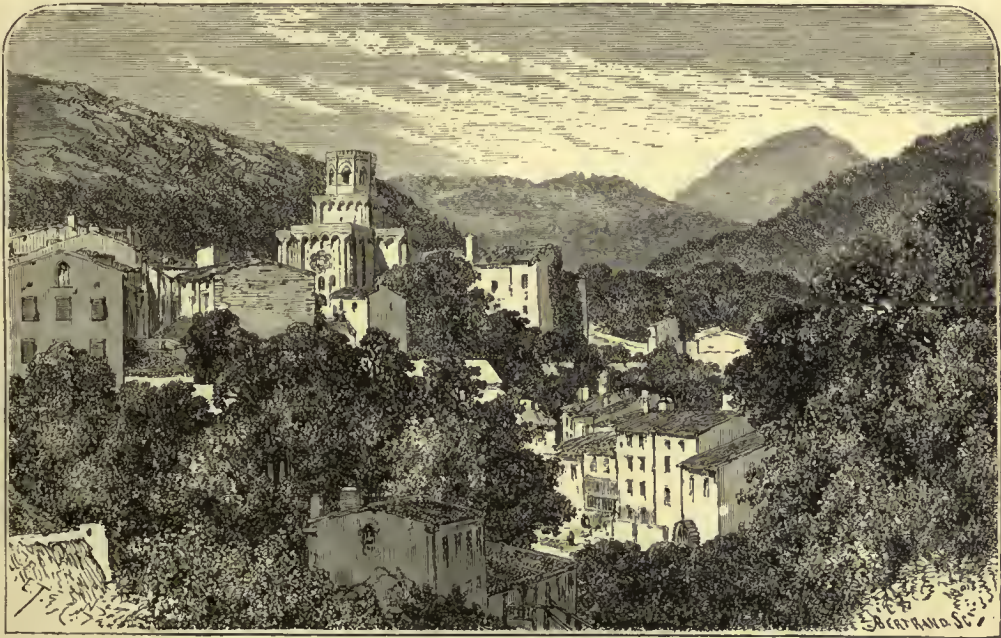
Denise, near Le Puy, supposed human remains have been discovered, and Mr. Pattison pronounces for their genuineness. This is as yet the only instance of the kind, but would show at any rate that the *cessation* of the fiery floods was subsequent to the appearance of man upon the scene.

Such speculations could not but occupy the mind in the course of many an excursion round Clermont. Of these, by far the most interesting were

* *Leisure Hour*, 1866, p. 618.

ASCENT OF THE PUY DE DÔME.

those to the highest peak of the district, the Puy de Dôme, and to Mont Dore. The former may be reached by the village of Royat, well worth a visit on its own account. There is a service of omnibuses, but so soon as Clermont itself is past, the walk up the glen is full of charm. A torrent rushes impetuously down through a cleft in the basalt which once poured in a fiery stream from Mont Gravenoire. A large bath-house, on the site of ancient Roman *thermæ*, covers the copious hot springs which attract great numbers of visitors to Royat; and a spacious hotel, with commanding terraces, overlooks the whole. The view from one of these terraces over the valley, now clothed in its richest autumn hues, was very beautiful; the village, embowered in trees on the edge of the ravine, looked



ROYAT.

charming, and invited a further stroll. But a few steps into the village street were sufficient to dispel every pleasing impression. The houses were dilapidated and dirty, the pathway foul with mire, the place reeked with unsavoury odours, and the people themselves had a dull and dismal aspect, in harmony with the surroundings. I was only too glad to escape to fresh air again, much marvelling that such streets and dwellings should be tolerated so near to the romantic beauties of this lovely glen.

From Royat it was a stiff climb up the Val de Fontanat to the barren table-land, from which the cone towers to the height of about 1700 feet, being 4842 feet above the sea-level. There are few more unique and striking views than that from the summit. North and south the volcanic peaks

rise in wild disorder from the granite level, which is broken into numerous plateaux, more or less covered with foliage and verdure. In many places it is easy, when once the attention is called to the matter, to trace the form of craters; the bowl-shape being very evident, with the edge or "lip" fractured at one side by the descending stream of lava. East and west the immense and fertile plains afford a smiling contrast to the wildness of the volcanic ranges. A popular rhyme somewhat exaggerates, it is true, the vastness of the prospect:

"Si Dôme était sur Dôme,
On verrait les portes de Rome."*

But it is sufficiently extensive, nevertheless. Probably, however, the visitor's



VAL DE FONTANAT AND PUY DE DÔME.

chief interest will be concentrated on the summit itself. It was here that the great "Torricellian experiment" was first decisively tried. When the attention of the illustrious Pascal was turned to the weight of the air, his sister, Madame Périer, was living at Clermont. Pascal asked her husband to carry a tube of mercury, hermetically sealed, to the top of the Puy de

Dôme, arguing, in a manner to us familiar, but which in him showed the intuition of genius, that an alteration in the height of the column would demonstrate the hypothesis of Torricelli, and afford a simple *datum* for ascertaining the weight of the atmosphere. Thus, upon this mountain one of the chief triumphs of science was won; the date was September 19, 1648. "The success of the experiment," writes M. Périer, "enchanted us to such a degree, that for our complete satisfaction we determined to repeat it, and did so five times more, with great exactness, on different parts of the summit, in the open air and under cover, in high wind, in fair weather,

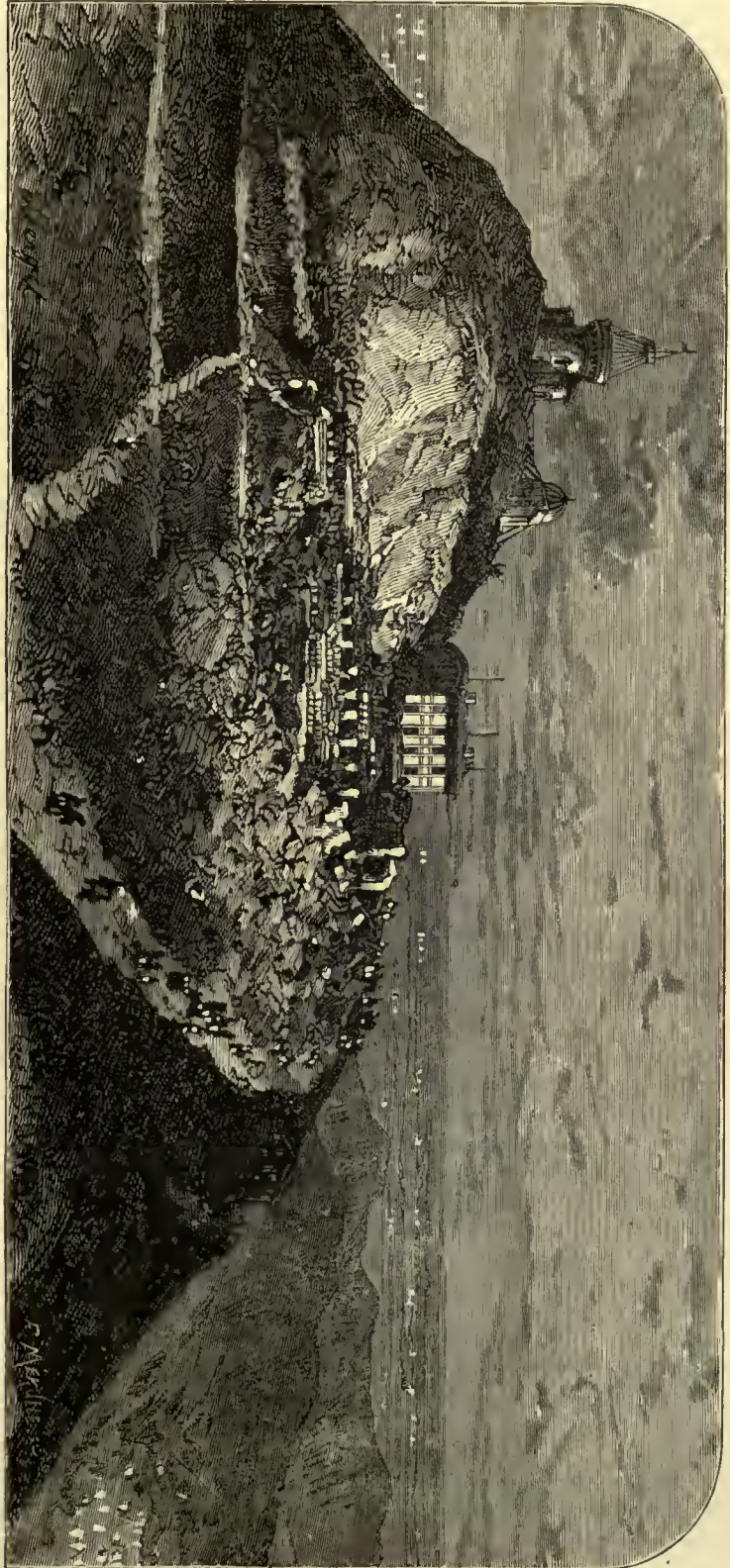
* The couplet may refer to the *little Puy de Dôme*, on the north side.

ASCENT OF THE PUY DE DÔME.

and during the rain and fog, carefully excluding the air from the tube on each occasion; and every experiment with the quicksilver showed the same result." The inference was clear; the old doctrine that "Nature abhors a vacuum" was finally exploded, and, after some further experiments carried on by Pascal himself, in the tower of St. Jacques in Paris, the barometer was invented.

Very appropriately, a fine observatory has now been erected on this mountain; it was opened August 22, 1876. During its construction some very remarkable Roman remains were brought to light by the workmen—marbles, bronzes, imperial coins, and the remains, it is thought, of a temple dedicated to Minerva. A little lower down on the south side are the ruins of a chapel consecrated to St. Barnabas. Here also in the sixteenth century

SUMMIT OF THE PUY DE DÔME, WITH OBSERVATORY AND ROMAN REMAINS.



the wild orgies of the "witches' sabbaths" were held. Certainly we need not wonder that the superstitious as well as the devout should have fixed upon this wild spot as congenial with their intenser moods, although doubtless poor Jeanne Bordeau, who was burned in the year 1514, after full confession, for practising witchery, on the Puy de Dôme, was more sinned against than sinning.

There are other volcanic heights to be explored, but I had no time for more than a hurried visit to one of them, Puy de Pariou, approached by a rough scramble from the Puy de Dôme, and rising to a height of just over 4000 feet above the sea-level. From a distance the summit of this mountain appears an inclined plane, but on ascending, you find yourself on the edge of a grassy crater, about 300 feet deep, and 1000 feet across—a vast natural amphitheatre. "It is a somewhat singular spectacle," says Mr. Poulett Scrope, in his *Volcanoes of Central France*, "to see a herd of cattle quietly grazing above the orifice whence such furious explosions once broke forth. Their foot-tracks round the shelving side of the basin, in steps rising one above the other, like the seats of an amphitheatre, make the excessive regularity of its circular basin more remarkable."

Clermont was reached late in the evening, after as fatiguing a day's work as one could wish to have, and the next day was spent in short journeys from one railway station to another, and pleasant rambles in the neighbourhood of the line; among other places Riom, Erval, and Tournœl. The ravine of Erval is as wild, for a short distance, as an Alpine pass, and one rock-encircled corner is called *Bout-du-Monde*, "The world's end." Tournœl is a grand ruined fortress in a most commanding situation on the way to Volvic (perhaps "the village of Vulcan," *Volcani vicus*), which is worth visiting for its great lava-quarries, that have furnished building materials to Clermont and Riom, and paving-stones to the streets of Paris.

But the finest excursion, indisputably, is that to Mont Dore. The drive, ascending steeply for the greater part of the distance—twenty-seven miles—abounds with the most diversified scenery. The brown, bare sides of the Puys, the amphitheatre of craters, the ruined towers, the picturesque villages, with the great blocks of granite and basalt, which lie in wild confusion about the fields, form a succession of ever-changing pictures; the dark grey of the hills, and the almost black lava-dust of the roads, being relieved by the rich autumn tints, first of the vineyards, then, as we ascend, of the chestnut, ash, and beech, while the fir forests on many a height form a background of sombre green.

At length a turn in the road discloses the village of Mont Dore in a broad valley, girdled with mountains, and dominated by the Pic du Sancy, the highest peak in Central France. To-day the village is as lonely as it is romantic; since it is "out of the season," and the valley is chill with frosty autumn airs. There is enough, however, to account for the wonderful charm of this little



FALL OF QUEREILH.

watering-place upon many, who come summer after summer to bathe in its warm springs, or to luxuriate in its pure bracing air at a height of 3400 feet above the sea-level. In this great "circus-like gorge," as Mr. Poulett Scrope calls it, with its wall of rocks, intersected by ravines, "scours," and cascades, the mountain-climber will find himself at home, while there is plenty of scope for the least accomplished pedestrian. The neighbourhood teems with waterfalls, some of which, as the Grand Cascade, the Fall of Quereilh, the Plat à



MONT DORE, AND VALLEY.

Barbe, are very beautiful, more from the wildness of their surroundings than for their own volume or picturesqueness; and there are even at this bleak height such "bits" of rock and woodland combined as artists might love. From all parts is seen a singularly rounded mountain, like nothing so much as the picture of Hill Difficulty in old editions of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, but without a House Beautiful at the top; it is called the "Capucin," from some fancied resemblance in a jutting peak to a cowed monk; and to ascend this height, about 1000 feet from a plateau on which it

AUVERGNE AND THE CÉVENNES.

stands amid a dark fir-wood, is the ambition of all visitors ; certainly the view from the summit is splendid. Here is a description by one whose pen was guided by a justifiable enthusiasm. "The sun was high in the blue heavens ;



MONT DORE ; ENTRANCE TO VILLAGE.

no cloud kept its dazzling rays from the earth, which lay in beautiful forms around. Brown and rugged rocks, over which the hawk was soaring, verdant and smiling slopes, where herds and flocks champed the sweet grasses, forests of firs, their dark needle leaves dipped with the emerald green of their spring



THE PLAT À BARBE.

growth; plains and valleys, spotted with little villages and quiet homesteads, cascades and streamlets that sparkled like diamonds as they flowed; all these were there, ay, and much more, an overpowering sense that the Almighty, who made all this visible creation so glad, so beautiful, was silently forming man's happiness in what we could not see. We lingered here some time, picking the rare flowers that tinged the greensward with their richer hue, and listening to the hum of insects and the song of birds; then reluctantly retraced our steps through the shady woods to the village."* This is a picture of the early summer; but even the bleak winds and the autumn decay, at the time of my visit, had not destroyed the beauty, although the winter's long loneliness had begun. Life at Mont Dore must be very pleasant and unsophisticated. From all I heard, there can be few things more enjoyable than a sojourn in one of these big, plainly-furnished hotels, now mostly shuttered and empty. The visitors soon fall into unconventional ways, and give themselves with true French *abandon* to the simple enjoyments of the place. An increasing number of English people, I was told, find their way annually to this wild valley, to the great benefit of their health, and not greatly to the harm of their pockets. For the French take their pleasures economically; and in such a place as this it is easy for our countrymen to follow their example. It is said that both here and at Bourboule, a village lower down the Dordogne—the chief of the mountain-streams which course down the valley, afterwards a fine river, uniting near the sea with the Garonne—the warm alkaline springs are of great use in pulmonary and rheumatic complaints. The baths were known to the Romans, as many ancient remains attest, but appear to have been abandoned in the fifth century, after the invasion of the Vandals, and remained for several ages choked by earth and ruined masonry. Singularly enough, through all this period, a part of the village retained the name of the *Panthéon*, and in the fifteenth century "the baths" are once more mentioned. Whatever be their therapeutic value, there can be no doubt respecting the efficacy of the mountain air, of the easy excursions, and of the mental rest, which can be found at this "Buxton of Central France."

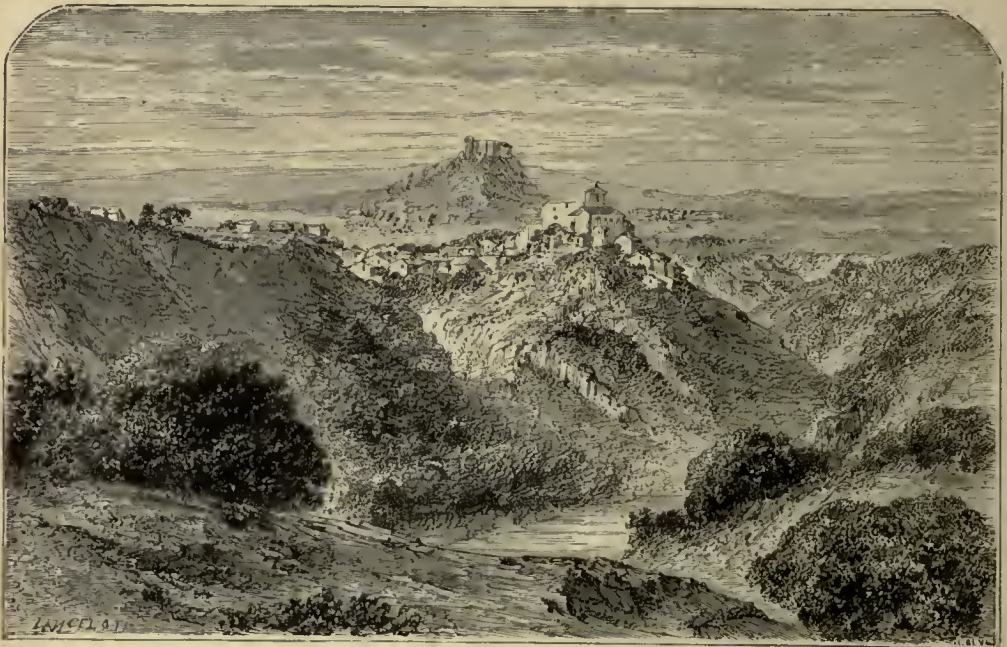
A magnificent drive by St. Nectaire to Issoire brought me once again to the railway route, where I was to take the train for the south. It was a matter of regret not to be able to stop at St. Nectaire, where there are also thermal springs and an *établissement*. The village is double, so to speak, one part lying amid fair meadows, the other crowning a rugged hill; the extremes of wildness and of beauty which characterise this neighbourhood being brought together at one view. Verrières is next passed, a place remarkable for one of the most curious basaltic monuments of the district, *la Roche longue*, a single dark pillar left standing while the erosive action of water and the atmosphere has cleared away the softer material in which it was once imbedded. The

* *Summer Days in Auvergne*, by H. de K., 1875.

AUVERGNE AND THE CÉVENNES.

road now plunges into an Alpine glen, bordered on one side by forests of beech and fir, on the other by a roaring torrent and rocky precipices. Then, on ascending a hill, a farewell view of the whole volcanic range is obtained, with the valley between; the Puy de Dôme and Mont Dore being both included in the prospect. The road now descends to Perrier, beneath the ruined hill-tower of Maurifolet, and thence by a road bordered with poplars to the little station at Issoire, whence I was soon whirled southwards up the valley of the Allier, which river in its rocky bed is crossed and recrossed till it has dwindled to a rivulet, and, beyond Langogne, disappears among the hills to the west.

At Langogne there was a diligence for Mende, a little town at the base



ST. IVOINE, NEAR ISSOIRE.

of steep, bare mountains, in places quite perpendicular, which entirely surround it save where the river Lot cuts its way through the gigantic barrier. A walk of ten miles over the hills conducts to Florac, on the Tarn, another small town flanked by a mighty castellated hill. Thence by another long wild walk up the stream to Pont de Mont Vert, the spot is reached where in desperation the persecuted Protestantism of Southern France first turned upon its oppressors in the evil days of Louis XIV. For it was in this desolate region that the Archdeacon Chayla, like another Archbishop Sharp, was murdered by those whom his cruel intolerance had aroused to as cruel a fanaticism. From that time, 1702, began a series of irregular, relentless struggles between the troops of the Grand Monarque and the peasantry,



TOWER OF MAURIFOLET.

fighting to the last gasp for their homes and their religion. For we are now in the Cévennes district, where the Huguenots so long maintained their faith, their worship, and their indomitable resistance.

The story is too long to tell, and these pages are not the place for the record. Englishmen in general, it is to be feared, know too little of these French "Covenanters," and a visit to the stern and rugged scene of their heroism and their sufferings would engrave upon the mind some ineffaceable memories.

"The Church of the Desert" is the expressive name by which these poor peasants, banded for the maintenance of their faith, have become known to succeeding generations. For, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, when multitudes had fled from their country, the peasantry of Languedoc, too poor to seek a refuge elsewhere, and protected by "the strength of the hills," had ventured to defy the proscription of their faith. They worshipped on bare hills, in rocky glens, in "dens and caves of the earth," or beneath the shade of chestnut groves in the more open valleys. Combining the stubborn strength of Highlanders with the warmth and intensity of a southern race, they were both ardent and patient; and when persecution became active and their oppressors began to hunt them out in their wild retreats, it never occurred to them to be false to their convictions. The usual expedients of persecutors were adopted—imprisonment, exile, torture, martyrdom. For a while the persecuted people made no resistance; their enthusiasm, stimulated by strange terrors, and the long agony of endurance, took another form, sure to appear where religious natures are at once roused into conflict and distracted by sorrowful mystery. From passionate and yearning desire many were led to the assurance of a special communion with the Unseen. They began to see visions, to hear strange voices, to "cry aloud," under impulses inexplicable and overwhelming. First a few, mostly women and young girls, then great numbers of both sexes, "prophesied" in their ecstasy. The fervour rose to an excitement which became irrepressible, and speedily overspread the whole province of Languedoc.* Still the imprisonments, tortures, executions continued. What more certain than that an outbreak must soon occur? The assassination of the un pitying Chayla was the spark which kindled the fuel to a flame, and the struggle was now for life or death. Throughout the province the peasantry took up arms, calling themselves "the children of God," called by their enemies "Camisards," probably from the *camise* or blouse which was their only uniform. The struggle was a bitter one, but at last it ended, in 1705, when Marshal Villars, general of Louis XIV., waited on his majesty with the tidings that the insurrection was quelled. By a singular coincidence, Pont de Mont Vert witnessed the end of the struggle, in the death of the last Camisard leader,

* A very remarkable series of well-attested narratives was published in 1707, under the title of *Le Théâtre Sacré des Cévennes*. It has been reprinted, with preface and notes by Pastor A. Bost, at Melun, 1847.

AUVERGNE AND THE CÉVENNES.

who leaped from the bridge while being conveyed as a prisoner by the royal troops, and was shot down in the stream.



ROCK OF CAYLUS, NEAR ST. AFFRIQUE, AN OLD HUGUENOT STRONGHOLD.

The contest was over, but persecution continued; the galleys were filled with men whose only crime was their Protestant faith: so lately as 1762 a Huguenot pastor was hanged at Toulouse on the charge of being *ministre*

de la religion prétendue réformée; and it was the same year that witnessed the tragedy of Jean Calas. It should never be forgotten that the awful reaction against all religion which marked the close of the eighteenth century in France was in part the recoil of reason and humanity from some of the most degrading superstitions and abominable cruelties that have ever claimed the authority of Heaven. That the populace, roused at last to fury against their spiritual as well as their temporal rulers, could not discriminate between the truth and its perversions was their misfortune, perhaps their crime; but it must be remembered that they had themselves connived at the suppression of the "witnessing church" amongst them, first in the valleys of the Alps, then among the hills of the Cévennes.

With such thoughts and memories the wanderer over these bleak uplands will find abundant room for reflection, little as the scenery might in itself attract his admiring regards. Its great characteristic is the combination of wild rocky moorland with an almost tropical climate in summer, and Alpine desolation in winter, while in the lower and more sheltered levels the luxuriance of vegetation is in singular contrast with the arid heights. In some places, the sides of the mountains are clothed with cornfields, vineyards, and groves of olive, mulberry, or chestnut, on terraced layers of soil, like a gigantic staircase; but oftener the hill-slopes are bare, showing only a few juniper bushes or scanty fields of rye. Flocks abound wherever there is a possibility of pasture; and the people, simple-hearted, robust and hard-working, improve to the utmost the few natural advantages which their land possesses.

A rough mountain-walk from Pont de Mont Vert brings us to Genolhac, an inconsiderable village, where the sight of a railway station is welcome enough after our excursion into "the Desert." The waters, it will be noticed, now flow eastwards towards the Rhone, showing that the watershed is passed. Proceeding by train southwards to Alais, almost every name we see brings to mind some old tradition and anecdote of the Camisard struggle; and most travellers will perhaps go straight to Nîmes, feeling that they have seen and heard enough for an ineffaceable impression. Still, should time and opportunity serve, it would be a far preferable plan to leave the train at Alais—a considerable town, noteworthy for memories of the conflict, but not otherwise—and to strike across the mountains, by a wild, bleak road, with glens of rare beauty below the sterile hills, down into the valley of the river Gardon at Anduze, and then over the mountains to St. Hippolyte. The walk or drive between the two towns last mentioned, through a sterile, lonely, far-reaching wilderness of hills, will complete the fascination of this wonderful district. From St. Hippolyte itself the descent by rail is easy to the fair valley, where the traveller may call a halt at Lunel. He will hardly care to go on over the salt marshes to Aiguesmortes—name of horror to this day—where may still be seen the great round "Tour de Constance," to which the Huguenot women were consigned when their fathers and brothers,

husbands and pastors, were sent to the galleys. This tower "continued to be the principal prison for Huguenot women in France for a period of about a hundred years. It was always horribly unhealthy; and to be condemned to this dungeon was considered almost as certain though a slower death than to be condemned to the gallows. Sixteen Huguenot women confined there in 1686 died within five months. Most of them were the wives of merchants of Nimes, or of men of property in the district. When the prisoners died off, the dungeon was at once filled up again with more victims; and it was rarely if ever empty, down to a period within only a few years before the outbreak of the French Revolution."*

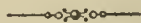
Even far-famed Montpellier, to which we now bend our way, connects itself in thought with the long agony of the persecuted church. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes indeed is commemorated by a bas-relief in the town gate; and every reader of Young's *Night Thoughts* will remember how, connected with the same act of royal injustice, was the refusal of a grave to "Narcissa," the poet's adopted daughter.

"What could I do? what succour? what resource?
With pious sacrilege a grave I stole:
With impious piety that grave I wronged;
Short in my duty, coward in my grief!
More like her murderer than friend I crept,
With soft suspended step, and muffled deep
In midnight darkness, whispered my last sigh—
Nor writ her name."†

What is the present condition of Protestantism in these districts? The question is often asked, very naturally; nor can the answer be wholly satisfactory. It often happens that the fruits of a long contest become tasteless or uncared-for when gained; and though it would be too much to assert this in the present instance, it must be matter of regret that the faith which sustained a contest so tremendous has not more life and energy now. For it was never trampled out. Every town and village has its Protestant pastors and nominal worshippers, and there is, no doubt, much simple piety among the peasant people. Yet the fact cannot be disguised that the ancient church of Languedoc has not fulfilled the promise of its early heroism, and that religious indifference, rather than either rationalism or superstition, has come like a blight upon its prosperity. Some earnest spirits are, however, working and praying for revival; and it will yet surely be proved that the blood of the martyrs has not been shed in vain.

* Smiles' *Huguenots in France*, p. 194.

† *Night Thoughts*, Night III., 169-179.





GETTING READY FOR A START.

A VISIT TO THE ALPS OF DAUPHINÉ.

GRENOBLE—VALLEY OF THE ISÈRE—LA GRANDE CHARTREUSE—TO BRIANÇON—THE VAUDOIS AND
FÉLIX NEFF—THE DURANCE—AVIGNON AND VAUCLUSE.



HERE can be no doubt as to which parts of France are the most beautiful; and it so happens that there are two great rivers which combine with mountain ranges and the sea to separate these districts from the rest. The one river is the Garonne, enclosing, with the Pyrenees and the coast, an irregular triangle, within which are contained, perhaps, the most perfectly charming scenes which France can boast: the other is the Rhone, sweeping round from the Lake of Geneva to Lyons, and thence to the sea, forming two sides of an irregular quadrilateral, of which the remaining two are

the Mediterranean shore and the Maritime and Cottian Alps. Which of these two corners of the land—the south-west and the south-east—offer the greater variety of attraction it is hard to say; the former is the more frequently visited by English tourists, for the simple reason that the mountain scenery of the latter has Switzerland as its neighbour and rival. Yet the mountain region that descends in long gradations to the valley of the Rhone in the ancient Dauphiné and Provence has marvellous attractions of its own. On the lowlands there are the ancient cities with their Roman remains, and the heights have many a glorious Alpine scene not unworthy to be compared with those of the Oberland. But they are comparatively unknown. Of the thousands of Englishmen to whom the Cathedral Terrace at Berne is as familiar as the Thames Embankment, and the Wetterhorn better known than Snowdon, how many have turned aside even for a single visit to Gap or to Briançon, or have ever seen Mont Meije or Mont Pelvoux?

We do not forget that Savoy also now belongs to France; but even of this comparatively familiar mountain region, what a wealth of beauty lies in the interior unexplored, almost unknown! Mont Blanc and Chamonix we leave out of the question; people *will* think of them as a part of Switzerland, and no book of "Swiss Pictures" would be complete without illustrations from these French territories. But Aix les Bains is at least familiar to multitudes of travellers, who, in passing through France at express speed, having comfortably or uneasily slept nearly all the way from Paris, have been wakened up to admiration by the exceeding loveliness of the Lac de Bourget, seen through the railway-carriage windows in the early sunlight, with dazzling snow upon the peaks beyond. Then from Chambéry to the mouth of the Mont Cenis tunnel at Modane, the journey along the valley of the Arc, if the day is bright, is one succession of mountain splendours, ever varying, as the hills now precipitously overhang the torrent's brink, now recede, leaving great level spaces covered by memorials of the winter's floods, and again part asunder to disclose wild, rocky glens between, beyond which tower loftier snow-peaks in the distance. It is certainly on the French or Savoy side of Mont Cenis that the richest beauty lies, and many a traveller must wish that he had time to explore the wonders of which he can obtain so tantalising a glimpse as he rushes by.

Leaving the express at Chambéry, I took the route to Grenoble, down the valley of the dark and rapid Isère, which in part stretches out over stony shallows, but for the most part rolls on in a broad deep flood. The glacier world in which this river and the Arc have their rise, almost at the summit of the mountain range, and near the edge of the tremendous rampart which overhangs the Piedmontese plain, is described by the few who have visited it as wonderfully magnificent in its contrast between the vast silent wildernesses of snow and rock, and the glimpses of exceeding loveliness in the valleys below. The village of Bonneval, six thousand feet above the



VIEW ON THE RIVER ARC.

H

level of the sea, gives access to the source of the Arc. It is no place for the tourist, the houses are half underground, and in winter the cattle share with the family the subterranean shelter from the cold: sheeps' dung is mainly used for fuel, wood being almost unattainable. The only crops are rye and barley, sown in sheltered places, the seed-time being in July, and the harvest in the August or September of the following year! Yet here people live (population at the last census 349), and contrive to be industrious and happy—not without some of the ornaments and luxuries of life, as gilt clocks and prettily-framed engravings. There is a path beside the torrent to Lanslebourg, at the foot of the old Mont Cenis Pass, where are still to be seen the remains of the famous Fell railway, winding upwards beside the post-road. The discontinuance of this mode of ascent to the regions of perpetual snow robs the world of a unique sensation! Having tried both, I prefer the tunnel; but there was a great charm in that long slow rise by zigzags to the wild summit of the pass, here and there passing under the sheltering eaves of the strong-roofed sheds raised as a protection against the avalanches; the post-road now close by, now again disappearing behind some jutting peak, with the endless rows of stone blocks to mark the way; the awful depth below; the palpitating engine that seemed, like a living thing, to pant and throb more painfully as it reached the upper air; the halt at the top to make all tight, as it seemed, for the descent:—and then the downward rush, headlong yet safe, round sharp curves, down precipitous slopes, with the point for which we are bound visible sheer below, at a distance of five thousand feet! It was impossible not to speculate as to the possibility of the system,—admirable and complete as it was, both in theory and practice,—giving way with a crash at some critical point, and, in spite of demonstrated sufficiency of breaks, strength of materials, perfection of arrangements, skill of drivers and conductors, a plunge into the abyss. But no catastrophe happened, and the journey still ranks among the brightest of memories.

We are now, however, following the course of the Isère, between fair wooded hills, with vineyards on every slope, and the rich autumn glow pervading the whole landscape, to the fair town of Grenoble (*Gratianopolis*, from the Emperor Gratian), charmingly placed on the river banks amid an amphitheatre of mountains, with a grand fortress, rising tier above tier, and to all appearance impregnable, upon a projecting rocky hill. The view from the great battery at the summit of the bold precipitous mountains in the neighbourhood, and up the fertile valley of the Isère to the distant glaciers, is truly magnificent. The walks round about the city are very pleasant, commanding at all points mountain panoramas of which the beauty is enhanced by the rich southern luxuriance which clusters around the base of every height. As far as I could judge, the people seemed cheerful and well-to-do; the special industry of the place, the manufacture of kid gloves, being continuously prosperous. Altogether there are few pleasanter places for a week's sojourn,

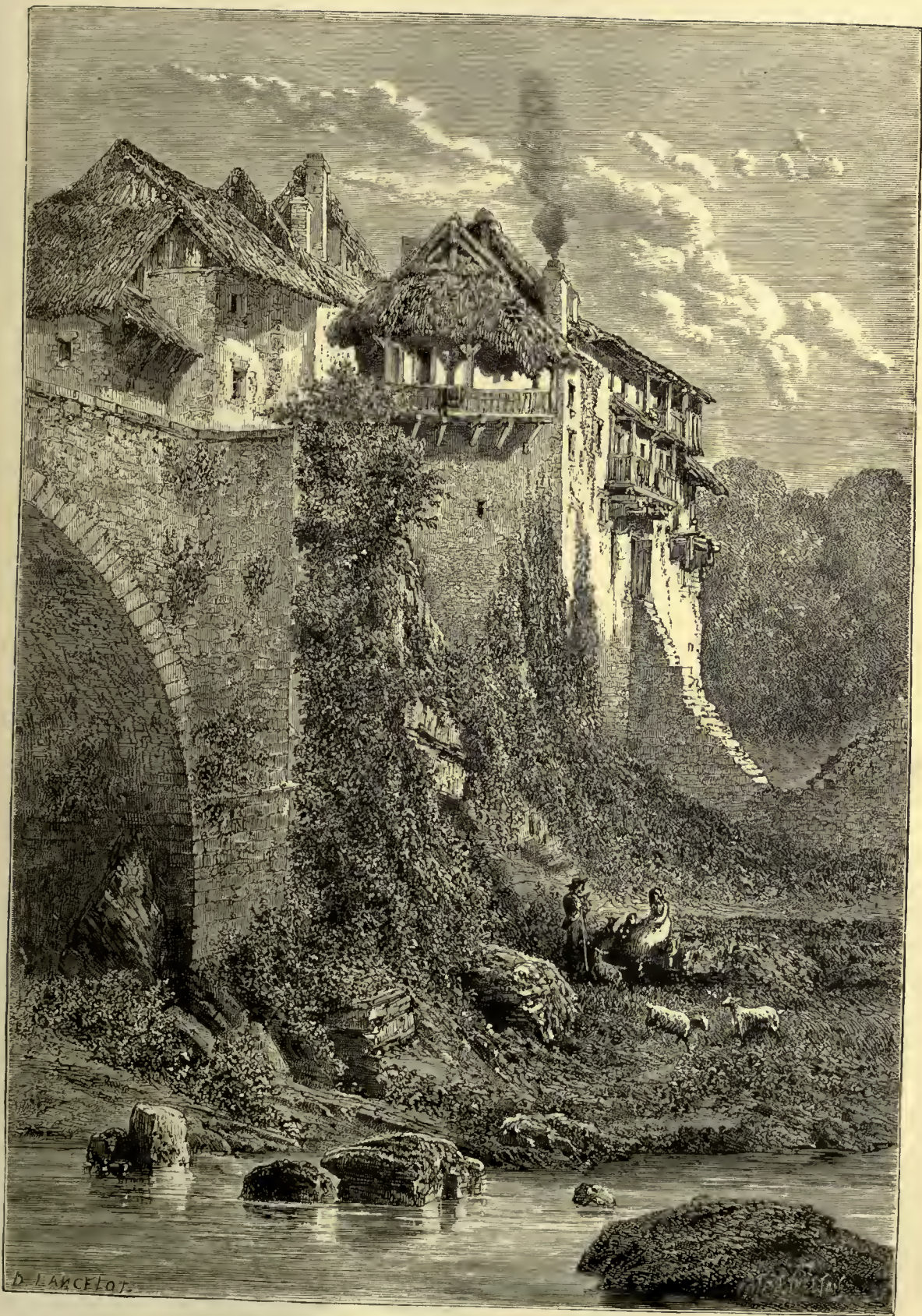
A VISIT TO THE ALPS OF DAUPHINÉ.

while the longer excursions in all directions are full of interest. Of these the most considerable was to La Grande Chartreuse, the well-known monastery. A short railway-ride brought me into the vast and lovely Vale of Grésivaudan, where the sunlight of a cloudless autumn morning was reflected in every variety of hue from the foliage just touched by the finger of decay. The vines, here trained in their luxuriance over trelliswork, or hanging in graceful festoons from tree to tree, were of a purple and golden splendour; the chestnut, beech, and mulberry-trees were clothed in every variety of autumnal tint, and the dark fir-woods that climbed the lower slopes



CITADEL OF GRENOBLE.

to the mighty hills beyond formed a magnificent framework to the picture, in the midst of which the Isère showed a sunlit grey among meadows still clothed in summer green. Too soon the station was reached, where the diligence was in waiting for St. Laurent du Pont, the village from which the ascent to the Grande Chartreuse begins. After a fine drive of eight or nine miles, part of the way through a winding rocky pass, I reached the foot of the gorge which leads to the monastery, and started for the six miles' easy ascent. It is an Alpine road, on the height beside a torrent, beneath tremendous cliffs which guard the defile in every varied shape of strength



ALBY, IN SAVOY.

and rocky beauty. But the one thing that distinguished the scene from all other mountain glens which I had ever traversed, was the extraordinary, indescribable splendour of the autumnal tints. The sides of the gorge were clothed with trees, from the torrent-bed to within a short distance of the towering cliff-summits; and the foliage was of every colour, purple, gold, russet-brown, bright crimson, with the dark green of the firs everywhere interspersed, and the whole lighted up by the afternoon sun. It was a feast, a banquet, a very revelry of colour! The green and foamy torrent was dashing far below, over its stony bed; above the mass of variegated foliage the grey cliffs rose in their stony grandeur, and the whole was over-arched by a sky of southern blue without a cloud.

Where the sides of the glen approach closest, the torrent is crossed by a lofty bridge; then appear vast sentinel rocks, as if guarding the pass. On the loftiest of these, in a position apparently inaccessible, a crucifix has been placed. As the shadows lengthened and I began to feel weary, the convent-bell sounded a welcome among the lonely hills, and soon I came in sight of the buildings, with their white walls and high slate roofs. They occupy a kind of plateau or "cirque" in the ascent, and are grandly placed; imposing, not from the beauty of their architecture, but from their extent. "Brothers" were working in the surrounding fields and woods, directing bodies of labourers, and still helping to "make the wilderness to smile." Others I had met on the way between the convent and a great manufactory-like range of buildings at Fourvoirie, near the foot of the glen, which I afterwards found were devoted to the preparation of the liqueurs which bring so vast a revenue to the establishment.

On ringing, I was courteously received, and shown into a great stone-paved room, warmed by an English patent louvre stove, most acceptable at this chill height in the autumn evening. A lay attendant, not in monastic dress, asked for my *carte de visite*, to deposit with the superior, and told me that supper would be ready at six. There was time for a stroll in the woods—alone, as there were no other English visitors—and when the last splendours of sunset had faded from the castled rocks around, I returned to the *salle à manger*, and found four Frenchmen, who had come up with their knapsacks. One of the "brothers" came in and chatted with us freely; he was evidently a well-educated gentleman, and acquainted with the subjects of current interest, in England and the East, as well as in France. When the supper was served, he retired, bidding us a hospitable *bon soir*. As the rules of the convent exclude all meat diet, it was a somewhat interesting question what the supper for five sharp-set travellers might be; and under the circumstances it may be excusable to give the *menu*. First, *soupe maigre*, with bread and vegetables, most tastily seasoned; next, a perfect *omelette aux herbes*; followed by fried potatoes delicately browned, with butter and just a *soupçon* of oil; then trout, the largest and finest I ever

A VISIT TO THE ALPS OF DAUPHINÉ.

tasted, with a *mayonnaise*, I think of salmon; cheese and butter to follow; pears, almonds, walnuts and figs. For beverage, good red wine *ad libitum*, and a glass of chartreuse for those who liked it at the end. Of course I could not tell whether such is the diet on which the good fathers mortify themselves. Supper over, we were conducted to our rooms, it having been arranged to summon us at half-past twelve for the midnight mass. My bedroom was a plain cell, opening from a stone corridor, with



LA GRANDE CHARTREUSE.

bed, table, chair, washstand, and *prie-Dieu*; no carpet, no looking-glass—these I presume are vanities. About eleven I was awakened by the clang of an enormous bell,—signal, I afterwards found, for the monks to pray in their dormitories. Then at twelve a “brother” knocked at my door; the bell began again, and I went, candle in hand, along the corridor to what I had before been shown as the entrance to chapel. Entering, I found myself with one of the Frenchmen in a high gallery at the end of the building, an

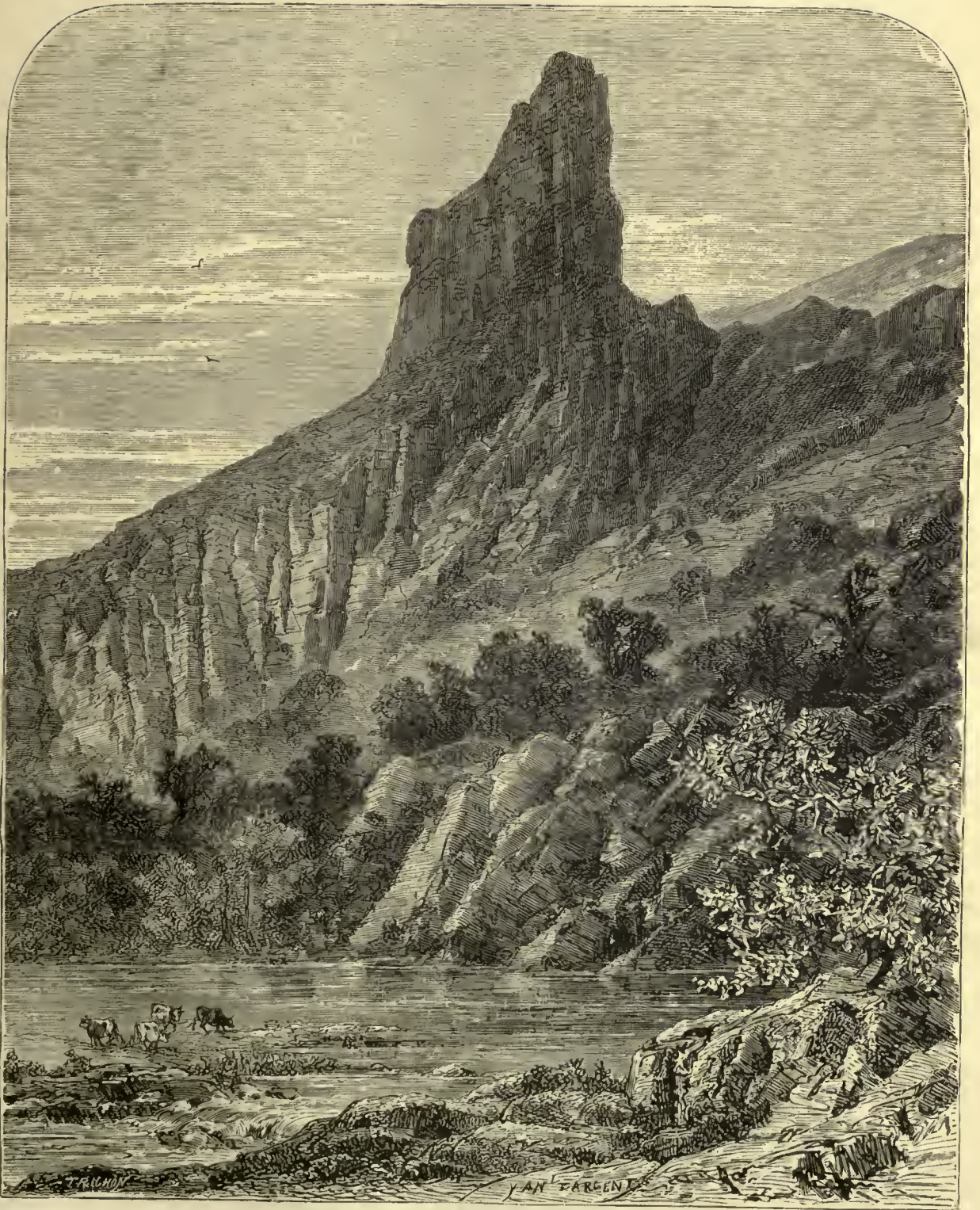
oblong vaulted hall, of fair proportions. Below was a sort of ante-chapel, empty; then a high screen surmounted by a grating, with a tall crucifix in the centre; beyond the screen the choir and altar, dimly lighted by candles that cast long weird shadows through the building. There was a glimpse of cowed forms in the choir, and a loud wild unison of many voices as they together intoned the mass. I remained in the cold gallery, listening and wondering, about a quarter of an hour, then returned to bed with the voices of the chanting monks still heard in the distance and forming an accompaniment to my return to the land of dreams. I rose early, much refreshed, and descending, found the four Frenchmen preparing to visit the house under convoy of a "brother." So we five sallied forth, along vast stony, quiet corridors, where notices were posted inviting *messieurs les visiteurs* to speak only in a *voix très-basse*, as they went along, not to disturb the "fathers" in their meditation. For the "fathers" are far superior to the "brothers;" in fact, the great monastery exists for their sake. Each has a suite of rooms, communicating with the corridor by a locked door, with bell, and a kind of square closet with iron door beside—I suppose for the service of the solitary meals. We entered one suite, from which the tenant had departed; and I was surprised by the spaciousness and even comfort of the arrangements. First, there was a long brick passage parallel with the corridor; and, on the other side, a dainty little high-walled garden, so arranged as to be overlooked by no rooms but those of the occupier. The basement was further occupied by a large woodshed, and a workshop with turning-lathe and sets of tools all complete. A stone staircase led to two spacious, airy rooms; one with brick floor and stove, for meals; the other, furnished with recess-bed, wardrobe and plain dressing-table, with a closet beyond for bookshelves, writing-table, and *prie-Dieu*, was the sleeping-room. On the whole there was much provision for comfort, in a simple way, for one who had abjured all earthly interests for a life of privacy and devotion. But oh, how solitary! Only on Sundays and feast days do the "fathers" sit together at table, where, however, they eat their meals in absolute silence. Only on Thursdays may they leave the building, when they are permitted to walk out in the forest and to speak one to another; but all do not care even for this privilege. These Carthusians have chosen to live apart, mysteries one to another; each with the memory, it may be of a great sorrow, it may be of a great sin. They have been worsted in life's conflict; henceforth they decline the battle. Yet in the grave pale faces of which I caught a glimpse there seemed neither feebleness nor fanaticism. Rarely have I seen nobler-looking men; there was even an air of refinement and thoughtfulness which distinguished them from all monks and friars whom I had ever seen before, except, perhaps, one or two brethren of St. Bernard. This brotherhood of the Chartreuse (whence "Charterhouse") is ramified in other lands, but the headquarters are here. One large apartment (the chapter-house) contains portraits of the successive

generals of the order, from Bruno downwards: in the spaces left vacant for those who are yet to come, are inscribed texts of Scripture and phrases from the great ecclesiastical writers, all in Latin. The Library is a spacious apartment, with a splendid collection of books—some fifteen or twenty thousand volumes, it is said. Whether the “fathers” are permitted to use these stores freely I could not learn; it is certain that there were very few vacant places on the shelves. We saw the cemetery, where each grave is marked by a little wooden cross, nameless, and not replaced when it decays. Two chapels also were visited, besides that in which we had witnessed the midnight mass; in one of these, two “fathers” were kneeling, apparently rapt in devotion. I drew back at the entrance, as I saw them; but our guide said, “They will not notice you; *entrez, monsieur* ;” and the monks remained without sound or movement, as still as statues upon the marble floor.

After our tour through the building, we went into the *salle à manger*, ready for breakfast, which was very much like the previous evening’s supper, tea and coffee, like meat, being excluded from the monastery. On our departure a bill was furnished—for these fathers and brothers have a regular charge for their hospitality, unlike those of St. Bernard, who charge nothing, but (it is said) expect much. Would any readers like to see the amount for supper, bed and breakfast in this unique establishment? It was 5*l.* 9*s.*—*tout compris*—say four shillings and eightpence halfpenny! Certainly, there was nothing to complain of on the score of rapacity, and the *tronc aux pauvres*, ready for any further offering, though prominent enough, was not obtrusive.

A barrack-like building opposite the monastery, under the charge of some aged sisters of charity, affords a similar hospitality to lady visitors, none of the sex being ever admitted to the Grande Chartreuse itself. But this establishment seemed vacant at the time of my visit. The fast approaching winter had greatly thinned the crowd of strangers who from various motives make their pilgrimage to this world-famous spot. Comparatively few of our own countrymen and countrywomen seem to come hither; although there are few places in Europe better worth a visit, whether from the exceeding beauty of its once desert surroundings, or from the manifold thoughts which this sadly mistaken life of some evidently noble natures may well suggest. Few among ourselves, however, are likely to be fascinated by the example. What we need, perhaps, is more silence. Only we know where to find it, in the neighbourhood of daily companionships, in the pauses of earthly conflicts. The voice which says to us, “Come ye apart, and rest awhile,” is no summons to the lifelong seclusion of the wilderness, but a call to the retirement which only braces us up for further activities, and gives a richer charm to home affections and the common tasks of life. Happily our Scriptural Protestantism has no place for the lonely self-centred life of the Carthusian devotee.

But I had little time to moralise as I made my way down the glen on



THE AIGUILLE PEAK, DAUPHINÉ.

that autumnal morning. For the wind had changed in the night, rolling clouds covered the tops of the hills and shrouded the forests in ghostlike garb of white; the rain fell in floods, and the torrent at the foot of the glen roared thunderously over its rocky bed. There was nothing for it but to hasten with all speed down to St. Laurent; the four Frenchmen stayed behind, and the six miles' solitary walk through the rain and mist showed very impressively why the place was still called "a desert." Until Fourvoirie was reached, I met no human being. The walk, however, was really enjoyable, and I reached Grenoble with the feeling of having made one of the pleasantest little excursions of my whole life.

But other scenes of a widely different character attract the sojourner at Grenoble. The Alps of Dauphiné are best to be explored by a journey to Briançon, then in a south-westerly direction along the valley of the ungovernable, muddy, desolating Durance — of all rivers the most furious in its wilder moods, while in its sullen intervals, so to speak, it rolls through vast expanses of shale and gravel torn down from the mountains, and left high and dry in the river-bed. Briançon itself is reached by a fine post-road from Grenoble, in parts as grand as the Simplon, cut here and there from the face of stupendous cliffs, then carried through narrow, deep gorges, while in the higher regions glaciers descend to the very roadside, and roaring torrents below make wild music all along the way.

Briançon itself is a fortress among the hills, where art has added all its resources to those of nature to form a stronghold as impregnable, surely, as any in the world: its foundation, a vast rock towering up from the plain, on one side precipitously descending to the rivers which unite below, on the other backed by a shelving mountain, with escarpments and bastions rising into the very clouds. The place has sustained sieges, commanding as it does the route to Piedmont, but has remained unconquered, vindicating its motto, *Petite ville et grand renom*. Its inhabitants, according to the last census, number 3698.



BRIANÇON.

A VISIT TO THE ALPS OF DAUPHINÉ.

Due west Mont Pelvoux towers grandly with its peaks and glaciers. Here, as history tells, in mountain caves, amid the rocks and eternal snows, the persecuted Vaudois of the fifteenth century would hide from their



MONT PELVOUX AND THE ALEFROIDE, FROM NEAR MONT DAUPHIN, IN THE VALLEY OF THE DURANCE.

oppressors. But the memories which are the chief glory of this wild region belong rather to the region lower down the Durance, where, on its western or right bank, the torrent Biaissee comes tumbling down from the bleak hills.

Here, in the Val de Freissinières and the surrounding glens, the Vaudois

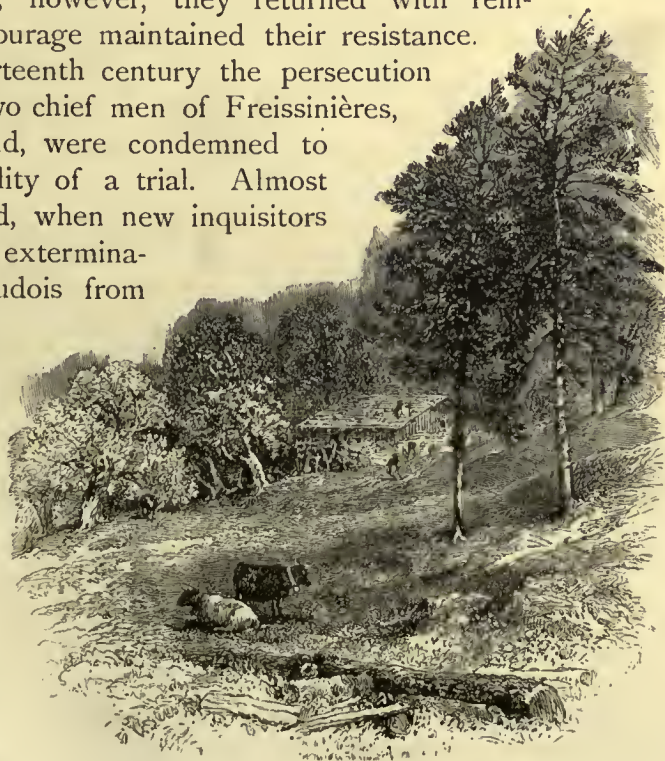
kept their faith from age to age, and withstood amid cruel sufferings the tyrant power of Rome. They were never "Protestant" in the accepted sense of that word, for their belief and worship are older than the Reformation; and, never having been subject to the Papal sway, they cannot be said to have revolted from it. From the year 1036 to the year 1290 five bulls of different popes required their extermination. Inquisitors pounced upon these fated valleys from the year 1238; in 1344



MONT PELVOUX FROM ABOVE LA BESSÉE.

the population of Freissinières, wearied by oppression, fled for awhile to the Piedmontese valleys, whence, however, they returned with reinforcements, and with new courage maintained their resistance.

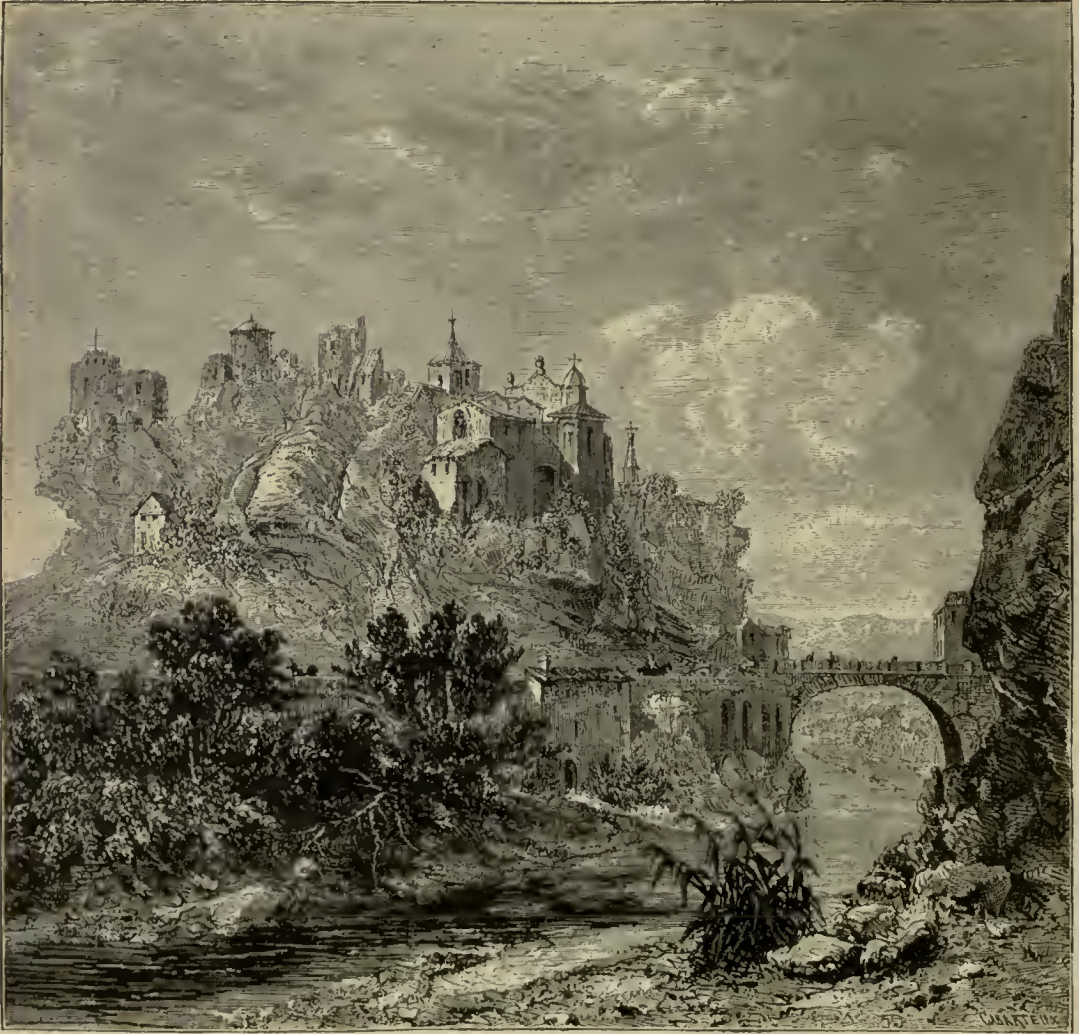
Towards the end of the fourteenth century the persecution redoubled its fury, and the two chief men of Freissinières, Michel Ruffi and Jean Giraud, were condemned to the flames without the formality of a trial. Almost a century of respite followed, when new inquisitors recommenced the work of extermination; and the unhappy Vaudois from generation to generation were subjected to the most revolting cruelties. At last this Val de Freissinières came into the possession of Cæsar Borgia, reputed son of Pope Alexander VI., from whom he obtained a brief of absolution for its harassed inhabitants. But the Pope, not understanding the manner of men with whom he had to deal, somewhat overdid his act of forgive-



IN THE VAL D'ALEFROIDE (VAL LOUISE).

A VISIT TO THE ALPS OF DAUPHINÉ.

ness, absolving the unfortunate Vaudois from the guilt not only of heresy, but of fraud and usury, larceny, simony, adultery, murder, poisoning, and all other crimes.* During the religious wars that followed, the Vaudois of Dauphiné again suffered greatly. The interposition of Cromwell and the sonnet by Milton belong to history.



VAISON, IN VAUCLUSE.

It was in these valleys too that the good Félix Neff conducted his apostolic labours. Above the Freissinière valley on the northern side extends the mighty crest of Dormilhouse, or Dormilleuse, where, in a spot more sheltered than the rest, the little village is situated which Neff chose as the chief sphere of his efforts for the moral and spiritual good of the people. It is "a

* These particulars are chiefly from Alexis Muston.

miserable village," in the words of Dr. Gilly, "at the very foot of the glacier; constructed like an eagle's nest upon the side of a mountain, the most repulsive, perhaps, of all the habitable spots of Europe. Nature is here stern and terrible, offering nothing to repay the traveller but the satisfaction of planting his foot on the rock which has been hallowed as the asylum of Christians of whom the world was not worthy. It consists of a few poor detached huts, from which fresh air, comfort, and cleanliness are all banished; some without chimneys or glazed windows, others consisting of a mere miserable kitchen and stable, seldom cleaned out more than once a year, where the inhabitants spend the greater part of the winter along with their cattle, for the sake of the warmth. Their few sterile fields hang over precipices, and are partly covered with blocks of granite. In some seasons even rye will not ripen. Many of the pasturages are inaccessible to cattle, and scarcely safe for sheep. Yet in this gloomy spot did the virtuous Protestant pastor, Félix Neff, sit himself down, because his services seemed here to be most required, where he had everything to teach, even to the planting of a potato."* It is pleasing to know that at Dormilleuse at least the small community remain faithful to their profession, and cherish the memory of their pastor after an interval of fifty years. At Pallon, a hamlet picturesquely situated below the crest, on both sides of the torrent, there is a comfortable parsonage built by English subscriptions, and often tenanted in the summer by visitors from Great Britain and America, who come hither to breathe the mountain air, and to visit the scenes of savage grandeur that have been hallowed throughout many ages by the faith and patience of the saints. Freissinière itself is now an entirely Romanist commune, and a revival of religious earnestness is much needed in the districts that are still nominally Protestant.

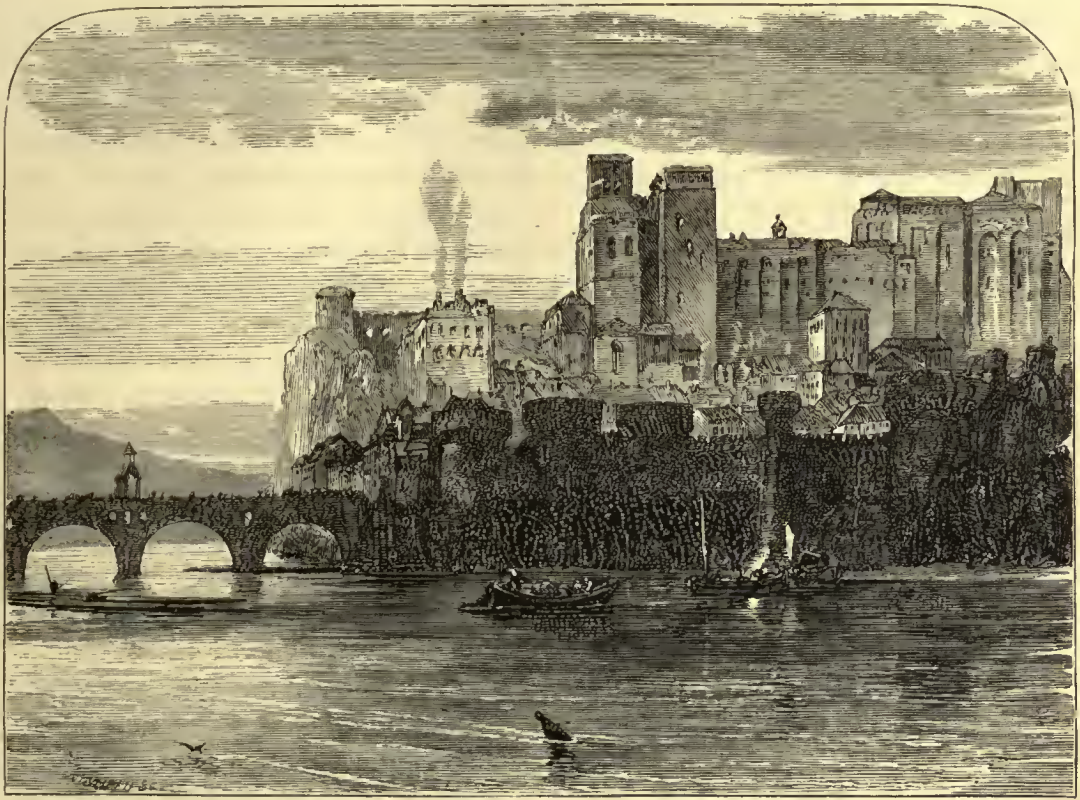
Returning to the valley of the Durance, we descend rapidly to Mont Dauphin, another mountain fortress, from which a grand defile to the east leads up to the Château Queyras, also famous as the scene of Neff's labours. But there was no time to stay, nor even to visit the stupendous gorge of the Guil, described as one of the finest in the Alps, from its length, extending to several miles, and the grandeur of its naked frowning precipices, which in many places approach so closely as to shut out the sun for months together. If we have seen the Gorge of Gondo, and the Baths of Pfeffers, we can imagine this, and so may hurry on. Embrun, another stout fortress, is now reached. These men of Dauphiné were at least resolved to keep the way closed and barred against invasion from Italy. Then a long, long dreary ride, with many a winding down the right bank of this terrible Durance, and we are at Sisteron, where there is a railway station; and the vineyards and olive groves which clothe the defile are doubly charming after the wild and awful splendour of the upper regions.

* *Memoir of Félix Neff*. See also *Life of Félix Neff*, R.T.S., p. 78. Neff died April, 1829.

Soon we enter Provence (Basses-Alpes), and pursue our way with such swiftness as French railway trains in the south can attain, still along the Durance to Avignon, where we are glad to bid farewell to this wild, fearful river as it sullenly and muddily makes its way to the Rhone.

The valley, it must be confessed, is stifling after the mountain airs; but it has its marvellous charms nevertheless. For are we not now in the neighbourhood of Vaucluse, famed in song? Even the Palace of the Popes must wait until we have made the excursion (happily now most easy, from railroad facilities) to the valley and the fountain. It is a descent, in more than one sense, from the wild and sterile grandeurs of the Vaudois country to the soft luxurious scenes where Petrarch, as he himself says, "wandered in the fields, the forests, and the fountains, resting on the mossy grottoes or beneath the shady trees . . . equally removed from joy or sadness, passing his days in the most profound calm, happy to have the Muses for companions, and the song of birds and the murmur of the stream for a serenade." So in the soft luxurious beauty of these meadows, gazing upwards at the festooned precipices which guard the still retreat, and lulled by the music of the crystal-clear cascade, we close our chapter. The relics of the ancient sway which have given the *Provincia* its name are too important to be classed with those widely different scenes which have detained us so long in the wonderful and almost unknown Gallic mountain land.





AVIGNON.

SOME ANCIENT CITIES AND THEIR MEMORIES.

AVIGNON AND THE POPES—NÎMES, ARLES, MARSEILLES—UP THE RHONE—ORANGE, VIENNE, LYONS
—RELIGIOUS HOPES AND FEARS.



RETURNING from Vaucluse to Avignon, we find ourselves within a fortress of the middle ages—a quiet, sleepy city, built for stout defence against long-vanished assailants, while here and there the modern buildings, with a newness of look that is almost oppressive, affront the venerable dignity of the place. High over all tower the grey walls of the vast square-built palace of the popes. A palace? grimmest of fortresses rather! recalling those days of the church militant when her chosen home was within embattled towers, and her methods of discipline were those of the dungeon and the scaffold. For it was in troublous times that the papacy found its refuge here—times of which the English people perhaps in general know too little. The

seventy years' "Babylonish Captivity of the Holy See," as some have termed it, was in fact no exile at all, but in the beginning a bold stroke for French supremacy in the church. Bertrand, Archbishop of Bordeaux, being chosen pope under the title of Clement the Fifth, resolved not to cross the Alps, but took up his abode at this fair city on the Rhone, summoning a council at Lyons, A.D. 1306, and laying the foundations of this palace, as the Vatican of the West. It was thirty years, however, before it was finished, and that by another pope, Benedict XII., second in order from Clement. The line of French rulers of the "Catholic Church" seemed established. The papal see became possessed of enormous wealth, part of which was spent in purchasing the fee simple of Avignon from Joanna, Countess of Provence, better known as Queen of the Two Sicilies. "To this tranquil seat of power the successors of St. Peter transplanted the luxury, the pomp, and the vices of the imperial city. Secure from the fraud and violence of a powerful and barbarous nobility, the courtiers of the see surrendered themselves to a holyday of delight—their repose was devoted to enjoyment, and Avignon presented perhaps the gayest and most voluptuous society of Europe. The elegance of Clement VI. diffused an air of literary refinement over the grosser pleasures of the place, and the spirit of Petrarch wrought its way through the councils of faction and the orgies of debauch."*

But at length the cry for an Italian pope, and for the restoration of Rome to its honours, had become too loud to be resisted. The imperial city had been distracted by strife: the great Rienzi, "the last of the Tribunes," had risen to power and been overthrown; Petrarch himself had eloquently urged the popes to return, to heal the dissensions, and to prove themselves the fathers of their people: Pope Urban the Fifth had actually made the attempt, and his entrance into Rome had been greeted by an enthusiastic people. But the cardinals, mostly Frenchmen, missed the delights of France too sorely. The bright little city on the Rhone, with its stately palace, and its luxurious ease, allured them back from the distracted and half-ruined metropolis of their church, and after two or three years' trial, the papal court was once more transferred to Avignon. But some years afterwards the cry of the Romans for their spiritual chief became too importunate to be resisted, and Gregory the Eleventh, also a Frenchman, ended the seventy years' "Captivity" by a final emigration to the ancient home of the papacy. The consequence was the establishment, on the death of Gregory the Eleventh, of a double papal line—French pope and Italian; or, as some put it, anti-pope and pope—the former continuing to reside at Avignon, and the "Western Schism," as it was called, enduring for between forty and fifty years.† When the schism ceased, Avignon remained a possession of Rome, and it was not until the Revolution that it finally became subject to France.

* Lord Lytton.

† The popes of Avignon were:

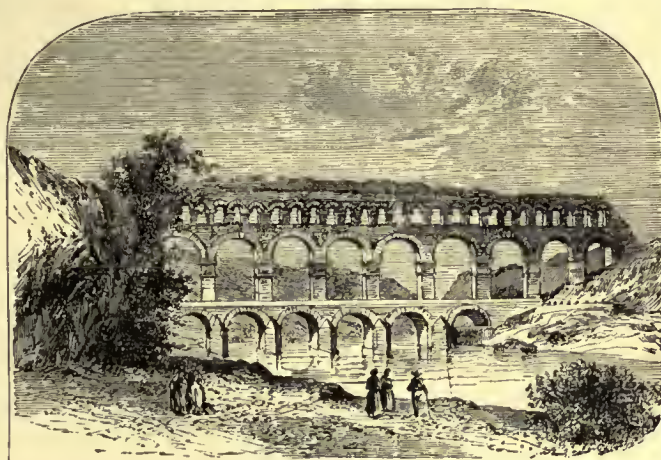
Clement V.	(Bertrand de Got, Bishop of Bordeaux)	A.D.	1309.
Vacancy		"	1314-1316.

AVIGNON TO NÎMES.

These bits of history seem natural, as we walk upon the ramparts, or along the boulevards below. Few cities in Europe have preserved their fortifications in so complete and picturesque a fashion, and nowhere is the Rhone more imposing than where its broad waters sweep round the northern part of the city walls. The cathedral-rock, which overhangs the stream, seems like a continuance of the massive defences, and the platform on its summit commands a fine view over the plain beyond, to the distant hills of Vaucluse on the right, while to the left the terrible Durance is seen as it ends its course in the great river.

A short journey in the direction of Nîmes brings us to the Pont du Gard, a ruined aqueduct,

probably as old as the Christian era; and in its colossal proportions a most impressive memorial of the Roman rule. Three tiers of arches, the widest being at the base, support a closed canal at a height of 155 feet above the bed of the Gardon valley; and that the aqueduct was long employed for its purpose is shown by the thick calcareous deposit with which the sides of the canal



THE PONT DU GARD.

are lined. The use of the conduit was to convey to Nemausus (now Nîmes) the pure water of two distant springs, now combining to form one of the tributaries of the Gardon, a considerable affluent of the Rhone. The sight of this vast monument impressively shows the former greatness of the province, the importance of this particular city, as well as the care and cost which the Romans devoted to the water supply of their great towns.

Yet Nîmes itself, to which we now make our way, is almost unknown

John XXII.	(Nicholas V. assumed the tiara at Rome)	A.D.	1316.
Benedict XII.	(friend of Petrarch)	"	1334.
Clement VI.	(purchased Avignon from Queen Joanna)	"	1342.
Innocent VI.	(favoured Rienzi, who abdicated 1347, was assassinated 1354)	"	1352.
Urban V.	(attempted to return to Rome; assumed the triple crown)	"	1362.
Gregory XI.	(removed to Rome 1377; died 1378)	"	1370.

French Popes, or "Anti-popes."

Clement VII.	(Robert of Geneva)	"	1378.
Benedict XIII.	(Pedro de Luna, expelled 1408)	"	1394.
Clement VIII.		"	1424.

In 1429 Clement resigned, and the French branch of the Papal Church submitted to Pope Martin v., Otho Colonna.

to ancient literature. Strabo speaks of it as a populous city on the road to Spain, and Pliny tells of the cheeses which it exported to Rome—product of the vast herds which were pastured on the eastern slopes of the Cévennes. The Roman remains of Nîmes and its neighbourhood are more numerous and striking than that of any city on this side of the Alps. The amphitheatre, which stands grandly in an open space in the heart of the town, is larger than that of Verona, and would contain, it is said, seventeen thousand spectators. But the most beautiful of all these memorials is the ancient temple, with Corinthian columns,



AMPHITHEATRE, NÎMES.

dedicated to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus,* now called the Maison Carrée, the Square House, which for its simple yet graceful design and elegant proportions is unsurpassed among the relics of antiquity. It is now a museum, and is well worth a visit, although it has one horrible picture,

“Nero experimenting on a slave with the poison intended for his brother,” which haunts the spectator afterwards like a nightmare. It is worth while also to visit the Fountain of the Nymphs, still as in Roman times † copious and limpid. We gain, indeed, a better notion of the former greatness of this now inconsiderable and quiet little city, when we observe that notwithstanding the existence of this and similar springs within its walls, it was judged necessary



MAISON CARRÉE, NÎMES.

to construct the stupendous aqueduct that we have visited at the Pont du Gard to augment the supply.

* The names have been ascertained by an examination of the holes to which the bronze letters of an inscription above the portico were affixed.

† It is mentioned by Ausonius, a poet of the fourth century, as proverbial for purity.

Many other remains of great interest occupy a day or two very pleasantly at this ancient city, and we then take a short railway ride to the twin towns of Beaucaire and Tarascon, which face each other on the Rhone. But there is nothing to detain us at either, save that Tarascon is connected with some characteristic mediæval legends about a dragon, who about the Christian era infested this arid neighbourhood, until Martha and Mary reached Languedoc in their traditional journey northward with Joseph of Arimathea. Martha went forth boldly against the monster, armed only with the cross, subdued him, and led him in triumph, fastened by her girdle, into the city. The feat is represented by sculptures in the Church of St. Martha, and was formerly commemorated by a yearly procession, in which the huge figure of a dragon was drawn through the town,

“Swinging the scaly horrors of his *wooden* tail”

to so mischievous a degree that at length the celebration was interdicted by the authorities. The dragon was called “a troubler,” *ταράσσων*; whence, say certain adventurous etymologists, the name of the city!

Very dreary is the plain beside the Rhone through which we now pursue our course to Arles, another ancient Roman city. For a part of the distance the river is hidden by a chain of low bare hills, from which the summer sun has dried up every trace of verdure, and the vineyards on the slopes and in the hollows are parched into a brown monotonous aridity. Then the plain opens up in meadows to the river's brink; but the meadows are parched and brown likewise, instead of sparkling rivulets are formal ditches, and where “willow trees beside the water-courses” might be expected, gnarled olive trees with their grey-green foliage stand in unenclosed clumps, or alone. The river itself, broad and deep though it is, adds by its turbid, unquiet waters to the generally depressing effect of the scene. Instinctively craving for some brighter colouring than nature, during these autumn months at least, can supply, the inhabitants of the villages have brightened up their houses with fantastic colouring, and in their own holiday costumes contrast refreshingly with the greys and browns in the midst of which they live. All may be different, I know, in spring, when fair Provence is bright with flowers, and the tender foliage is on the vine, and the olive groves and mulberry and fig and orange trees are freshly green, while the melon-blossoms, the cactuses, and the aloe, beautify every garden. But I speak of what I saw in the autumn, when the landscape had, so to speak, lost its vitality, and lay awaiting the winter rigours and the early sunshine to beautify it again for its brief season of splendour. So we reached the grey, quiet little city of Arles, at the apex of the Rhone delta, the extraordinary *Ile de la Camargue* (“reed-field,” *κάμαξ-ἀγρός*), that “Africa-in-Europe” as it has been called, a vast salt plain, haunted by ibis, flamingo, and pelican, with the mirage of the desert constantly to be seen along its glittering levels. But hither I did

not go, the descriptions in Murray and *Joanne* were sufficient, and Arles itself had enough of interest to exhaust all the time at command.

This *Arlate* was in Roman times a most considerable city, and again we mark in many august relics of the past the vanished greatness of the Provincia. There is an amphitheatre most massively constructed, and larger even than that at Nîmes, having been capable of accommodating at least twenty thousand spectators. The fragments of a theatre recently disinterred are also very fine, and there is an obelisk of grey granite of date unknown, probably imported by the Romans from Egypt, and left where it was landed, its possessors having failed to raise it into its place. At any rate it was found imbedded in the Rhone mud in 1675, and then erected where now it stands in the middle of the city. Just opposite is a museum, rich in Roman remains,



AMPHITHEATRE, ARLES.

and the cathedral, one of the oldest ecclesiastical buildings in France, belonging to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, dedicated to "St. Trophimus," companion of the Apostle Paul, being one of the few Gentiles who accompanied him. From this fact, perhaps, the evangelisation of Southern Gaul has been ascribed to Trophimus, although of course without any trustworthy historical authority. The cathedral itself is sufficiently curious, and contains one of the most ancient Christian sculptures in the world, belonging, it is

said, to the third or fourth century, and seeming to represent the passage through the Red Sea as the type of death. But of even higher interest than these ecclesiastical remains are "the Elysian Fields" ("Elysii campi," whence the modern name *Aliscamps*), an authentic pagan burying-place, to which the dead were brought from distant cities.* Here in later times a portion was marked off for Christians; and there are contrasts between the monumental remains in the two divisions only to be paralleled in impressiveness by those of the catacombs in Rome. It is to be regretted that any part of this immense cemetery should have been appropriated to the modern uncongenial uses of railway-sheds and workshops. The dusty promenade which bisects it,

* "Si come ad Arli ove 'l Rodano stagna,
Fanno i sepolcri tutto 'l loco varo."—*Dante, Inferno*, lx. 112.

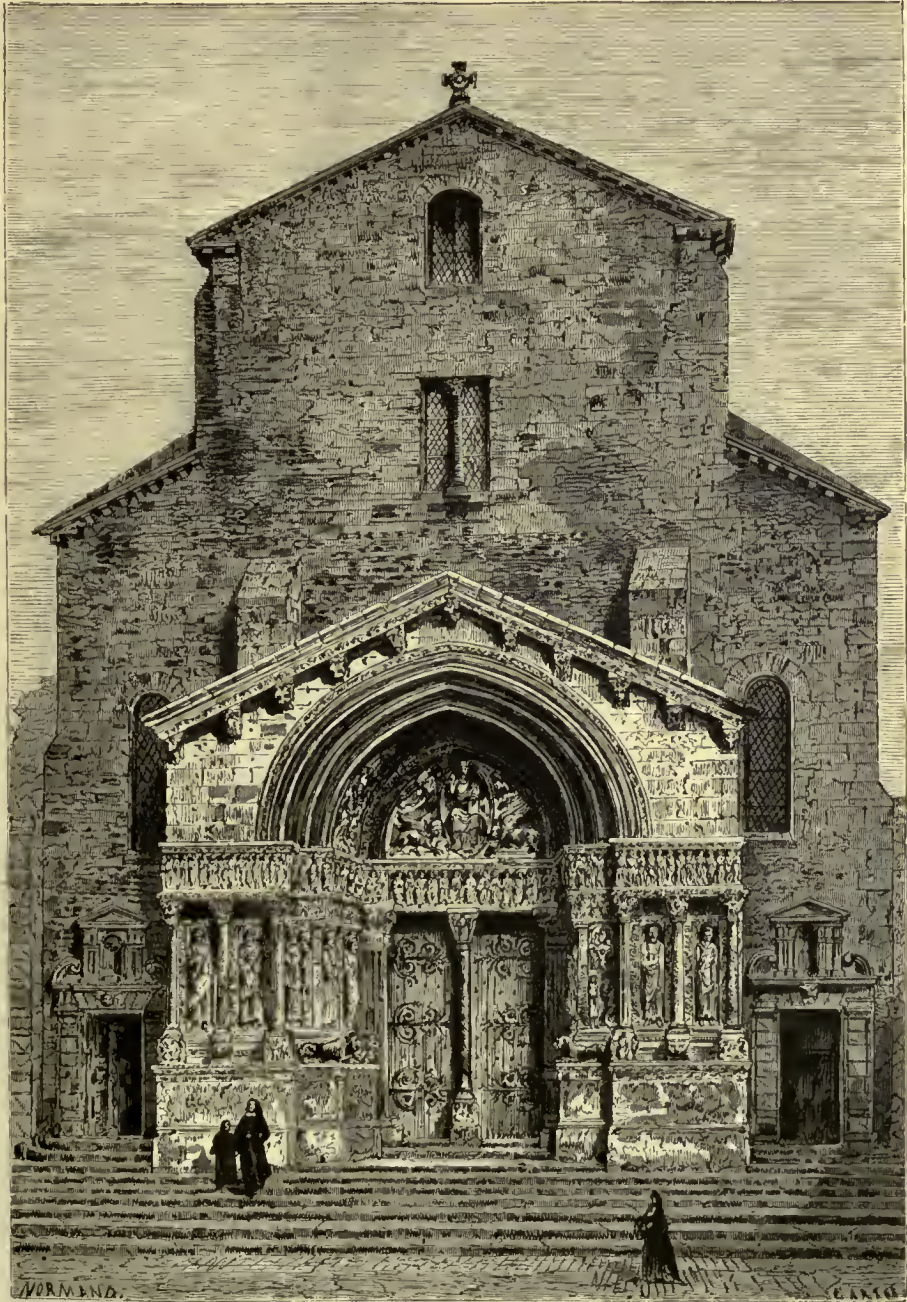
"Even as at Arles, where stagnant grows the Rhone,
The sepulchres make all the place uneven."—*Longfellow*.



ROMAN CEMETERY, ARLES.

ARLES.

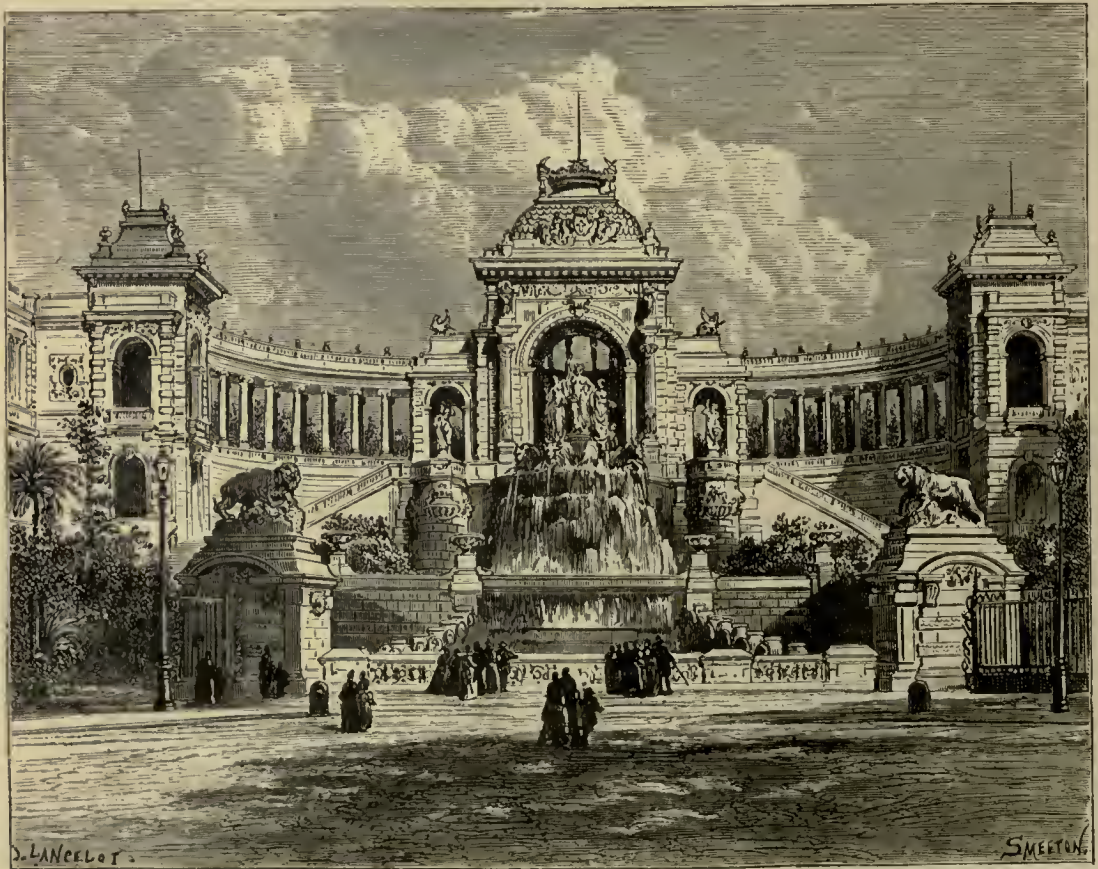
and the modern cemetery which occupies the northern corner, could be tolerated ; but surely the railway company might have found room enough in



CHURCH OF ST. TROPHIMUS, ARLES.

the suburbs for their operations without trespassing on the great silent City of the Dead !

Between Arles and Marseilles the railway leaves the Rhone and crosses a strange wild plain, "campus lapideus," the *Crau*, covered entirely with shingle and small boulders, lying upon a poor thin soil. I had thought that nothing could well surpass the dreary arid desolation of the plain between Tarascon and Arles, but this was now quite outdone. So strange a desert beneath so bright a sky, and in the midst of so fruitful a land, is surely nowhere else to be seen: yet much has been done in parts to relieve its desolation by the excavation of canals, which bring down the waters of the



FONTAINE, MARSEILLES.

Rhone and of the Durance to make the wilderness to smile. In an age which talks about "the flooding of the Sahara," the irrigation of the *Crau* in every part of it hardly seems an impracticable task, and the results obtained wherever the attempt has been made are decisively encouraging to further effort, yield of fruit and grain of various kinds being extraordinary. How the pebbly desert was formed can only be conjectured. It has remained in its present state from the dawn of history; and Æschylus, in a fragment preserved by Pomponius Mela, and quoted in Murray, refers to the mythical story that

MARSEILLES.

Zeus sent these stones in a shower to the earth as missiles for Hercules, who had exhausted his arrows in combat with the Ligurians. Very probably they are relics of some vast inundation or series of inundations by the terrible Durance, or perhaps of the Rhone itself.

Marseilles must not detain us long, although a city of wonderful magnificence. Everything of brightness and splendour which characterises French city life seems to be here, and in addition, the charm of the blue Mediter-



NOTRE DAME DE LA GARDE, MARSEILLES.

anean, more exquisite, perhaps, to every sense in the distant view than in the immediate neighbourhood. There is something very romantic in the idea of a tideless sea; but this by a great city too often implies the retention of much which ebbing waters would have carried away; and we may willingly tolerate long stretches of sand or shingle or slippery rock on the ocean shore for the freshness of the returning tide. So the beach in the neighbourhood of Marseilles did not attract or charm me; the wide tree-

planted boulevards, brilliant streets, and long avenues in the city outskirts, were far pleasanter for a promenade, while it was better still to mount the heights, and from the rocky summit of Notre Dame de la Garde to expatiate at leisure over the glorious sea view, with the distant islands, and the long windings of the coast, while a fine foreground for the dark-blue expanse was formed by the white houses of the city, with the bare vineyards and sombre green olive groves on the surrounding heights, interspersed with white-washed and *pink-washed* rural villas. Eastward, the distant purple hills suggest the

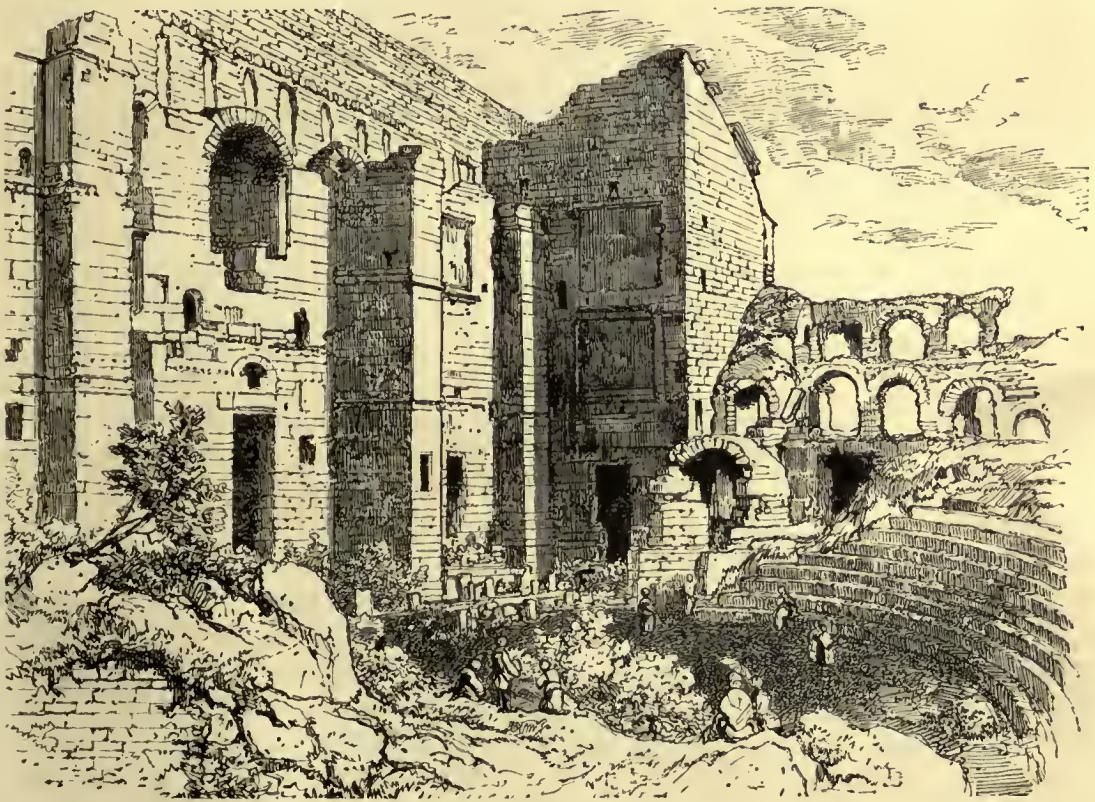


WASHERWOMEN ON THE PAILLON, NICE.

yet unexplored beauties of the coast—the “South of France” *par éminence*; Fréjus, with more Roman remains (Forum Julii); Cannes, in its magnificent valley; fair Nice, with Cimiés; and Mentone, among its olive and palm-clad hills. These all offer fairest pictures to the lover of the beautiful; but they must as yet be left unvisited. If, as before remarked, notwithstanding political geography, Switzerland seems to claim the Alps of Savoy, so Italy yet associates herself with the towns of the Riviera; and though in Toulon, Hyères, or even Cannes, there is still a French aspect over everything, we

seem to breathe Italian air at Nice or Mentone ; while Monaco, on its romantic promontory, and with its superb gambling establishment (now happily doomed), is absolutely unique.

For the present our path lies northward from Marseilles, and by the splendidly-appointed Lyons and Mediterranean Railway we rapidly retrace the distance to Avignon. Thence along the left bank of the Rhone we traverse a vast plain until reaching Orange, where nothing will detain us but the remains of the very wonderful theatre, where a hillside furnished the *auditorium*, and a stupendous five-storied wall, reared opposite, the *scena*.



ROMAN THEATRE, ORANGE.

To me this latter was one of the most amazing structures of all those which still attest the tastes and habits of the Provincia. Let Murray give the measurements, and the reader shall judge of the labour and cost that must have been lavished on the mere material of amusement. "Its dimensions are, 111 feet high, 334½ feet long, and 13 feet thick. It is formed of huge blocks, fitted accurately together without cement." "Like some tall cliff," it has been honeycombed at its base by caves and cellars, with sheds and cottages in front: but these have now been cleared away, and the mighty wall has been made safe, as an "historical monument." Another historical

matter, of a very different kind, is suggested by this little town, and most Englishmen as they pass dreamily remember, perhaps, that our William the Third was a Prince of Orange. How came he by a possession here, in the heart of Southern France? The question is debated not infrequently in railway-carriages whether this is *the* Orange, or whether there is not another in Germany or Holland! The fact is that this possession, an independent principality from the eleventh century, fell, by the marriage of its heiress, to the House of Nassau in the sixteenth, and so remained an appendage of that family until the death of William, when it passed over to Frederick Wilhelm of Prussia, being exchanged a few years afterwards with the King of France for other possessions. The eldest son of the King of Holland is still, however, termed by courtesy, Prince of Orange.

A few miles further we pass out of the department of Vaucluse, and the most beautiful part of the long journey begins. On the right the Dauphiné Alps rise in endless diversity of outline, the grand mass of Mont Ventoux, on whose summit the snows of winter are beginning to gather, being well in view. On the opposite bank of the river the Ardèche comes down from the Cévennes mountains. Round-topped mulberry-trees, long since stripped of their leaves for the silkworms, cover the levels. A line of limestone cliffs now appears, and the opposite side of the river is picturesque with castled heights. After a while we are passing bare unpicturesque hills, where every foot of land is of priceless value, for here the vines are grown which produce the costliest wines. Travelling companions point out here and there a slope, or a nook, the products of which for some inscrutable reason have a richness, a strength, or a bouquet nowhere else to be attained, be the expense or labour what it may. Pre-eminent among these of course is the Hermitage, where, according to tradition, a hermit—is there not his cell, a ruined heap, on its summit?—planted a grape of incomparable flavour which he had brought from Shiraz, and so laid the foundation of that world-wide fame, of a certain sort, which attaches to these dark unlovely slopes. The same vines, however, if planted elsewhere seem at once to degenerate; and it must be concluded that just here is the combination of soil and position, latitude and longitude, which the grape needs for its rarest perfection.

Vienne at length is reached, the old Vienna—place of exile for Pontius Pilate—memorable afterwards in the annals of martyrdom. Here also are Roman remains; but the Christian traveller will rather search out the memorials of those who in earliest times taught the truth and defended it with their lives. When the churches in this district were founded, we cannot tell; but the record of martyrdoms belongs to the reign of Marcus Aurelius, A.D. 177; and a more affecting story of trial and brave endurance has never been written than is contained in the letter from the churches of Lugdunum and Vienna to the churches of Asia Minor.*

* It is given at full length in Milner's and other Church Histories, under A.D. 177.

We are now approaching Lyons, our present destination, a city too well known to many of my readers to need much description or illustration. For one thing, I must express a surprise, in which many share who visit this great manufacturing town for the first time, in finding it so free from the usual accompaniments of such places in England,—from tall chimneys and grimy streets. It is in fact a very splendid city; with a noble range of wooded hills on the right bank of the Saone, commanding views which reach east and south to Alpine mountain-lands, where distant gleams of snow were already appearing, while in clearest weather it is said even Mont Blanc is visible. The Rhone, too, is very beautiful, rolling its broad blue flood through the very centre of the city. True, the river is changed from the glorious freshness of its youth as it appears at Geneva; its blue is touched with a shade of grey, and it is not so rapid in its course; but it is still too swift for navigation, and save for the washerwomen's sheds on each side and the bath-establishments moored to the shore, it is unencumbered and lonely, in striking contrast with its busy embankments and crowded bridges. The chief streets of the city are noble, broad and clean, with most tempting shops. As to the manufactories, they seem mostly to be in the suburbs, while multitudes of the people ply their looms in their own houses. There are a few tall chimneys, and from the heights I observed a large cloud of smoke floating on the wind; but the prevailing effect is that of sunny brightness—at least when the mists have dispersed, which are apt to rise from the twin rivers, or from the marshy ground at their confluence, and enwrap the place with dank unwholesome chill. These mists are the one drawback to this sunny town; but when they were once dispersed the climate was delightful. I walked along the Rhone banks to a large public park, where there was a splendid lake for boating, with broad meadows for sports, avenues of fine trees, a botanic garden and a zoological collection, all free to the people. Here, too, the grass was green as in England—a welcome sight after the parched meadows and brown uplands of Provence.

A short ascent in the evening brought me to the summit of Fourvières (*Forum vetus*, probably), where on the top of the cathedral dome a colossal statue of the Virgin, gilt, seems to distribute blessings over the city beneath. I ascended to the top, and was rewarded by a very magnificent view of the city and the surrounding plain and the distant mountains; the Rhone and Saone being traceable afar in their approach to the city, then in their junction beyond it, and the broad flood in which together, under the former name, they pursued their southward way to the sea. Behind the cathedral extends a dusty upland plain, much used, I believe, for military exercises; and amid a cluster of buildings beyond stands a little church dedicated to the memory of Irenæus, on the traditional spot of his martyrdom under Septimius Severus, A.D. 197. There was little to recall the memory

of the great bishop and of his associates in suffering, although the attendant was anxious that I should see the very bones! I turned away, somewhat disappointed, and descended by the cathedral, past a little chapel on a flight of steps leading to the town, where worshippers were incessantly passing in and out. I entered, and found myself in a home of undisguised Mariolatry. Never was temple more manifestly consecrated to any deity than this shrine was to the Virgin. Her name was everywhere; her supposed interpositions were commemorated in a multitude of pictures, mostly rude in design and execution, that covered the walls. A sick man was lying on a bed, his wife



LYONS.

and children praying around, the Virgin appearing in the sky, as if interposing to heal him. A carriage was falling over a precipice, the Virgin was stretching out a hand from heaven to draw it back. A ship was in peril, the sailors were on their knees, the Virgin on high was hushing the storm. A young couple were kneeling side by side, the Virgin was handing a babe into their outstretched arms! And so on, and so on, the series of daubs, with here and there a really skilful picture, set forth *her* one and only name! There may have been a touching simplicity in all this, a sincere though mistaken

devotion ; to me it seemed more like a grovelling superstition, that must be barren of all noble results in the heart and life. The wonder was to see, not merely the multitude of votive offerings in this chapel and the cathedral alone, but the number of people who constantly, and at all hours of the day, were climbing and descending the hill, intent upon religious observances of one kind or another. Shops lined one part of the ascent, offering for sale wreaths, crucifixes, medals, rosaries, and little books of devotion, with waxen models of hands, feet, ears, and other parts of the body, to be suspended in the churches as votive offerings to the power that was supposed to heal their maladies. It was plain that, notwithstanding the scepticism among the French working people, of which we hear so much, and the carelessness which undoubtedly characterises multitudes, there are also innumerable devotees, prepared to give time and money with every sign of earnest if unreasoning allegiance to their faith.

These facts, and others like them, seem worthy of most serious reflection. The people have not wholly cast off the yoke of religion. What is being done to lead them to a pure and rational Scriptural faith? Protestantism, for some reason, seems comparatively weak and unaggressive. One active church at least there is in Lyons, occupied by a pastor who bears an honoured name ; and the teaching and services are most delightful ; but they do not win upon, they do not touch, the crowd without, who still crowd up to Notre Dame de Fourvières, and invoke the Lady of the Hill ! Whatever hopeful signs there are seem rather in the direction of a wise and manly use of political freedom than in that of a renewed allegiance to the Christian faith.

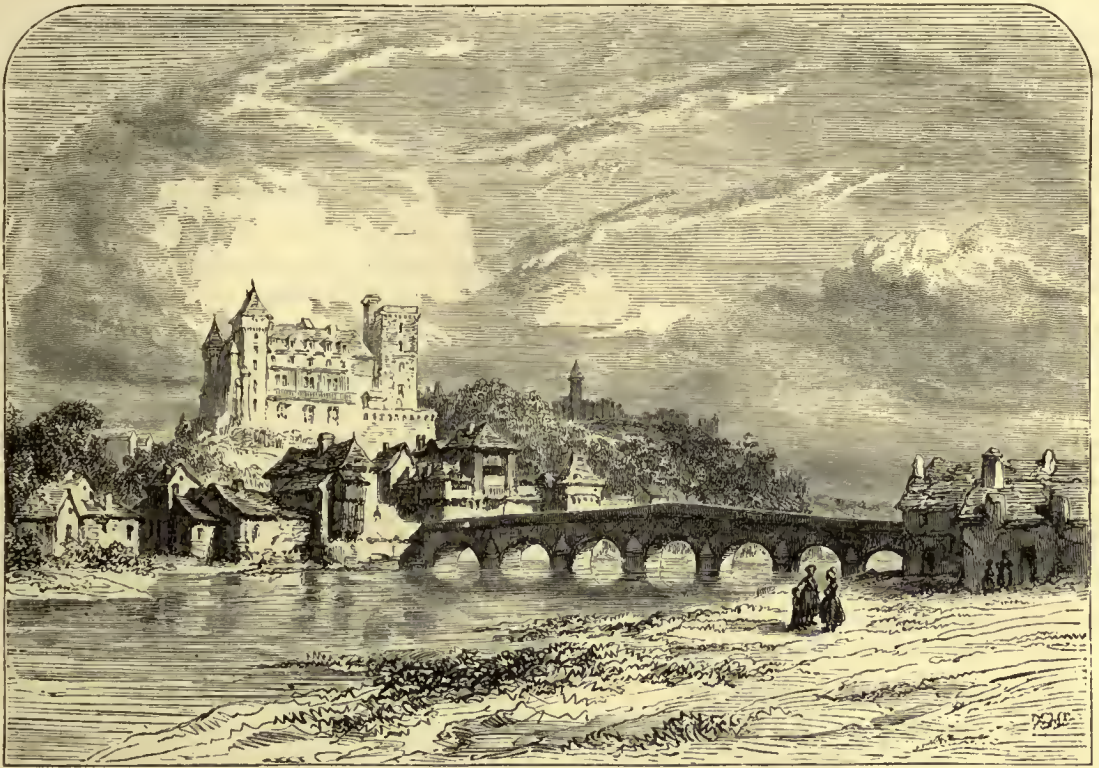
One fact impressed me greatly. It was a surprise to me in visiting Lyons to observe the city so empty of strangers. Finding myself one day literally the only guest at the evening table d'hôte of my hotel, I remarked on the fact to the waiter : "*Ah, monsieur,*" he said, "it is election time, and most people are frightened away ; they think it will be a time of disorder, because they know that Frenchmen have strong opinions. But,"—he shrugged his shoulders and smiled—"we do not fight now—our elections are like yours in England ; there is a great stir, but no tumult, and all ends peaceably." So, indeed, I found it everywhere ; and the autumn election of 1877 was upon the whole one of the grandest expressions of national will—calm, determined, wisely moderate—that the world has ever seen. Most instructive was it to see in every town and commune the electoral manifesto of the Marshal-President disclaiming complicity with the clerical party, those ancient foes of freedom. *It is a falsehood,* he said, not mincing his words, —the assertion that the government is allied with them. That even the reactionary party was compelled in the struggle to throw off the burden of ecclesiastical support spoke volumes ; and this one sentence of the Marshal showed beyond question that all France had learned at length one part of the secret of its regeneration. But one part only. To glory in freedom, however hardly won and

wisely upheld, is not all. Most deeply true, as well as touching, were words recently spoken by M. Théodore Monod, respecting the achieved freedom of the Republic, as manifest at the opening of the Paris Exhibition in 1878:

“By way of illustration of the feelings of the people, let me ask, Has any young man or woman present had a beloved mother grievously ill, nigh to death? Do they remember when the physician shook his head, and gave hardly any hope? By-and-by she got a little better and stronger, began to take a little food, and one day she left the room and went into the dining-room, and took her place at the family table. Oh, that day! Though nothing particular happened, yet that was the day when they blessed God that He had given her back again to them. That is just what Frenchmen feel at the opening of the Exhibition. Only eight short years ago there was foreign war, and then civil war, and after that every kind of effort to rob the people of the government of their choice; but, in spite of it all, they now have their own government, and are peaceful and prosperous, and have the sympathy and respect of other nations. But in that great national festival there was one great blank; there was one word missing, and that word was ‘God.’ God was nowhere. One might have expected that He would at least be recognised in some allusion in one of the official speeches; but there was not even that kind of recognition. It appeared as if the whole thing were done for the glory of man, and that alone. Now, that is very sad, is it not? And what we have to do, we who have some knowledge of God and of His truth and His love, is to avail ourselves of the grand opportunity which is now afforded to them for making the name of God known and loved among the people of France.”*

* Speech at the Anniversary of the Religious Tract Society, May 3, 1878.





PAU.

SOUTH-WEST FRANCE AND THE PYRENEES.

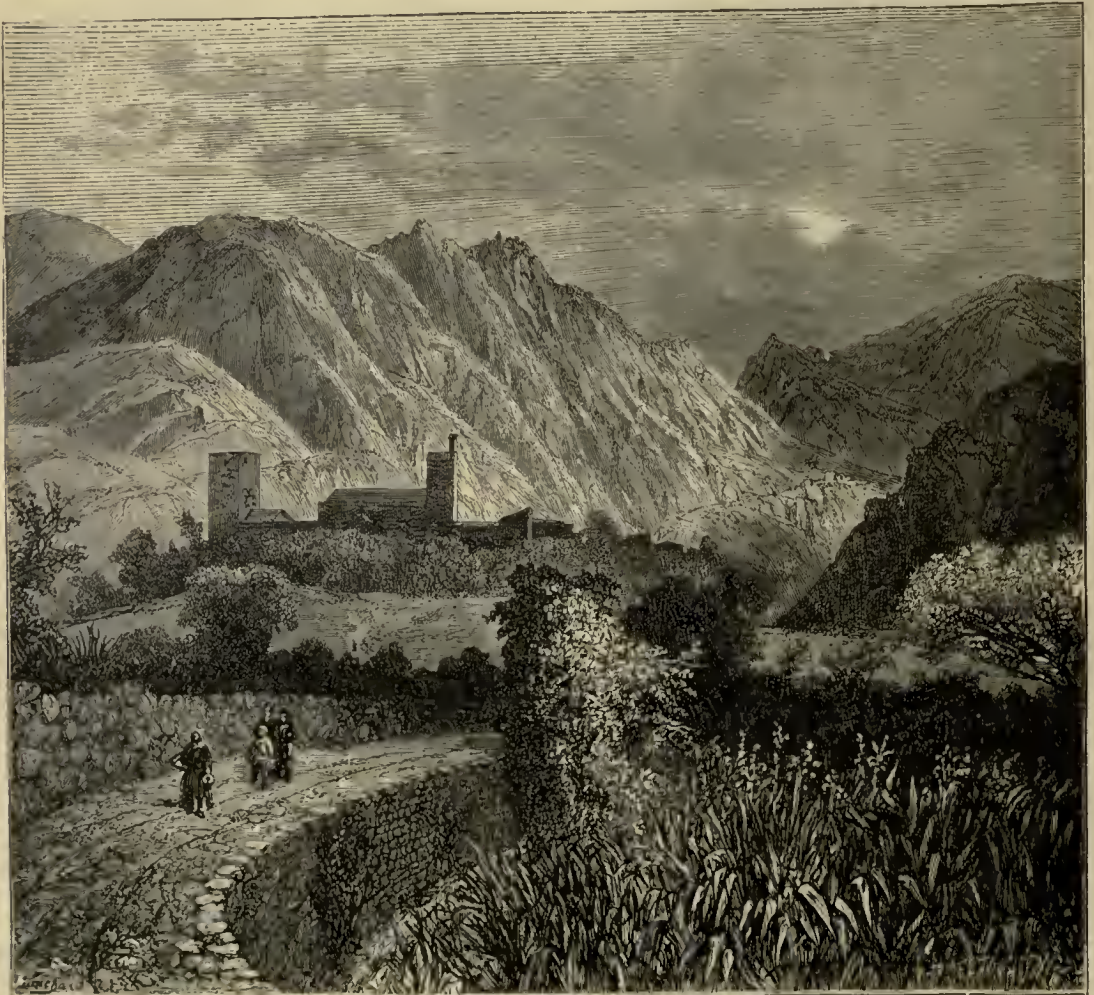
THE ALPS AND PYRENEES—PICS, PORTES, GAVES, AND CIRQUES—LUCHON—THE TWO BAGNÈRES—GAVARNIE—CAUTERETS—EAUX BONNES AND CHAUDES—LOURDES—PAU—BAYONNE AND BIARRITZ—THE LANDES—MÉDOC.



BETWEEN France and Spain, as everybody knows, there runs from sea to sea one continuous mountain barrier, about two hundred and seventy miles in length, from twenty to forty miles in breadth, and singularly alike through the whole of the chain, although loftiest near the centre. Very different are the Pyrenees from the Alpine world of Switzerland, and all who would know the secret of mountain beauty—the “gloom” and the “glory” alike—should visit both. Each has

its special partisans, and it must be conceded to the exclusive lover of Swiss scenery that there are points in which the Pyrenees have nothing to compare with it. Lakes, waterfalls, and glaciers are here on a smaller scale; nor are

there the grandeurs of solitary snow-peaks, nor the endless diversity which marks the upper regions of the Alps. The whole mountain system is more uniform; it is, in fact, as travellers have often called it, a stupendous, irregular wall, rising into peaks, between which the depressions are comparatively slight. The passes, therefore, are very lofty, save at the extremities of the mountain line, where the whole chain is considerably lower. Some sixty or seventy



VERNET AND MONT CANIGOU, EASTERN PYRENEES.

roads from France into Spain, known by the mountaineers, traverse these depressions or *cols*, but only a very few of them are practicable, save to hardy pedestrians, and the general route between the two countries is either by the railway near the coast of the Bay of Biscay, from Bayonne to St. Sebastian, or by the fine carriage-road over the Col de Perthus, from Perpignan, near the Mediterranean. The lover of scenery, however, whose

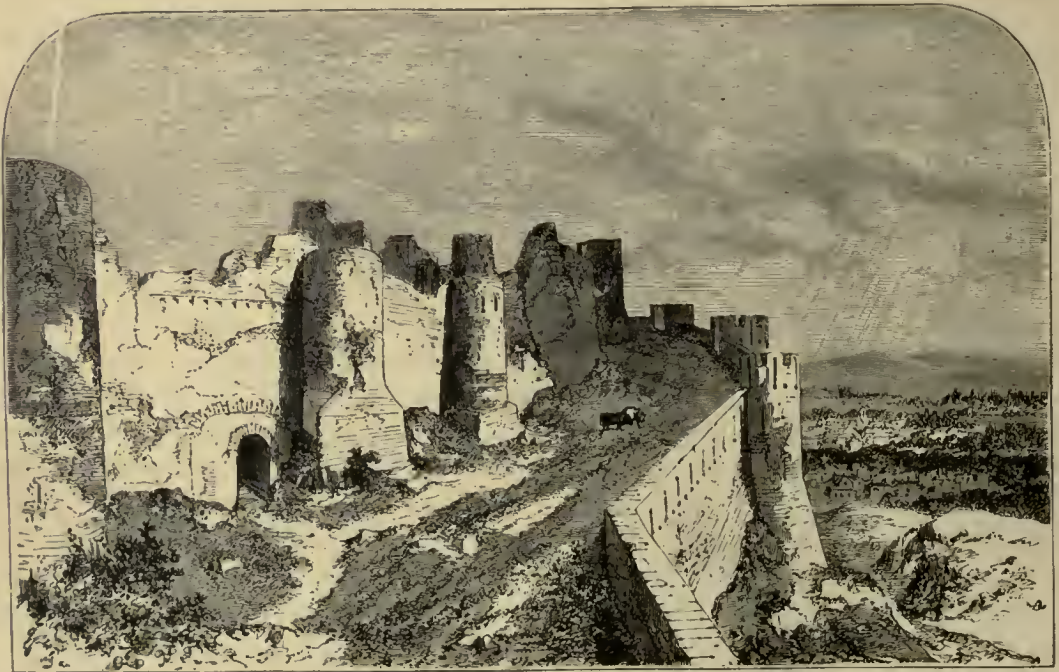
present purpose is not to make his way into Spain, will do better to remain in the central region, starting if possible from Narbonne, taking the old fortress town of Carcassonne in his way, and so reaching Toulouse, the ancient home of the troubadours, and a place whose monuments and memories, had we but time to pursue them, would be a compendious guide to the whole history of France.

There is no city, perhaps, where there is so much to be learned by the mere sightseer as in this ancient capital of Languedoc. Its early Christian annals are of high interest, while in later days it was the centre of the Albigensian persecution, and in almost modern times the scene of the Calas tragedy. To the visitor of to-day, Toulouse may well be attractive as the seat of the most active and useful agency now existing in France for the issue of evangelical literature. The publications of the "Société des Livres Religieux" in this city are disseminated throughout the French-speaking world, and already form a noble library of works in which the essential truths of the Gospel are fully and worthily inculcated. We were pleased to see some of the more valuable books of this society on the railway book-stalls, where what is equivocal or worse is too often the only mental fare to be procured besides the multitudinous newspapers.

We can, however, do scant justice to this ancient city, notwithstanding its associations with the past, and its good work in the present. Truth to tell, its neighbourhood is far from tempting now. The whole vast plain of Languedoc and Gascony, in the centre of which it stands, is in the autumn an arid expanse, and we can but look longingly up the Garonne, which seems, in its rapid descent, to tell of those mountain regions whence it springs. We resolve to follow it to its source, or as near to this as possible. Every one else seems going to Tarbes; "it is the right thing to do," "the key of the Pyrenees," and so on: but for once we take our own counsel, and have no after reason to regret the decision to halt at Montrejeau. How is it that we never heard of this magnificent place before? Here the Garonne makes a great bend in coming down from the mountains. Upwards we descry its course through a wild avenue, so to speak, of the grandest heights, clothed with dark fir-trees variegated by the autumn splendours of the oak, the chestnut, and the beech, with an immense undergrowth of box, the specialty of Pyrenean vegetation: the meadows through which the stream descends are in their brilliancy of verdure a wonderful and most refreshing contrast to the brown and yellow of the plain behind; and the mountain outlines, towering upward in endless variety of grandeur until they sweep round the head of the valley into the cloud-capped summits of the snowy evil-named Maladetta, complete a picture than which Switzerland itself has scarcely anything to show more glorious.

But we leave the Garonne for a little while to the left, and proceed by rail up the glen by the side of another mountain stream from the point

where the two unite, and at Bagnères (Balnearia, baths) de Luchon reach the terminus. A vast meadow is below, as flat as though it had once held a lake between the mountains which close it in. On one side of the meadow flows the Garonne at the foot of majestic hills, on the other is the mountain stream, beside which the railway is constructed, and beyond, a perfect wilderness of hills towering in bleak bare majesty from their girdle of forests. The formation of the Pyrenean valleys is now well seen. They run up into the mountains, perpendicularly to the main direction of the latter, and are closed sometimes by a narrow pass leading over the ridge, sometimes by a vast wall or "cirque" of precipices, down the rifts of which waterfalls are gleaming,



FORTIFICATIONS OF CARCASSONNE.

while every ledge or slope to which the earth can cling bears its clustering luxuriance of vegetation. In the bed of every valley is a "Gave" or mountain stream,—a word probably kindred with the Celtic *Avon*. These streams are severally tributary to the Adour and the Garonne.

At Luchon the traveller finds himself in a kind of Happy Valley, not without comfortable hotels, bath-houses where hot and cold springs, chalybeate, sulphureous, or saline, may be had at discretion, fair avenues of trees, and a climate which for its wonderfully exhilarating properties is surely unsurpassed. But one can hardly be content to remain in the vale with so many mountain excursions on all sides inviting. The source of the Garonne has yet to be visited by a charming ride across the valley by the Port de

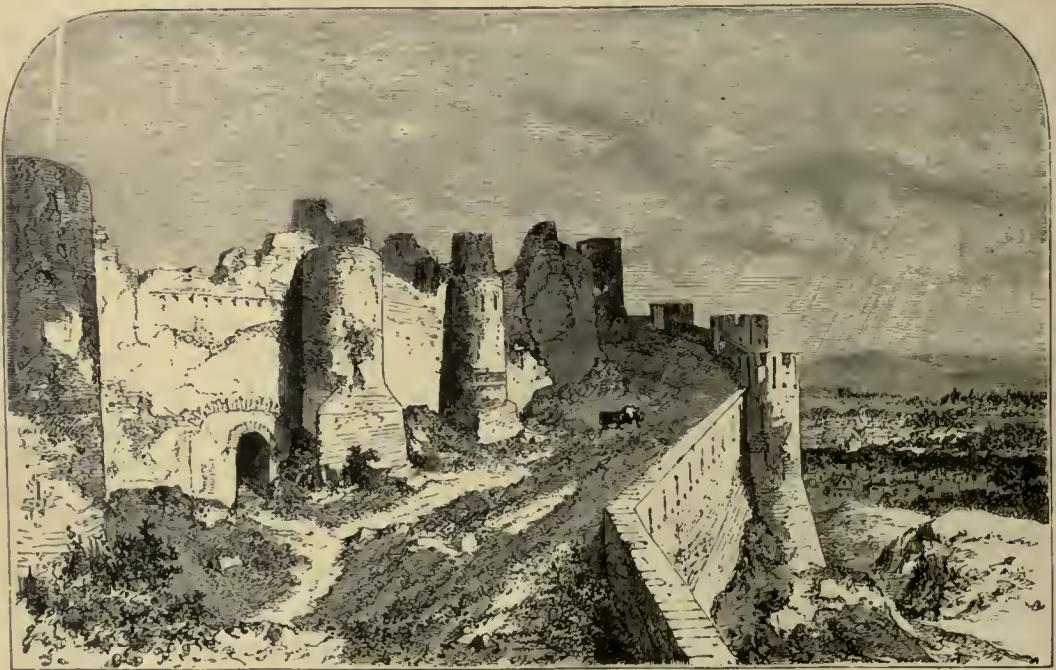
Portillon, then up the stream, through dark tremendous forests with the great cliffs towering overhead, to a spot where, from beneath a precipice, the river bursts in full volume. The scene is one of the most impressive it is possible to conceive. Whence the river comes in this ceaseless flood can only be conjectured. That it must be from the vast snowfields of the terrible Maladetta is plain, but by what secret channel do the waters make their way until they thus leap into light? There is no time to stay and explore, even if exploration would be of any use, or we should have to remain all night at Bassoste, on the side of the broad valley opposite to Luchon—a fate not to be thought of without a shudder! For here in the Pyrenees “rustic accommodation” too often means dirt; and “homely fare” is some uneatable horror!

Another wonderfully fine excursion from Luchon is that up to the Port de Venasque, an easier walk than that to the source of the Garonne, since, instead of crossing to the latter river, we ascend by the mountain stream on which Luchon stands. The climb is a weary one, but the traveller is rewarded not only by a grand view of the Mont Maladetta, but a fine glimpse of the Spanish side. The “Port” is in fact a narrow passage cut in the mountain crest—an open rocky gateway from France into Spain: a true “Windeyatte.” Another of these gateways, the Port de Picard, may be visited in the neighbourhood by those who are desirous or able to remain upon these bleak heights. Or the mountain which towers on the west to a further height of 1200 feet, the Pic de Sauvegarde, may be ascended for the unsurpassable view over France and Spain which it is said to command. There is a path to the summit, but slippery with loose shale, and dangerous; and the mountain is mournfully memorable as that on which Archdeacon Hardwick, the brilliant author of *Christ and other Masters*, with invaluable works only too brief on Church history, lost his life by a fall in 1859.

An easier pilgrimage was that to the Lac d'Oo, a walk or mule-ride of ten miles, at first through lovely woods, carpeted with flowers, then up a barren valley, followed by a steep ascent in many a weary zigzag, thence through a kind of rocky portal to a lonely basin in the mountains, crossed by a barrier of slaty rock, which forms a natural dam confining the waters that descend in a fine cascade from the glaciers above into a small lake, or rather tarn, most grand in its surroundings. A pass which we did not attempt is described as leading upwards by the stream that feeds the cascade to the higher lake from which it falls, thence over rock and snow to one still higher, generally frozen, and so on, tarn above tarn, with rocky staircases between, until the highest ridge, the Port d'Oo, is obtained, and the hardy climber looks down again upon Spain in the direction of Venasque.

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Instead of returning to Luchon the stout pedestrian may turn to the

right on arriving at the carriage-road, and ascend the pass to Arreau, taking heed as he passes lest he excite the ire of the shepherds' dogs, who here, as elsewhere in the Pyrenees, are large, faithful, fierce, and unreasoning in



LAC D'OO.

their dealings with the stranger. From Arreau a drive of about twenty-four miles will bring him to Bagnères de Bigorre, a watering-place whose cheerful brightness may be more to the taste of many than the wilder splendours of

Luchon. In the sunshine of early spring, or bright days in winter, this must be a charming abode; in summer and the beginning of autumn the heat is scarcely tolerable. The vale of Campan, in which the little town is placed, is one of exceeding loveliness; the people, too, are of a more refined and



SHEPHERD GIRL.

cheerful appearance than the peasantry whom we have met in the villages and mountains since leaving Toulouse. Civilization and industry have here made more progress, and the number of children and young girls knitting the fine Pyrenean wool is a pleasing sight. It may be added, by the way,

that the light woollen tissue known as "barège" is chiefly manufactured here. Baréges, the well-known watering-place farther down in the heart of the hills, gives its name to the fabric, but no more. In fact, Baréges is nothing but a bathing-place, lofty, chill, and wild; but the cures effected by means of its waters are reported to be wonderful. If all that is said be true, these are beyond comparison the most healing of all mineral streams. To



BATHS OF ST. SAUVEUR.

other watering-places people may go to amuse themselves; the baths and daily draughts are but a small part of the entertainment, and the cure is often effected as much by the climate, the rest, and the exercise, with perhaps some added touch of imagination, as by the healing waters. But let no *malade imaginaire* go to Baréges! Nor, we would say, let any traveller in health do so, at least on his own account, excepting as a stage on his way to more attractive scenes. For Luz and St. Sauveur in their grand defile may soon be reached



BRIDGE OF HOURAT, CENTRAL PYRENEES.

by those who have come this way from Bagnères de Bigorre, and then a good road leads to the most unique, extraordinary, and wildly picturesque, if not absolutely beautiful scene in the Pyrenees—the Cirque of Gavarnie.

The route is up a valley, along the face of wooded precipices, while a torrent or "Gave" brawls below. The torrent parts, one branch descending from a magnificent wooded glen to the left; but we keep on, and reach in succession two desolate-looking villages. From the former of these, Gèdres, there is a fine view from the bridge that crosses the Gave, upward through a perspective of mountain-sides, to the Brèche de Roland, a "Port" or gap in the highest ridge—another entrance from France into Spain. From this point the road and the torrent alike wind through a wild confusion of boulders fallen from the mountains above, and when the second village, Gavarnie, is passed, where donkeys may be had by tourists unprepared for three miles' rough walking, the valley appears, shut in by dark encircling mountains crowned with perpetual snow. This environment forms the Cirque—a stupendous irregular semicircle, the precipices rising in three stories, so to speak, to a height of a thousand to fourteen hundred feet, with snow-fields on the shelves, and glaciers clinging to the rocks wherever they can find a ledge, while white thread-like cascades fall with a faintly murmurous sound, some being dissipated into mist before they reach the base of the rock, but all uniting in different streamlets there and making up the Gave. The spectator can but stand and wonder at the weird and desolate scene: the ground is strewn with blocks and fragments of stone, with immense patches of half-frozen snow; the purple sky above, should the weather be propitious, contrasts with the white lines that crest the peak and the sombre grey of the sides; no living thing appears; birds will not build on those craggy icy ledges; even the mountain eagle seeks a less savage spot for her eyrie. But for the guide (taken for companionship rather than for direction on a path so plain), the solitude would be almost insupportable. It would be easy to fancy oneself at the world's end, as old poets used to depict it, a colossal wall shutting out the habitations of men from Chaos and Night. But at any rate the habitations of men are behind us—there is one small hut at the opening of the Cirque, but it is shut up to-day—and the wildest of mountain villages will be welcome as a rest after this awful solitude.

Other Pyrenean scenes and excursions, most delightful in themselves and in the exquisite climate, which stimulates without exhausting the energies, are very much the counterpart of the earlier ones. The people whom one meets in this central region are picturesquely clad, with an evident love for bright colours; the scarf, sash, or head-dress, flung on with careless Spanish grace, prettily contrasting with the inevitable blue of the French peasant's attire. Muleteers come down with their burdens from the other side; the goatherds seem to lead a merry life among the mountain pastures. Reaching St. Sauveur

again, we make our way first down to Pierrefitte, along a narrow, beautifully-wooded defile, in which we cross and recross the Gave several times, and notice the wonderful number of box-trees interspersed with the beech and oaks which line the road. At Pierrefitte another Gave rushes down from



PEASANT OF THE PYRENEES.

Cauterets, and the road up the gorge to this wild watering-place is by all means to be taken, thither and back again, for there is no practicable outlet. But who will grudge the double drive or walk through the steep slaty defile, beautiful at every step with the foliage clinging to the crags? One of Mr.

CAUTERETS.

Tennyson's shorter poems rings in the ear, as if set to the music of the dashing stream below—

“ All along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,—
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walked with one I loved two-and-thirty years ago.”



OBSERVATORY, PIC DU MIDI DE BIGORRE.

The village itself is not inviting, although the hot-springs are said to be of great efficacy, and Caunterets is thronged accordingly all through the season. For rich and varied beauty, with a background of mountain grandeur, the visitor had better seek Eaux-Chaudes, and its somewhat loftier neighbour,

Eaux-Bonnes, where the cliffs, woods, waterfalls, with the magnificently towering peaks beyond, combine in forms of surpassing beauty, while all the best points of view are rendered accessible by walks and terraces in every direction along the mountain-side. Here too rises *the* Pic du Midi, beside the pass which from above Eaux-Chaudes winds upwards steeply and magnificently along the pine-clothed steep in the way to Spain. There are many Pyrenean mountains which claim this name of "the Southern Peak," but this Pic du Midi d'Ossau (or "the Bear"), so called from the Gave which tumbles and roars beside this pass, is the grandest of them all. There is, perhaps, no mountain in the whole range which admits of so near and so complete a view; it is better, say those who have done both, to survey it from the pass than actually to ascend it. Certainly it is difficult to imagine a sublimer scene than this stupendous snow-crowned peak presents, lifting its rugged cone to the clouds from amid the dark pine-woods at its base. Although less than 10,000 feet in height, and therefore considerably lower than several of the Pyrenean peaks, there is none that so completely seems to meet the ideal of "an exceeding high mountain."

But our way now lies to the world again. We are compelled to descend the pass without that view into Spain which might have been obtained by a few hours' further toil, and from our delightful watering-place we take the carriage-road to Argellès. To tell the truth, our main object in pursuing this route was to visit Lourdes, seeing that we could otherwise have reached Pau



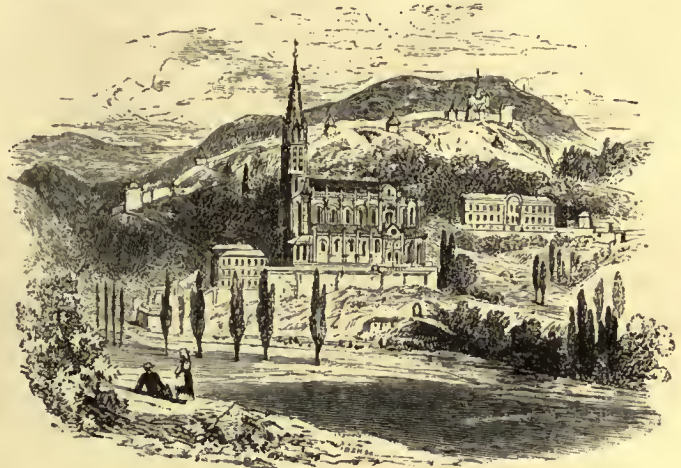
THE CAVE, LOURDES.

from Luz by a very direct and beautiful drive of twenty-seven miles, descending almost all the way. But whatever may be thought of the motive for our pilgrimage, the journey was its own reward; the pass, in the first part of it especially, being of extraordinary and most unexpected magnificence. There was one stage, about ten miles on the way, which could only be compared to the Schyn Pass, near Thusis, in Switzerland; so grandly, boldly, is the road carried along the side of the mountain, while the torrent rushes far below. As the lower part of the route is reached, the

mountains around appear in forms of amazing grandeur, while the smiling valley of Argellès is rich with all luxuriant products of the field, the vineyard, and the garden. Here, however, we come to a little railway-station,

with its trains each way three times a day; one will start in half an hour, and therefore, after a hurried glance at the picturesqueness and beauty of this most lovely place, with its grand background of peaks, we turn away (just a little ashamed), and like other pilgrims set off in quest of the grotto and miraculous fountain at Lourdes.

The place is soon reached, and the quaint pictures we had seen prepared us for the outward aspect of the village. A rock overhangs it, crowned with a grey ruined castle, built, according to tradition, by Julius Cæsar. A rapid stream flows at the base of the cliff, the Gave de Pau,



CHURCH AT LOURDES.

formed higher up by the confluence of two mountain torrents, the one from Gavarnie, the other from the valley of Cauterets. At the extremity of a meadow is a low rocky eminence, on which stands a very modern-looking church, and in the side of the rock below is the grotto in which the Virgin is reported to have appeared in 1858 to Marie Bernadette Soubirous, a girl of fourteen, with that extraordinary announcement, "Je suis l'immaculée Conception!" At the same time, it is said, a fountain, hitherto unknown, began to flow from the grotto, which was afterwards revealed to poor Marie as having virtue to heal the blind and the lame. The superstition, at first confined to the Pyrenean peasantry, at length took hold of the French mind; at the close of the Franco-German war a pilgrimage on a great scale was organised to Lourdes, and hundreds of thousands of persons have since that time visited the spot. In the grotto is now to be seen a statue of the Virgin, with a great number of votive offerings; the fountain has been enclosed, and its stream (which analysis shows to be pure water) directed through iron pipes for the use of the faithful, who are continually to be seen approaching the spot with bottles, to carry away the precious fluid. Rosaries and crucifixes, with all such wares, are offered by clamorous vendors; no doubt a large revenue is reaped by the guardians of the shrine, and the church which we saw has been dedicated to the honour of the "Queen of Heaven." The truth of these occurrences, it may be remarked, has not been left to rest upon the testimony of a sickly girl, which the Roman Catholic laity might believe or not according to their judgment of the evidence. With singular fatuity, the episcopal authority, of

this diocese at least, has been pledged to the reality of the vision, and, as we have seen already, the Church in distant parts of France has committed itself to the same amazing belief.*

There is something inexpressibly disheartening in the whole scene. What can we say, what can we do for these groups of "ignorant worshippers?" Dispel their ignorance, and too probably the next thing will be that they will not worship at all. Yet it seems the duty of the many visitors to this fair mountain-land, if they have learned the secret of a purer faith, to



GROTTO AT LOURDES.

leave a testimony behind. With much satisfaction we saw some "Scripture leaflets"—whence supplied we know not—in the possession of not a few. If wisely selected, so as to awaken the conscience without arousing animosity, and on the principle that to instil the truth is the best way to expose the error, the words may be expected to affect, not the many, who perhaps cannot read, and will certainly not listen, but the few who in the end will influence the rest. It may be that the new reformation which France so sorely needs will come silently and gradually, in the track of political

* See *Sunday at Home*, January 11, 1873.

freedom, and that the Revolution, accompanied in the beginning by so fierce an outburst against all religion, will be found to have prepared the soil for the Kingdom of God. Or other catastrophes may impend: who can tell? Meanwhile, we can but offer a few picture-leaves containing single texts in brilliant flower-borders to the children whom we meet. These at least are eagerly accepted, and we know that a sentence, a word of Scripture, has often borne a message of truth and life.

From Lourdes to Pau we descend swiftly, beside the Gave, the plains opening more and more widely as we advance; but we feel that we are out of the Pyrenees. No doubt Pau is very beautifully situated—its view to the south of wooded hills in the foreground, rising to the magnificent serrated ridge with snowy summits, and rocky cols between, that bound the horizon, is wonderfully fascinating, especially to those who have already penetrated to the wild mountain recesses: there are comforts and *agréments*, too, which abound at Pau, and which many visitors to the higher regions sadly miss. Perhaps it would have been better to begin, instead of ending, the excursion here. As it is, we have but a languid interest in these busy streets and formal avenues, even in the castle with its historical relics. But again and again during our brief stay do we dwell upon that southward view, especially when the westering sun crowns those distant hills with roseate or crimson splendour. It is not the “after-glow” of the Alps, but it is very beautiful, for all that.

From Pau the journey to Bayonne was interesting, from the fertility of the rolling plain to the south, beyond which the Pyrenean crests and ramparts rose grandly, while there was continually the gleam of waters descending to join the full current of the stream on the opposite side to that pursued by the railroad. Bayonne itself is pleasant for situation, but hardly remarkable, save for the half Spanish character of the buildings and the inhabitants. As all readers of history know, this frontier fortress has seen brave deeds in many a struggle. There are chapters in the story of the Peninsular War that make the heart beat high; but the chronicles of Bayonne have nothing nobler than the refusal of its governor, Dapremont, to take part in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. When Charles ix. commanded the destruction of the Huguenots of the city, Dapremont bravely replied, “The city of Bayonne, Sire, comprises good citizens and brave soldiers, but not a single executioner!”

Of course we drive through the pine-woods to Biarritz, where in the late autumn the season still lingers, though shorn of its chief attractions. Every one seems tired of gaieties, and the place is actually dull! In the palmy days of the Second Empire it might have been different—but perhaps there is a half-unconscious desire to escape the memory of those times. Nothing, however, can destroy the charm of those breezy cliffs, where the sea airs are tempered by the softness of a southern climate, nor of the broad

smooth sands and the limpid purity of the sea. It was pleasant also, after Mediterranean experiences, to see the tide grandly coming in with the full swell of the Atlantic. Here, too, in our walks through the neighbourhood we meet people clad in the old Basque costume, the flat *biretta*, like a Scottish shepherd's cap, the red sash and hempen sandals; with their rugged faces bespeaking stern and unconquerable independence.

There was no time to take the usual "run" into Spain, to Fontarabia or San Sebastian; and we left the fascinating Pyrenean district, where, perhaps, most persons enter, by Bordeaux, passing northwards across that extraordinary expanse of sand, between the Adour and the Garonne, known as the Landes. The peasants on stilts rather shirk the neighbourhood of



BIARRITZ.

the railway, but some appeared, busily knitting, according to their wont. The mode of locomotion is very sensible, not merely freeing the stilt-wearers from the clogging sand, but enabling them to survey their flocks over the level ground. Anything more dreary, however, could scarcely be imagined than this plain, save perhaps the Crau, by the Rhone, to the south, and the Sologne between Blois and Nevers. On both the latter, however, something may be made to grow by pains, irrigation, and spade-husbandry. Here all labour seems in vain; water but sinks through the sandy waste, and only heath, furze, and thistles seem to flourish, together with the fir-tree, which abounds in great belts along the shore and miniature forests all through the district. The roots keep the shifting sands in some degree together, and the trees are a protection against the blasts from the sea, while Arcachon, in the north-west of

BORDEAUX.

the department—a little watering-place on a land-locked bay (or *bassin*), engirdled with pines—is quite unique, and seems to possess an extraordinary charm to many. Here is no mountain scenery to distract,—the very ocean is practically shut out. True, you can see it, as it were, by climbing over the shoulder of Arcachon; but the place itself fronts the *bassin*, which the narrow entrance makes proof against all but the wildest storms. Then for



ROMAN CIRCUS, BORDEAUX.

background, there is the great pine-forest, seeming to extend endlessly. The only excursions are on sandy paths, carpeted with fir-needles, winding through the woods—healthful, no doubt, but monotonous. In winter, however, the shelter from cold blasts must be perfect, and the equable climate, with the dry soil and the resinous exhalations from the pine-trees, make Arcachon unsurpassable as a refuge for invalids suffering from pulmonary or rheumatic affections. At present we are quite content to leave it.

Before bringing our long journey in this south-west corner of France to a close at Bordeaux, we must notice the very extraordinary change which befalls this flat expanse of the Landes before it reaches the river Garonne. There is hardly any parallel instance of the way in which a slight change in physical conditions completely revolutionises both soil and products. For many a dreary mile, as we have seen, the sandy waste bears only the dark monotonous pine-

forests, with great stretches of heath and furze between. But as we approach the acute angle formed by the Garonne (or the Gironde, as it is called after receiving the Dordogne from Auvergne) and the sea, the subsoil becomes a mass of light gravel, and shows a singular capacity for sustaining and developing the vine. The marshy gravel bank, therefore, "in the midst of the waters" (*in mediis aquis*, whence the name Médoc), extending for many miles along the left bank of the river, and of a breadth varying from a mile and a half to three miles, has become famous throughout the world for its wines. Here are the vineyards named after the châteaux Laffitte, Margaux, and Latour, or after the communes of Castelnau, St. Laurent, St. Julien, with others



SHEPHERD DOGS OF THE PYRENEES.

only less famous. How assiduously this extraordinary slip of land is cultivated, and how, in spite of malaria, it gives employment to a large and busy population, will be easily understood. The wonder is in the sudden transition from an arid wilderness to one of the most fruitful regions of the earth; and the sweep of detritus from the Pyrenean mountains, by the descending floods of former ages, no doubt has wrought the change.





HAUTES-RIVIÈRES.

THE HILL COUNTRIES OF EASTERN FRANCE.

VALLEY OF THE MEUSE--THE ARDENNES--SÉDAN, DOMREMY, AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS--THE VOSGES--OBERLIN--VALLEY OF THE DOUBS--BESANÇON--GLIMPSE OF THE JURA.



I HAVE taken," said a friend, returning from a fortnight's journey, "many a grander and more exciting excursion, but never one of more satisfying beauty; and it was in a country of which before my trip I knew absolutely nothing."

The speaker was one who had travelled much, and seen many lands, and there was accordingly no little curiosity as to the route which had so charmed him. It turned out that he had travelled up the valley of the Meuse, from the point where, at Givet, the river passes from Belgium into France, skirting the forest of Ardennes; that his first halting-places had been at Sedan, Verdun, and Domremy; that he had then crossed to the country of the Vosges, and after four or five glorious days among the forests and mountains had struck the river Doubs at Belfort, and traced its downward course until it reached

THE HILL COUNTRIES OF EASTERN FRANCE.

the Saone. "There is an excursion for you!" cried our friend, with a rapture which it was difficult to reciprocate; for beside the names and the associations of the district with the Franco-German war, the region declared so superlatively beautiful was all but unknown.

This ignorance, it is certain, is very common; although perhaps the



ORATORY OF ST. REMACLE, IN THE ARDENNES.

visits that have been paid to the district since the war have done something to dispel it. That a region so easy of access and so abounding in varied beauties is worth visiting for its own sake, it was not difficult for our friend to prove, and none, we think, will regret following his example.

The beauty of the Meuse begins soon after the river enters France;



WOODMAN'S CABIN, IN THE ARDENNES.

THE FOREST OF ARDENNES.

it winds through a narrow defile cut through slaty rocks, while beyond it on both banks swelling heights are covered with noble woods—relics of the ancient Ardenne forest. From Mézières, the capital of the department, endless excursions may be taken through the forest glens, over the passes, or to the hill-tops, where many a lovely though limited prospect charms the eye; or again to the grassy valleys, where beside the rapid and limpid



SCENE IN THE ARDENNES.

streams will be found many a pretty rustic village, the home of an industrious simple-minded people. Here and there by the river-side the crags are really magnificent, in one place (les Dames de Meuse) attaining a height of about twelve hundred feet.

A somewhat longer excursion may be taken to Rheims, where a day may be well spent in visiting the "historical monuments" of the place, and

THE HILL COUNTRIES OF EASTERN FRANCE.

especially the world-famous cathedral of Notre Dame, where the Kings of France were crowned for nearly six hundred years. But every visitor to



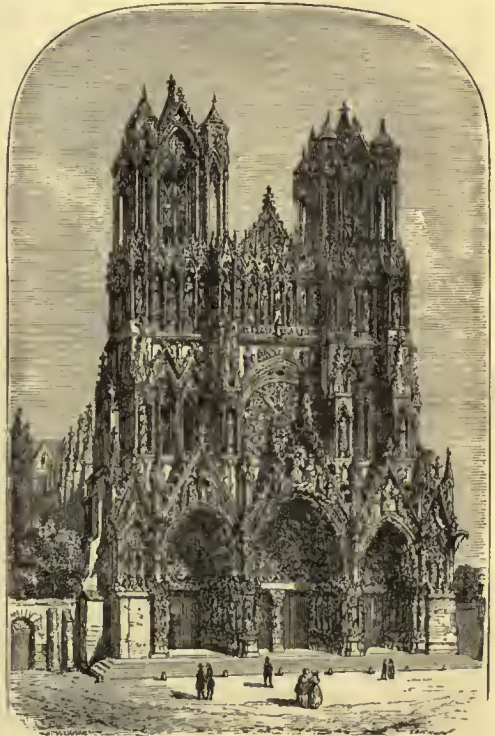
LES DAMES DE MEUSE.

Mézières will be even more anxious to see Sedan, where the history of the Second Empire closed, and the history of France entered upon an era

of which the world yet awaits the unfolding, with much of anxiety, yet—may we not say?—with more of hope. The quiet little town, so long the centre of French Protestant intellectual life, where the armies of France and Prussia met for their final encounter on the memorable First of September, 1870, is pleasingly situated between the Meuse and wooded hills, and from the height of the citadel the plan of the battle will be easily understood. There the Emperor Napoleon was posted—on those crested heights opposite, beyond the river, was the King William. Behind and around the citadel the French divisions were gradually hemmed in by the German forces, advancing simultaneously from east and west, and nothing remained but surrender. French guides will take you from spot to spot, and tell you the story with frank *naïveté*, reserving the great effect for the Weaver's Cottage, where the Emperor and Count von Bismarck met, and it was acknowledged that all was over!

A long run by the winding river now takes us to Verdun, also a place of great historic memories. Charlemagne here divided his empire; and the course of European history has been to a great extent determined by that "Treaty of Verdun" ratified more than a thousand years ago. Here also was the place of detention for the English seized as prisoners by Napoleon I. in 1803, and kept in weary exile for eleven years, until the fall of the First Empire. Those of us to whom elder relatives have often told strange tales of those sad days will look upon the place with peculiar, if melancholy interest. "But," suggests a French companion, to whom we are expatiating on the dismal recollections of those times, "what was Verdun to Dartmoor?" and we have little more to say but to express a hope that the ancient enmities are dead for ever.

But what of the animosities of a yet older time? As we reach the now "historical monument" of Domremy, a village by the Meuse, that has here become a narrow stream, we leave the little roadside station, in the track of one of the small people who eagerly offer to show us the cottage of *la Pucelle*. For here it was that Joan of Arc was born, and spent the first days of her strangely heroic life. In these woods she heard the voices which urged her to the enterprise of delivering her country; and here



CATHEDRAL OF RHEIMS.

it was she wished to return to take up the thread of her simple life again, her mission was accomplished and Charles the Seventh had been crowned at Rheims. She was dissuaded, to her own undoing, as all the world knows; and England had the deep disgrace of her martyrdom. It is wonderful that Shakspeare had no appreciation of the heroic maid: to him she was a mere vulgar sorceress—a witch deserving of contempt and punishment, if not of the stake to which ignorant and inhuman bigotry consigned her. But what shall we say of Voltaire's *Pucelle*? It seems the very "irony of fate" that the anniversary of her martyrdom should have occurred on the very date of his attempted apotheosis!



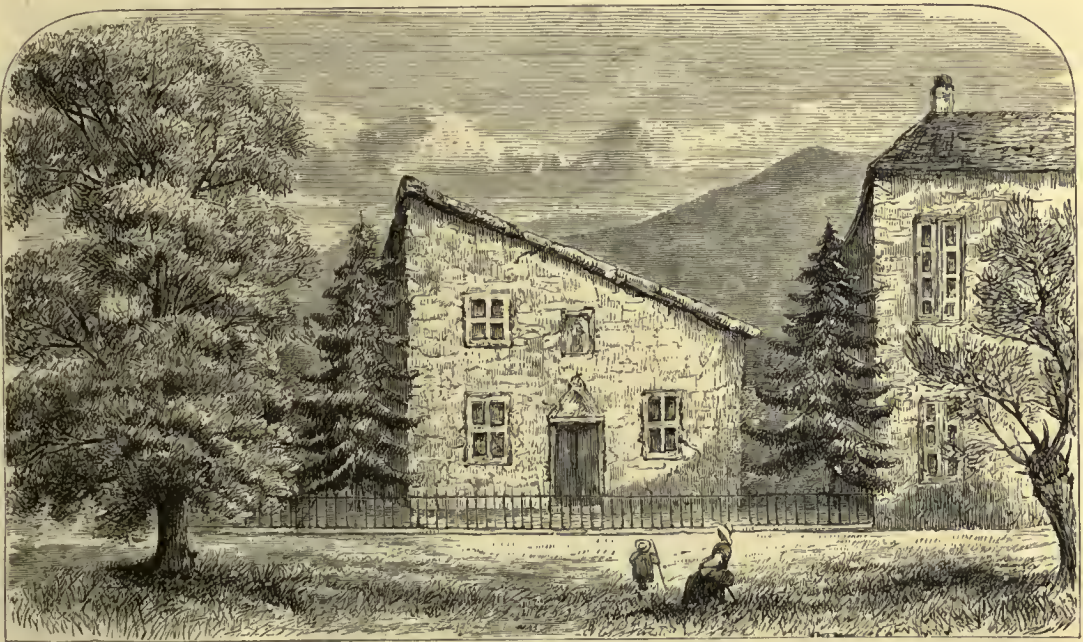
WOODCUTTERS' CAMP IN THE ARDENNES.

France at least has done justice to the Maid of Orleans. With touching characteristic sentiment she had asked, as her only reward, that her native village should be released from taxation, and the boon was freely accorded for many generations, the entry in the tax-register opposite "*Domremy*" being, "*Cancelled, on account of la Pucelle.*" At the Revolution this exclusive privilege, like others of a less innocent character, was abolished: but the cottage remains under the care of the State, and a copy of the statue at Orleans by the Princess Marie, presented by her father King Louis Philippe,* is preserved there, together with some other interesting memorials.

* See page 61.

DOMREMY: THE VOSGES.

It is a singular question, after all, whether Joan of Arc was ever burned! For there are historical sceptics even here. And we feel, as we turn away from this simple cottage home, that it would be a relief, although at the distance of nearly four hundred and fifty years, to be assured that the marvellous maid found in the noontide and evening of her life the peaceful home for which she longed. Yet the evidence seems too strong that the barbarous deed was wrought, and we dare not accept the satisfaction of thinking that on this fair earth there was one martyr the less. Truly is her story "a light of ancient France:" and the "canonization" by which it has recently been proposed to honour her would be but an



COTTAGE OF LA PUCELLE, DOMREMY.

imperfect expression of the tribute which all the world—a few cavillers excepted—is now ready to pay to her noble and heroic name.

At Domremy we are on the verge of the Vosges district, and find a delightful carriage-road through a richly-wooded undulating country to Epinal, the metropolis of the district. Thence we may rove at will. Some will prefer to descend the Moselle, which here flows swiftly on its way from its native hills to the distant Rhine, through meadows of fairest green. But this would take us out of France, especially now that Metz has become a German city. We therefore prefer to pay a brief visit to Plombières, the fashionable Vosges watering-place, in a wide mountain ravine; a favourite retreat of the late Emperor, and, unlike some more widely famed scenes of resort, of a natural beauty fully worthy of its reputation. The avenues and

groves which almost surround the town offer most charming promenades—not gritty and dusty, as are so many *places* in the suburbs of French towns, but verdant and shaded, while the breezes from the mountains are delightfully invigorating, although the inhabitants and visitors of course attribute the good effects of a residence at Plombières chiefly to the waters—hot and cold, chalybeate and alkaline, which are regarded as of so much worth, that the natural stream—the Augronne—which here comes tumbling down from the mountains, has been carefully conducted from time immemorial into a subterranean tunnel, lest it should reach and dilute the health-giving fountains. These baths were known in the Roman era, and were once dedicated to Neptune and Apollo.

A beautiful drive of about ten miles through mountain scenery conducts to Remiremont, a little town nobly situated among fir-clad hills, in the midst



PLOMBIÈRES.

of limpid rushing streams. From this point the excursions that may be made into the Vosges district are almost numberless, and in their varied beauty they open up to the traveller at almost every point some fresh and unexpected delight. For as of many beautiful regions in France, so also of this frontier-district, it may be stated as a general fact that the English know nothing about it. True, there are no snow peaks or glaciers, as in Switzerland, nor passes appalling in their sublimity; the rounded hill-summits, not inappropriately named *ballons*, are apt to seem monotonous after a while to the devotee of mountain scenery; but the pine-forests are glorious; between the hills nestle the fairest valleys; and the wanderer from beaten tracks will find a simple, kindly people to a great extent true to their Protestant principles.

THE VOSGES.

The eastern slopes of the Vosges have belonged to Germany since the war of 1870; but the character of the inhabitants remains almost as unaltered as the natural aspects of the scene; they are neither French nor



NEW YEAR'S DAY IN THE VOSGES.

German, but borderers, with some of the ways of both, and other characteristics all their own. It was in this region that the good pastor Oberlin carried on for fifty years those Christian and philanthropic labours which



OBERLIN'S HOUSE, BAN DE LA ROCHE.

have given him a name among the world's philanthropists. The Ban de la Roche, the scene of this good man's labours, is on the German side of the frontier, and perhaps is best approached from Strasbourg. The village of Walderbach, where Oberlin lived, and that of Fouday, where he was buried, are within a short distance of each other, and may well be visited not only for their own beauty but for the memorials which they everywhere present of the good pastor's laborious and useful life. He was civilizer as well as pastor; and, in the words of Dr. Stoughton, "opened new means of communication between different parts of the neighbourhood, provided schools, advanced the material civilization of the inhabitants, suppressed strifes old and new, presented a charming example of Christian home life, and accomplished pastoral labour worthy of the deepest admiration."*



From the southern part of the Vosges chain,

* *Sunday at Home*, June, 1878, in which two papers by the Rev. Dr. Stoughton, entitled *Ban de la Roche*, give an account of a personal visit to the scene of Oberlin's labours.

the journey by the great frontier fortress of Belfort is an easy one, on the northern part of the Jura. The first stage beyond Belfort will probably be Montbéliard, beautifully embosomed among swelling hills, with a fine but modern castle. This town is famous in the history of the Reformation and in the life of the noble-hearted Dauphiné evangelist, William Farel. Driven from his home by persecution, Farel had repaired to Switzerland, whence he was urged by Œcolampadius to devote himself to Christian effort in France. The young reformer, although not yet regularly ordained to the ministry of the Word, dared not refuse the call, and a concurrence of circumstances brought him to Montbéliard. Solemnly set apart by Œcolampadius, *avec l'invocation du nom de Dieu*, he entered on his work, "stationed, as it were, at an advanced post. Behind him, Basle and Strasbourg supported him with their advice and their printing-presses; before him lay the provinces of Franche Comté, Burgundy, Lorraine, the Lyonnais, and the rest of France, where men of God were beginning to struggle against error in the midst of profound darkness. He immediately began to preach Jesus Christ, and to exhort the faithful not to permit themselves to be turned aside from the Holy Scriptures either by threats or stratagems. Beginning, long before Calvin, the work that this reformer was to accomplish on a much larger scale, Farel was at Montbéliard, like a general on a hill, whose piercing eye glances over the field of battle, who cheers those who are actively engaged with the enemy, rallies the ranks which the impetuosity of the charge has broken, and animates by his courage those who hang back.* Erasmus immediately wrote to his Roman Catholic friends, that a Frenchman, escaped from France, was making a great disturbance in these regions.

"Farel's labours were not unfruitful. 'On every side,' wrote he to a fellow-countryman, 'men are springing up who devote all their powers and their lives to extend Christ's kingdom as widely as possible.'† The friends of the Gospel gave thanks to God that His blessed Word shone brighter every day in all parts of France.‡ The adversaries were astounded. 'The faction,' wrote Erasmus to the Bishop of Rochester, 'is spreading daily, and is penetrating Savoy, Lorraine, and France.'"§

Theodore Beza, at a later period, maintained the Protestant faith at a memorable conference in this same town. It is satisfactory to know that the light has not been quenched, but that the doctrines of Farel and Beza are still preached and professed in this active, prosperous little town.

We have now entered the department of the Doubs; and there are few more charming railway journeys than that beside this fair and stately stream, which, having flowed for many miles parallel to the main chain of the Jura,

* This comparison is employed by one of Farel's friends, during his stay at Montbéliard.

† Neufchatel *MS.*, 2nd August, 1524.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ Erasmus, *Epp.*, p. 809. Merle d'Aubigné, *History of Reformation*, bk. xii. ch. xi.

forming the boundary between France and Switzerland, changes its course near Montbéliard, and descends, between fertile, well-wooded hills on the right and a magnificent forest on the left, as far as Besançon. The river Doubs, says Mr. Philip Gilbert Hamerton, than whom none can be a more competent judge, is "one of the loveliest in Europe." "All the valley is beautiful down to Besançon. The lines of the hills are especially graceful, and well worth studying.



CHATEAU OF MONTBÉLIARD.

The river charmed me by its purity, and a sort of tranquil grace, appreciable even from the railway.* We would fain linger by these fair tranquil waters, at "the Isle" emphatically so called, and beautiful exceedingly, or at Beaume-les-Dames, which to Mr. Hamerton appeared "the most beautifully-situated place in the whole valley;" but limited time compelled me to hurry to Besançon, a place

* *Round my House: Notes of Rural Life in France*, pp. 32, 39.



ROMAN THEATRE, BESANÇON.

THE RIVER DOUBS.

I had known from boyhood, as described in the first book of *Cæsar's Commentaries*, "oppidum magnum Sequanorum," by name Vesontio, almost surrounded by "flumen Dubis," the river Doubs. Here the craggy steep on the peninsula still frowns with a mighty fortress, as in Gallic or Roman days, only its constructor was Vauban. The isthmus which Cæsar describes "spatium quod non est amplius pedum DC quâ flumen intermittit"—an estimate of width, by the way, much too moderate—is occupied by a citadel. In this



L'ÎLE-SUR-LE-DOUBS.

fine city, in short, the ancient and the modern, the arts of peace and those of war, the natural and the artificial strength and beauty are all combined in a degree hardly known elsewhere. One of the finest public libraries in France attracts the student, and the antiquary will rejoice in the Roman remains—a triumphal arch, the ruins of an aqueduct, pillars and mosaics here and there, while the ancient "Campus Martius" reappears, altered no doubt in form as much as name, in the modern promenade of "Chamars."

On the whole, Besançon has attractions that may well induce the visits of others besides travellers in the watchmaking business; although these are pretty numerous too, seeing that this above all is the craft by which the old fortress-town has now its wealth.

THE HILL COUNTRIES OF EASTERN FRANCE.

From Besançon to Dole the country continues very lovely; the calm and noble river sweeps on between its green hills, and at Verdun-sur-le-Doubs, an inconsiderable place, quietly merges in the Saône. The cradle and the grave of the Doubs are comparatively near to each other, and instead of pursuing it to Verdun to see its end, a happy impulse led me across to Pontarlier, from which pretty mountain-town I could trace the infant stream, which in its progress had so charmed me, nearly to its source among the pine-woods of the Jura. No close to a pleasant excursion could have been more delightful; except, indeed, the fact that it was but the beginning of another, over the Jura into Switzerland.



IN THE VOSGES MOUNTAINS.



FOREST, FONTAINEBLEAU.

FROM LYONS TO PARIS.

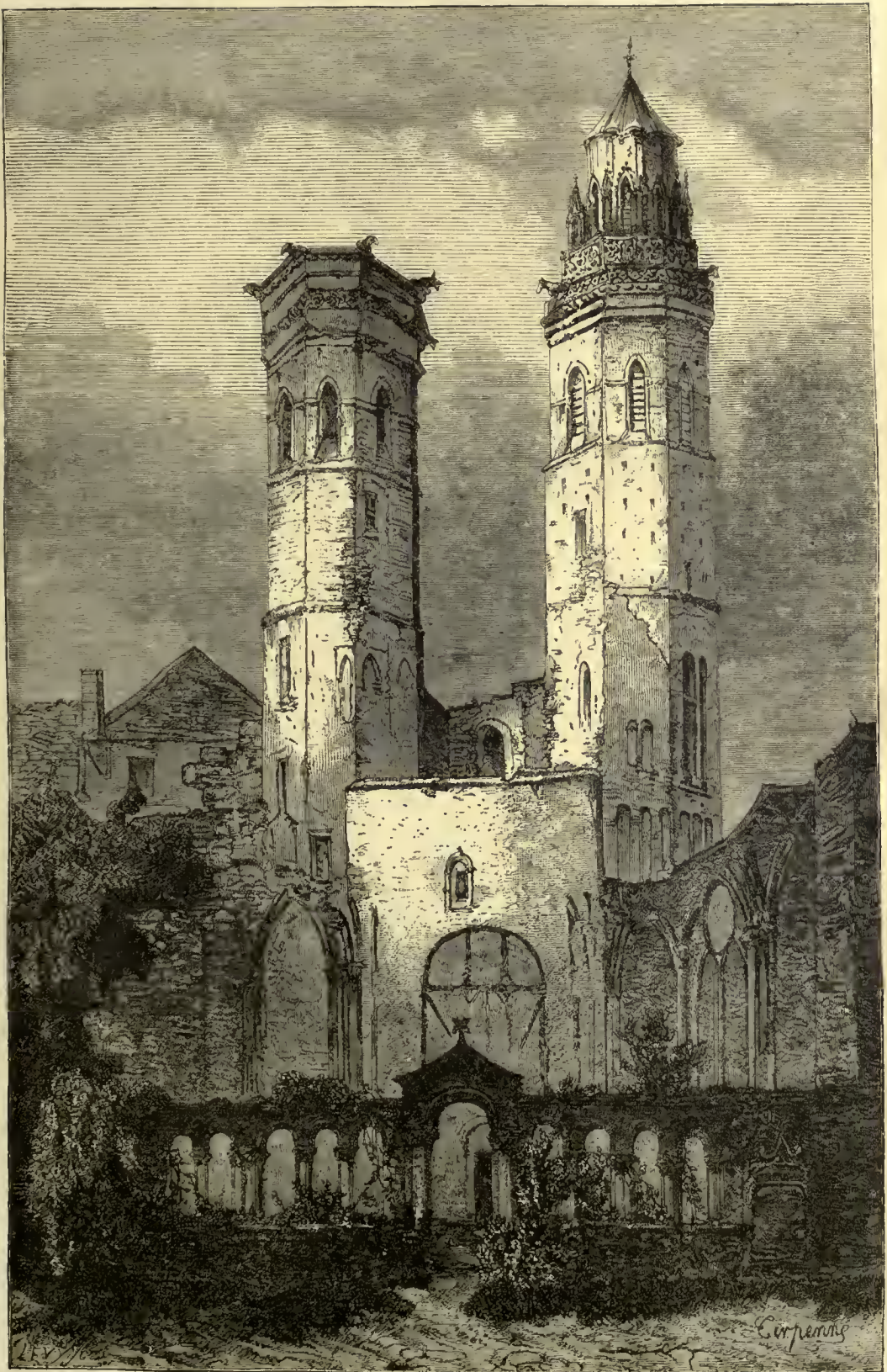
MÂCON AND LAMARTINE—THE CÔTE D'OR—DIJON—CHARTRES
AND ITS CATHEDRAL—FONTAINEBLEAU: ITS PALACE AND
PARK—TO PARIS.

“ALL roads lead to Paris;” and the ordinary tourist when upon one of the great lines of French railway is mostly too anxious to finish his outward or homeward journey to observe more upon the way than can be seen through the windows of his carriage, or gathered during long pauses

for refreshment at the *buffets*. Happy the traveller who has leisure to halt from time to time, to wander away from the stations, unencumbered save by knapsack; and to note, in however rapid a survey, those characteristics both of places and of people which to the majority of visitors are utterly unknown. No one who can do this will lightly condemn French scenery *en masse* as monotonous and uninteresting, or describe French people, in one compendious phrase, as only frivolous, pleasure-loving, and idle. There are Englishmen who have much to learn from the patient daily industry, the contented and cheerful domestic life, the frugality and temperance of many a French peasant or artizan, in country or in town.

A journey marked by pleasant halts was that from Lyons to Paris. At Mâcon, so well known as a junction and refreshment-station on the chief Swiss route, as well as a great emporium for the wines of Burgundy, perhaps the most interesting of these stoppages was made. It was not that there was anything especially striking in the town, although the ruined towers of the Romanesque Cathedral of St. Vincent are very fine, and the distant ethereal vision of Mont Blanc in favourable weather from the bridge over the Saône is worth stopping to see. But the little quiet city is so connected with the memory of Lamartine as well to deserve the passing notice of all whose youthful imagination was fired by the events of 1848, and who were taught great lessons by the failures and disappointments that followed.

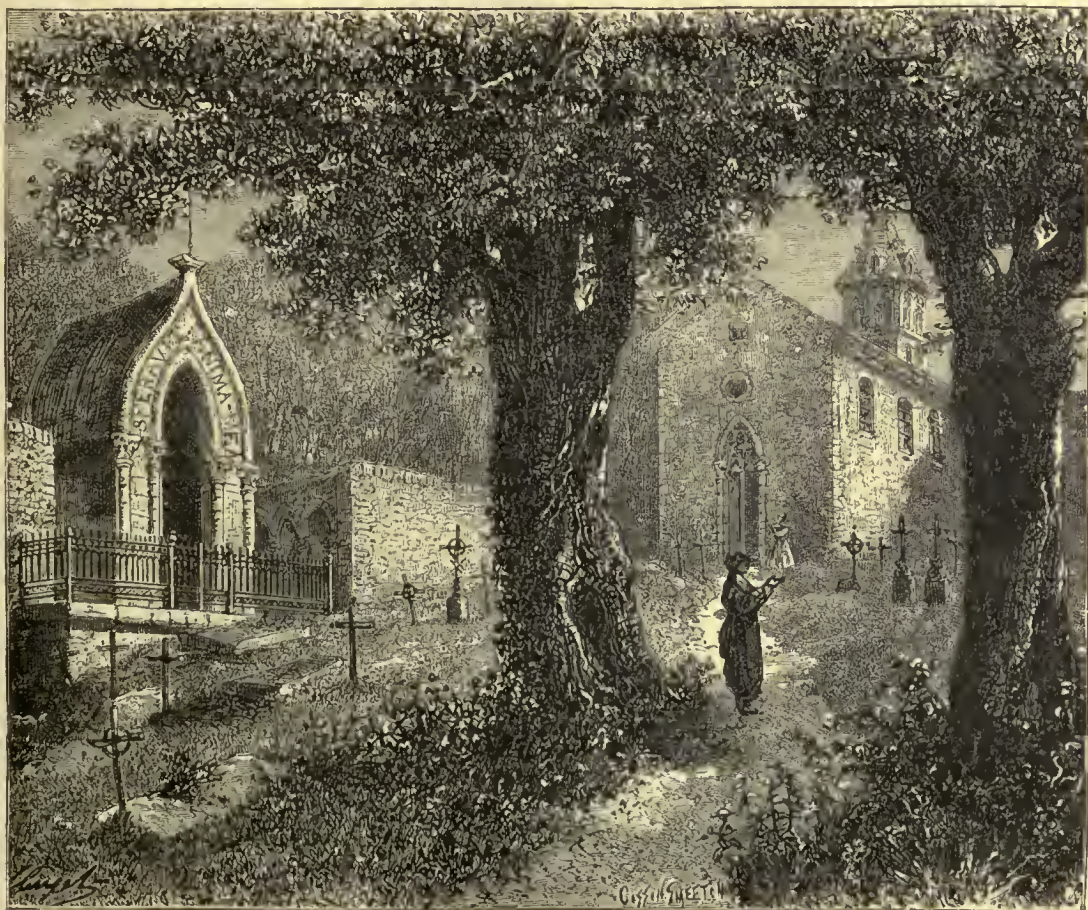
This is how the poet describes the town of his birth: "On the banks of the Saône, some leagues above Lyons, rises, on the slope of a hill but little raised above the plain, the small but charming town of Mâcon. Two Gothic towers, dilapidated and worn by time, attract the eye and the thought of the traveller who descends towards Provence or Italy by the steamers by which the river is continually furrowed. Above these ruins of the ancient cathedral, there stretch, to the distance of nearly half a league, long lines of white houses and of quays, where the merchandise of Southern France and the products of Burgundian vineyards are constantly being shipped or unshipped. The upper part of the town, out of sight of the river, is abandoned to stillness and repose. It might be called a Spanish city; grass grows, all the summer through, between the paving-stones; the lofty walls of ancient convents darken the narrow streets: there are college, hospital, churches, some restored, others in ruins and used by the coopers of the district for storehouses; a large *Place*, planted at its two extremities with linden-trees, where children play and old people sit in the sun; long faubourgs of low houses, which wind to the summit of the hill; and around the *Place*, five or six hotels or large houses, almost always closed, to which in the winter the old families of the province repair. Such is a general view of the upper town. At one of the angles of the *Place*, which was before the Revolution a rampart, and which still preserves that name, may be seen a large and lofty house, pierced with few windows, and of which the high and massive walls,



RUINS OF ST. VINCENT, MÂCON.

blackened by the rain and fretted by the sun, have for more than a century been bound together by massive clamps of iron. A high, wide gate, approached by two steps, opens to a long vestibule, at the end of which a heavy stone staircase, lighted by a colossal window, ascends from storey to storey to numerous and gloomy apartments. 'This is the house in which I was born.'

The graphic sketch of the poet well represents the Mâcon of to-day, save that the "coopers" are still busier, and the vast stores of warehoused

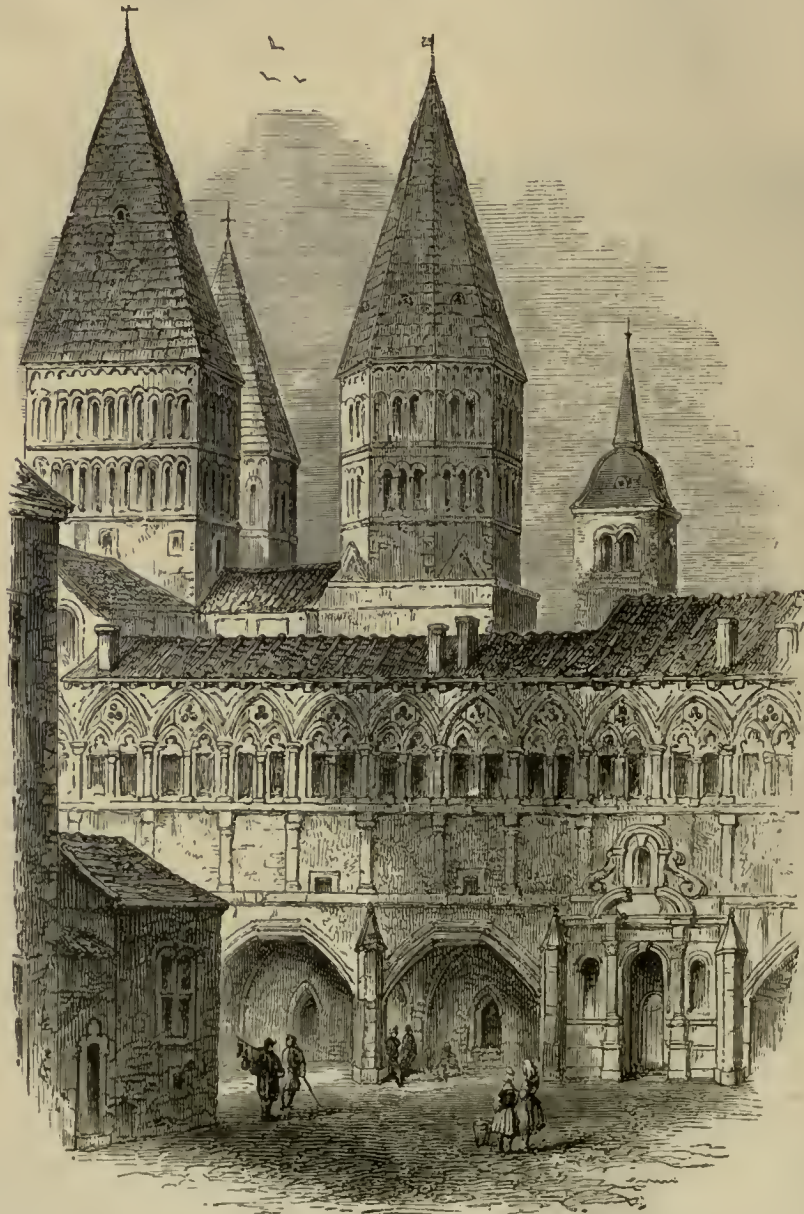


TOMB OF LAMARTINE, ST. POINT.

burgundy yet more wonderful. These last were evidently, in the esteem of the hotel-keeper, the glory of Mâcon, and of course "Monsieur would go and see *les caves?*" But Monsieur preferred an excursion to the rural home of Lamartine and his tomb at St. Point. His grave is covered by a simple pointed arch, with the inscription, *Speravit anima mea*; fit motto for that changeful, often sad, yet simple, truthful life!

"At how many tables," he once said to his companion in Eastern travel as they sat down to their meal, "and what various kinds of bread, have I

eaten, during the journey of my life! First, the rye-bread of my native country, with honest peasants, when my mother, with a large family and a narrowness of circumstances akin to want, accustomed us to frugality and self-restraint,



ABBEY OF CLUNY, IN ITS PRIME.

inuring us to the simplicity and privation of rural ways; then the bread of opulence and of courts; at the table of ministers, of sovereigns, and princes, while I represented my country in the ranks of diplomacy in foreign capitals

—then the bread of the people, sour and black with powder, at the Hôtel de Ville of Paris, during the long days and sleepless nights of popular excitement—then the bread of injury, misunderstanding, and wrong; the bread of constant labour and nights deprived of sleep—then the bread of travellers under Arabian tents or in the monasteries of Mount Lebanon—then the bread of hospitality among strangers, as that which we are eating to-day;—and who knows the rest? . . . Well, of all the daily bread that I have ever broken, the sweetest, the most delicious, after that which I shared, when a child upon my mother's knees, with my sisters and brothers around me, has ever been that which I have eaten, as to-day, in the solitude of distant lands, beside my horse, on the grass or on the sand, beside the fountain, in the shadow of tent or tree, without knowing where my evening meal would be! Man is born a pilgrim!"* Truly, Lamartine was not made for the rough and practical work of the State; and though for one brief period he rose to true heroism, he could not sustain the strife. He was ambitious, but "ambition should be made of sterner stuff," and so the end was the sadness and egotism of one who is only too conscious of brilliant failure.

Beyond St. Point, it is but a pleasant drive to Cluny, where the great Benedictine abbey, now partly in ruins, partly devoted to other purposes, still recalls the memory of the lonely monk of whom we only know that he sang of *Jerusalem the Golden*. Three Popes, so history tells, have gone forth from the walls of Cluny—one of them among the greatest of the line; but for one English visitor who thinks of the fiery Hildebrand, a hundred will recall the name of Bernard, and murmur, as they pace around the ruins, some words of those quaint, strangely pathetic strains, in which he has taught the church of all succeeding time to express its fondest longings and brightest hopes. Nor let it be forgotten that here in sunny Burgundy was also the great Abbey of Clairvaux, famous for the other and greater Bernard, called in his Church, a "Saint;" a man renowned in his generation for many things, and remembered by us for one sweet hymn: *Jesus, the very thought of Thee, with sweetness fills my breast*.

Very different thoughts are awakened by Paray-le-Monial, which we may easily visit from Cluny. Again, as at Lourdes, we see the forces of delusion in full play, leading thousands of pilgrims to the spot where the nun Marie Alacoque professed to have had the vision of the Sacred Heart, and to have conversed with the Virgin, sorrowing over the unbelief of the nations. The whole story I had seen portrayed in rude pictures on the walls of the La Chartreuse refectory; but it was somewhat startling to see how here, as at Lourdes, the wild legend is *believed*.

Returning to Mâcon, and passing northward along the great plain of Burgundy, we skirt on the west "a steep and lofty bank of land, precipitous here and there, and almost interminably long, covered with vineyards, and

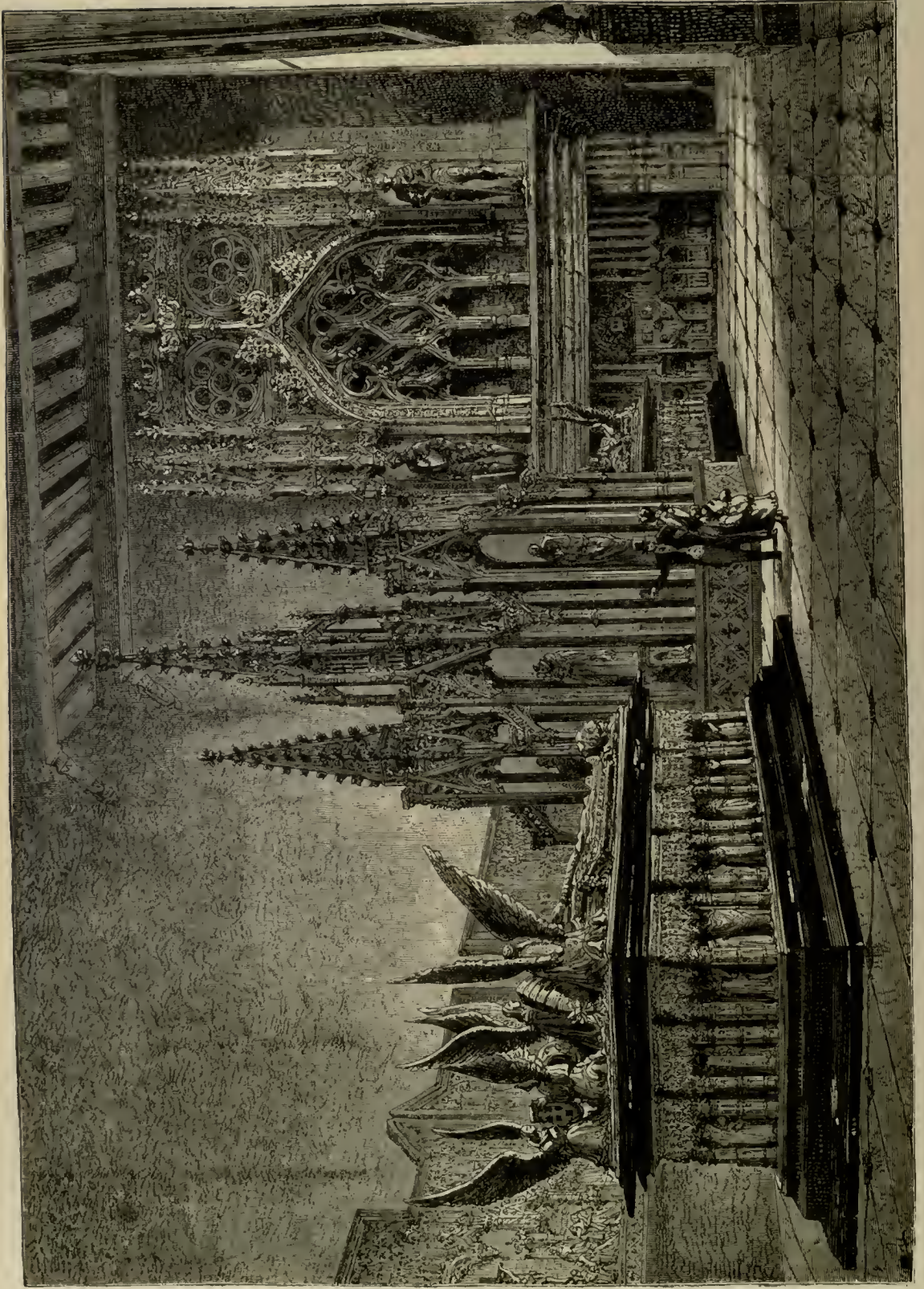
* Lamartine, *Second Voyage en Orient*.

with many rich villages at its base. That steep long bank of stony ground is the famous *Côte d'Or*, where the grapes are grown which fill so many cellars with wine and so many pockets with gold. It is a region of well-to-do people—a region where the perennial flow of grape-juice, always easily transmuted into money, has made all but the imprudent rich. The inhabitants are manly, frank, hospitable and good-tempered, though rather hasty; and as for intelligence, it is not easy to find a region in all Europe where men's wits are so keen and lively. But notwithstanding all these recommendations, the *Côte d'Or* is not a land where I should care to live. You have the *Côte* and the plain, the plain and the *Côte*—two great things, but likely to become very wearisome in time. There is no water, with its pleasant life and changefulness; no rocks, save the crumbling oolite; no hills are visible but the steep *Côte*, except on a very clear day, when you get a sight of the distant Jura, like a pale mist far away; there are no trees, or hardly any, so precious is the land for the wealth-producing vines; and your only refuge from the wearisome monotony of the scenery is to go up one of the dry, narrow, rocky gorges which, happily for the inhabitants, penetrate at intervals into the elevated land, where, after winding for a little distance like true valleys, they come suddenly to an abrupt termination at the foot of an inaccessible precipice.

“A vine-land is very splendid in autumn, for the autumnal colour is beyond all description glorious; but in summer the dull green is sadly wanting in variety, and in the dreary blaze of unchanging sunshine the low vines offer no shade. Besides, one has no sense of liberty when looking at a French vine country, for it is not a pleasant land to walk over, in the narrow paths between the sticks. In short, the vines may be an agreeable sight for those whom they make rich (most disagreeable, however, even to these, in the bad years which occur so frequently); but a landscape-painter, who likes to surround himself with an abundance of natural beauty, does better to avoid them.”*

Dijon was reached at length—the capital of ancient Burgundy, a stately, splendid, quiet city, and at the time of my visit bathed in dazzling, almost blinding sunlight. Hardly any place in “fair France” is so thronged with memories. The wealth and splendour of the Burgundian dukes; the series of struggles which ended in, near the close of the fifteenth century, the partition of the province between France and Austria; the energy with which the French province adhered to the Papal cause during the wars of religion in the sixteenth century; the enthusiasm with which Dijon adopted the principles of the Revolution at the close of the last century, and the calamities which it underwent in the Franco-Prussian war, all belong to history. Of this last conflict there remain few or no memorials; the past has reasserted its sway, and at Dijon, almost more than in any other city of France, the visitor apprehends the distinctness of the ancient division of the country into minor

* *Round my House*, by P. G. Hamerton, pp. 23-25.

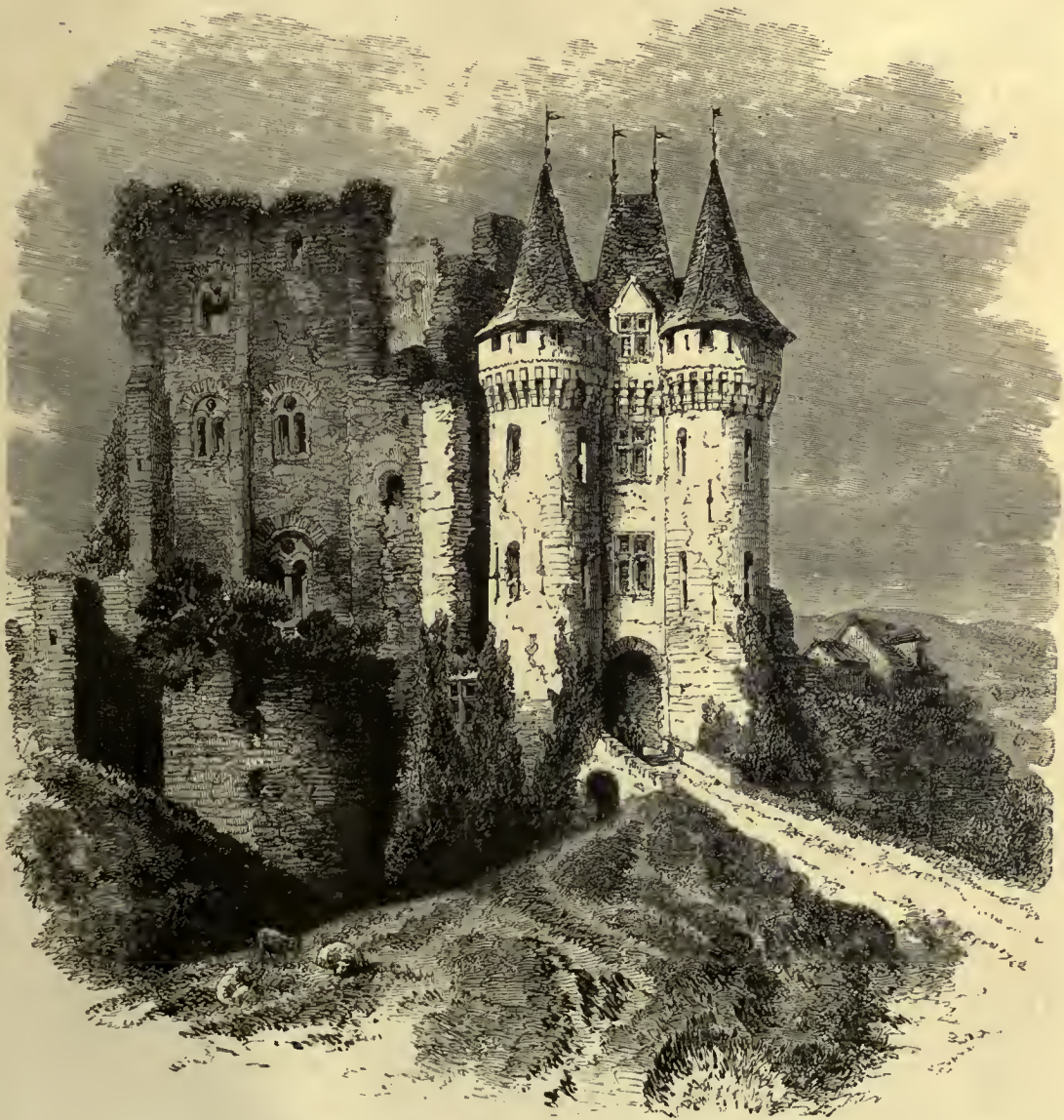


SALLE DES GARDES, DIJON.

DIJON TO BOURGES AND CHARTRES.

states and sovereignties. The palace of the Dukes of Burgundy, now the Hôtel de Ville, bears on its façade the inscription,

EN CE PALAIS SONT NÉS,
Jean sans Peur . . . 28 Mai . . . MCCCLXXI.
Philippe le Bon . . . 30 Juin . . . MCCCCXVI.
Charles le Téméraire . . . 10 Nov. . . MCCCCXXXIII.

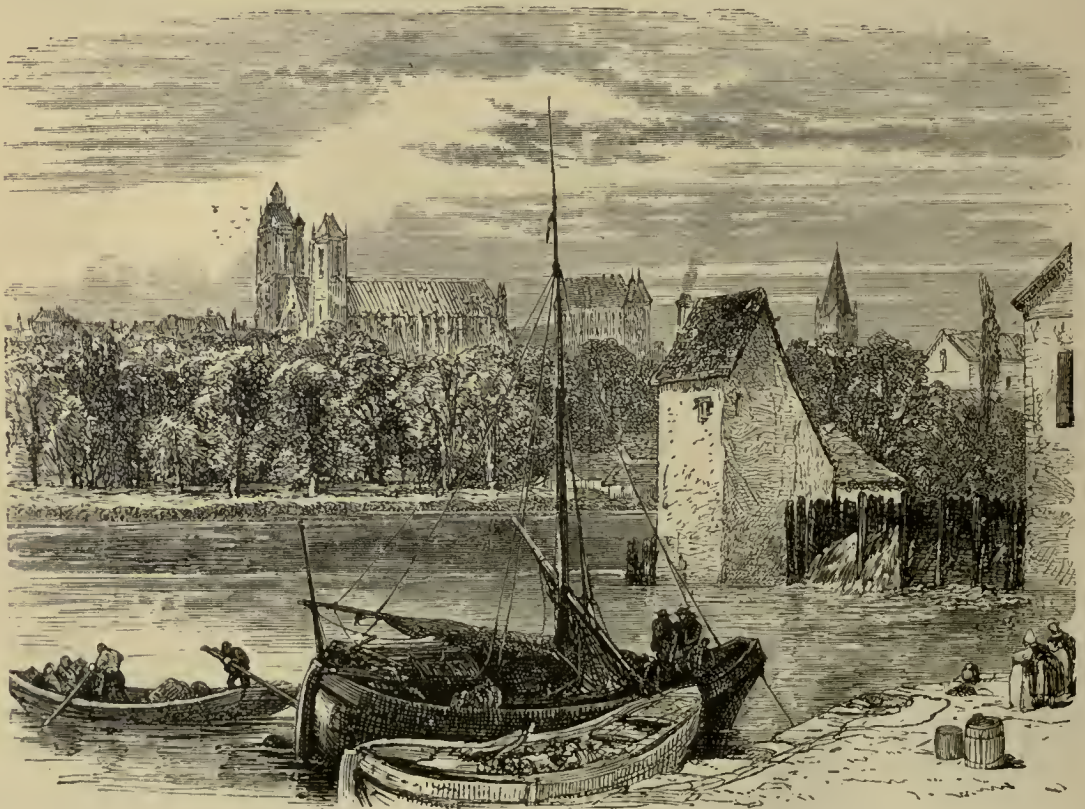


CHÂTEAU OF NOGENT-LE-ROTROU, THE RESIDENCE OF SULLY.

In the Salle des Gardes are magnificent tombs of John the Fearless, with his consort Marguerite, also of his father, Philip the Bold. On the whole, this hall is as well worth visiting as anything in Dijon; while throughout the

vast building of which it forms a part, the treasures of art and the archaeological collections will well repay the traveller who has a day to spend in quiet disengagement from the present. Somehow, with all its modernness, there is an old-world air about Dijon.

The run from Dijon to Paris is long and very wearisome, refreshed by glimpses of the Yonne, whose downward course the railway follows. A very pleasant *détour*, however, may be made at Sens into the valley of the Loire; and as I was desirous of seeing Bourges and Chartres, which in a former tour I had been compelled to omit, I adopted this somewhat circuitous route to



BOURGES.

Paris. Bourges, for five hundred years the capital of Aquitaine, is in one of those positions that seem made for great cities. From the time when the great plain first became inhabited, it must have been, and must always have remained a metropolis. Upon a broad eminence, at the confluence of three considerable streams, it commands the whole country round. Julius Cæsar speaks of it, under its ancient name of Avaricum, as "*oppidum maximum munitissimumque*"—"*totius Galliæ prope pulcherrima;*" and it still in a high degree sustains the character. There are no Roman remains, which is a little surprising; but in mediæval structures the city abounds. Chief of all is the





CHARTRES.

Cathedral, nobly placed on the crowning platform of the city, and visible, it is said, at a distance of thirty miles. It is an edifice which, in the words of Jules Verne, "reproduces the whole succession of architectural styles for four centuries, from the austere Roman to the flamboyant Gothic of the Renaissance." Until I saw Chartres I thought the interior of Bourges Cathedral the finest in France. Its aisles, two on each side, are unbroken by transepts, an arrangement which gives an almost unique impression of majestic simplicity. Of the details of the building little need be said, except that the painted glass of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, here as elsewhere, is of almost inimitable splendour. Emerging from the cathedral, and with little time to spare, I walked through the principal streets, which are broad and noble, with a singularly striking *Hôtel de Ville*, where the variety of Gothic art is displayed almost to the point of fantasy. No two windows or mouldings are alike, and yet the impression of the whole is that of a true unity—how much better than any mechanical uniformity!

There are glorious walks on the Bourges ramparts, open to every breeze that sweeps across the valley, but I could not linger, and was soon on my route to Chartres. The two unequal cathedral towers of this town also are visible from a great distance in all directions, above the vast plain of corn, divided by trenches or low narrow embankments into hedgeless fields, interspersed with few trees, and in its very monotony

impressive from the suggestion of abundance which it gives. We have passed from the land of wine to the land of corn, and the amazing richness and fertility of both give almost a new sense of the bounteousness which fills this fair world with plenty. Chartres itself is a quiet, sleepy-looking little town, with irregular streets and open *places*, disclosing some beautiful views over the great corn-plain, and down the valley of the Eure. But the cathedral is the great attraction, and I may say at once that whether from the contrast between the stately pile and its quaint homely surroundings, or from the



CATHEDRAL, CHARTRES.



TYMPAN OF WESTERN DOOR, CHARTRES CATHEDRAL.

vastness and symmetry of the building itself, as distinct from all magnificence of detail, no French cathedral impressed me so much.

"All cathedrals," writes the author of *John Halifax*, "have their prominent characteristics: that of Chartres seemed to me to be grandeur and calm. This in spite of its great degree of ornamentation; the front being, it is said, covered with no fewer than 1800 separate figures; yet it seems neither flrid nor over-adorned. The proportions are so immense, and yet so perfect, and the mass of Gothic figures spreads so levelly over the whole, that no special one distracts the eye; while, at the same time, if we once begin to individualise them, their beauty is endless. The tone of colour is so subdued, so soft, that they affect one like the beauty of an old woman—grander and tenderer than that of many young women; and full of the one quality in which youth fails—expression. Standing at the foot of the flight of steps, grey, old, and broken, which leads up to the entrance of Chartres Cathedral, I thought of what an artist had said, the week before, in showing me the portrait of a young beauty he was at work upon: that though youth and beauty are delightful things, still, speaking professionally, he preferred the character, the records of a lifetime's education, which time writes upon almost any middle-aged face—hieroglyphics which in all young faces must necessarily be a blank. And so it is that all deeper natures instinctively like old houses, old towns, old churches, better than anything which is new.

“The first impression given by the interior, as well as the exterior of Chartres Cathedral, is enormous height—height rising into such dimness of shadow that it takes away the idea of any roof; one looks upwards as if to the sky, and with the same sensation of peace. Amiens Cathedral has this in degree; but then Amiens still gives the feeling of newness—one is inclined to say, ‘How grand! and who is the architect?’ But at Chartres one never thinks of the architect at all. One’s soul’s wings begin to tremble and stir, just as they do under the open sky, with no fragment of mortal roof, however safe and ornamental, to keep them in and restrain their liberty, even under the most beautiful bonds. I cannot clearly describe the feeling; but those to whom the very breath of religious life is freedom—perfect freedom—will understand it, and what it symbolises.”*

With ever-increasing wonder, I spent hours in exploring the cathedral, descending to its long glimmering crypts, with their little chapels and altars at intervals, where tapers were dimly burning—glad to escape again from the chill subterranean corridor to the nave, flooded with radiance from the vast and magnificent windows of painted glass. To study these alone is worth a journey to Chartres; while if possible the marble sculptures which surround the exterior of the choir, and present a statuesque epitome of the Gospel narrative according to the imagination of four centuries ago, are more noteworthy still. To non-reading generations these figures and groups must have been as a vast stone book, strangely mingling fact and fiction, grotesque enough in places, yet wrought throughout with artistic feeling and power. The statuary of the porticoes is also very striking; above the western door is the figure of our Lord with the four “living creatures” described in Ezekiel, and employed in mediæval art as symbols of the Evangelists. “Below these are the fourteen prophets, and in the arches above the four-and-twenty elders of the Apocalypse, playing on musical instruments. The sculptures of the right-hand portal relate to the life of the Virgin, and in that of the left is seen Christ, surrounded by angels, with the signs of the zodiac, and the agricultural labours of the twelve months of the year.”

Apart from the glory of the building, however, we are constrained to pause and consider its symbolism and its uses. And then the charm is gone! The magnificent, soul-inspiring structure is an idol-shrine. “Freedom,” in the words of the gifted author just quoted, may be the appropriate suggestion, perhaps it was in some dim way the inspiration, of the wondrous pile; but the temple now is dedicated to a soul-degrading superstition. The chief object, in the esteem of the worshippers, which the cathedral contains, is a large black doll, on a pedestal in a chapel about the centre of the north aisle. Here there is always a little crowd of kneeling votaries, even when the rest of the building is deserted; here tapers are ceaselessly burning, and a priestly custodian is in constant attendance to receive the offerings of the

* *Fair France*, pp. 164-166.

faithful. I stood and watched the stream of devotees. They were mostly women of the humbler class, who came up one by one, knelt before the image, went forward to kiss the pedestal, made their offering, and departed. It was a sad sight. Yet might there not be, even in this temple of Mariolatry, beneath the crust of superstition, some "hidden life" of faith and love?

I purchased from the custodian of the image a number of a magazine, *La Voix de Notre-Dame de Chartres*, April, 1878. It contained prose and verse, little essays, tales, paragraphs of intelligence, like one of our cheaper religious monthlies. Some correspondents requested the prayers of the readers, others expressed gratitude for mercies received, but all to "Notre-Dame de Chartres," or "Notre-Dame de Sous-Terre" (whom I had seen worshipped before an "underground" image in the crypt), or "la bonne Mère." One only wrote, "Je remercie Dieu et Notre-Dame de Chartres!" But the strangest thing of all was the narrative, quoted from a Lyons religious paper, of a miraculous cure effected on a diseased limb by the application of some lint that had served to soothe the sufferings of Pope Pius the Ninth! The tale is told at large, with what the Lyons editor calls "austère simplicité," and is intended to show that the late Pope is already an intercessor with God, or, in the words of the narrator, "to bring glory to him whom we have so much loved, to make us love him more, to induce the afflicted to invoke him, and thus to hasten the hour of his crowning triumph!"

But to return to my starting-point at Sens. There are probably few travellers who will follow my example in taking Orleans and Chartres *en route* to Paris. On another occasion, pursuing the direct road, and having travelled by a slow train from Dijon, I was fain, from very weariness, to halt for a day at Fontainebleau, and was more than repaid. Everybody knows this place by name, and multitudes are familiar with the glimpses of far-reaching woodland that may be gained where the railway skirts the forest; but few English travellers, I think, have any notion of the richness, the beauty, the extraordinary variety of this fair domain. It was dark when, in a jolting omnibus, I was driven, as it seemed for miles—I found it afterwards just a mile and a half—from the station to the hotel. In the morning I looked out upon a broad, clean, quiet street; a few steps brought me to a great lonely mediæval palace, which I afterwards found well worth visiting for the strangely varied associations which attach to its small and stately rooms and long-deserted galleries. Catherine de Médicis, Diana of Poitiers, Queen Christina of Sweden, Henrietta Maria of England, Louis the Fourteenth and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, hapless Marie Antoinette, Napoleon the First and the wronged and noble Josephine, the imprisoned Pope Pius the Seventh, and Louis Philippe, "the citizen king"—all have their memorials here; and one realises better the great facts of history in seeing the very places where they occurred. With Louis Philippe the historical interest of Fontainebleau comes to an end; yet the old place

FONTAINEBLEAU.



FONTAINEBLEAU.

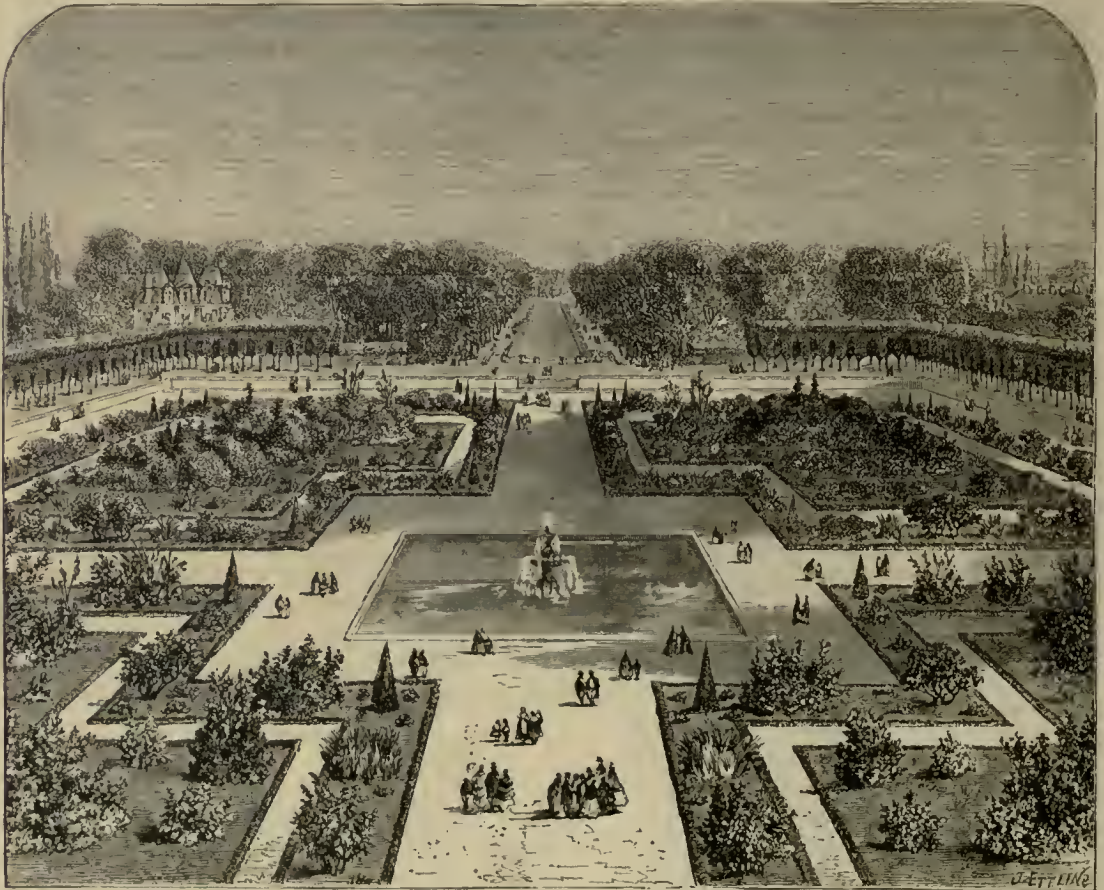
seems as though it might once again be filled with life and activity, and become the scene of great events. True, it bears the stamp of royalty throughout; but republics have had their stately palaces too.

The gardens will fascinate the lovers of elaborate arrangement and orderly primness, but are not otherwise remarkable except for their great fishponds. On the whole, they scarcely repay a walk round, especially when outside them stretches the

magnificent forest, with its heathery slopes, dark fir woods, vast expanses of green sward, planted with beech and oak, and a surface broken into wild,

SARGENT. SC

picturesque gorges by "the scars" and rocky projections of the sandstone. Quarries of this stone, which is largely used in paving the streets of Paris, have been excavated on the skirts of the forest, and employ a large number of workmen. The excursions through the undulating expanse of woodland, fifty miles in circumference, and covering an area of forty-two thousand five hundred acres, are of the most fascinating variety; one might wander for days, meeting new beauties at every turn. For the guidance of pedestrians,



THE PARTERRE, FONTAINEBLEAU.

a map of the forest, a perfect model in its way, has been prepared by "Sylvain," a true forest enthusiast—a retired soldier, M. Denecourt, who has devoted the latter part of his life to exploring every part of the neighbourhood, and to making its beauties more accessible. Under his direction, footpaths have been cut to all the most picturesque spots; and blue arrows painted on trees at every dubious point make the way plain, so that even "children in the wood" need not here be lost. It was with reluctant steps that I turned away from this fairyland, even for PARIS.



OLD PARIS.

NOTES ON PARIS.

WONDERS OF THE CITY—NEW AND OLD PARIS—GLIMPSES OF HISTORY—HOPES FOR THE FUTURE—
 NAPOLEON III. AND M. HAUSSMANN—BUTTES-CHAUMONT—A VISIT TO BELLEVILLE—CHRISTIAN
 WORK IN PARIS—AMUSEMENTS—PARIS AND ENGLISH SUNDAYS.



AFTER many wanderings, Paris at last was reached—not to be explored, not to be studied, still less to be described; but only to be wondered at as before, with an intensity that deepens with every visit.

It was the time of the 1878 Exhibition—of this last and crowning proof, as people think, of what the skill and ingenuity of man can do, in whatever can minister to taste, ease, luxury, mental or physical enjoyment. But, after all, Paris itself is *the* Exhibition. The sight-seer in the long corridors and



PARIS EXHIBITION, 1878, FRONT VIEW.

halls of the Champ de Mars, and on the Trocadéro slope, beholds but a small part of the marvels enfolded in this great "city of delights." It is even unfortunate that so many visitors unfamiliar with Paris have been content to receive their chief impressions of the city from the "west end"—from the streets and *places*, quays and bridges which may be visited on the way from the Rue de Rivoli or the Boulevard des Italiens to the Champ de Mars. True, these are of almost unequalled splendour. The Madeleine is the loveliest of classic temples; the Louvre the most magnificent and exhaustive of art-museums; and the Place de la Concorde offers, from the base of the Luxor obelisk, on a bright afternoon in early summer, a panorama of splendour, in the various and sumptuous architecture, the stately streets which here converge, the long lines of rich foliage, the play of the fountains, the gay and moving crowds, no other city in the world can present. A few steps further, and we are in the avenues of the Champs-Elysées; a short drive, and we pass the fortifications into the Bois de Boulogne, where all that art can effect has been done to give to a comparatively limited space the effect of a vast expanse of woodland beauty; with gardens, lakes, and waterfalls, artificial, but charming.

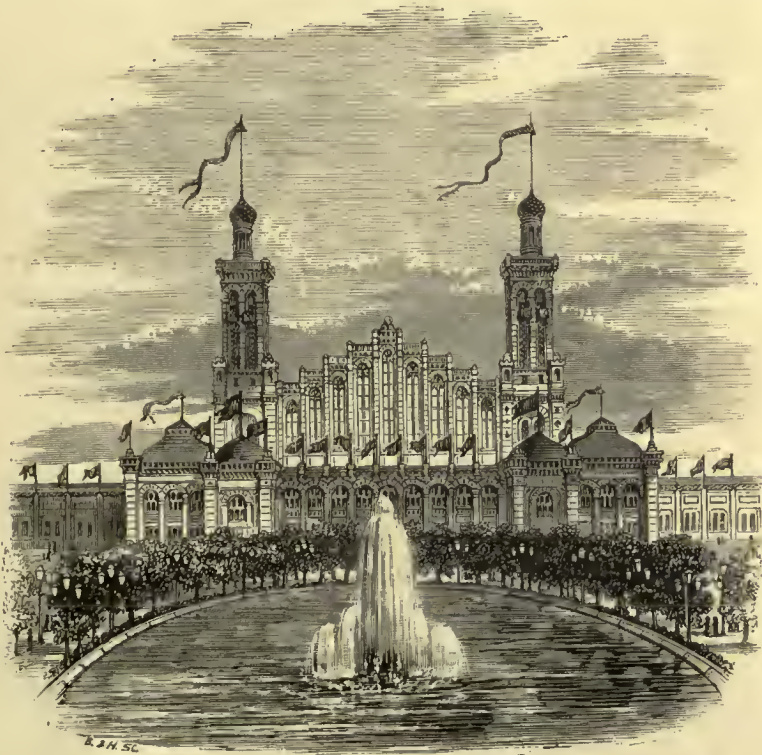
Returning to the river-side, in the direction indicated by the glittering gilded dome of the Hôtel des Invalides, we may either stroll beneath the shadow of trees along the noble quay on the right bank of the river, or may cross one of the numerous bridges to the Exhibition. But Paris is not to be really seen or understood in this way. Nor, in fact, is there any short and easy method of attaining an adequate notion of the city, even in its outward aspects; while beneath the surface there are interests, ac-

THE ANCIENT CITY.

tivities, and—as the French phrase has it—“worlds,” into which no mere visitor can penetrate.

Something may be learned of modern Paris by glancing back at ancient times, and so contrasting the present with the past.

This it is comparatively easy to do, from the geographical character of the city. The “Old Town” was a stronghold of the Parisii, a Gallic tribe, on the chief island of the Seine, round which arose the city of Lutetia (*Loutouhezi*, “water-girt dwelling”). Here Roman armies fixed their quarters, and Roman fleets were moored—a memory preserved by the ship in the arms of Paris to this day.



PALACE OF THE TROCADÉRO.

Our old friend Cæsar mentions the city and its people; we meet with them repeatedly in the *Notitia Imperii*; but the next dim picture which emerges for us from the mists of antiquity is that of a mission and a martyrdom. St. Dionysius,* it is said, with six other evangelists, came from Rome to Gaul, and founded churches in seven cities; Dionysius (abbreviated into Denys or Denis) selecting Paris, where he was beheaded in the persecution under Valerian. The “Martyr’s Hill,” to the north of the city—by a slight change *Montmartre*—perpetuates the memory of Christ’s faithful witness. There is a

* Strangely confounded in mediæval times with Dionysius the Areopagite, Acts xvii. 34. It was a grave charge against Abelard that he denied this identity! The date of the Gallic Dionysius was about A.D. 250-260. Gregory of Tours (d. 595) is the earliest authority for his mission.

foolish legend of St. Denis having walked away after his execution with his head beneath his arm, as shown in many a picture on French church walls; but perhaps the absurdity may be regarded as confirming the original story,



CATHEDRAL OF ST. DENIS; WITH NORTH TOWER BEFORE ITS DEMOLITION.

as it is easy to trace the tale to some rude pictorial record of the martyrdom. Many a myth, we know, arises out of an unimaginative literal rendering of symbolic art. Away to the north, we must not omit to notice, and if

HISTORICAL GLIMPSES.

possible to visit, the Cathedral of St. Denis, once the burying-place of French kings, and now again, after many vicissitudes, appearing in something of its pristine magnificence, as restored by M. Viollet-le-Duc. Taken altogether, this cathedral, from the perfection of its structure and the wealth of its memories, is one of the most impressive Gothic buildings in the world.



CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE DAME.

The next glimpse of Paris that we have is connected with the attempted revival of heathenism. Here, in what is now one of the most brilliant parts of the Boulevard St. Germain, in the palace adjoining sumptuous *thermæ*, or baths, erected by the Roman Emperor Constantius Chlorus, were the headquarters of his youthful relative Julian, who was already devoting his leisure

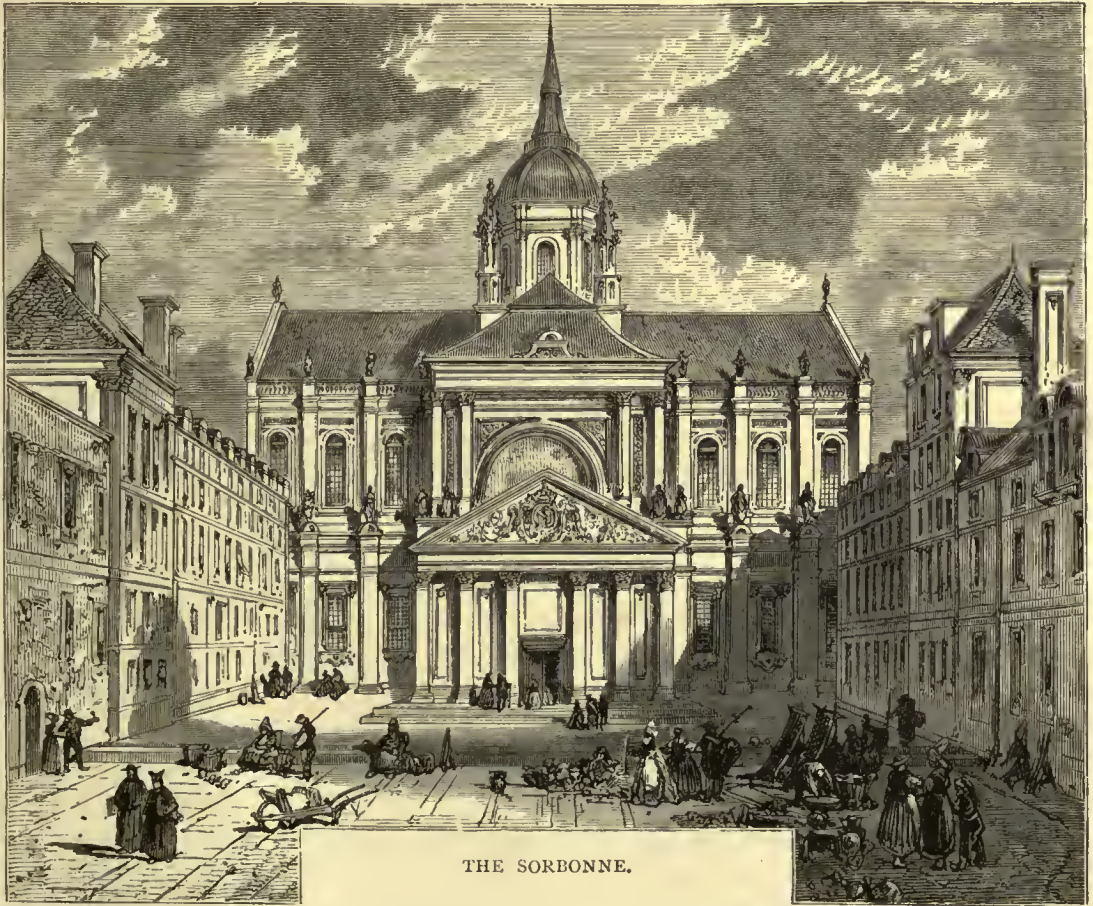
to those studies which led him to renounce the Christian profession and earned for him in the church the title of "Apostate." It was here that, in the wild tumultuary fashion of that era, the army first proclaimed him Emperor; and hence that he marched eastward, to find himself, through the sudden death of Constantius, sole ruler of the Roman people. All that followed belongs to the history of the Empire. Whatever genius, culture, and the power of natural character could effect was done to restore the gods of the old idolatry; it was the last effort, made under every favouring circumstance; its failure was one of the turning-points in the history of the world, and the words attributed to Julian on his dying couch in the Asiatic battlefield may be taken as the motto of that era: O GALILEAN, THOU HAST CONQUERED!

With such reflections, the visitor will view with especial interest the ruins of the Palais des Thermes, which are, moreover, as I believe, the only Roman remains now traceable in Paris. They are attached to that most interesting and wonderful museum, which to so many English people is apparently unknown—perhaps because it is on the south side of the river, away from the crowd of visitors—in the Hôtel de Cluny, once belonging to the great Benedictine monastery whose ruins we have already seen in Burgundy. We do not, however, linger now in the splendid apartments, tastefully restored, so as to present a perfect specimen of a Renaissance mansion of the sixteenth century, nor amid the antique or mediæval collections of the museum. Our present business is in the garden, where still stands the *frigidarium* of the old palace, with its oblong plunge-bath, and the remains of the leaden pipes which brought or carried off the water. Here, too, are some dilapidated Roman altars, a battered statue of Julian himself, with other sculptures; while in the garden are great masses and fragments of Roman, Gothic, or Norman construction, some of which have been brought from other parts of the city. On the whole, a morning cannot be more pleasantly spent in Paris than by visiting this Cluny museum. Then the Sorbonne is almost close by, so famous in the annals of scholastic theology; the Panthéon is not far off, with the magnificent public library of Sainte Geneviève; and if learning and literature pall in this classic quarter of Paris, there are the Luxembourg Gardens to invite a stroll or a rest.

But the memory of Julian has led us too far. Returning to our history, the annals of Paris, for nearly a thousand years after the possession of the city and the kingdom by the Franks under the great Clovis, flow on uninterruptedly, but with few points of the highest interest.

In the ninth century the Normans endeavoured to bring the city under their rule, but unsuccessfully. The struggle, however, issued in the deposition of the Carolingian dynasty—which, with the Merovingian line preceding, has so often been a bewilderment to young students of French history—and ended in the enthronement of the house of Capet. Paris now became the

permanent capital; and king after king devoted themselves to its fortification and embellishment. In the twelfth century Notre Dame was begun, and the wall of Paris, with its towers and gates, was built by Philip Augustus. This was extended, as shown in the sketch at the head of this chapter, in the fourteenth century (the period of the wars with our own Edward the Third), by Étienne Marcel, the Haussmann of the period. The fifteenth century is famous for Agincourt, and for the entry of the English into Paris six years after, followed by the uprising under Joan of Arc, the coronation of Charles



THE SORBONNE.

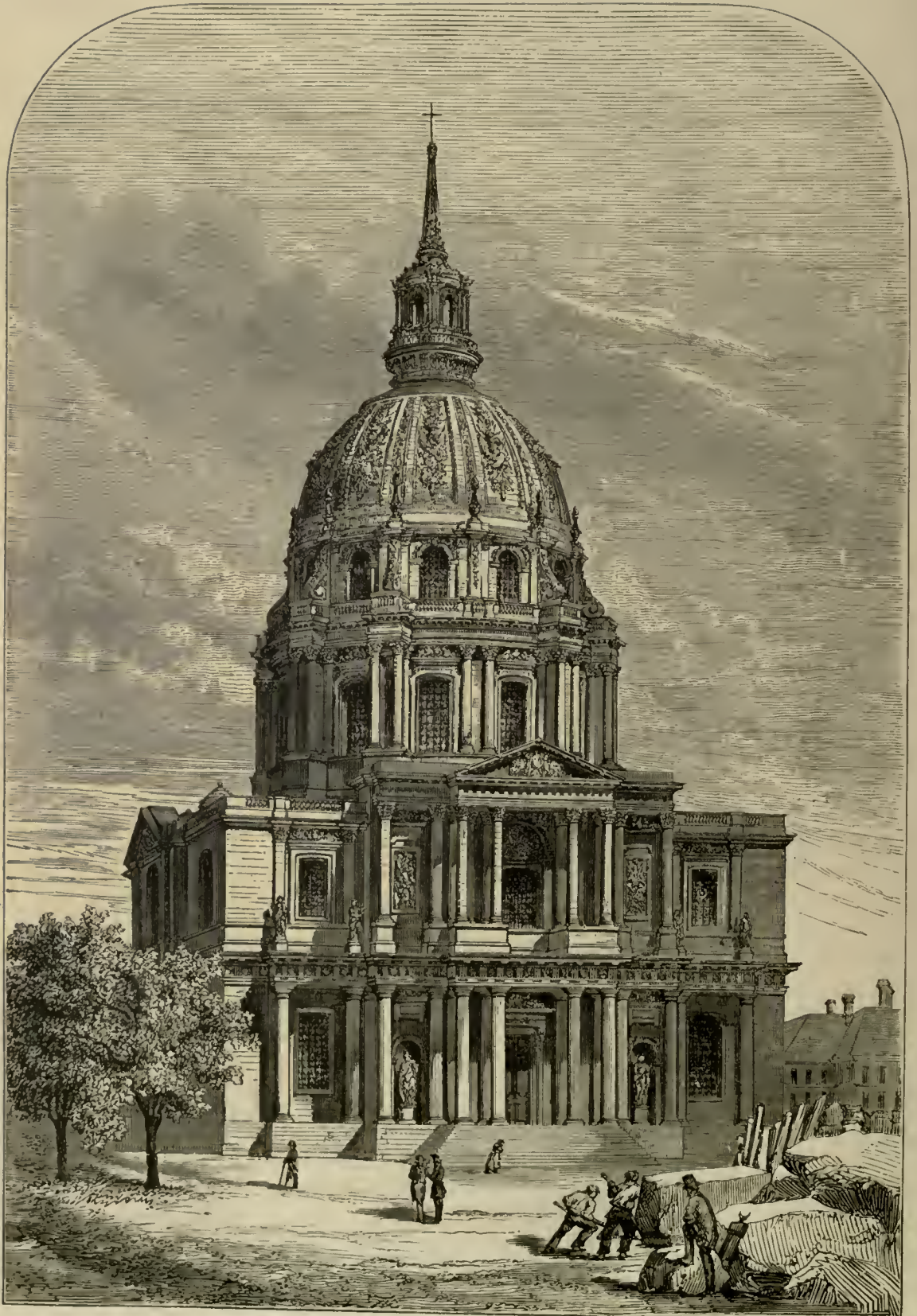
the Seventh at Rheims, and the expulsion of our countrymen from France. In the sixteenth century the Louvre palace was built, and became the residence of Francis the Second, the husband of Mary Queen of Scots. From this point the interest deepens. The religious wars now shadowed fair France, and men thought the end of the world at hand. Who can forget the 24th of August, 1572, the day of St. Bartholomew? or the "day of the barricades," sixteen years after (May 12, 1588), when the Duke of Guise and the League seemed so fatally to triumph? Henry of Navarre, first monarch of

the House of Bourbon, after his defence of the Protestant cause and his abjuration of the Protestant faith, became master of Paris six years afterwards, and with his minister Sully effected much for the improvement of the city. The Pont Neuf was now completed, and the palaces of the Louvre and Tuileries greatly enlarged. But it was in the time of the *Grand Monarque*, Louis the Fourteenth, that Paris began to attain something of that splendour which has made it the wonder of the world. The king himself never resided here, but the costly works which so vividly show both the taste and the profusion of the era were carried on throughout his reign—partly, it may have been, to distract the minds of the people from more serious matters of political or religious questioning. It is to this age that we owe the lovely Tuileries (tile-field) Gardens, the Champs-Élysées, and Versailles. The Louvre was enlarged, the Hôtel des Invalides and the Observatory were built, and eighty new streets were laid out; thirty-three new churches were erected; and after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle the fortifications of Paris were converted into the line of boulevards which still form one of the chief glories of the city.

But in the next reign but one the cost of all this was fearfully paid, in many ways! It was from an exhausted exchequer that the Revolution had its first impulse: and then the world knows how the people, who had been made of small account in the days of royal splendour, held down by the double forces of secular tyranny and spiritual despotism, arose in the terrible reaction of godlessness, anarchy, and mutual hatred. The memory of those days still hangs over Paris; few visitors omit to pass from the spot where the Column of July indicates the place of the Bastille, along the Rue St. Antoine and the Rue de Rivoli to the place where, opposite the end of the Tuileries Gardens, in what is now the splendid Place de la Concorde, there stood the Guillotine! It was proposed in after days to erect a fountain there, but Chateaubriand disposed of the scheme by the remark that "all the water in the world could not wash away the blood that had there been shed."

The Revolution—or rather one phase of it—was ended by the "whiff of cannon shot" directed down the streets of Paris by "Citizen Bonaparte." The First Empire soon followed; through the sites of demolished convents and churches new streets were driven—notably the Rue de Rivoli and the Rue de la Paix. The great markets of Paris were constructed and opened for use; and, for splendour, the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile was begun at the summit of the grand Champs-Élysées avenue. It is called the "Star" arch, not from the constellation of Napoleonic triumphs which it was intended to record, but because twelve avenues or boulevards radiate from it as a centre.

We pass over the days of the restored Bourbons, and can but briefly glance at those of Louis Philippe, much as was done in his reign for the completion of public buildings and the improvement of the city generally. The Madeleine, the Hôtel de Ville, the Louvre, the Palace of Versailles



HÔTEL DES INVALIDES.

were among the structures completed or beautified by the citizen-king, by whom also the remains of Napoleon Bonaparte were brought from St. Helena and laid in the noble sarcophagus which they now occupy beneath the dome of the Invalides. The present lines of fortification were also laid out, and the principal forts erected. But in 1848 his reign was suddenly closed, "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" reappeared as the motto of Paris; and again the world stood still to see, and wonder what would be the end.

The end was not yet. From the second of December, 1851, to the fourth of September, 1870, the world saw what to contemporaries seemed an empire mighty and lasting, but what posterity perhaps may term an interregnum—a parenthesis in the true history of a people. We cannot now discuss the Second Empire, with all its accompanying good and evil, and it is too soon to forecast the effects of the late changes. Few moments in the lives of monarchs have been more impressive than that in which our Queen and her Consort, as related in their Diary, stood side by side with Napoleon the Third, by the coffin of Napoleon the First. To many visitors, indeed, as to myself, the vast, silent, open crypt, with its bas-reliefs, colossal emblematic statues, names of victories recorded on the pavement around, gigantic laurel wreath in mosaic work, all seen in the dim light from the dome above, and surrounding the mighty sarcophagus where the mortal remains of one man are crumbling into dust, must ever rank as the most solemn sight in Paris. We feel the words of our Queen to be more impressive than any eloquence:

"We went to look from above into the open vault. . . . The coffin is not yet there, but in a small side Chapelle de St. Jérôme. Into this the Emperor led me, and there I stood, at the arm of Napoleon III., his nephew, before the coffin of England's bitterest foe—I, the granddaughter of that king who hated him most, and who most vigorously opposed him, and this very nephew, who bears his name, being my nearest and dearest ally! The organ of the church was playing 'God save the Queen' at the time, and this solemn scene took place by torchlight, and during a thunderstorm. Strange and wonderful indeed. It seems as if in this tribute of respect to a departed and dead foe old enmities and rivalries were wiped out, and the seal of Heaven placed upon that bond of unity which is now happily established between two great and powerful nations. May Heaven bless and prosper it!"*

Of the war and "the Commune" we will not now speak. Only in this hour of apparently returning prosperity we cannot forbear to pause and ask, What shall be the end? Into whose hands shall the future of this noble, impulsive, erratic nation be committed? We can only commend her to the Ruler of nations, assured that the secret of all power, for people as for individuals, is in the influence of that Spirit who often moves upon the face of *troubled* waters before the utterance of the words, "Let there be Light!"

But we must not linger on themes like these. We return to our survey.

* The *Queen's Journal*, quoted in Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*, vol. iii., p. 337.

NOTES ON PARIS.

This Isle of Paris is now chiefly occupied by the Cathedral of Notre Dame, the Palais de Justice—with its exquisite two-storied Sainte-Chapelle, a Gothic gem, for which the most hurried sight-seer ought to turn aside—and the Hôtel-Dieu, the great ancient hospital, now rebuilt. Ascending the tower of



EXCURSION IN THE PARIS SEWERS.

Notre Dame, we get a general view of the city, and, in the narrow streets sloping down to the river, seen from above like long defiles, discern some semblance of what the city was in the days of St. Bartholomew and the League, or—coming nearer to our own times—in those of Louis the Four-

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS.

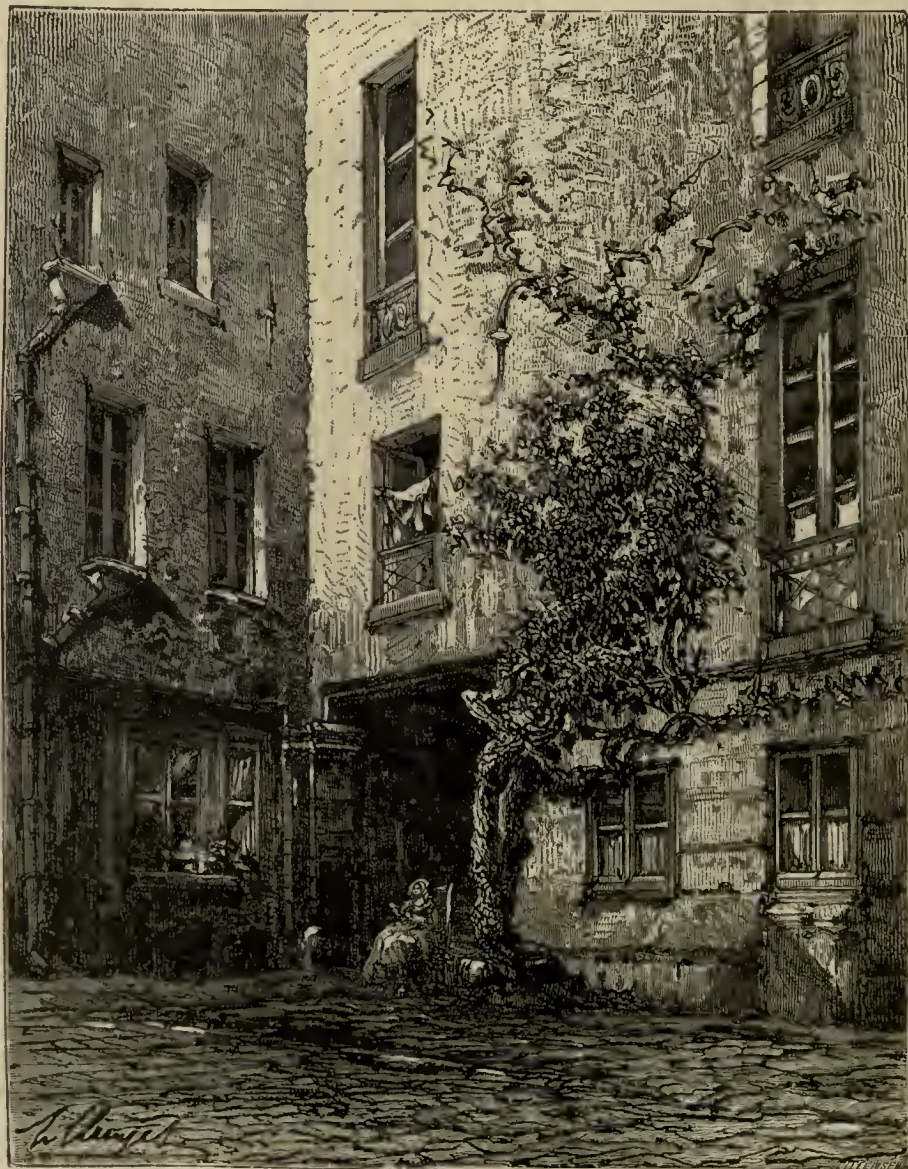
teenth or of the Revolution. Paris is now one of the healthiest cities in the world; thanks, in great measure, to the enormous drainage works which have been in progress ever since the reign of Louis Philippe; the sewers, it is said, extending to a length of nearly five hundred miles, and being so large and well ventilated that they may be safely and even pleasantly traversed, not only as a matter of business, but parties, including ladies, being frequently made up in summer time for their exploration. Most visitors will, however, content themselves with admiring the arrangements made for the cleanliness



CANAL ST. MARTIN, PARIS.

of the streets; the very gutters, after the sweepings of the night have been carried away, running with clear crystal water. Perhaps the curious will visit the Canal St. Martin, connecting the Marne and the Seine, and passing under the eastern part of the city, by the Column of July. In the gardens of the Boulevard Richard Lenoir above there are air-holes, through which puffs of steam from the craft that navigate this canal continually arise. The vast catacombs form another feature of subterranean Paris. Formerly quarries, yielding the white limestone of which the city is so largely built, they were after the Revolution made a great charnel-house; and the ghastly depositories

of skulls and bones, now arrayed in seemly order, attract many a visitor. I write from hearsay only, having had no opportunity of traversing these vast and gloomy depths; but those who have done so express much astonishment at their immense extent, as well as at the care, ingenuity, and even tastefulness, of the whole arrangement.



HOUSE OF RACINE, PARIS.

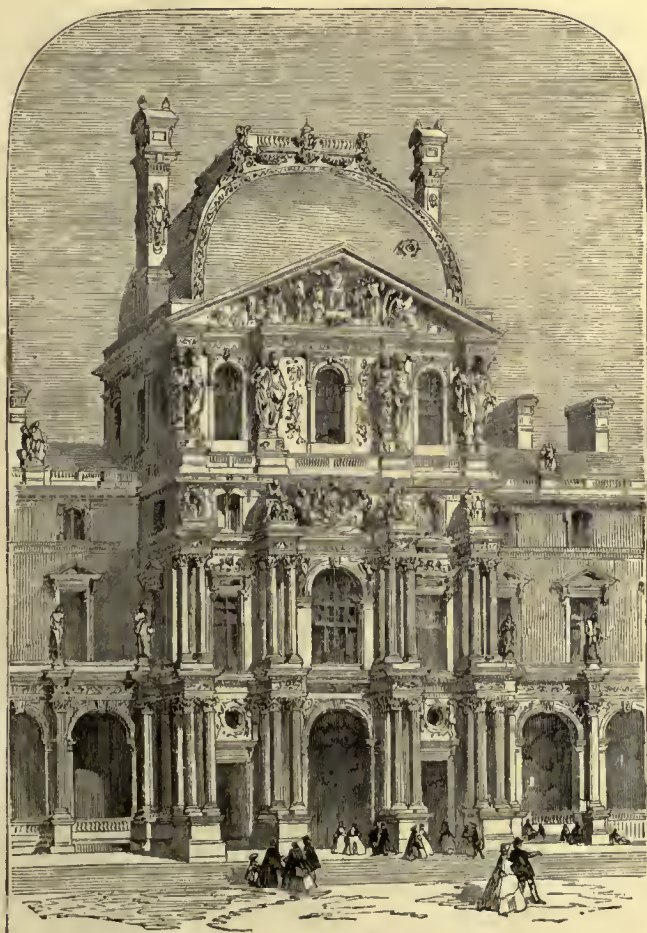
We return, however, to *terra firma*, and are led by preference to some of the ancient streets, bordered by tall houses, to one or two of which we have obtained the *entrée*, and where, beyond the time-stained walls of the front, open large courts, the flowers still grow, and the "vine and

fig-tree" climb the walls. Such a dwelling is the "House of Racine;" and in quiet streets and byways, or behind high blank walls, there is many a quiet retreat, apparently forgotten or unvisited while the traffic of the city roars past, and often associated with immortal names. Who that has read will forget Victor Hugo's description of the garden in the Rue Picpus?

It may not be said of Napoleon the Third, as of another ruler, that he found the city stone and left it marble; at any rate, where he found narrow, close, convoluted streets—the very places for conspiracy, obstruction, or riot—he has left broad avenues,

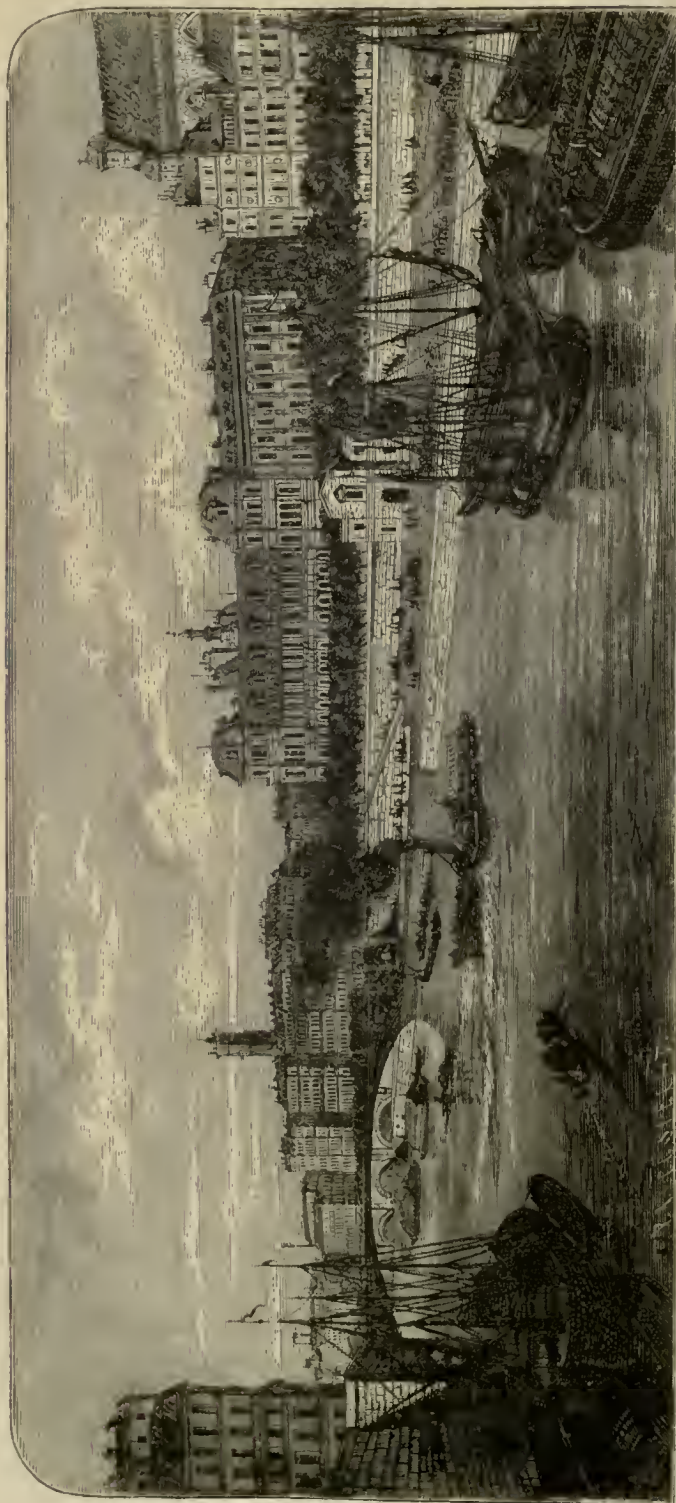
and straight, open boulevards, down which columns of soldiers may easily march, and which a cannonade could sweep from end to end. I do not say that such was his design, or that he had no nobler, more truly civilizing aims. Certainly, it is a little pathetic to see how the **N**, which some years ago seemed inwrought into all the architecture of Paris—carved in wood, chiselled in stone, moulded in cement, twined in ironwork—has almost utterly vanished! Lady Verney truly says,* "the past is ignored in France to a degree inconceivable elsewhere,—swallowed up in the ocean of the present, so that not even a waif or stray is left to show what had been the state of things which was engulfed. The last time we were in Paris, the number of streets,

of boulevards, of shops, cafés, barracks, palaces, roads, and *places* named after the Emperor and Empress were literally legion. Now not in the most obscure faubourg did we see even a trace of the name of either. There must have been tens of thousands of Louis Napoleon's busts in Paris alone, in plaster and in marble; what has become of them? Have they been broken up, or are they hidden in cellars until the wheel shall bring up his successor?



TURGOT PAVILION OF THE LOUVRE.

* *Contemporary Review*, July 1878.



BRIDGE OF ST. LOUIS.

. . . After 1848 the signs of the Orleans rule were obliterated as quickly; the remembrance of the old Bourbons was as transitory in 1836; the Napoleon Bees were painted over the Fleurs de Lys, and the Fleurs de Lys over the Bees, with dismal impartiality. The half-effaced 'Liberté, Égalité et Fraternité' over the gate of the Louvre—the word 'National' painted over 'Impérial,' which again covers over the word 'Bourbon' underneath, so thinly that traces of the letters below can still be seen, make one sad. The streets can hardly know their own names; some of them must have been altered a dozen times at the least."

Without entering into the political question, there are reasons enough on the very surface why the Parisians should turn shudderingly from the recollection of the catastrophe of the Second Empire, and the dark days that followed. Yet—what wonderful power of reparation has this people shown! Pass through the Paris of to-day—more brilliant, crowded, apparently wealthy than ever; and it is hard indeed

to remember how few years have elapsed since the beautiful city was in the enemy's grasp — desolated by famine : "The children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city. They say to their mothers, Where is corn and wine?" Then how like a hideous dream does the brief fury of the Communist appear! Still, there are the ruins yet: and it was not without some fresh surprise that I observed, in a very brief interval after these dark disasters, how excursion parties of visitors, conducted by Frenchmen, were made up from time to time to the several scenes of warfare, riot, and destruction. The ruins of St. Cloud, the shattered works of Fort Valérien, or, within the city, the melancholy blackened shell of the Tuileries, those of the Hôtel de Ville, or of the Palais de Justice, with many other memorials of lawless fury, were as so many items in an exhibition! Yet —and this was the strangest part of all—there was the very reverse of heartlessness in this parade of national calamity. The tragedy and the pathos of the situation were evidently keenly felt. The guide who was careful to point out to you every detail of the humiliating spectacle, would become by turns pale with indignation, or tearful with grief. I could not doubt the emotion to be genuine, but the scene was very French!

The public parks and gardens of Paris might claim a chapter to themselves. They almost engirdle the city, and in spring-time are especially beautiful, while even in summer they provide a pleasant if not absolute escape from the all-pervading, all-penetrating dust. Versailles of course everybody visits; Vincennes, comparatively neglected, is of a yet richer beauty. But there is at least one improvement for which we have reason to be grateful to the Emperor and his lieutenant, M. Haussmann. Lying beyond Belleville, on the north-eastern side of the city, were the Buttes-Chaumont, where once the Montfaucon gibbet stood, and where the vilest of criminals were wont to congregate. It was a squalid, foul, ill-smelling quarter—a receptacle for all the moral and physical rubbish of Paris. The scarred and crumbling sides of old quarries overhung the dungheaps and pools of stagnant water, from which every summer the miasma carried fever into the narrow streets around. By the skill of M. Haussmann the whole place has been transformed into one of the most charming, if artificial, of public parks. The lower levels are laid out in turfy lawns, beds of flowers, and winding gravel walks; the quarry-sides have become miniature cliffs and glens; in one rocky recess a cascade of purest water picturesquely falls; shady paths are carried up the slopes, and the highest point, to which a pretty suspension-bridge gives access, is crowned with a Corinthian temple, from whose tiny portal a fine view is obtained over the whole northern part of the city. Few English people, I think, make their way through the long crowded Belleville suburb to this spot, which it is not too much to call romantic. Let me assure them that they can hardly have a pleasanter morning's excursion, especially if they

NOTES ON PARIS.

combine with it a visit to one of those centres of beneficence and evangelisation which now so happily exist in the neighbourhood.

On occasion of my visit, I was taken into a room which was filled by some



PARIS BREAD CARRIER.

seventy or eighty of the poorest of the poor. They had been gathered from all parts of the city to receive medical assistance, gratuitously provided in connection with the mission of which Miss de Broen is the well-known superintendent. Before attending to their physical ills the medical attendant

conducted a short religious service—a hymn, remarkably well sung by the poor people, a prayer, and an address judiciously short. They then went into the infirmary one by one, the ladies of the mission remaining to converse with those who had to wait. I thought of Him who came at once to heal and to save. Thence we proceeded to a girls' day school, evidently well taught by a teacher *diplômée*, and to a sewing-meeting, where a number of poor women, some of them very aged, were working, with busy and often trembling fingers, for the half-franc which to them is so much. Here also religious instruction suited to the circumstances of the people is given; and it would be difficult to find a place where more genuinely useful benevolent and religious work is carried on than that which is done in this unpretending iron church and in the neighbouring dispensary and newly-planned infirmary. Other forms of Christian enterprise have also found a place in this suburb, and the names of Mr. and Mrs. McAll,—who are now conducting religious services in twenty-two different *salles*, all over Paris,—as well as of other earnest workers, are familiar to many. The number of meetings held in private houses or mission-rooms was a surprise to me; and where not long since there appeared the portentous spectacle of a population at war with society, and fanatical in unbelief, the simple preaching of Christ, and the exhibition of Christianity as the highest philanthropy, are effecting a real though quiet transformation. But the “works” of Christian beneficence which have happily found their home in Paris would be far too numerous for even mention here. They are, says Lady Verney, “curiously successful;” and a word in passing must be spoken for that of Miss Leigh, who with her fellow-workers gives herself wholly “to the care of young *English* girls who are collected in Paris on so many pretences, also to English orphans and persons in distress.” No words can exaggerate the value of this effort for the good of many who must otherwise have been lost in the great vortex,—uncared for and unknown.

It was with much interest also that I visited the *dépôt* of religious literature in the Place du Théâtre Français, one of the best and most central parts of the city; and noted the efforts which are made to bring evangelical truth before the thousands whom the Exhibition had gathered from all lands to this fair city. There is increasing room for such efforts, as well as obvious need; for the French are more than ever a reading people. Whether the comparison has ever been instituted I do not know; but it would seem that the circulation of the daily journals in Paris even surpasses that of our newspapers in London. Certainly there is a greater variety; each keeping not only to its own side in politics, Bonapartist, Legitimist, or Republican, but to its own line of intelligence, so that for a comprehensive view several papers must be read. The “worlds” in Paris, now and then intersecting in their orbits, oftener lie wide apart. No place, as every one knows, is so pleasure-loving: in no place, perhaps, are the severer sciences more assiduously pursued. In fact, everything here seeks a scientific basis,—law and government, education,

literature in all its branches; there are "academies" and professors for everything; the "rule of thumb" is an antiquated barbarism; is there not even an *art de s'amuser*? Perhaps it would be better were there less of science in many things, and more of impulse. Where education is systematized in all points to such a degree of nicety, the educated also lose some of their elasticity. I was amused by reading in one of the French journals a criticism on the Oxford and Cambridge boat-race:

"The English," said the critic, "are right in encouraging their youth to remain young as long as possible, and to maintain a sound mind in a sound



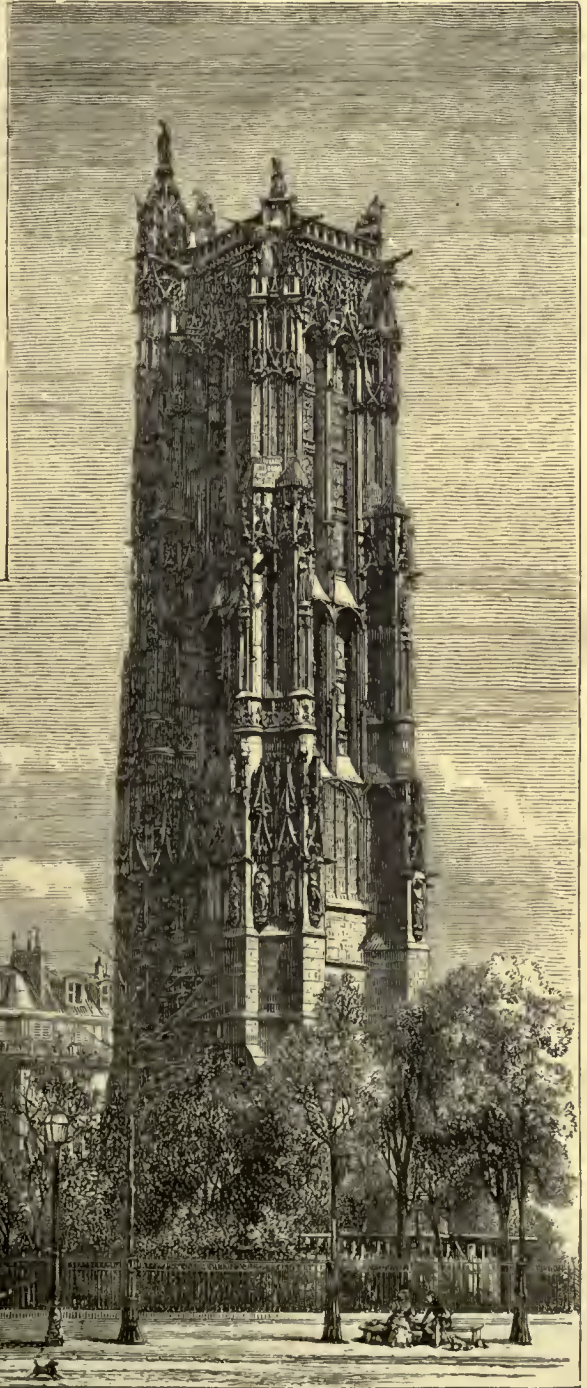
PARIS DÉPÔT OF THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.

and vigorous body. Undoubtedly their legitimate enthusiasm for physical exercises is sometimes carried to ridiculous excesses; but our domestic peculiarity, the fault of our hothouse education, is much more offensive and hurtful to our country than the athletic eccentricities of our neighbours across the Channel. It is certainly desirable, as far as possible, as they seem to do in England, to extend the imitation of antiquity to gymnastics and to 'music' in the original sense of the word. Let us hope that our new Minister of Public Instruction, who has announced to us that a new breath of life has stirred through our University, will attempt to bring about in our

French education also this happy marriage of body and mind. May the day soon come when young Englishmen who visit the Continent shall no longer be annoyed and scandalised by seeing in the streets of our cities those lamentable groups of collegians, defiling two and two in their frock-coats for their Thursday constitutional, at the same hour when the boys at Eton and the other English schools, lightly clad in a costume of white flannel, and with jaunty coloured caps upon their heads, are throwing quoits, leaping bars, rowing, cricketing, playing at racquet or tennis, or, more simply still, are bounding across the fields, and in the very sense of freedom are kept from dreaming of mischief!"*

This extract casts much light on the character of the two nations. Yet

* *Le Temps*, April 15, 1878.



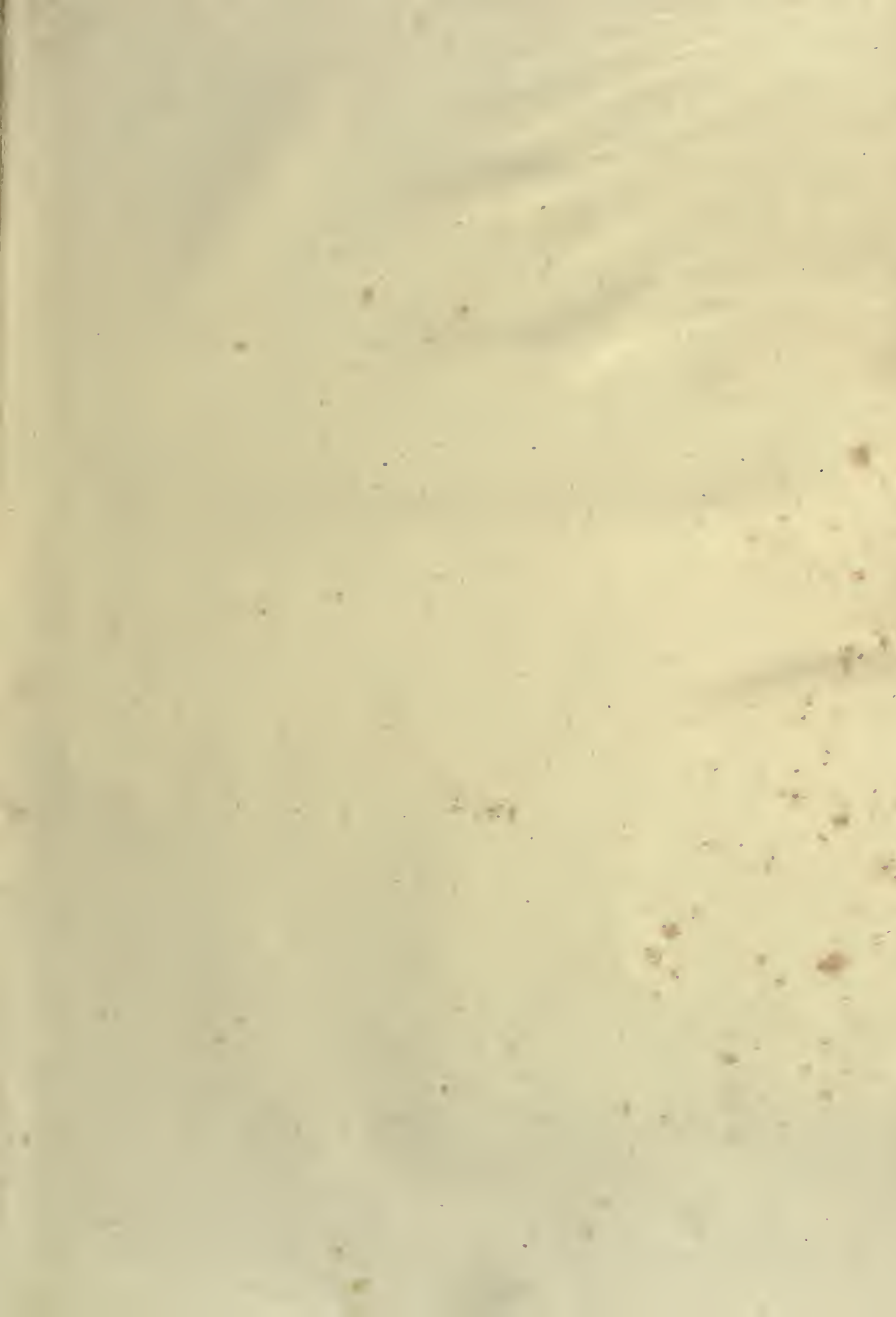
TOWER OF ST. JACQUES, RUE DE RIVOLI.

there is another side to the question ; and in the art of "amusing themselves simply" the French are our superiors. I have seen a party of grown-up men in ecstasies of enjoyment over a large hollow india-rubber ball, beaten to and fro with the open hand ; and the little coloured balloons carried away all day by the children of customers at the *Magasins du Louvre* seem to afford an intensity of delight which English children would not feel. The working people again, if the truth must be spoken, are more domestic in their pleasures. For one family group in an English park or promenade, in which the father and elder sons were sharing the enjoyment with the wife, sisters, and little ones, you would see a dozen in the Champs Elysées, the Luxembourg Gardens, or the Buttes Chaumont. There is greater temperance, too, in these little excursions, as well as at all times. I do not say, as some have said, that you never see a drunken man in France—I have seen too many ; but there is not the hard, determined "boozing" which is too common with us. Possibly the contrast is mainly owing to climate, and to the difference between a wine and a beer country ; but the fact is certain, and would be even more marked, but for the Sunday evening self-indulgence which unhappily becomes the rule where the sacred character of the day of rest is disregarded.

A French Sabbath is indeed a saddening spectacle, both in the morning, when it brings no respite to the labourer from hard work, and in the evening, when the highest joys to which it calls him are those of the theatre and the dancing-room. No visitor to Paris, or to any large provincial town of France, can fail to note this characteristic, or to see how all classes have taken the Lord's Day as a time—I will not say of degrading or sensual pleasure, but of simple recreation. As a matter of course, it is on Sunday that museums and picture galleries are opened freely, that the great water-works of Versailles are to be seen, that racecourses and theatres offer their richest attractions. Many, even, who profess to be living in the fear of God regard Sunday as multitudes of devout English people observe Christmas Day—religious services in the morning, amusements at night. But then we close the shops on Christmas Day ; in France they are mostly open on Sunday ; and so it happens that the enjoyment of many implies the toil of more.

The worshippers from our land, indeed, need not be bereft of their customary Sabbath privileges. Paris has not a few sanctuaries in which, whether in the French language or in our own, the worship of a simple evangelical faith is offered. These must in many cases be sought for, and are often found with difficulty ; but they are there, and a few of the calmest, happiest hours of rest on the Lord's Day that I have ever known have been in crowded, pleasure-seeking Paris.





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Green, Samuel Gosnell
French pictures

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