

The Project Gutenberg eBook of In Château Land

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: In Château Land

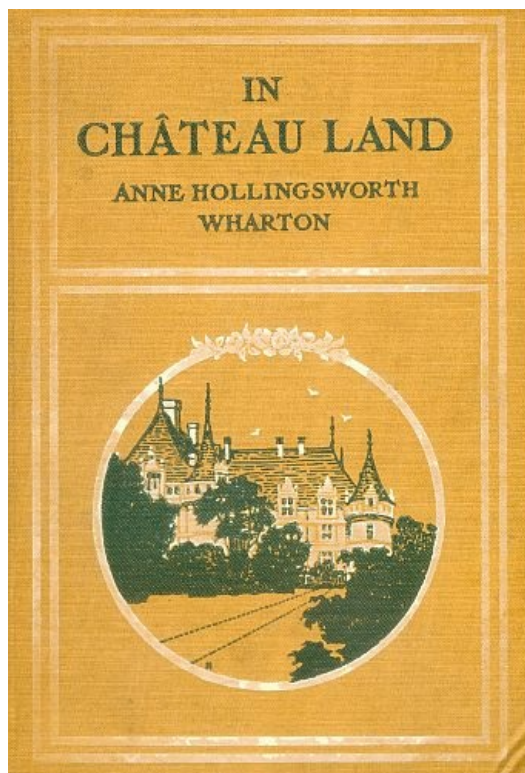
Author: Anne Hollingsworth Wharton

Release date: January 24, 2009 [eBook #27881]

Language: English

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK IN CHÂTEAU LAND ***

E-text prepared by Suzanne Shell, Emmy,
and the Project Gutenberg Online Distributed Proofreading Team
(<http://www.pgdp.net>)



IN CHÂTEAU LAND

[2]

By Anne Hollingsworth Wharton

AN ENGLISH HONEYMOON. Decorated title and 17 illustrations. Cloth, extra, \$1.50 *net*.

ITALIAN DAYS AND WAYS. Decorated title and 8 illustrations. 12 mo. Cloth, extra, \$1.50 *net*.

SOCIAL LIFE IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC. Profusely illustrated. 8vo. Buckram, gilt top, uncut edges. \$3.00 *net*; half levant, \$6.00 *net*.

SALONS, COLONIAL AND REPUBLICAN. Profusely illustrated. 8vo. Buckram, \$3.00; three-quarters levant,

\$6.00.

HEIRLOOMS IN MINIATURES. Profusely illustrated. 8vo. Buckram, \$3.00; three-quarters levant, \$6.00.

THROUGH COLONIAL DOORWAYS. Illustrated. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.25.

COLONIAL DAYS AND DAMES. Illustrated. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.25.

A LAST CENTURY MAID. Illustrated. 8vo. Cloth, \$1.25.

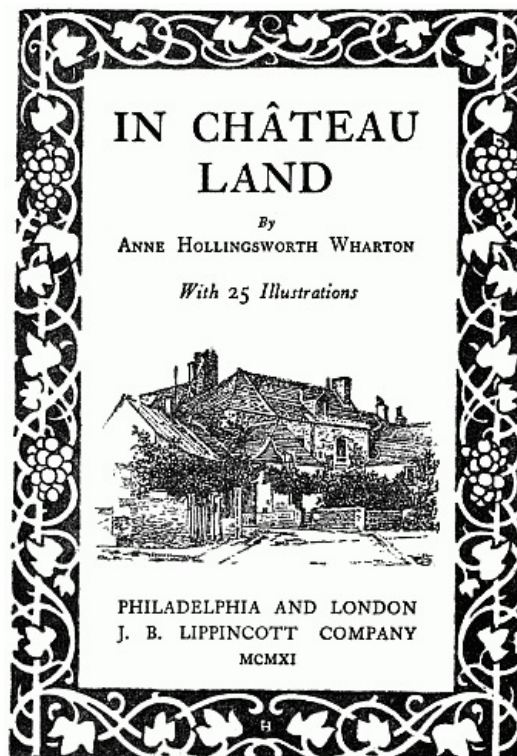


[4]

Neurdein Freres,

Photo.

LOCHES WITH GATE OF CORDELIERS



[5]

Published November, 1911

PRINTED BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
 AT THE WASHINGTON SQUARE PRESS
 PHILADELPHIA, U.S.A.

CONTENTS

[7]

	PAGE
I	
AN EMBARRASSMENT OF CHÂTEAUX	9
II	
AN ISLAND CHÂTEAU	30
III	
AN AFTERNOON AT COPPET	45
IV	
EN ROUTE FOR TOURAINE	64
V	
IN AND AROUND TOURS	80
VI	
LANGEAIS AND AZAY-LE-RIDEAU	96
VII	
TWO QUEENS AT AMBOISE	117
VIII	
A BATTLE ROYAL OF DAMES	146
IX	
A FAIR PRISON	174
X	
COMPENSATIONS	202
XI	
THE ROMANCE OF BLOIS	226
XII	
THREE CHÂTEAUX	258
XIII	
CHINON AND FONTEVRAULT	295
XIV	
ANGERS	319
XV	
ORLEANS AND ITS MAID	349
XVI	
A CHÂTEAU FÊTE	369

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

[8]

LOCHES, WITH GATE OF CORDELIERS
 ISOLA BELLA, LAKE MAGGIORE

Frontispiece
[36](#)

STAIRCASE AND CLOÛTRE DE LA PSALLETTE, ST. GATIEN	82
MEDIÆVAL STAIRWAY, CHÂTEAU OF LUYNES	96
ENTRANCE TO LANGEAIS, WITH DRAWBRIDGE	98
CAFÉ RABELAIS OPPOSITE CHÂTEAU OF LANGEAIS	108
CHÂTEAU OF AZAY-LE-RIDEAU, EAST FAÇADE	112
CHÂTEAU OF LANGEAIS, FROM THE LOIRE	120
CHÂTEAU OF AMBOISE, FROM OPPOSITE BANK OF THE LOIRE	130
CHENONCEAUX, MARQUES TOWER AND GALLERY ACROSS THE CHER	154
HOUSE OF TRISTAN L'HERMITE	178
AGNES SOREL	188
ENTRANCE TO CHÂTEAU OF BLOIS, WITH STATUE OF LOUIS XII	214
COURT OF BLOIS, WITH STAIRCASE OF FRANCIS I	228
LOUISE DE LA VALLIÈRE	238
CHÂTEAU OF CHAUMONT, THE LOIRE ON THE LEFT	264
SMITHY NEAR GATE OF CHEVERNY	278
FROM PHOTOGRAPH BY MRS OTIS SKINNER	
ANNE DE THOU, DAME DE CHEVERNY	282
CHÂTEAU OF CHAMBORD	286
RUINS OF CHÂTEAU OF COUDRAY AT CHINON	296
FRENCH CAVE DWELLINGS NEAR SAUMUR	316
FORGE NEAR STONE STAIRWAY AT LUYNES	354
FROM PHOTOGRAPH BY MRS OTIS SKINNER	
HÔTEL CABU	364
HOUSE OF JOAN OF ARC	364
SALLE DES MARRIAGES, ORLEANS	366

IN CHÂTEAU LAND

[9]

I

AN EMBARRASSMENT OF CHÂTEAUX

HOTEL FLORENCE, BELLAGIO, August 10th.

You will be surprised, dear Margaret, to have a letter from me here instead of from Touraine. We fully intended to go directly from the Dolomites and Venice to Milan and on to Tours, stopping a day or two in Paris en route, but Miss Cassandra begged for a few days on Lake Como, as in all her travels by sea and shore she has never seen the Italian lakes. We changed our itinerary simply to be obliging, but Walter and I have had no reason to regret the change for one minute.

Beautiful as you and I found this region in June, I must admit that its August charms are more entrancing and pervasive. Instead of the clear blues, greens and purples of June, the light haze that veils the mountain tops brings out the same indescribable opalescent shades of heliotrope, azure and rose that we thought belonged exclusively to the Dolomites. However, these mountains are first cousins, once or twice removed, to the Eastern Italian and Austrian Alps and have a good right to a family likeness. There is something almost intoxicating in the ethereal beauty of this lake, something that goes to one's head like wine. I don't wonder that poets and artists rave about its charms, of which not the least is its infinite variety. The scene changes so quickly. The glow of color fades, a cloud obscures the sun, the blue and purple turn to gray in an instant, and we descend from a hillside garden, where gay flowers gain added brilliancy from the sun, to a cypress-bordered path where the grateful shade is so dense that we walk in twilight and listen to the liquid note of the nightingale, or the blackcap, whose song is sometimes mistaken for that of his more distinguished neighbor.

[10]

This morning when we were resting in a hillside pavilion, near the Villa Giulia, gazing upon the sapphire lake and the line of purple Alps beyond, we concluded that nothing was needed to complete the beauty of the scene but a snow mountain in the distance, when lo! as if in obedience to our call, a cloud that shrouded some far-off peaks slowly lifted, revealing to us the shining crest of Monte Rosa. It really seemed as if Monte Rosa had amiably thrown up that dazzling white shoulder for our especial delectation. This evening at sunset it will be touched with delicate pink.

[11]

I am writing this afternoon on one of the long tables so conveniently placed on the upper deck of the little steamers upon which we made so many excursions when you and I were here in June. The colors of sky, mountain and lake are particularly lovely at this time of the day. Miss Cassandra and Lydia have taken out their water colors, and are trying to put upon paper the exquisite translucent shades of the mountains that surround the lake. Lydia says that the wash of

water colors reproduces these atmospheric effects much more faithfully than the solid oils, and she and our Quaker lady are washing away at their improvised easels, having sent the children off for fresh glasses of water. While I write to you, Walter lights his cigar and gives himself up to day dreams, and I shall soon say *au revoir* and devote myself to the same delightful, if unprofitable, occupation, as this fairy lake is the place of all others in which to dream and lead the *dolce far niente* life of Italy. And so we float about in boats, as at Venice, and think not of the morrow. By we, I mean Walter, Lydia and myself, as the children and Miss Cassandra are fatiguingly energetic. She has just reminded me that there is something to do here beside gazing at these picturesque shores from a boat, as there are numerous villas to be visited, to most of which are attached gardens of marvellous beauty. We are passing one just now which has a water gate, over which climbing geraniums have thrown a veil of bloom. The villa itself is of a delicate salmon color, and the garden close to the lake is gay with many flowers, petunias and pink and white oleanders being most in evidence. The roses are nearly over, but other flowers have taken their places, and the gardens all along the shore make brilliant patches of color.

[12]

It is not strange that Bulwer chose this lake as the site of Melnotte's *château en Espagne*, for surely there could not be found a more fitting spot for a romance than this deep vale,

"Shut out by Alpine hills from the rude world,
Near a clear lake, margined by fruits of gold,
And whispering myrtles, glassing softest skies."

We were wondering what "golden fruits" were to be found on these shores at this time, oranges and nespoli being out of season, when some boatmen in a small fishing smack began to sing the "Santa Lucia" beloved by the Neapolitans. A handsome, middle-aged woman seated near us, touched to tears by the penetrating sweetness of the song, as it reached us across the waters, and with the *camaraderie* induced by the common hap of travel, has just whispered in my ear that her husband proposed to her at Bellagio. I fancied the happy pair floating about in a boat with a beautiful brown and yellow sail, but the lady has destroyed my picture by telling me that she was over in New York at the time. It appears that a timid and somewhat uncertain admirer, the kind that we read about in old-fashioned novels, as he strolled by the shores of the lake at twilight, heard a boatman singing her favorite song and the melody of "Santa Lucia" floating forth upon the still air, coupled with the beauty of the scene, so wrought upon his feelings that he forthwith wrote her a love letter by the flickering light of a *bougie*. This little incident dates back to the more romantic if less comfortable days before electricity came to light our way, even in remote places.

[13]

[14]

August 11th.

There are so many châteaux to be visited, and so many excursions on the lake to be made that we could stay here a month and have a charming plan for each day. This morning, we climbed a winding mountain path to the Villa Serbelloni and wandered through the hillside garden, with its grottoes and tunnels, to a natural balcony overhanging a precipice of sheer rock that rises above the lake. From this height there is a view of the whole northern part of Lake Como, with the Alps beyond, and here one realizes the beauty of Bellagio which along the water front is but a long line of shops. Situated on the extreme end of the point of land that separates Lake Como from its southern arm, the Lago di Lecco, the little town rises upon its terraces, and with its steep, narrow streets and winding paths, is as picturesque as only an Italian hillside *villaggio* can be.

On this Punta di Bellagio is situated one of the numerous villas of the younger Pliny; another villa we saw, near the curious intermittent spring, which he described in his letters. This Larian Lake, as the ancients called it, is full of classic associations, and of those of a later time connected with Italy's heroic struggle for independence, for the Villa Pliniana was once the home of the heroic and beautiful Princess Christina Belgiojoso, the friend of Cavour and Garibaldi, who equipped a troop of Lombardy volunteers which she herself commanded, until she was banished from Italy by order of the Austrian general.

[15]

Gazing upon the blue lake, on whose shining bosom the rocky shores were so charmingly mirrored, to-day, it was difficult to believe that great storms ever sweep over its still waters, yet habitués of this region tell us that this Punta di Bellagio is the centre of furious storms, the most violent coming from behind Monte Crocione, back of Cadenabbia, and sweeping with great fury across the lake. Such a storm as this was the memorable one of 1493, upon whose violence chroniclers of the time delighted to descant. This particular tempest, which was probably no more severe than many others, found a place in history and romance because its unmannerly waters tossed about the richly decorated barge of Bianca Sforza, whose marriage to Maximilian, King of the Romans, had been solemnized with great magnificence, at the cathedral in Milan, three days before. The bridal party set forth from Como in brilliant sunshine, the shores crowded with men and women in holiday attire, and the air filled with joyous music. Bianca's barge was rowed by forty sailors, says Nicolo da Correggio, while her suite followed in thirty boats, painted and decked out with laurel boughs and tapestries. This gay *cortège* reached Bellagio in safety, and after a night spent at a castle on the promontory the bride and her attendants set sail toward the upper end of the lake. Hardly had they left the shore when the weather changed, and a violent storm scattered the fleet in all directions. Bianca's richly decorated barge, with her fine hundred-thousand-ducat trousseau aboard, was tossed about as mercilessly as if it had been a fisherman's smack. The poor young Queen and her ladies wept and cried aloud to God for mercy. Giasone del Maino, says the chronicler, alone preserved his composure, and calmly smiled at the terror of the courtiers, while he besought the frightened boatmen to keep their heads. Happily,

[16]

the tempest subsided toward nightfall, and the Queen's barge, with part of her fleet, succeeded in putting back into the harbor of Bellagio. The following day a more prosperous start was made, and poor Bianca was saved from the terrors of the deep to make another perilous journey, this time across the Alps on muleback, by that fearful and cruel mountain of Nombrey, as a Venetian chronicler described the Stelvio Pass. She finally reached Innsbruck, where she was joined, some months later, by her tardy and cold-hearted bridegroom.

[17]

We had seen Bianca's handsome bronze effigy in the Franciscan church at Innsbruck, and so felt a personal interest in the fair young bride who had been launched forth upon this matrimonial venture with so much pomp and ceremony, her head crowned with diamonds and pearls, and her long train and huge sleeves supported by great nobles of Milan. Foolish and light-headed the young Queen doubtless was, and with some childish habits which must have been annoying to her grave consort, many years her senior,—Erasmus Brasca, the Milanese envoy, says that he was obliged to remonstrate with her for the silly trick of eating her meals on the floor instead of at table,—and yet she was a warm-hearted, affectionate girl, and like many another princess of that time, she deserved a happier fate than the loveless marriage that had been arranged for her. Our memories are quite fresh about Bianca and her sorrows, because an accommodating tourist, who had Mrs. Ady's "Beatrice d'Este" with her, has loaned it to us for reading in the evenings—at least for as much time as we can afford to spend in-doors when the out-door world is so beguiling.

[18]

August 12th.

The man of the party and the children set forth early this morning for a day's fishing on the lake, Walter having learned from a loquacious boatman that trout of large size, frequently weighing fifteen pounds, are to be caught here. We women, lacking the credulity of the true brother of the angle, declined Walter's invitation, preferring a morning at the Villa Carlotta to "the calm, quiet, innocent recreation of angling," although we did encourage the fisher-folk by telling them that we should return from sightseeing with keen appetites for their trout.

[19]

The villa, or château, which we visited to-day, situated on a hillside directly opposite Bellagio, is not that in which Maximilian and Carlotta passed some happy years before the misfortunes of their life overtook them. That villa, as you may remember, is on the southern shore of Lake Como, at Cernobbio. The fact of there being two Villas Carlotta on the same lake is somewhat confusing, as will appear later. This one, whose beautiful hillside gardens reach from Cadenabbia to Tremezzo, our informing little local guidebook tells us, was long known as the Villa Clerici, later as the Villa Sommariva, and finally, failing of heirs in the Sommariva line, it was bought by the Princess Albert of Prussia, who named the villa after her own daughter Charlotte.

We crossed from Bellagio to Cadenabbia in one of the little boats with brown awnings and gay cushions, that add so much to the picturesqueness of this fairy lake, and made our way to the Villa Carlotta, passing through the richly wrought iron gates and up many steps to the terraced garden where a fountain throws its feathery spray into the air. We were all three in such high spirits as befit a party of pleasure seekers, journeying through a land of enchantment on a brilliantly beautiful day, for it must be admitted that in a downpour of rain Lake Como and its shores are like any other places in the rain. Miss Cassandra, who is gay even under dull skies and overhanging clouds, is gayer than usual to-day, having donned a hat in which she takes great pride, a hat of her own confection, which she is pleased to call a "Merry Widow," and an indecorously merry widow it is, so riotous is it in its garnishings of chiffon, tulle and feathers! Thus far Lydia has prevented her aunt from appearing, in public, in her cherished hat; but here, in the lake region, where the sun is scorching at midday, she rebels against Lydia's authority, says she has no idea of having her brains broiled out for the sake of keeping up a dignified and conventional appearance, and that this hat is just the thing for water-parties, and is not at all extreme compared with the peach-basket, the immense picture hat with its gigantic willow plumes, the grenadier, and other fashionable monstrosities in the way of headgear. Our jaunt to Cadenabbia appeared to be the psychological moment for the inauguration of the merry widow, and so I may say, truly and literally, that our Quaker lady is in fine feather to-day, her head crowned with nodding plumes, and not a qualm of conscience ament the far-away meeting and its overseers to cloud her pleasure.

[20]

[21]

Whether in consequence of the charms of the merry widow, or because of a certain distinctive individuality that belongs to her, Miss Cassandra attracted even more attention than usual this morning. While we were admiring the noble Thorwaldsen reliefs, that form the frieze of the entrance hall, and the exquisite marble of Cupid and Psyche by Canova, that is one of the glories of the Villa Carlotta, she, as is her sociable wont, fell into conversation with two English-speaking women of distinguished appearance. Before we left the château Miss Cassandra and one of her new friends, a stately, beautiful woman, were exchanging confidences and experiences with the freedom and intimacy of two schoolgirls. These ladies, whom Miss Cassandra is pleased to call the American countesses,—it having transpired in the course of conversation that they were of American birth, Pennsylvanians in fact, who had married titled Italians,—were courteous to us all, but they simply fell in love with our Quaker lady, whose "thee's" and "thou's" seemed to possess a magic charm for them.

[22]

Later on we were in some way separated from our new acquaintances amid the intricacies of these winding hillside paths, where one may walk miles, especially if the guide is clever and entertaining, and has an eye to future *lira* bestowed in some proportion to the time spent in exploring the beauties of the garden, and to the fatigue attending the tour. Italian dames of high

degree, even if so fortunate as to have been born in America, are not usually as good walkers as our untitled countrywomen. These ladies, being no exception to the rule, had probably yielded to the seductions of one of the rustic seats, placed so alluringly under the shade of fine trees, while we wandered on from path to path, stopping to admire an avenue of palms, a bamboo plantation, a blue Norway spruce, a huge India-rubber tree, a bed of homelike American ferns, or a clump of gorgeous rhododendrons, for the trees and flowers of all climes thrive in this favored spot. A party of four or five men and women had joined us, who talked to each other in German, occasionally bowing to us and smiling, after the polite fashion of foreigners, when the guide drew our attention to some rare flower or plant, or to a charming vista of lake and mountain, seen through a frame of interlacing branches and vines. An immense bed of cactus, on a sunny slope, attracted the regard and admiration of our companions. Miss Cassandra, who had seen the cactus in its glory on its native heath, recognized the strangers' admiration even in an unknown language, and by way of protest expatiated in her enthusiastic fashion upon the splendor of the cactus of Mexico, the plumes of her hat waving in unison with her eloquent words and gestures, while Lydia and I exchanged amused glances; but our merriment was destined to be but short lived. The strangers, who were standing near us, could not, of course, get the drift of what Miss Cassandra was saying, but one of the party, a man of strongly marked personality, evidently caught the word "Mexico," and pricked up his ears when she repeated it. In an instant, a heavy hand was laid upon her shoulder, while an angry voice hissed close to her ear:

[23]

"Mexican, Mexican! Pourquoi avez-vous tué l'Empereur Maximilian?"

Not comprehending this sudden arraignment, although she felt the heavy hand upon her shoulder, heard the angry voice at her side, and saw the unfriendly faces that surrounded her, our dear Miss Cassandra, by way of making matters worse, repeated the only word that she had caught:

[24]

"Mexican! Yes, the Mexican cactus is much finer than this!"

This innocent remark seemed to irritate the Austrian beyond all bounds. He repeated his question in French, still keeping his hand on the poor lady's shoulder and gazing into her frightened face.

"Why did you kill the Emperor Maximilian?" gesticulating with his free hand and drawing it across his throat. "Pourquoi lui avez-vous coupé la gorge?"

Lydia and I were too shocked and dismayed to speak, and in that instant of terror every sad and gruesome disaster, that had befallen unprotected travellers in a strange land, passed in rapid review before our minds. We turned to the guide for help, but he who had been so voluble and instructive in botanical lore, in several languages, now held his tongue in them all, appearing quite dull and uninterested, as if having no understanding or part in the affair! Suddenly my voice came to me, and I cried out in the best French that I could command: "The Emperor Maximilian did not have his throat cut! He died like a soldier! He was shot!"

[25]

"Well, then," exclaimed the Austrian, still gesticulating violently with one hand and shaking Miss Cassandra's shoulder with the other, "Why did you shoot him!"

Not having improved the situation by my remark, I turned again to the guide, when, to our immense relief, the American countesses, most opportunely, emerged from a shaded path. Miss Cassandra's pale, frightened face, the despair written upon Lydia's and mine, the stranger's excited tone and gestures, told half the story, while I eagerly explained:

"These people are Austrians. They think that Miss Cassandra is a Mexican, and they hate her on account of the assassination of the Emperor Maximilian. She is frightened to death, but she does not understand a word of what it is all about. Do explain!"

The stately lady, Countess Z—— by name, drew near, threw her arm protectingly around Miss Cassandra, and turning to the Austrian, with an air of command, ordered him to take his hand off her shoulder, explaining in German (German had never sounded so sweet to my ears) that this lady was an American citizen who had simply travelled in Mexico. The man listened and withdrew his hand, looking decidedly crestfallen when she added: "The American nation had nothing to do with the most unfortunate sacrifice of your young prince; in fact, the government at Washington made an effort to avert the disaster. His death was deplored in America, and you must remember that the whole affair was in a large measure instigated by the ambitious designs of Napoleon III, who broke faith with Maximilian, failed to send him the troops he had promised him, and cruelly abandoned him to his fate."

[26]

The Austrian bowed low and humbly apologized, adding something in an undertone about "Here in the grounds of the château where Maximilian and Carlotta had once lived, seemed no place to talk about Mexico."

"You are quite mistaken!" exclaimed the Countess. "This is not the Villa Carlotta that once belonged to Maximilian. That is quite at the other end of the lake. This château, long the property of the Sommariva family, passed in 1843 into the hands of the Princess Charlotte of Prussia, who named it after her daughter, another Carlotta, and I hope a happier one than the poor Empress Carlotta."

[27]

Again the Austrian bowed and apologized, this time to Miss Cassandra, who, from his softened voice and deferential manner, realized that whatever deadly peril had menaced her was happily

averted, and throwing her arms around the Countess Z——'s neck, she exclaimed, "My dear countrywoman! Thee has the face of an angel and, like an angel, thee has brought peace to our troubled minds. But for the life of me I cannot tell what I have done to make that German so angry!"

When Miss Cassandra had learned what was the head and front of her offending, she begged the Countess to explain that she was a woman of peace, that war was abhorrent to her and all of her persuasion, and finally she quite won the Austrian's heart by telling him that she had no admiration for that upstart Bonaparte family (Miss Cassandra is nothing if not aristocratic); that for her part she liked old-established dynasties, like the Hapsburgs, and had always considered the marriage of the daughter of a long line of kings with the self-made Emperor a great come down for Maria Louisa. Please remember that these are Miss Cassandra's sentiments, not mine, and how the dear Italian-American lady managed to translate them into good German and keep her face straight at the same time, I know not; but the Austrian evidently understood, as he became more profusely apologetic every moment, and well he might be for, as Miss Cassandra says, "No amount of bowing and scraping and apologizing could make up for the fright he had given us." But she is the most forgiving of mortals, as you know, and an *entente cordiale* having been established, through the mediation of our two American-Italian *diplomates*, the two recent foes were soon exchanging courtesies and scaling mountain paths together, hand in hand, smiling, gesticulating, quite *en rapport*, without a syllable of language between them, Miss Cassandra's nodding plumes seeming to accentuate her expressions of peace and good will. While our Quaker lady was stepping off gaily, her late tormentor now her willing captive, Lydia, usually so quiet and self-contained, suddenly collapsed upon the nearest seat and went off in a violent attack of hysterics. One of the Austrian women rushed off for a glass of water, while the countesses ministered to her, in true story-book fashion, having with them a bottle of sal volatile which seems to be an important part of the equipment of every well-appointed foreign lady. And what do you think that heartless Lydia said between her laughter and her sobs? "If only one of us had had a kodak with us, to take a snapshot of Aunt Cassie with the angry Austrian berating her! Nobody will ever believe the story when we get back to America, and then it would lose half its point without the merry widow!"

Of course we had tales of adventure to relate when reunited with our family this evening. Walter warmly, and I believe with sincerity, expressed his regret that he had not been with us, which regret was probably all the more heartfelt because he had failed to catch the fifteen pound trout or, indeed, I may add in all truthfulness, trout of any size and weight.

II

AN ISLAND CHÂTEAU

PENSION BEAU-SÉJOUR, STRESA, Wednesday, August 17th.

WE REACHED this enchanting spot by a most circuitous and varied route, which I outline for you, as you may be coming this way some time. From Bellagio we crossed over to Menaggio, on Monday after *déjeuner*, where we took an electric tram which brought us to Porlezza in less than an hour. Here we found a boat awaiting us in which we enjoyed a two hours' sail on beautiful Lake Lugano. At Lugano, which we reached before six o'clock, we were in Switzerland, as we learned when the customs officers visited our luggage, with no benefit to themselves and little disturbance to us, and again when we found our beds at the hotel supplied with feather counterpanes—and I may venture to say it with all my love for Italy—by a scrupulous and shining cleanliness that belongs more to the thrifty Swiss than to the amiable and less energetic Italians. Lugano is full of quaint corners, interesting narrow streets, market wagons, drawn by oxen, and stalls and carts on all sides, filled with curios and native wares that would tempt the most blasé shopper. Yesterday, being a market day when the peasants come in from the surrounding country in their ox carts, and with their great panniers, or *hottes*, on their backs, we found many delightful bits for our kodaks. The children were especially interested in a woman who carried a pretty, little young kid in her pannier, instead of the fruits and vegetables that are usually to be seen in these great baskets, and a heavy load it must have been! But these Swiss and Italian women are burden-bearers from early childhood.

We needed a week instead of a day and night at Lugano, and let me advise you and Allan not to travel on schedule time when you make your tour through these lakes, as there are so many delightful side trips to be made. Some pleasant Americans, whom we met at the hotel in Lugano, told us that a day or two spent on the summit of Monte Generoso is well worth while, as the view is one of the finest in Europe, embracing as it does the chain of the Alps, the Italian lakes and the vast plains of Lombardy as far as the Apennines. In addition to all this there are fine woods and pasture lands upon this mountain top, and a hotel in which one may sojourn in comfort, if comfort is to be considered when such heavenly views are to be feasted upon.

We quitted Lugano after luncheon yesterday, having had time for only a hurried visit to the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli and the famous Luini frescoes. Another charming trip on the lovely Lago di Lugano brought us to Ponte Tresa, from whence we journeyed by a steam tram through an enchanting wild wood country, full of little hills and rushing streamlets, to Luino. Do

you wonder that Lisa calls this a fairy journey? The change from car to boat and boat to car takes away all the weariness of travel, and the varied beauties of lake and shore make this an ideal trip, especially as we found ourselves transferred to another boat at Luino which brought us straight to fairyland, here at Stresa. The lights upon the many boats on the lake and in the hotels and villas along the shore gave the little town a gala appearance, as if it were celebrating our arrival, as Miss Cassandra suggested. Later on it became humiliatingly evident that we had not been expected, our boat was late, the cabs had all gone away, and it was with difficulty that we secured enough conveyances for our party.

[33]

We drove many miles, so it seemed to us, by winding roads up a steep hillside to this pension, where we finally found light, warmth, welcome and good beds, of which last we were sorely in need. By morning light the pension proves itself to be well named Beau-Séjour, as it is delightfully situated on a hill above the lake, with a garden, which slopes down to the town, full of oleanders and orange and lemon trees. When I opened the *jalousies* at my window, what should I see but dear, snow-crested Monte Rosa and the rest of the Alpine chain, seeming quite near in this crystal atmosphere, a perfect background for the picturesque Borromean Islands, fairy islets in a silver lake!

"I really think that Maggiore is more beautiful than Como," I said, reluctantly, for I have heretofore contended that Lake Como at Bellagio is the most beautiful place on the face of the earth.

"Take what goods the gods provide you, Zephine, and don't use up the gray matter of your brain trying to find out which of these lakes you like best," said Walter in his most judicial tone.

[34]

"Yes, but one really cannot help comparing these two lakes, and if we give the preference to Maggiore we have Mr. Ruskin on our side, who considers the scenery of Lake Maggiore to be the most beautiful and enchanting of all lake scenery, so we read in a pleasant little book of Richard Bagot's which we found on the drawing-room table, yet the author says that for himself he has no hesitation in giving his vote in favor of the Larian Lake for beauty of scenery and richness of historic interest."

Despite his philosophy I truly think that the man of the party has left his heart at Bellagio, as I heard him telling a brother angler, whom he met at the boat landing, how fine he found the fishing there and that he doubted the sport being as good at Stresa—at least for amateur fishermen. The associations here are less inspiring than those of Como, the presiding genius of Stresa being San Carlo Borromeo, whose thirst for the blood of heretics gained for him the title of Saint. A great bronze statue at Arona now proclaims his zeal for the Church. Miss Cassandra, who has an optimistic faith in a spark of the divine in the most world-hardened saint or sinner, reminds me of Carlo Borromeo's heroic devotion to the sufferers from famine and the plague at Milan in 1570 and 1576. So, with a somewhat gentler feeling in our hearts toward "the Saint," we turned our faces toward Isola Bella and its great chateau, built by a later and more worldly-minded member of the Borromean family, Count Vitaliano Borromeo. This chateau, which from the lake side appears like a stronghold of ancient times, is fitly named the Castello, and after admiring its substantial stone terrace and great iron gates we were prepared for something more imposing than what we found within. The large rooms, with their modern furniture and paintings, some of them poor copies from the old masters, were strangely out of harmony with the ancient exterior of the Castello; but they were shown to us with great pride by the custodian, who must have found us singularly unappreciative and lacking in enthusiasm, even when he displayed a room in which the great Napoleon had once slept. When Napoleon was here, and why, and whether he was here at all, does not concern any of us especially, except Lydia, who having a turn for history is always determined to find out how, why, when, and where. I am glad that she does care, as her example is edifying to us all, especially so to Christine and Lisa, who follow her about and ask questions to their hearts' content, which she is never tired of answering. The garden, we revelled in, and found it hard to believe that the terrace, which rises to a height of one hundred feet, was once a barren rock until Count Borromeo covered it with a luxuriant growth of orange, olive, and lemon trees, cedars, oleanders, roses, camellias, and every tree and plant that you can think of. It is really a bewilderingly lovely garden, and we wandered through its paths joyously until we came suddenly upon some artificial grottos at one end overlooking the lake. These remarkable creations are so utterly tasteless, with masses of bristling shellwork and crude, ungainly statues, that we wondered how anything so inartistic could find a home upon Italian soil. The children, however, found delight in the hideous grottos, were sure that they had been robbers' dens, and fancied they heard the groans of prisoners issuing from their cavernous openings. They were so fascinated, as children always are by the mysterious and unknown, that nothing but the pangs of hunger and promises of luncheon on a terrace garden overlooking the lake reconciled them to leaving the garden and the grottos.

[35]

[36]

[37]



A. Gebr. Wehrli, Photo.

ISOLA BELLA, LAKE MAGGIORE

We tried to forget the monstrosities of the château garden and to remember only the beauty and the rich luxuriance of its trees and the many flowering vines that clambered all over the shellwork terraces, as if striving to conceal their rococo ugliness. Nor is it difficult to forget unsightly objects here, when we have only to raise our eyes to behold a scene of surpassing beauty,—Isola Madre and Isola dei Pescatori look but a stone's throw from us across the shining water, and beyond a girdle of snow mountains seems to encircle the lake, our beloved Monte Rosa, white as a swan's breast, dominating them all. Despite the distracting beauty of the outlook from our café, on the terrace of a very indifferent looking hostel, we enjoyed our luncheon of Italian dishes, crowned by an *omelette aux confitures* of such superlative excellence that even my inveterate American was ready to acknowledge that it was the best omelet he had ever eaten anywhere.

[38]

We shall need a whole morning for Isola Madre, whose gardens are said to be even more beautiful than those of Isola Bella. The sporting tastes of the man of the party naturally draw him toward the allurements of Isola dei Pescatori, but thither we shall decline to accompany him, for picturesque as it appears from the shore, it is, on a more intimate acquaintance, said to rival in unsavoriness the far-famed odors of the city of Cologne.

ORTA, August 19th.

From Stresa we made a short *détour*, in order to have a day and night here on the Lago d'Orta, which although comparatively near Lake Maggiore is not often included in the itinerary of the fast traveling tourist, who usually hurries to Arona, Stresa, and Pallanza, which, beautiful as they are, lack something of the restful charm of this miniature lake set in the midst of a circle of well-wooded hills. After Como and Maggiore, which are like inland seas, the Lago d'Orta with its pretty island of San Giulio, all so small that one may see the whole picture at a glance, is indescribably lovely. The waters here are said to be of a deeper blue than anywhere else in Italy, probably because the lake is fed from springs which issue from its rocky bed. The whole town of Orta, as well as the lake, is a blaze of color with the gay awnings of its many loggie, its masses of scarlet and pink geraniums, cactus and oleanders, its fruit stalls laden with melons, peaches and tomatoes, or poma d'oro, and its blue sky over all. We cannot imagine Orta under any but a clear sky, as our day here has been one of dazzling brilliancy. But it was not solely for its beauty that the man of the party brought us to Orta, as I discovered when I looked over a little local guidebook last night, and learned that the Lago d'Orta is famous for its fish, and abounds in trout of large size, pike, perch, and the *agoni*, a delicate little fish for which Lake Como is also noted. After glancing over this illuminating guidebook, and recalling the fact that the catch at Stresa had been poor the day before, we were not surprised to hear arrangements being made for an early start this morning. After reading aloud some extracts from the guidebook, Miss Cassandra said, quite seriously:

[39]

"For ways that are dark and tricks that are vain commend me to a fisherman or hunter. With all that Izaak Walton was pleased to say about fishing being 'a calm, quiet, innocent recreation,' I have known the best of men, even as good men as Walter, descend to duplicity and even to prevarication when it came to a question of fish or game. Not that I regret for a moment Walter's bringing us here. Orta is so beautiful that the end justifies the means; but he might have told us why we were coming."

[40]

Despite the innate and total depravity of fisher folk, I yielded to Walter's and the children's persuasions and joined the fishing party this morning, and a delightful day I had, seated in the stern of the boat under one of the little canopies that you see in all the pictures of this region. Here, well screened from the sun, with books and work, and the lovely lake and shore to gaze

upon, the hours passed so quickly that I was surprised when we were told that it was time to land on the Island of San Giulio for our noon *déjeuner*. I was in the midst of relating the interesting experiences of the missionary priest Julius, who is said to have founded a church here as early as 390, when we were nearing the lovely little island named for him. The children were naturally delighted with the priest's fertility of resource, which, like that of the mother in their favorite "Swiss Family Robinson," was equal to every occasion.

[41]

Having resolved to found a sanctuary upon the island whose solitary beauty, as it rested upon the shining bosom of the lake, appealed to him as it does to us to-day, and finding no boatmen upon the shore willing to convey him thither, on account of the hideous monsters, dragons, and serpents of huge size then inhabiting the place, good Julius, nothing daunted by so trifling an inconvenience as the lack of a boat, used his long cloak as a sail, and his staff as a rudder, and thus equipped allowed himself to be blown across to the island.

"Of course, we know that there is nothing new under the sun, but who would have thought of finding traces of the first aeroplane here, in this quiet spot, far from the haunts of men?"

This from the man of the party, while Lisa exclaimed impatiently: "Now, don't stop the story! What did the good priest do when he landed on the island? Did he kill the beasts with his big stick?"

"We never heard of the 'big stick' flourishing among these lakes," said Walter, as he wound up his line, and I explained to the children that the hideous monsters fled before the beautiful face of the messenger of peace and swam across the water to the mainland. A delightful confirmation of the story, the children found in the church, where they were shown a huge bone that belonged to one of these self-same monsters.

[42]

"Very like a whale," said Walter, while we were further edified by a sight of the silver and crystal shrine under which repose the bones of St. Julius removed from the little old church to this one of the seventh century, which is a perfect miniature basilica. This was explained to us by a priest, in Italianized French of the most mongrel description, translated by me and listened to by Christine and Lisa with eager faces and wide-open eyes.

When we related our experiences to Miss Cassandra, who had in our absence visited the twenty chapels on the mainland erected in honor of St. Francis of Assisi, she shook her head, knowingly, and said, "Lydia and I have heard a great many wonderful tales, too, but it is worth everything to be a child and ready to swallow anything from a gumdrop to a whale."

[43]

The little girls take so much more interest in churches and shrines than we had expected that we are half regretting our plan to leave them in a French school in Lausanne while we make our tour among the *Châteaux* of the Loire. I can hear you say, "Why not take them to Tours, for the French there?" We know that the French of Tours is exquisite, but they have had quite as much travel as is good for them, and then they have little friends at the school in Lausanne whom they wish to join. "And after all," as Miss Cassandra says, "American French can always be spotted, no matter how good it may be." We were very much amused over the criticism of a little American boy who had been educated in Italy. He said of an English lady's correct and even idiomatic Italian, "Yes, it's all right; but she doesn't speak in the right tune." We have so many tunes in our own language that we are less particular than the French and Italians, who treat theirs with the greatest respect.

To-morrow we leave this charming spot with great reluctance. We shall doubtless find architectural beauty in Touraine, but we shall miss the glorious mountain and lake views and these indescribable atmospheric effects that we delight in. But, as the man of the party says, with masculine directness, "Having started out to see the *Châteaux* of the Loire, had we not better push on to Touraine?"

[44]

You cannot appreciate the full magnanimity of this advice without realizing that Orta is a place above all others to please a man's fancy, and that the fishing is exceptionally good. Miss Cassandra has taken back her caustic expressions with regard to the devious ways of fisher folk, or at least of this especial fisherman, and so, in good humor with one another and with the world in general, we set forth for Lausanne, by Domodossola and the Simplon. We shall have a Sunday in Lausanne to drink in Calvinism near its source; Monday we arrange about the children's school, and set forth for Touraine on Tuesday, stopping in Geneva for a day and night.

III

[45]

AN AFTERNOON AT COPPET

GENEVA, August 24th.

LIKE Hawthorne, our first feeling upon returning to Switzerland, after our sojourn in Italy, was of a certain chill and austerity in the atmosphere, a lack of heartiness, in sharp contrast to the rich feast of beauty, the warm color and compelling charm of Italian towns. This impression was accentuated by the fact that it rained yesterday at Lausanne and that we reached Geneva in the

rain. We had one clear day, however, at Lausanne, upon which we made a pilgrimage to Chillon, to the great delight of the *Kinder*. Miss Cassandra insisted that we should take the children to see this most romantic and beautiful spot, because, she says, it is out of fashion nowadays, like Niagara Falls at home, and that it is a part of a liberal education to see the Castle of Chillon and read Byron's poem on the spot, all of which we did. It is needless to tell you that Christine and Lisa considered this day on the lake and in and about Chillon the most interesting educational experience of their lives. We were glad to leave them at the pension in Lausanne with a memory so pleasant as this, and for ourselves we carry away with us a picture of the grim castle reaching out into the blue lake and beyond that almost unrivalled line of Alpine peaks, white and shining in the sun. After this there came a day of rain, in which we set forth for Geneva.

[46]

"We have not seen him for three days until to-day," said the *garçon* who waited on us at the terrace café of the hotel this morning, with a fond glance toward the snowy crest of Mont Blanc rising above enveloping clouds. It would not have occurred to us to call this exquisite pearl and rose peak *him*, as did the *garçon*, who was proud of his English, and much surer of his genders than we ever hope to be in his language, or any other save our own; but we were ready to echo his lament after a day of clouds and rain. To be in these picturesque old towns upon the shores of the Lake of Geneva, and not to see Mont Blanc by sunlight, moonlight, and starlight is a grievance not lightly to be borne; but when a glory of sunshine dispelled the clouds and Mont Blanc threw its misty veil to the winds and stood forth beautiful as a bride, in shining white touched with palest pink, we could only, like the woman of the Scriptures, forget our sorrows for joy that such a day was born to the world.

[47]

Days like this are rare in the Swiss autumn, and with jealous care we planned its hours, carefully balancing the claims of Vevey, Yvoire, picturesque as an Italian hillside town, Ferney, and Coppet. This last drew us irresistibly by its associations with Madame de Staël and her brilliant entourage, and we decided that this day of days should be dedicated to a tour along the Côte Suisse of the lake, stopping at Nyon for a glance at its sixteenth century château and returning in time to spend a long afternoon at Coppet. The only drawback to this delightful plan was that this is Wednesday, and according to the friendly little guidebook that informs sojourners in Geneva how to make the best of their days, Thursday is the day that the Château de Staël is open to visitors. Learning, however, that the d'Haussonvilles were not at present in residence, we concluded to take our courage, and some silver, in our hands, trusting to its seductive influence upon the caretaker. After a short stroll through the quaint old town of Coppet we ascended the steep hill that leads to the Château de Staël. As we drew near the entrance gate, Walter, manlike, retired to the rear of the procession, saying that he would leave all preliminaries to the womenfolk, as they always knew what to say and generally managed to get what they wanted.

[48]

Fortune favored us. We noticed several persons were grouped together in the courtyard, and pushing open the gate, which was not locked, Lydia, who if gentle of mien is bold of heart, inquired in her most charmingly hesitating manner and in her Sunday best French whether we should be permitted to enter. Upon this a man separated himself from the group and approaching us asked if we very much wished to see the château, for if we did he was about to conduct some friends through the premises and would be pleased to include us in the party.

"When the French wish to be polite how gracefully they accord a favor!" exclaimed Lydia, turning to Walter, the joy of conquest shining in her blue eyes.

"Yes, and I kept out of it for fear of spoiling sport. Any caretaker who could withstand the combined charms of you three must be valiant indeed! I noticed that Zéphine put Miss Cassandra in the forefront of the battle; she is always a winner even if she isn't up to the language, and you did the talking. Zéphine certainly knows how to marshal her forces!"

[49]

We all laughed heartily over Walter's effort to make a virtue of his own masterly inactivity, and Miss Cassandra asked him if he had ever applied for a diplomatic mission, as we gaily entered the spacious courtyard.

We noticed, as we passed on toward the château, the old tower of the archives, which doubtless contains human documents as interesting as those published by Count Othenin d'Haussonville about his pretty great-grandmother when she was *jeune fille très coquette*, with numerous lovers at her feet. Behind the close-barred door of the tower the love letters of Edward Gibbon to the village belle were preserved, among them that cold and cruel epistle in which for prudential reasons he renounced the love of Mademoiselle Curchod, whom he would "always remember as the most worthy, the most charming of her sex."

Count d'Haussonville, who now owns Coppet, our guide informed us, is not the grandson of Madame de Staël, as Lydia and I had thought, but her great-grandson. Albertine de Staël married Victor, Duc de Broglie, and their daughter became the wife of Count Othenin d'Haussonville, to whom we are indebted for the story of the early love affair of his ancestress with the historian of the Roman Empire. The sympathies of the reader of this touching pastoral are naturally with the pretty Swiss girl, who seems to have been sincerely attached to her recreant lover, although she had sufficient pride to conceal her emotions. If Edward Gibbon found excuse for himself in the reported tranquillity and gayety of Mademoiselle Curchod, we, for our part, are glad that she did not wear her heart upon her sleeve, there being other worlds to conquer. Indeed, even then, several suitors were at Mademoiselle Curchod's feet, among them a young parson,—her father being a pastor, young parsons were her legitimate prey,—and still greater triumphs were reserved for her in the gay world of Paris which she was soon to enter. As *dame de compagnie*, Mademoiselle Curchod journeyed with Madame Vermeux to the French capital, and carried off

[50]

[51]

one of her lovers, M. Necker, under her very eyes. The popular tradition is that Madame Vermenoux was well tired of M. Necker and of Mademoiselle Curchod also, and so cheerfully gave them both her blessing, remarking with malice as well as wit: "They will bore each other so much that they will be provided with an occupation."

It soon transpired that M. and Mme. Necker, far from boring each other, were quite unfashionably happy in their married life, some part of which was passed at Coppet, which M. Necker bought at the time of his dismissal from office.

An hour of triumph came to Madame Necker later when Edward Gibbon visited her in her husband's home in Paris. After being hospitably invited to supper by M. Necker, the historian related that the husband composedly went off to bed, leaving him *tête-à-tête* with his wife, adding, "That is to treat an old lover as a person of little consequence."

The love affairs of the Swiss pastor's daughter, her disappointments, her triumphs, and her facility for turning from lost Edens to pastures new, would be of little interest to-day did they not reveal certain common characteristics possessed by the lively blue-stocking, Susanne Curchod, and her passionate, intense daughter, Anne Germaine de Staël. The well-conducted Madame Necker, whose fair name was touched by no breath of scandal, possessed all her life a craving for love, devotion, and admiration, which were accorded to her in full measure. With the mother, passion was restrained by fine delicacy and reserve, and her heart was satisfied by a congenial marriage, while the impetuous and ill-regulated nature of Germaine was thrown back upon itself by an early and singularly ill-assorted union.

[52]

With many thoughts of the two interesting women who once lived in the château we passed through the doorway into the hall, on whose right-hand side is a colossal statue of Louis Seize, while on the left are portraits of several generations of d'Haussonvilles. On the stairway are numerous genealogical charts and family trees of the Neckers, doubtless reaching back to Attila, if not to Adam, for strange as it may seem the great Swiss financier was as much addicted to vain genealogies and heraldic quarterings as a twentieth century American.

It was in the long library, with its many windows opening out upon a sunny terrace, that we came upon traces of the presiding genius of the château. Here are Madame de Staël's own books, the cases unchanged, we were assured, except by the addition of new publications from time to time. On a table, among the most treasured possessions of the devoted daughter, is the strong box of M. Necker in which he kept his accounts with the French Government when he sought to stem the tide of financial disaster that was bearing the monarchy to its doom.

[53]

From this room instinct with the atmosphere of culture, a fit setting for the profoundly intellectual woman who inhabited it, we stepped through one of the long windows to the terrace which commands a glorious view. In the distance, yet not seeming very far away in this clear air, is that well-known group of which Mont Blanc is the central peak, with the Dent du Géant and the Aiguilles du Glacier and D'Argentière standing guard over its crystalline purity. We had seen Mont Blanc and its attendant mountains from the heights of Mont Revard, and knew its majestic beauty as seen from Chamounix; but we all agreed that nothing could be lovelier than these white peaks rising above the sapphire lake, with the blue cloud-flecked sky over all. Yet, with this perfect picture spread before her, Madame de Staël longed for the very gutters of Paris, its sights and sounds, which were inseparably associated in her mind with the joyous chatter of the salon to which she had been introduced at an age when most children are in the nursery. Seated upon a high chair in her mother's salon, little Anne Germaine Necker listened eagerly to the discourses of the great men of her day. Listening was not destined to be her *rôle* in later years; but to pace up and down the long drawing room at Coppet, with the invariable green branch in her beautiful hands, uttering words that charmed such guests as Schlegel, Sismondi, Bonstetten of Geneva and Chateaubriand. It was Chateaubriand who said that the two magical charms of Coppet were the conversation of Madame de Staël and the beauty of Madame Récamier.

[54]

Madame de Staël's library opens into her bedroom, and beyond this is the charming little apartment dedicated to Madame Récamier. This small, dainty room, with hand-made paper upon its walls of delicate green decorated with flowers and birds, seemed a fit setting for the flower-like beauty who occupied it, a lily that preserved its purity amid the almost incredible corruption of the social life of the period.

[55]

Madame de Staël's own bedroom is filled with pictures, and souvenirs of the *vie intime* of one who with all her faults was dowered with a limitless affection for her family and friends. Here is a marble bust of the beautiful daughter Albertine in her girlhood, and on the right of Madame de Staël's bed is a portrait of her mother, in water color painted during her last illness, the fine, delicate old face framed in by a lace cap. On the margin of this picture is written, "Elle m'aimera toujours." Under this lovely water color is the same picture reproduced in black and white, beneath which some crude hand has written in English the trite phrase, "Not lost, but gone before."

In a glass case are Madame de Staël's India shawls, which, like Josephine de Beauharnais and other women of the period, she seems to have possessed the art of wearing with grace and distinction. One of these shawls appears in the familiar portrait by David, which is in a small library or living room *au premier*; this we reached by climbing many stairs. It is quite evident that David was not in sympathy with his sitter, as in this painting he has softened no line of the heavy featured face, and illumined with no light of intellect a countenance that in conversation was so transformed that Madame de Staël's listeners forgot for the moment that she was not beautiful.

[56]

Quite near the portrait of the exile of Coppet, as she was pleased to call herself, is one of Baron de Staël Holstein, in court costume, finished, elegant, handsome perhaps, but quite insignificant. It is surely one of the ironies of fate that the Baron de Staël is only remembered today as the husband of a woman whom he seems to have looked upon as his social inferior. In this living room is a large portrait of M. Necker, indeed, no room is without a portrait or bust of the idolized father, and here, looking strangely modern among faces of the First Empire, is a charming group of the four daughters of the Count d'Haussonville, the present owner of Coppet. Several portraits and busts there are, in the drawing room, of beautiful Albertine de Staël, wife of Victor, Duc de Broglie, whom Madame de Staël says that she loved for his tenderness and sympathy.

[57]

In this spacious, homelike drawing room, furnished in the style of the First Empire, and yet not too fine for daily use, we could imagine Madame de Staël surrounded by her brilliant circle of friends, many of whom had been, like herself, banished from the Paris that they loved. She is described by Madame Vigée Lebrun, and other guests, as walking up and down the long salon, conversing incessantly, or sitting at one of the tables writing notes and interjecting profound or brilliant thoughts into the conversation. "Her words," added Madame Lebrun, "have an ardor quite peculiar to her. It is impossible to interrupt her. At these times she produces on one the effect of an improvisatrice."

Ohlenschlager described the *châtelaine* of Coppet as "living in an enchanted castle, a queen or a fairy," albeit of rather substantial proportions, it must be admitted, "her wand being the little green branch that her servant placed each day by her plate at table." The time of the Danish poet's visit was that golden period in the life of the château when it was the *rendezvous* of many of the savants of Germany and Geneva. Into the charmed circle, at this time, entered Madame Krüdener, that strangely puzzling combination of priestess and coquette, whose Greuze face and mystic revelations touched the heart of an Emperor. Standing in the long salon, which contains many portraits and souvenirs of the habitués of Coppet, we realized something of the life of those brilliant days, when the walls echoed to what Bonstettin called "prodigious outbursts of wit and learning," and upon whose boards classic dramas and original plays were acted, often very badly, by the learned guests. Rosalie de Constant wrote that she trembled for her cousin Benjamin's success in *Mahomet*, which *rôle* he accepted with confidence, while beneath the play at life and love the great tragedy of a passionate human soul is played on to the end, for this is the period of storm and stress, of alternate reproaches and caresses, from which Benjamin Constant escaped finally to the side of his less exacting Charlotte.

[58]

After spending some weeks in the company of a hostess who could converse half the day and most of the night with no sign of fatigue, it is not strange that Benjamin Constant sometimes found himself wearied by the mental activity of Coppet, where "more intellect was dispensed in one day than in one year in many lands," or that Bonstettin said that after a visit to the château, "One appreciated the conversation of insipid people who made no demand upon one's intellect." And brilliant as was that of the hostess, her guests doubtless hailed as a relief from mental strain occasional days when she became so much absorbed in her writing that she ceased for a while to converse, and they were free to wander at will through the beautiful park, or to gather around the Récamier sofa, still to be seen in one corner of the salon, where the lovely Juliette held her court.

[59]

Madame Récamier, like Benjamin Constant, Sismondi, and many other distinguished persons who had incurred the displeasure of Napoleon, found what seems to us a gilded exile at Coppet in the home of the Emperor's arch-enemy. The close friendship of Germaine de Staël and Juliette Récamier, even cemented as it was by the common bond of misfortune, is difficult to understand. That Madame de Staël kept by her side for years a woman whose remarkable beauty and sympathetic charm brought out in strong contrast her own personal defects, presupposes a generosity of spirit for which few persons give this supremely egotistical woman credit. She always spoke of Madame Récamier in rapturous terms, and her "belle Juliette" and her "dear angel" seems to have been free under the eyes of her hostess to capture such noble and learned lovers as Mathieu de Montmorency, Prince Augustus of Prussia, Ampère, and Chateaubriand. It was only when that ill-named Benjamin Constant allowed his unstable affections to wander from the dahlia to the lily that Germaine de Staël's anger was aroused against her friend. For a short period Madame Récamier ceased to be the "belle Juliette" and the "dear angel" of the mistress of Coppet until, with a truly angelic sweetness of temper and infinite tact, she made Germaine understand that she had no desire to carry off her recreant lover and so the friendship continued to the end.

[60]

If it is difficult to understand the long friendship of Madame de Staël and Juliette Récamier, it is quite impossible to follow with any comprehension or sympathy the various loves of Germaine. One can perhaps understand that after Benjamin Constant had escaped from her stormy endearments she could turn for solace to young Albert Rocca, and yet why did she still cling to Benjamin's outworn affection, and then, with naïve inconsistency, declare that he had not been the supreme object of her devotion, but that Narbonne, Talleyrand and Mathieu de Montmorency were the three men whom she had most deeply loved?

[61]

Lydia said something of this, as we passed through the gate of the château, upon which an elderly woman, who had been one of the guide's party, turned to us and said abruptly, "Artistic temperament! Men have been allowed a monopoly of all the advantages belonging to the artistic temperament for so many years that it seems only fair to cover over the delinquencies of women of such unquestioned genius as Germaine de Staël and George Sand with the same mantle of

charity."

These words of truth and soberness were spoken in a tone of authority, almost of finality, and yet in the stranger's eyes there shone so kindly and genial a light that far from being repelled by them, we found ourselves discussing with her the loves of poets and philosophers as we descended the steep hill that leads from the château to the garden café at its foot. Here, led on by the pleasant comradeship induced by travel, we continued our discussion over cups of tea and buns, while Mont Blanc glowed to rose in the sunset light, and we wondered again how Madame de Staël could ever have looked upon the shores of this beautiful lake as a "terrible country," even if it was for her a "land of exile."

[62]

You will think that we have had enough pleasure and interest for one afternoon, but you must remember that this is our one day in Geneva, and although we have all been here before, we have never seen Ferney. Walter discovered, in looking over the local guidebook, that this is the day for Ferney, and that it is open until six o'clock. He found that we had an hour after reaching the boat landing. Walter secured an automobile and we set forth for the home of Voltaire, which is really very near Geneva.

It was interesting to see the old philosopher's rooms and the gardens, from which there is an extended view of the lake and mountains; but most impressive after all is the little church which he built in his old age, with the inscription on one end:

DEO EREXIT VOLTAIRE MDCCLXI

Walter has suddenly conceived the idea that there are some valuable coins well worth a visit in the Ariana Museum which we passed on the way to Ferney, so we have decided to gain a half day here by taking an afternoon train to Dijon and stopping there over night. When you next hear from me it will be from Mary Stuart's pleasant land of France and probably from the Paris beloved of Germaine de Staël. Until then, *au revoir, ma belle*.

[63]

IV

[64]

EN ROUTE FOR TOURAINE

HÔTEL DE LA CLÔCHE, DIJON, August 26th.

WE STOPPED at this interesting old town last night in order to break the long journey from Geneva to Paris. Dijon, which has only been to us a station to stop in long enough to change trains and to look upon longingly from the car windows, proves upon closer acquaintance to be a town of great interest. After a morning spent among its churches and ancient houses and in its museum, we were quite ready to echo the sentiments of an English lady whom we met at the *table d'hôte*, who spends weeks here instead of days, and wonders why travellers pass Dijon by when it is so much more worth while than many of the places they are going to. So much is left of the ancient churches and buildings to remind one of the romantic and heroic history of Dijon, that it seems eminently fitting that we should make this stop-over, a visit to the capital city of Burgundy being a suitable prelude to a sojourn among the châteaux of the French kings, who had their own troubles with these powerful lords of the soil. The present Hôtel de Ville was once the palace of the Dukes of Burgundy. Little is now left of the original building with the exception of the ancient kitchens, and these, with their half-dozen great ventilating shafts, give one the impression that those doughty old warriors had sensitive olfactories.

[65]

In the Cathedral of Saint Bénigne, who seems to be the patron saint of Dijon, are the remains of the great Dukes of Burgundy, although their magnificent tombs are in the museum. The Cathedral of Saint Bénigne has a lovely apse and other architectural charms; but Notre Dame captivated us utterly, so wonderful are its gargoyles representing man and beast with equal impartiality, their heads and shoulders emerging from a rich luxuriant foliage, the whole indescribably beautiful and grotesque at the same time. It is not strange that the carved figure of a plump and well-fed Holy Father, with his book in one hand and food in the other, sitting beside an empty-handed and mild-faced sheep, should have called forth such lines as the following from some local poet, evidently intended for the remarks of the sheep:

[66]

"LES ESPRITS-FORTS.

Volontiers les humains s'apellent fortes-têtes
Qui la plupart du temps ne sont que bonnes bêtes
Et qui juste en raison de leurs étroits esprits
De leurs maigres pensers sont beaucoup trop épris."

Other decorators and sculptors of these ancient buildings have, like Fra Lippo Lippi, worked their own quaint conceits and humorous fancies into their canvases and marbles, and we to-day are filled with wonder at their cleverness, as well as over the excellence of their art, so exquisite is the carving of leaf and branch and vine. One would need to come often to the Galerie des Tours of Notre Dame to fully enjoy it, and other beauties of this church, whose tower is crowned by a curious clock with moving figures, called Jacquemart, after the Flemish mechanic Jacques

Marc who designed it. The Jacquemart, with his pipe in his mouth, stolidly strikes the hours, undisturbed by the cold of winter or the heat of summer, as some Burgundian poet of the sixteenth century has set forth in a quaint rhyme.

[67]

Near the cathedral is a charmingly picturesque building called La Tour de Bar, where René d'Anjou, Duke of Bar and Lorraine, was imprisoned with his children. In the museum, which possesses many treasures in painting and sculpture, we saw the magnificently carved tombs of Philippe le Hardi and Jean Sans-Peur. Here, with angels at their heads and lions couchant at their feet, the effigies of these Dukes of Valois rest, surrounded by a wealth of sculpture and decoration almost unequalled. It would be well worth stopping over night at Dijon if only to see the magnificent tombs of these bold and unscrupulous old warriors and politicians. Jean Sans-Peur planned and accomplished the assassination of Louis d'Orléans and was himself overtaken by the assassin a few years later. The tomb of the boldest and bravest of them all, Charles le Téméraire, you may remember, we saw at Bruges. The lion at the feet of the last Duke of Burgundy, with head upraised, seems to be guarding the repose of his royal master, who in his life found that neither statecraft nor armies could avail against the machinations of his arch-enemy, Louis XI.

[68]

Beautiful and impressive as are these tombs, the true glory of Dijon is that the great Bossuet was born here and St. Bernard so near, at Fontaine, that Dijon may claim him for her own; and Rameau, the celebrated composer; Rude, whose sculptures adorn the Arc de l'Etoile in Paris; Jouffroy, and a host of other celebrities, as we read in the names of the streets, parks, and boulevards, for Dijon, like so many French cities and towns, writes her history, art, literature, and science on her street corners and public squares, thus keeping the names of her great people before her children.

When we were studying routes in Geneva yesterday it seemed quite possible to go to Tours by Bourges and Saincaize, and thus secure a day in Bourges for the cathedral of Saint Etienne, which is said to be one of the most glorious in France, and not less interesting to see the house of the famous merchant-prince who supplied the depleted coffers of Charles VII, Jacques Cœur, the valiant heart to whom nothing was impossible, as his motto sets forth. At the tourist office we were told that such a crosscut to Tours was quite out of the question, impossible, and that the only route to the château country was via Paris. It seemed to us a quite useless waste of time and strength to go northward to Paris and then down again to Tours, which is south and a little west, but having no knowledge on the subject and no Bradshaw with us to prove our point, we accepted the ultimatum, although Miss Cassandra relieved her feelings by saying that she did not believe a word of it, and that tourist's agents were a stiff-necked and untoward generation, and that she for her part felt sure that we could cut across the country to Saincaize and Bourges. However, when we hear the questions that are asked these long-suffering agents at the tourist offices by people who do not seem to understand explanations in any language, even their own, we wonder that they have any good nature left, whatever their birthright of amiability may have been. Here, in Dijon, we find that we could have carried out our charming little plan, and Walter, realizing my disappointment, suggests that we take an automobile from here to Saincaize and then go by a train to Bourges and Tours. This sounds quite delightful, but our Quaker lady, having turned her face toward the gay capital, demurs, saying that "We have started to Paris, and to Paris we had better go, especially as our trunks have been sent on in advance, and it really is not safe to have one's luggage long out of one's sight in a strange country." This last argument proved conclusive, and we yielded, as we usually do, to Miss Cassandra's arguments, although we generally make a pretence of discussing the pros and cons.

[69]

[70]

PARIS, August 29th.

When we reached Paris on Saturday we soon found out why we had come here, to use the rather obscure phrasing of the man of the party, for it speedily transpired that Miss Cassandra had brought us here with deliberate intent to lead us from the straight and narrow path of sightseeing into the devious and beguiling ways of the *modiste*. She has for some reason set her heart upon having two Paris gowns, one for the house and one for the street, and Lydia and I, being too humane to leave her unprotected in the hands of a dressmaker who speaks no English, spent one whole afternoon amid the intricacies of broadcloth, messaline, and chiffon. Of course we ordered some gowns for ourselves as a time-saving measure, although I really do not think it is usually worth while to waste one's precious hours over clothes when there is so much to be done that is better worth while. However, the shades of mauve, and all the variants of purple, which are set forth so alluringly in the windows are enough to tempt an anchorite, and no more decided color attracts us, as blues and greens seem crude and startling beside these soft shades, which came in with the half-mourning for King Edward and are still affected by Parisians of good taste.

[71]

Our Quaker lady has become so gay and worldly-minded, since her signal triumph with the American countesses in her merry widow, that we are continually reminded of the "Rejuvenation of Aunt Mary," and Lydia and I have to be on the alert to draw her away from the attractions of windows where millinery is displayed, lest she insist on investing in a grenadier, or in that later and even more grotesque device of the *modiste*, the "Chantecler."

To compensate for the time lost at the dressmakers, we had two long beautiful mornings at the Louvre and a Sunday afternoon at the Luxembourg, followed by a cup of tea and a pleasant, sociable half-hour at the Students' Hostel, on the Boulevard Saint-Michel, a delightful, homelike

[72]

inn where many young women who are studying in Paris find a home amid congenial surroundings. A little oasis in the desert of a lonesome student life, this friendly hostel seemed to us. Several women whom we knew at home were pouring tea, and we met some nice English and American girls who are studying art and music, and the tea and buns brought to us by friendly hands made the simple afternoon tea take upon it something of the nature of a lovefeast, so warm and kindly was the welcome accorded us.

PENSION B—, TOURS, August 30th.

We left Paris yesterday from the Station Quai d'Orsay for our journey of three and a half hours to Tours. So near to Paris is this château land of Touraine that we wonder why we have not all been journeying this way full many a year, instead of waiting to be caught up and borne hither by the tide of fashion, especially as our route lay through a land filled with historic and romantic associations. It is impossible to pass through this flat but picturesque country, with its winding rivers and white roads shaded by tall poplars, and by such old gray towns as Étampes, Orléans, Blois, and Amboise, without recalling the delight with which we have wandered here in such goodly company as that of Brantôme, Balzac, Dumas, and Madame de Sévigné.

[73]

It was upon this same Loire, which winds around many a château before it throws itself into the sea, that Madame de Sévigné described herself as setting forth from Tours at 5 o'clock on a May morning, in a boat, and in the most beautiful weather in the world.

These boats on the Loire, as described by Madame de Sévigné, were evidently somewhat like gondolas. "I have the body of my *grande carosse* so arranged," she wrote, "that the sun could not trouble us; we lowered the glasses; the opening in front made a marvellous picture, all the points of view that you can imagine. Only the Abbé and I were in this little compartment on good cushions and in fine air, much at our ease, altogether like *cochons sur la paille*. We had *potage et du bouilli*, quite warm, as there is a little furnace here; one eats on a ship's plank like the king and queen; from which you see how everything is *raffiné* upon our Loire!"

[74]

Down this same river M. Fouquet, the great financier, fled from the wrath of his royal master and the bitter hatred of his rival Colbert. On the swift current the lighter sped, carried along by it and the eight rowers toward Nantes and Fouquet's own fortress of Belle Isle, only to be overtaken by Colbert's boat with its twelve sturdy oarsmen. Whatever may have been the sins of Fouquet, he had so many charming traits and was so beloved by the great writers of France—Molière, La Fontaine, Madame de Sévigné, Pelisson, and all the rest whom he gathered around him at his château—that our sympathies are with him rather than with the cold and calculating Colbert. Putting their hands into the public coffers was so much the habit of the financiers and royal almoners of that period that we quite resent Fouquet's being singled out for the horrible punishment inflicted upon him, and after all he may not have been guilty, as justice often went far astray in those days, as in later times.

Whether or not M. Fouquet was the "Man with the Iron Mask," as some authorities relate, we shall probably never know. Walter, who is not a fanciful person, as you are aware, is inclined to believe that he was, although his beloved Dumas has invented a highly dramatic tale which makes a twin brother of Louis XIV, the mysterious "Man with the Iron Mask."

[75]

In the goodly company of Madame de Sévigné, her *fablier*, as she dubbed La Fontaine, M. Fouquet, and our old friends the three Guardsmen, you may believe that the journey from Paris to Tours did not seem long to us. I must tell you of one contretemps, however, in case you, like us, take the express train from the Quai d'Orsay. Instead of being carried to our destination, which is a railroad courtesy that one naturally expects, we were dumped out at a place about twenty miles from Tours. We had our books and papers all around us, and were enjoying sole possession of the compartment, when we were suddenly told to put away our playthings and change cars. We asked "Why?" as we had understood that this was a through train, but the only response that we could get from the guard was, "St. Pierre le Corps, change cars for Tours!" So bag and baggage, with not a porter in sight to help us, and Walter loaded like a dromedary with dress-suit cases and parcels, we were hurried across a dozen railroad tracks to a train which was apparently waiting for us.

[76]

"What does it all mean?" exclaimed Miss Cassandra. "What have we to do with St. Peter and his body? St. Martin and his cloak are what we naturally expect here."

"To be sure," we all exclaimed in a breath, but we had actually forgotten that St. Martin was the patron saint of Tours.

Miss Cassandra is worth a dozen guidebooks, as she always gives us her information when we want it, and we want it at every step in this old Touraine, which is filled with history and romance. She also reminds us that between Tours and Poitiers was fought the great battle between the Saracen invaders and the French, under Charles Martel, which turned back the tide of Mohammedism and secured for France and Europe the blessings of Christianity, and that in the Château of Plessis-les-Tours the famous treaty was made between Henry III and his kinsman, Henry of Navarre, which brought together under one flag the League, the Reformers, and the Royalists of France.

[77]

As we drove from the station to the hotel, the coachman pointed out to us the new church of St. Martin, which occupies a portion of the site of the vast basilica of which two picturesque towers alone remain. We hope for a nearer view of it to-morrow, and of St. Gatien, whose double

towers we can see from our windows at the Pension B—.

We had expected to stop at the *Hôtel de l'Univers*, which Mr. Henry James and all the other great folk honor with their regard; but finding no accommodations there we are temporarily lodged at this excellent pension. Although called a hotel by courtesy, this house possesses all the characteristics of a pension in good standing. There is no office, nothing to suggest the passing of the coin of the realm between ourselves and the proprietors. We are treated like honored guests by the ancient porter and the other domestics; but of Madame, our hostess, we have only fleeting visions in the hall and on the stairway, usually in a pink *matinée*. Monsieur materializes on occasions when we need postage stamps and change, and is most accommodating in looking up train times for us. Above all, and most characteristic of all, there is in the *salle à manger* a long table surrounded by a dozen or more of our countrywomen, *en voyage* like ourselves. [78]

Walter was at first somewhat disconcerted by this formidable array of womankind without a man in sight, and at the dinner table confided to me his sentiments regarding pensions in rather strong language, insisting that it was like being in a convent, or a young ladies' seminary, except that he had noticed that most of the ladies were not painfully young, all this in an undertone, of course, when lo! as if in answer to his lament, a man appeared and seated himself modestly, as befitted his minority sex, at a side table by his wife. Walter now having some one to keep him in countenance, we shall probably remain where we are and indeed a harder heart than his, even a heart of stone, could not fail to be touched by Miss Cassandra's delight at being surrounded by her compatriots, and able to speak her own language once more with freedom. The joyous manner in which she expands socially, and scintillates conversationally, proves how keen her sufferings must have been in the uncomprehending and unrequiting circles in which we have been living. It goes without saying that she soon became the centre of attraction at table, and so thrilled her audience by a spirited recital of her adventures at the Villa Carlotta that the other man cried, "Bravo!" from his side table, without waiting for the formality of an introduction. [79]

"Quite different," as Walter says, "from the punctilious gentlemen in the 'Bab Ballads' who couldn't eat the oysters on the desert island without being duly presented."

Our new acquaintances are already planning tours for us to the different châteaux of the Loire, while Walter and his companion, who proves to be a United States Army man and quite a delightful person, are smoking in the garden. This garden upon which our long windows open, with its many flowers and shrubs and the largest gingko tree I have ever seen, would hold us fast by its charms were the Pension B— less comfortable than it is.

V

 [80]

IN AND AROUND TOURS

PENSION B—, TOURS, August 31st.

WE SET forth this morning on a voyage of discovery, and on foot, which is the only satisfactory way to explore this old town, with its winding streets and quaint byways and corners.

Our first visit was to the church of St. Martin of Tours, in the Rue des Halles, which brought with it some disappointment, as instead of a building so old that no one can give its date, we found a fine new church, in whose crypt are the remains of St. Martin. The most ancient basilica of St. Martin was erected soon after the death of the benevolent saint, whose remains were carried by faithful members of his diocese from Candes, where he died in the beginning of the fifth century. This basilica was burned down in the tenth century, and another erected on its site some years later. This last basilica, built in the twelfth or thirteenth century, of vast size and beauty, was certainly old enough to have been treated with respect, and its destruction a few years ago to make way for a new street was, as Walter says, an act of vandalism worthy of the councilmen of an American city. Of the old church only two towers remain, the Tour de Charlemagne and the Tour de l'Horloge, and the gallery of one of the cloisters. Over this imperfect arcade, with its exquisite carvings of arabesques, flowers, fruits, cherubs, and griffins, Mr. Henry James waxed eloquent, and Mrs. Mark Pattison said of it: "Of these beautiful galleries the eastern side alone has survived, and being little known it has fortunately not been restored, and left to go quietly to ruin. Yet even in its present condition the sculptures with which it is enriched, the bas reliefs, arabesques, and medallions which fill the delicate lines of the pilasters and arcades testify to the brilliant and decided character which the Renaissance early assumed in Touraine." [81]

If the present church of St. Martin was disappointingly new, we found the Cathedral of St. Gatien sufficiently ancient, with its choir dating back to the thirteenth century and its transept to the fourteenth, while the newels of the two towers belong to a very much earlier church dedicated to the first Bishop of Tours, and partly destroyed by fire in 1166. [82]

Who St. Gatien was, and why he had a cathedral built in his honor, even Miss Cassandra and Lydia do not know, and we have no good histories or Lives of the Saints to refer to; verily one would need a traveller's library of many



Neurdein Freres, Photo.
STAIRCASE AND CLOÎTRE DE LA PSALLETTE, ST. GATIEN

volumes in order to answer the many questions that occur to us in this city, which is so full of old French history, and English history, too. Indeed it is quite impossible to separate them at this period, when England owned so much of France and, as Miss Cassandra says, her kings were always looking out of the windows of their French castles upon some Naboth's vineyard that they were planning to seize from their neighbors.

"Jolly old robbers they were," says Walter, "and always on top when there was any fighting to be done. I must say, quite aside from the question of right or wrong, that I have much more sympathy with them than with the Johnny Crapauds. Here, in this foreign land of France, the Plantagenet kings seem quite our own, and only a few removes in consanguinity from our early Presidents."

[83]

We were glad to lay claim to the Cathedral of St. Gatiens, which in a way belongs to us, as the choir was begun by Henry II of England, although it is to be regretted that a quarrel between this Plantagenet king and Louis VII resulted in a fire which destroyed much of the good work. We lingered long in the cloisters, and climbed up the royal staircase, with its beautiful openwork vaulting to the north tower, from whose top we may see as far as Azay-le-

Rideau on a clear day.

This was, of course, not a clear day, as we are having hazy August weather, so we did not see Azay, but from the tower we gained quite a good idea of the general plan of Tours, and stopped long enough in the cloisters to learn that the picturesque little gallery, called the Cloître de la Psalette, was the place where the choir boys were once trained. The façade of this cathedral seemed to us a beautiful example of Renaissance style, although said to offend many of the canons of architecture. We are thankful that we do not know enough about the principles of architecture to be offended by so beautiful a creation, and inside the church we were so charmed by the exquisite old glass, staining the marble pillars with red, blue and violet, that we failed to notice that the aisles are too narrow for perfect harmony. The jewel-like glass of the Lady Chapel was brought here from the old church of St. Julian in the Rue Nationale, once the Rue Royale, and is especially lovely.

[84]

In a chapel in the right-hand transept we saw the tomb of the little children of Charles VIII and Anne of Brittany, by whose early death the throne of France passed to the Valois branch of the Orleans family. Looking at the faces of these two children sleeping here side by side, the little one with his hands under the ermine marble, the elder with his small hands folded piously together, a wave of sympathy passed over us for the unhappy mother who was in a few months deprived of both her precious babies. As we stood by the tomb with its two quaint little figures, guarded by kneeling angels at their heads and feet, beautiful, appropriate, reverent, we wondered why modern sculptors fall so far behind the ancient in work of this sort. The moderns may know their anatomy better, but in sweetness and tender poetic expression the work of the old artists is infinitely superior. This charming little group was probably made by Michael Colombe, although it has been attributed to several other sculptors of the time.

[85]

After a visit to the archbishop's palace, and a short stop at the museum, which attracted us less than the outdoor world on this pleasant day, we stopped at the Quai du Pont Neuf to look at the statues of Descartes and Rabelais, so picturesquely placed on each side of the Pont de Pierre. Retracing our steps by the Rue Nationale we strolled into the interesting old church of St. Julian, where we admired the vast nave of noble proportions and the beautiful stained glass. After wandering at will through several streets with no especial object in view, we found ourselves in a charming little park where we were interested in a monument to three good physicians of Tours, a recognition of valiant service to humanity that might well be followed by our American cities. Just here my inveterate American reminded me of the monument in Boston to the discoverer of ether, and that to Dr. Hahnemann in Washington.

"Both of them monstrosities of bad taste!" exclaimed Miss Cassandra, as we turned into the Rue Emile Zola, and along the Rue Nationale to the Palais de Justice, in one of whose gardens is a fine statue of the great novelist who was born in the Maison de Balzac, near by on the Rue Nationale. Through the streets George Sand and Victor Hugo, we found our way to the theatre and then back to the Boulevard Béranger, upon which our pension is situated.

[86]

"It is," as Miss Cassandra says, "a liberal education to walk through the streets of these old French towns, and whatever may be the shortcomings of the French, as a nation, they cannot be accused of forgetting their great people."

As we stroll through these thoroughfares and parks we are constantly reminded by a name on a street corner or a statue that this Touraine is the land of Balzac, Rabelais, Descartes, and in a way of Ronsard and George Sand, as the châteaux of La Poissonnière and Nohant are not far away. Here they, and many another French writer, walked and dreamed, creating characters so lifelike that they also walk with us through these quaint streets and byways or look out from picturesque doorways. We can fancy the Curé de Tours emerging from the lovely Cloître de la Psallette of St. Gatien or the still lovelier cloister of old St. Martin's; or we can see poor Félex de Vandenesse making his way across the park, Emile Zola, with his meagre lunch basket on his arm. We have not yet tasted the *rillons* and *rillettes* so prized by the school children of Tours, and so longed for by Félex when he beheld them in the baskets of his more fortunate companions. Lydia reminds us that Balzac was at some pains to explain that this savory preparation of pork is seldom seen upon the aristocratic tables of Tours, and as our pension is strictly aristocratic and exclusive, it is doubtful if we ever see *rillons* and *rillettes* upon Madame B——'s table.

[87]

September 1st.

We crossed over the bridge this afternoon in a tram to Saint Symphorien, on whose hillside the original city of Tours was built. Here we saw an interesting Renaissance church, and passing through the streets of Vieux Calvaire l'Ermitage, Jeanne d'Arc and St. Gatien, gained the entrance to the Abbey of Marmoutier, where Saint Gatien dug out his cave in the rocky hillside. We also saw the ruins of a fine thirteenth century basilica once the glory of Touraine, and by a spiral staircase ascended to the *Chapelle des Sept Dormants*, really a cavern cut in the side of the hill in the shape of a cross, where rest the seven disciples of St. Martin, who all died on the same day as he had predicted. Their bodies remained intact for days and many miracles were worked, which you may believe, or not, just as you choose. When the name of the chapel was revealed to Miss Cassandra she exclaimed: "I have heard of the Seven Sleepers all my life and have been likened unto them in my youth; but never did I expect to lay eyes upon their resting place, and very uncomfortable beds they must have been!"

[88]

"So it was St. Gatien who first brought Christianity to France. Some one of us should surely have known that," said Lydia, looking up from the pages of a small local guidebook, with a face so dejected over her own ignorance, and that of her companions, that Miss Cassandra said in her most soothing tones:

"Never mind, dear, you will probably find when we reach the next cathedral town that some other worthy and adored saint did this good work for France."

[89]

And sure enough, this very night we have been learning, from a short history that we picked up on a book stall, that, although St. Gatien came here on a mission from Rome in the third century, to St. Martin is due the spread of Christianity not only through Touraine but all over France.

Having done our duty in the line of sightseeing and historic associations, we rested from our labors for a brief season and stopped to call on the Grants from New York, who are staying in a pleasant pension at St. Symphorien. Here we had an hour with them in the garden where many flowers are abloom, and exchanged travel experiences and home gossip over *brioche*s, the famous white wine of Vouvray and glasses of orange-flower water. Orange-flower water is the proper thing to drink here as it is made in large quantities in the neighborhood of Tours. As a refreshing and unintoxicating beverage it was highly recommended to our Quaker lady, who does not take kindly to the wine of the country, which is really guiltless of alcohol to any extent; but over this rather insipid drink she was not particularly enthusiastic. Like the English woman when she made her first acquaintance with terrapin, the most that Miss Cassandra could be induced to say was that the *eau des fleurs d'oranges sucrée* was not so very bad. The English dame, of course, said "it is not so very nasty"; but we have not become sufficiently Anglicized to say "nasty" in company. There is no knowing what we may come to when Angela joins us, as she has been visiting and motoring with Dr. McIvor's English and Scotch relations for the last six weeks and will have become quite a Britisher by the time we see her again. She is to meet us in Paris later in September, when her M.D. will join us for his vacation.

[90]

We returned home by the suspension bridge, built upon the site of an early bridge of boats. A later stone bridge was erected by Odo, Count of Blois and Touraine, "in order," as he recorded, "to make himself agreeable to God, useful to posterity and upon the solicitations of his wife." These were very good reasons, it must be admitted, for building a bridge. The substructure of this old stone bridge, the first of its kind in France, may be seen below the surface of the water a little farther up the stream.

Royalty seems to have had the good taste to spend much time in Touraine during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, and small wonder we thought, for this fertile well-watered plain combines the advantages of north and south, and is hospitable to the fruits and flowers of many climates. Louis XI, in his declining years, sought refuge here from the chill winds of Paris, which are tempered in Touraine by the softer breezes of the Midi, and this ancient city of the Turones he wished to make the capital of the France that he had strengthened and unified. However we may abhor the despicable characteristics of this wily old politician and despot, we cannot afford to underestimate his constructive ability and his zeal for the glory of France.

[91]

September 2nd.

We drove out this morning through the little village of St. Anne to the old château of Plessis-les-Tours, which Louis built and fortified to suit his fancy and his fears, for great and powerful as he was he seems to have been a most timid mortal. Of the "hidden pitfalls, snares and gins" with which the old King surrounded his castle we could not expect to find a trace, but we were disappointed to see nothing left of the three external battlemented walls or the three gates and dungeon-keep, which Sir Walter Scott described, the latter rising "like a black Ethiopian giant high into the air."

[92]

With our Quentin Durward in our hands, we read of Plessis-les-Tours as the novelist pictured it for us in the light of romance. Of course Sir Walter never saw this château, but like many other places that he was not able to visit, it was described to him by his friend and neighbor, Mr. James Skene, Laird of Rubislaw, who while travelling in France kept an accurate diary, enlivened by a number of clever drawings, all of which he placed at the novelist's disposal. From this journal, says Lockhart, Sir Walter took the substance of the original introduction to Quentin Durward. As Mr. James Skene is said to have given his friend most accurate descriptions of the buildings and grounds, it is safe to conclude that the château has been entirely remodelled since the days when the young Scottish archer listened to the voice of the Countess Isabelle, as she sang to the accompaniment of her lute while he acted as sentinel in the "spacious latticed gallery" of the château. It is needless to say that we failed to discover the spacious gallery or the maze of stairs, vaults, and galleries above and under ground which are described as leading to it. Nor did we see any traces of the fleur-de-lis, ermines, and porcupines which are said to have adorned the walls at a later date. Indeed the empty, unfurnished rooms and halls, guiltless of paintings or tapestries, were so dismal that we hurried through them. As if to add an additional note of discord to the inharmonious interior, a "vaccination museum" has been established in one of the ancient rooms. We stopped a moment to look at the numerous caricatures of the new method of preventing the ravages of smallpox; one, that especially entertained Walter, represented the medical faculty as a donkey in glasses charged upon by vaccine in the form of a furious cow.

[93]

We hoped to find in the grounds some compensation for the cheerlessness of the interior of the castle; but here again we were doomed to disappointment. The vast lawn and extensive parterres, which caused the park of Plessis-les-Tours to be spoken of as the Garden of France, have long since disappeared, and all that we could find was a grass-grown yard with some neglected flower beds, surrounded by a hedge of fusane, a kind of laurel with a small white flower that grows here in great profusion. We made an effort to see, or to fancy that we saw, an underground passage that was pointed out to us as that which once led to the dungeon upon whose stone foundation was placed the iron cage in which Cardinal la Balue was confined. Of the series of fosses which once enclosed the château we found some remains, but of the solid ramparts flanked by towers, where a band of archers were once posted by night and day, and of the bristling *chevaux-de-frise* nothing was to be seen. Walter wishes you to tell Allen that the greatest disappointment of all is that there is no oak forest anywhere near Plessis from whose boughs the victims of Louis were wont to hang "like so many acorns," one of Scott's bits of realism that appealed to his boyish imagination.

[94]

We were glad to turn our backs upon the modern brick building which occupies the site of the ancient stronghold of Plessis and to drive home by a farm called La Rabatière, whose fifteenth century building is said to have been the manor house of Olivier le Daim, familiarly called Olivier le Diable, the barber-minister of Louis. Our driver, who is somewhat of an historian, and like a loyal Tournageau is proud of the associations of his town, good and bad alike, was delighted to show us this old home of Olivier who was, he informed us, the executioner of his master's enemies of high degree, while Tristan l'Hermite attended to those of less distinction, having, as Louis warned Quentin, "For him whose tongue wagged too freely an amulet for the throat which never failed to work a certain cure." The house of Tristan, our *cocher* told us, we should find in one of the narrow streets of the old part of Tours, which we have not yet explored.

[95]

VI

[96]

LANGEAIS AND AZAY-LE-RIDEAU

PENSION B—, TOURS, September 3rd.

WHEN we started toward Langeais this afternoon we were pleased to think that our way was much the same as that which Félix took in search of his "Lily of the Valley." The Loire lay before us just as he described it,—a long watery ribbon which glistens in the sun between two green banks, the rows of poplars which deck this vale of love with moving tracery, the oak woods reaching forward between the vineyards on the hillsides which are rounded by the river into constant variety, the soft outlines crossing each other and fading to the horizon."

We passed by Luynes, whose steep hillside steps we shall mount some day to see the fine view of the river and valley from the outer walls and terrace of the château, as its doors are said to be inhospitable to those who wish to inspect the interior. This afternoon Langeais and Azay-le-Rideau are beckoning us, although we were tempted to stop for a nearer view of the strange Pile de Cinq Mars, which is, we are told, an unsolved

[97]

architectural puzzle. The most probable explanation is that this lofty tower was once part of a signalling system, by beacon fires, which flamed messages along the valley, past Luynes to the Lantern of Rochecorbon and as far eastward as Amboise.

Although there are the ruins of a castle of the same name quite near the Pile de Cinq Mars, the home of Henry d'Effiat, Marquis de Cinq Mars, seems to have been at Chaumont, where Alfred de Vigny placed the opening scenes of his novel.

To compensate for our disappointing morning at Plessis-les-Tours, we had an entirely satisfactory afternoon at Langeais, where we beheld a veritable fortress of ancient times. At a first glance we were as much interested in the little gray town of Langeais, which is charmingly situated on the right bank of the Loire, as in the château itself, whose façade is gloomy and austere, a true mediæval fortress, "with moat, drawbridge, and portcullis still in working order," as Walter expresses it. As we stood on the stone steps at the entrance between the great frowning towers waiting for the portcullis to be raised, we felt as if we might be in a Scott or Dumas novel, especially as our Quaker lady repeated in her own dramatic fashion:

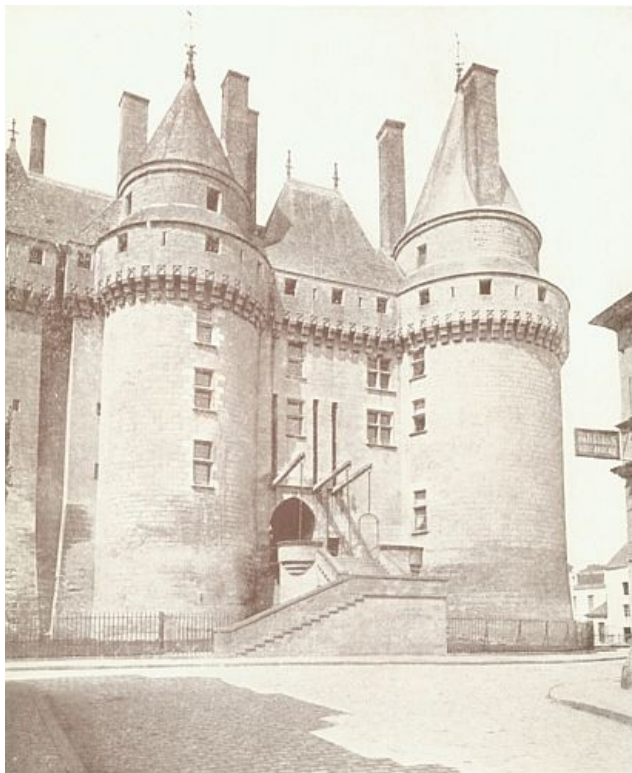
". . . And darest thou then
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall?
And hopest thou hence unscathed to go?
No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no!
Up drawbridge, grooms—what, warder, ho!
Let the portcullis fall."

Lord Marmion turn'd,—well was his need,—
And dashed the rowels in his steed,
Like arrow through the archway sprung,
The ponderous gate behind him rung;
To pass there was such scanty room,
The bars, descending, razed his plume.



MEDIÆVAL STAIRWAY, CHÂTEAU OF LUYNES

[98]



ENTRANCE TO LANGEAIS, WITH DRAWBRIDGE

Fortunately for us the portcullis rose instead of falling, and so, with plumes unscathed, we passed through the doorway, and as if to add to the *vraisemblance* of the situation and make us feel quite mediæval, soldiers stood on each side of the entrance, apparently on guard, and it was not until after we had entered the château that we discovered them to be visitors like ourselves.

[99]

If the façade of Langeais, with its severe simplicity and solidity, its great stone towers, massive walls, *chemin de ronde* and machiolated cornices, gave us an impression of power and majesty, we found that it also had a smiling face turned toward the hill and the lovely gardens. Here the windows open upon a lawn with turf as green and velvety as that of England, and parterres of flowers laid out in all manner of geometrical figures. From a court basking in sunshine, two beautiful Renaissance doors lead into the castle. Through one of them we passed into a small room in which the inevitable postcards and souvenirs were sold by a pretty little dark-eyed French woman, who acted as our guide through the castle. We begged her to stand near the vine-decked doorway to have her photograph taken, which she did with

cheerful alacrity. Some soldiers, who were buying souvenirs, stepped through the doorway just in time to come into the picture, their red uniforms adding a delightful touch of color as they stood out against the gray walls of the château. It was a charming scene which we hoped to be able to send you, but alas! a cloud passed over the sun, and this, with the dark stone background, made too dull a setting, and by the time the sun was out again our guide was in request to take a party

[100]

of tourists through the château, ourselves among them. Langeais is so popular during this busy touring season that hours and turns are strictly observed.

One of the soldiers is evidently the *cher ami* of our pretty Eloisa, who waved her little hand to him as she sent a coquettish glance from her fine eyes in his direction, and threw him a kiss, after which she applied herself to her task as cicerone, conducting us from room to room, enlarging upon the history and associations of the château, and explaining to us that of the original castle, built by Foulques Nerra, or "Fulk the Black," in 990, only the ruinous donjon keep is to be seen beyond the gardens. The present château is of much later date, and was built by Jean Bourré, comptroller of the finances for Normandy under Louis XI, who was granted letters patent of nobility and the captaincy of Langeais about 1465. After listening to thrilling tales of the barbarous cruelty of Fulk the Black, Count of Anjou, who had his first wife burned at the stake and made himself very disagreeable in other ways, as our guide naïvely remarked in French of the purest Touraine brand, Lydia exclaimed, "The more perfect the French, the easier it is to understand!"

[101]

"It is all the same to me, good or bad," groaned Walter in reply to Lydia's Ollendorf phrase, uttering quite audible animadversions against foreign languages in general and the French in particular, which our guide fortunately did not comprehend, especially as he concluded with a crushing comparison, "Why are not all the guides like that wonderful little woman at the Castle of Chillan, who told her story in English, French, and German with equal fluency and facility?"

"Why, indeed!" echoed Miss Cassandra, who being a fellow sufferer is most sympathetic.

It certainly is exasperating to a degree to have the interesting history and traditions given forth in a language that one does not understand, and with such rapidity that if those who are able to grasp the meaning attempt to translate they quite lose the thread of the discourse and are left far behind in the story.

As we passed through the great halls and spacious rooms with timbered ceilings, tapestried walls, and beautifully tiled floors, we were impressed with the combination of mediæval strength and homelike comfort, especially in the living rooms and bedrooms. The graceful mural decorations of flowers and cherries in the Salon des Fleurs are in strong contrast with the massive woodwork and the heavy carved furniture, and yet the ensemble is quite harmonious. In the guard room we noticed a fine frieze in which the arms of Anne of Brittany are interwoven with her motto, "*Potius Mori quam Fœdari!*"

[102]

From this and much more in the line of careful restoration and rich decoration and furnishing, you may believe that the interior of Langeais has undergone a transformation, at the hands of several owners of the château, since the days when Mr. Henry James spoke of its apartments as "not of first-class interest." M. Christophe Baron and Monsieur and Madame Jacques Siegfried have, while preserving the distinctive characteristics of an ancient fortress, made of Langeais an entirely livable château.

Just here we are reminded by our historians that we Anglo-Saxons have a link far back in our own history with Langeais and the cruel Fulk, Duke of Anjou, as one of his descendants married Matilda, daughter of Henry I, of England, and their grandson was Richard Cœur de Lion, who was Count of Touraine and Lord of Langeais as well as King of England.

[103]

In the beautiful long salon, with its wonderful sixteenth century tapestries and handsomely carved Spanish choir stalls, our guide became especially eloquent, telling us that this was the room in which Charles VIII and Anne de Bretagne were married, the inlaid table in the centre being that upon which the marriage contract was signed.

"What is the little black-eyed woman talking about?" asked Miss Cassandra, in a most pathetic tone. Fortunately, our cicerone gave us more time in this room than in the others, and as we stood by the windows which look out upon the court and gardens, a blaze of color in the September sunshine, Lydia and I tried to explain about the very remarkable marriage solemnized in this château between the heiress of Brittany and the young King of France.

Odd as royal marriages usually are, this was especially melodramatic, as the royal lover seems to have set forth to meet the lady of his choice with a sword in one hand and a wedding ring in the other.

[104]

The hand of the young Duchess of Brittany was naturally sought after by many princes, who looked with longing eyes upon her rich inheritance, in addition to which, as Brantôme says, she was renowned for her beauty and grace, which latter was not impaired by the fact that one leg was shorter than the other. She was also learned, according to the learning of her day, and clever, which circumstances probably weighed lighter than vanity when put in the scale against the wealth of the Duchy of Brittany. Among the various pretendants to the hand of the Duchess was Louis, Duke of Orleans, who as next in succession to his cousin Charles was a suitor quite worthy of the hand of this high-born lady. Feats of valor had been performed by Louis in Brittany earlier in his career, which of course reached the ears of Anne, who like every woman of spirit admired a hero, when lo! misfortune of misfortunes, he was taken prisoner at the battle of St. Aubin, where he fought bravely at the head of his infantry. This capture must have been a sad blow to the hopes of the young Duke of Orleans, as Maximilian, Duke of Austria, promptly stepped in and claimed the hand of the Breton heiress; but even this wooing was not destined to prosper, as Charles VIII, who had just succeeded to the throne of France, suddenly announced that he was the proper person to wed the Duchess Anne and her possessions, and promptly

[105]

breaking his engagement with Margaret of Austria, set forth upon his war-like wooing. She, poor girl, would probably have preferred any one of her suitors to the boy of nineteen or twenty, misshapen and ignorant, says a chronicler of the time, and so feeble in body that his father, despairing of his holding the throne, had arranged a marriage between the next heir, this same Duke of Orleans, and his daughter, Jeanne of France. The young Duchess, an heiress in her own right, and possessed of a decided will of her own, as appeared later, was singularly hampered in the choice of a consort, several eligible suitors being separated from her by the armies of Charles, who, closely besieging the town of Rennes, demanded her hand at the point of the sword. Thus wooed, Anne reluctantly consented to become Queen of France, and was secretly betrothed to Charles at Rennes. [106]

If the betrothal of Charles and Anne was accomplished with scant ceremony, their marriage at Langeais was celebrated in due form. The bride, accompanied by a distinguished suite, is described, as she arrived at the château upon her palfrey, wearing a rich travelling costume of cloth and velvet, trimmed with one hundred and thirty-nine sable skins. Her wedding dress of cloth of gold was even more sumptuous, as it was adorned with one hundred and sixty sable skins. Fortunately for the comfort of the wearer, the wedding was in December, and in these stone buildings, destitute of adequate heating arrangements, fur garments must have been particularly comfortable. The nuptial benediction was pronounced by the Bishop of Angers, probably in a chapel which was formerly in the southwest wing of the château, and in the presence of the Prince of Orange, the Duke of Bourbon, the Chancellor of France and other nobles of high degree, among them the Duke of Orleans, afterwards Louis XII, who was destined to become the second husband of Anne. One of the articles of the marriage contract signed in this room at Langeais was that if Charles should die without issue Anne should marry the next heir to the crown, thus uniting Brittany indissolubly with France. [107]

Brantôme described the fourteen-year-old bride as pretty, with black eyes, well-marked eyebrows, black hair, fresh complexion and a dimpled chin, but as Lydia says, one cannot always trust Brantôme, as he painted Catherine de Médici whom he beheld with his mortal eyes in all the glory of the lily and rose, and later, when he saw Queen Elizabeth in London, he wrote of her as beautiful and of lofty bearing. It is quite evident that Brantôme's eyes were bedazzled by the glitter of royalty, or was it the glitter of royal gold?

"Well, whether or not Anne was beautiful, it is a comfort to have her safely married in the midst of so much confusion and warfare," said Miss Cassandra, with the satisfied air of a mother who has just made an eligible marriage for her daughter.

"But we have not done with her yet," exclaimed Lydia. "We shall meet her and her ermine tails and tasseled ropes in every château of the Loire, and at Amboise we shall go a step further in her history, and only reach the last chapter at Blois." [108]



CAFÉ RABELAIS OPPOSITE CHÂTEAU OF LANGEAIS

From the mediæval fortress, with its wealth of French and English history that Lydia and our guide poured into our willing ears, we crossed the Rue Gambetta to the little Café Rabelais, opposite the entrance to the château, where we spent a cheerful *quart d'heure* over cups of tea, and classic buns that are temptingly displayed in the window. Although this genial reformed monk, as Walter is pleased to call Rabelais, was born at Chinon, he seems to have lived at Langeais at two different periods of his wandering and eventful life, Guillaume, Sieur de Langeais, having given him a cottage near the château.

Having come to Langeais by train we engaged a hack to convey us to Azay-le-Rideau, a drive of about six miles. As we drove over a long bridge that crosses the Loire, we had another view of the château, with its three massive towers, many chimneys, and of the wide shining river that flows beside it, bordered by tall poplars and dotted with green islets. Our drive was through a level farming land, where men and women were at work cutting grass and turning over the long rows of yellow flax which were drying in the sun. Here again we saw many women with the large [109]

baskets or *hottes* on their backs, as if to remind us that the burden-bearers are not all of Italy, for the women of France work quite as hard as the men, more constantly it would seem, if we may judge by the number of men who are to be seen loafing about the little inns and *cabarets*.

Across the wide, low-lying fields and pasture lands, we could see the long line of foliage that marks the forest of Chambord. All these great country palaces of the kings and nobles of France were comparatively near each other, "quite within visiting distance," as Miss Cassandra says. As we walked along the avenue of horse-chestnut trees, and over the little bridge that spans the Indre, we felt that no site could have been better chosen for the building of a palace of pleasure than this. With a background of forest trees, a river flowing around it, the stone walls and bridges draped with a brilliant crimson curtain of American ivy, the Château of Azay-le-Rideau justifies Balzac's enthusiastic description: "A diamond with a thousand facets, with the Indre for a setting and perched on piles buried in flowers." Yet this gay palace, like most of the châteaux of the Loire, has arisen upon the foundations of a fortress, and its odd name was given it in honor of a certain Hughes Ridel or Rideau, who in the thirteenth century built a castle on an island to defend the passage of the Indre, the position being an important one strategically. When our old Dijon friend, Jean Sans-Peur, came this way in 1417, he took care to place a garrison of several hundred men at Azay. These Burgundian soldiers, having a high opinion of the strength of the castle and of their own prowess, undertook to jeer at the Dauphin, afterwards Charles VII, as he passed by on his way from Chinon to Tours, upon which he laid siege to Azay and captured and meted out summary vengeance upon those who had mocked at and insulted him. The story told to us sounds, as Miss Cassandra says, like a chapter from the Chronicles or the Book of Kings, for although a great bear did not come out of the woods and devour those wicked mockers, they were hanged, every one, their captain was beheaded and the castle razed to the ground.

[110]

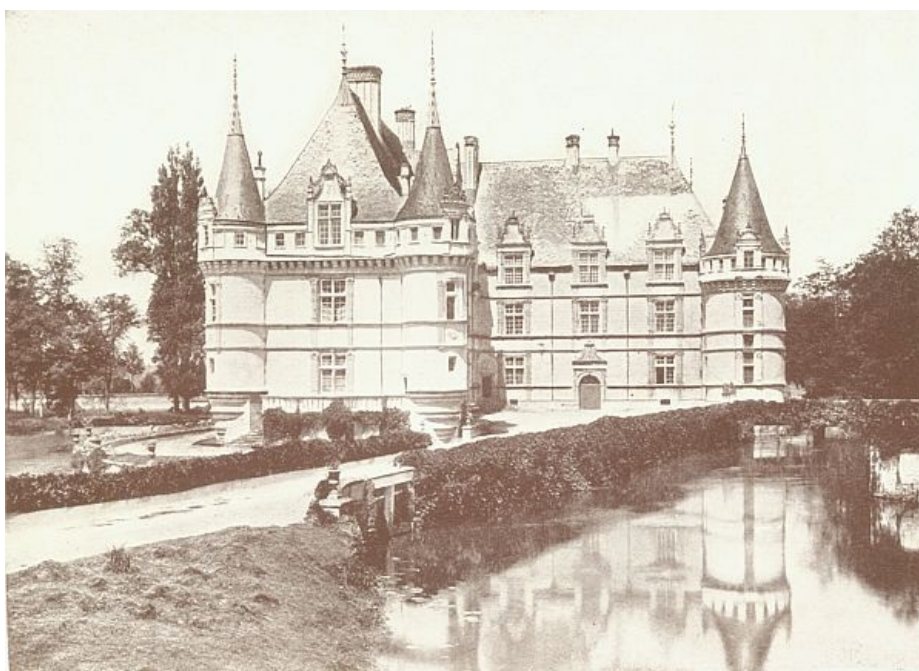
Upon the piles of the old fortress the Château of Azay arose to please the fancy of a certain Grilles Berthold, a relative of the Bohier who built the Château of Chenonceaux, and like him a minister of Finance.

[111]

Built upon an island, the slow flowing Indre forms a natural moat around the castle, or as Balzac expresses it more picturesquely, "This most charming and elaborate of the châteaux of beautiful Touraine ever bathes itself in the Indre, like a princely galley adorned with lace-like pavilions and windows, and with pretty soldiers on its weathercocks, turning, like all soldiers, whichever way the wind blows." The lace-like effect that Balzac speaks of evidently refers to the exquisite carving on the walls and around the windows, and upon the graceful corner towers of the château. Here, over the driveway and in other places, are the salamander of Francis I and the ermine of his wife, Claude of Brittany, who died before the château was completed. Francis lived to use and enjoy Azay in the hunting season, as did other sovereigns.

The architect, whose name seems to have been lost sight of amid much discussion and some chicanery with regard to the possession of the château, was a wise man in his day and instead of attempting to unite the feudal fortress and the hunting seat, as Le Nepveu was doing at Chambord, he was content to make of Azay-le-Rideau a palace of pleasure. Indeed, he seems to have allowed his fancy free play in the construction of this château, with the result that he has made of it a dwelling place of great beauty, richly decorated but never overloaded with ornament. Even the chimney tops are brodered over with graceful designs and covered with a fine basket work in metal.

[112]



CHATEAU OF AZAY-LE-RIDEAU, EAST FAÇADE

A true gem of the French Renaissance is Azay-le-Rideau, so the learned in architecture tell us, and yet enough of the old fortress construction has been preserved to add strength and compactness to the fairy-like beauty of this château.

Through the handsome double doorway above which the salamander of Francis breathes forth its device, "*Nutrisco et extingo*," we passed into the beautiful hall and up the grand staircase, with its sculptured vaults of stone, rich beyond compare, adorned with medallions of royal faces and decorations of fruits, flowers, and heraldic emblems. Miss Cassandra, being somewhat fatigued after our ramble through Langeais, sat down upon the steps to enjoy at leisure the delicate beauty of the ornamentation of the stairway, declaring that she was quite ready to take up her abode here, as this château fulfilled all the requirements of a pleasant country home, and after reading Madame Waddington's book she had always wished to try château life in France.

[113]

Lydia and I objected, for after the complete and harmonious furnishing of Langeais the interior of Azay-le-Rideau seems a trifle bare, as only two or three of the rooms are thoroughly furnished. As the property now belongs to the State and is in the care of L'Ecole des Beaux Arts, which is gradually collecting rare and beautiful articles of furniture, this compact little château will soon be completely equipped as a Renaissance museum.

The room of Francis I is shown, with handsome carved bed and rich hangings of turquoise blue damask, adjoining it the room in which Louis XIV slept, which is hung in crimson damask. These rooms, with some fine tapestries, scattered articles of furniture and a number of portraits, complete the present equipment of Azay-le-Rideau. Among the portraits that interested us was one of Catherine de Médicis by Clouet, and another by the same artist of Francis I, as he so often appears in his portraits, "with the insufferable smile upon his lips that curl upward satyr-like towards the narrow eyes, the crisp close-cut brownish beard and the pink silken sleeves and doublet." Near by, in strong contrast to the sensual face of Francis, hangs the clear-cut face of Calvin. Here also are the portraits of Henry of Navarre and the wife for whom he cared so little, the beautiful Marguerite of Valois, less beautiful in her portrait than one would expect, and of the woman whom he loved so deeply, Gabrielle d'Estrées, Duchess of Beaufort.

[114]

A charm of romance ever surrounds the graceful figure of Gabrielle d'Estrées, whom the usually inconstant Henry seems to have loved tenderly and faithfully to the end of her days. Many persons have excused this connection of the King with *la belle Gabrielle* because of his loveless and enforced marriage with his cousin Marguerite, who was faithful to her royal husband only when his life or his throne were in danger. At such times she would fly to his aid like a good comrade. The handsomest and the most brilliant and daring of the unfortunate and ill-fated brood of the dreadful Catherine, Marguerite seems to have been particularly happy when she was able to thwart the malicious designs of her mother, from whose plots the King of Navarre so often escaped that he was said to have borne a charmed life.

[115]

As we quitted the château to wander through its lovely gardens, gay with many flowers, and over the lawn with its fine copper beeches, exquisite mimosa trees, hemlocks, and delicate larches, we thought of the many great lords and noble ladies who had walked over this fair demesne and, like us, had stopped to enjoy the soft breezes by the side of the little river where the birches spread their long branches over the gently flowing stream. So near the great world and yet so retired from it, it is not strange that Francis, and the kings who followed him, should have often turned from the turmoil and unrest of the court to enjoy this happy valley.

We were tempted to linger so long in the grounds that we had only a short time to spend in the interesting eleventh century church which adjoins the park and, like the château, belongs to the State. The façade of the church is richly decorated with quaint statuettes and carvings, and here also is a seigniorial chapel with inscriptions of the Biencourt family who owned the château of Azay-le-Rideau before it passed into the hands of the government.

[116]

Our appetite for châteaux has so increased with the seeing of them that we regretted not having time to go to Ussé this same afternoon, but we shall have to make a separate trip to this palace, which is said to be a superb example of Gothic architecture. Although the château is often inhospitably closed to visitors, its exterior, with innumerable towers and tourelles, and the terraces, gardens, and vast park, nearly seven miles in circumference, are well worth a visit.

As usual, the afternoon was not long enough, and the shortening September light warned us that we must take a train from the station at Azay-le-Rideau about six in order to reach Tours in time for dinner.

VII

[117]

TWO QUEENS AT AMBOISE

PENSION B—, TOURS, September 5th.

THIS morning we spent at the Château of Amboise, which we reached by crossing two bridges over the Loire, as the wide river is divided at this point by the Isle St. Jean. None of all these beautiful royal castles owes more to the Loire than Amboise, whose magnificent round machiolated tower commands the approaches to the bridge, while the fine pointed windows and arched balcony give a fairyland lightness and grace to the adjoining façade which crowns a bluff high above the river.

We reached the château by many hillside steps, and through a garden which stands so high upon its terrace above the street that it seems, like the famous gardens of Babylon, to hang in the air. Upon a nearer view we found that the garden rests upon a solid foundation of rock and earth, and is surrounded by strong walls and parapets of masonry. From these walls the light buttresses of the little Chapel of St. Hubert spring. This lovely chapel, which with its fine delicate spire and chiselled pinnacles, standing out against the blue sky, gives an effect of indescribable beauty, was built by Charles VIII after his return from Italy. The wonderful carvings above the doorway, representing St. Hubert's miraculous encounter with a stag, were doubtless executed by Italian workmen whom he brought with him, as only skilled hands could have produced a result so rich and decorative and yet so exquisitely fine and delicate. Other beautiful carvings ornament the façade and the interior of the chapel, which in form is a miniature Sainte Chapel, less brilliant in color and richer in carving than the ancient Chapel of St. Louis, in Paris.

[118]

A cheerful château, perched upon a rock and bathed in sunshine, Amboise appeared to us today, whether we looked at it from the bridge or from the garden, with nothing to remind us of the sad and tragic events in its history. This we are told reaches back to the time of Julius Cæsar, who, recognizing the strategic value of this high bluff above the Loire, built a strong tower here. Upon the well-wooded Isle St. Jean, directly opposite the château, Clovis and Alaric are said to have held an important conference, and our own good King Arthur is credited with owning the Castle of Amboise at one time, and of graciously returning it to the Franks before he sailed away to conquer Mordred and to meet his own death upon the Isle of Avalon. All of these tales we may believe or not as we please, for Touraine is full of ancient legends, more or less credible, and especially rich in those pertaining to Cæsar and his conquests, and of the beloved St. Martin's miraculous success in destroying the conqueror's towns, landmarks, and images of the gods.

[119]

While Lydia was gloating over the very ancient history of Amboise, Walter and I were glad to connect it with a later time when Louis VII met Thomas à Becket here with a view to bringing about a reconciliation between the proud prelate and his lord and master, Henry II of England. This meeting seemed comparatively recent, after the shadowy traditions of Cæsar and St. Martin that were poured into our ears, and we began to feel quite at home in the castle when we learned that our old friend of Langeais, Charles VIII, was born at Amboise and spent his childhood here under the care of his good and clever mother, Charlotte of Savoy. She taught him all that he was permitted to learn, his father, the crafty Louis XI, for some reason only known to himself, desiring his son and heir to grow up in ignorance of books as well as of the world of men.

[120]



CHÂTEAU OF LANGEAIS, FROM THE LOIRE

After her marriage at Langeais, Anne de Bretagne made a right royal progress to St. Denis, where she was anointed and crowned with great state and ceremony, the crown, which was far too heavy for the head of the little Queen of fourteen, being held over her by the Duke of Orleans. The new Queen, after making a solemn entrance into Paris and receiving the homage of all the civil and military officers of the Châtelet, the Provost of Paris, and of many other dignitaries, returned with her husband to Amboise, where most of their married life was spent. Additions were made to the château at this time and its interior was fitted up with great splendor; thousands of yards of cloth of gold, silk, tapestries from Flanders, and other precious stuffs were used as hangings, to the amount of ten thousand pounds, says one chronicler. "Past and contemporary events were portrayed on the tapestries. André Denisot and Guillaume Ménagier, workers of Tours, had charge of the furnishing; one room by Ménagier was hung with silk tapestry on which the history of Moses was represented, and the floor was covered with a large, fine silk Moorish carpet." All this, and much more in the way of rich furnishings and handsome silver, was brought to the old castle to do honor to the Bretonne bride, who was destined to know little happiness in her new home. Her eldest son, the Dauphin Charles, who was described by Philippe de Commines as "a fine child, bold in speech, and fearing not the things other children are frightened at," a child whose birth was hailed with rejoicing as an heir to the Duchy of Brittany and the Kingdom of France, fell ill and died at Amboise while his mother was near the frontier of Italy celebrating the King's recent victories. A curious story is told by Brantôme about

[121]

the mourning of the King and Queen for this beloved son.

"After the death of the Dauphin," says this chronicler, "King Charles and his Queen were full of such desolate grief that the doctors, fearing the weakness and feeble constitution of the King, were of opinion that excess of sorrow might be prejudicial to his health; they therefore advised as many distractions as possible, and suggested that the princes at court should invent new pastimes, dances, and mummeries to give pleasure to the King and Queen, which being done, the Monseigneur d'Orléans devised a masquerade with dances, in which he danced with such gaiety and so played the fool that the Queen thought he was making merry because he was nearer the throne of France, seeing that the Dauphin was dead. She was extremely displeased, and looked on him with such aversion that he was obliged to leave Amboise, where the court then was, and go to his Castle of Blois."

[122]

This was, as Walter remarks, rather shabby treatment of a royal prince and a former suitor; but the little Queen was hot tempered, strong in her likes and aversions, and never unmindful of the fact that she was Duchess of Brittany in her own right, as well as Queen of France by her marriage.

Lydia reminds us that the unappreciated Duke of Orleans had his innings later when he became King, after the death of Charles, and the second husband of Anne. You may notice that we are quite up on the history of Anne of Brittany, as we came across a charming biography of her at Brentano's in Paris, *A Twice Crowned Queen*, by the Countess de la Warr, in addition to which we have been looking over an old copy of Brantôme that we found at a book store here.

[123]

In the three years following the death of the Dauphin two sons and a daughter were born to Charles and Anne. These children all died in infancy. "In vain," says the Countess de la Warr, "did Anne take every precaution to save the lives of these little creatures whom death snatched from her so ruthlessly. She summoned nurses from Brittany, and the superstitious beliefs of her own country came back to her mind. She presented them with amulets, a Guienne crown piece wrapped up in paper, a piece of black wax in a bag of cloth of gold, six serpents' tongues,—a large one, two of medium size, and three little ones,—and rosaries of chalcedony and jasper; she not only sent votive offerings to the venerated shrines of the saints in Brittany, and presented rich gifts every year to the Holy Virgin of Auray, but she went herself on a pilgrimage. Alas! it was all to no purpose; a relentless fate followed the poor Queen."

[124]

A still heavier blow was destined to fall upon Anne, a few years later, in the death of her husband, to whom she seems to have been devotedly attached. In the midst of his work of beautifying Amboise with the spoils of his Italian wars, Charles was suddenly struck down with apoplexy, induced it is thought by a blow. He hit his head, never a very strong one, according to all accounts, against the stone arch of a little doorway and died a few hours after. We were shown the entrance to the Galerie Hacquelebac where the King met with his fatal accident as he was on his way to the tennis court with the Queen and his confessor, the Bishop of Angers. The door, which was very low at that time, was later raised and decorated with the porcupine of Louis XII.

The little widow, not yet twenty-one, was so overcome with grief at the death of her husband that she spent her days and nights in tears and lamentations. The only comfort that she found was in ordering a magnificent funeral for Charles, to every detail of which Louis d'Orléans, the new King, attended with scrupulous care, defraying himself the whole cost, not only of the ceremony itself, but of that incurred in conveying the body from Amboise to St. Denis. Even this devotion on the part of her husband's successor did not satisfy the Queen, as she redoubled her lamentations upon seeing him, and although he did everything in his power to comfort her in the most winning way, she still refused to eat or sleep and insisted between her sobs: "*Je dois suivre le chemin de mon mari!*" which for some reason sounds infinitely more pathetic than the plain English, "I must follow the way of my husband."

[125]

The way of the beloved Charles Anne was not destined to follow, as we find her, in less than a year, following in the way of his successor, Louis XII. The enforced and altogether unhappy marriage between Louis and his cousin, Jeanne of France, having been annulled by Alexander VI, in return for certain honors conferred upon his son, Cæsar Borgia, and the decree of separation having been pronounced by him at Chinon, Louis d'Orléans was free to offer his heart and his hand to the lady of his choice. This he did with all despatch, and was as promptly accepted by the widowed Queen.

[126]

The marriage of Louis XII and Anne was solemnized in her own castle, at Nantes, January 8, 1499, less than nine months after the death of her husband. The Queen bestowed rich gifts upon the churches of Brittany, the King having already conferred upon the Pope's representative, Cæsar Borgia, a pension of twenty thousand gold crowns, besides which he created him Duke of Valentinois.

"All this goes to prove," as Miss Cassandra says, "that bribery and corruption in high places are not strictly modern methods, since this good King Louis, called the Father of his people, resorted to them."

With this exception, Louis seems to have been quite a respectable person for a royal prince of that time, as he did everything in his power to make up to the discarded Jeanne for her disappointment at not being invited to share the throne of France with him. He conferred upon her the Duchy of Berry and other domains, and with them a handsome income which enabled the

pious princess to do many good works and to found the religious order of the Annonciade, of which she became Superior.

[127]

Although Louis and Anne established their residence at the King's birthplace, the Château of Blois, the Queen was at Amboise during the spring after her marriage, where her return was celebrated with rejoicings and festivities which were as original as they were picturesque, and well calculated to please a wine-drinking populace. Anne's biographer says: "The boulevard between the River Loire and the castle was transformed into a huge pavilion, in the middle of which were erected two columns bearing the devices of Louis and Anne,—a porcupine and an ermine,—and from the mouth of each, wine poured. A dais of red damask had been prepared for the King and one of white for the Queen; but Anne alone took part in this ceremony, either because Louis was prevented from being present or because he did not wish by his presence to recall sad memories."

Despite her wilfulness and obstinacy, Louis was very fond of *ma Bretonne*, as he playfully called his wife, and yielded to her in many instances. It is recorded, however, that when Anne wished to marry their daughter Claude to the Archduke Charles of Austria, the King stood out stoutly against the persuasions of his spouse and insisted upon her betrothal to his cousin and heir, Francis d'Angoulême, telling his wife, after his own humorous, homely fashion, that he had resolved "to marry his mice to none but the rats of his own barn."

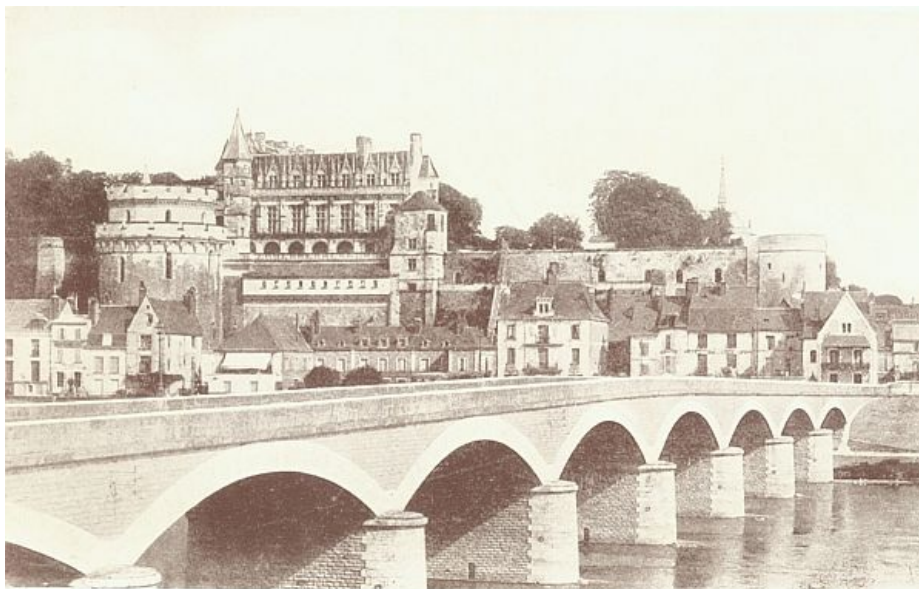
[128]

Even with occasional differences of opinion, which the King seems to have met with charming good humor, the union of Anne and Louis was far happier than most royal marriages. The little Bretonne, who had begun by disliking Louis d'Orléans, ended by loving him even more devotedly than her first husband, which does not seem strange to us, as he was a brave and accomplished gentleman, altogether a far more lovable character than Charles.

With all her devotion to her husband, the Duchess Queen was a thrifty lady, with an eye to the main chance, and when poor Louis was ill and thought to be dying at Blois, she attempted to provide against the chances and changes of sudden widowhood by sending down the river to Nantes several boats loaded with handsome furniture, jewels, silver, and the like. These boats were stopped between Saumur and Nantes by the Maréchal de Gié, his excuse being that as the King was still alive Anne had no right to remove her possessions from the castle. Although Maréchal de Gié was a favorite minister of Louis, Anne had him arrested and treated with great indignity. Not only was the unfortunate Maréchal punished for his recent sins, but by means of researches into his past life it was found that he had committed various offences against the State. Indignities and miseries were heaped upon him, and so hot was the wrath of the royal lady that when it was proposed that the Maréchal de Gié should be sentenced to death, she promptly replied that death was far too good for him, as that ended the sorrows of life, and that for one of high estate to sink to a low estate and to be overwhelmed with misfortunes was to die daily, which was quite good enough for him. All of which shows that even if Anne was something of a philosopher she was also possessed of a most vindictive spirit, and quite lacking in the sweetness and charity with which her partial biographer has endowed her. Fortunately the King, recovering, "through the good prayers of his people," intervened on behalf of his late favorite and mitigated the rigor of his sentence, which was even then more severe than was warranted by his offence.

[129]

[130]



CHÂTEAU OF AMBOISE, FROM OPPOSITE BANK OF THE LOIRE

I tell you this little tale because it is characteristic of the time, as well as of the imperious little Duchess Queen, and makes us realize that Louis was well named the good, and had need of all the generosity and amiability that has been attributed to him as an offset to the fiery temper of his Breton wife.

Among the many interesting additions that Charles VIII made to Amboise was the great double Tours des Minimes, adjoining the royal apartments. This tower was used as an approach to the château by means of inclined planes of brick work, which wound around a central newel, graded

so gently that horses and light vehicles could ascend without difficulty. These curious ascents were doubtless suggested to the King by the low broad steps in the Vatican over which the old Popes were wont to ride on their white mules. Lydia reminds us that it was upon this dim corkscrew of a road winding upward that Brown performed his remarkable feat in *The Lightning Conductor*. Brown might have made this dizzy ascent and perilous descent in his Napier; but it could be done by no other chauffeur, "live or dead or fashioned by my fancy," although kings and princes once rode their horses up these inclines, which answered the purpose of *porte cochère* and stairway. By this way Francis I and his guest Charles V rode up to the royal apartments when the Emperor made his visit here in 1539, amid general rejoicings and such a blaze of flambeaux that, as the ancient chronicler tells us, even in this dim passage one might see as clearly as at midday.

[131]

In the terraced garden of Amboise, near a quincunx of lime trees, is a bust of Leonardo da Vinci. We wondered why it was placed here until we learned from our invaluable *Joanne* that the Italian artist had lived and died at Amboise, inhabiting a little manor house near the château. It was Francis I, the beauty loving as well as the pleasure seeking King, who brought Leonardo to France and to Amboise, the home of his childhood. The Italian artist was over sixty when he came to France and only lived about three years here, dying, it is said, in the arms of Francis. Among his last requests were minute directions for his burial in the royal church of St. Florentin, which once stood in the grounds of the castle. When this church was destroyed, in the last century, a skull and some bones were found among the ruins which were supposed to be those of Leonardo. A bust was erected on the spot where the remains were found. Whether or not the bones are those of Leonardo, a fitting memorial to the great artist is this bust near the lovely quincunx, whose overshadowing branches form a roof of delicate green above it like the pergolas of his native Italy. We afterwards visited the little Château de Cloux, where Leonardo had once lived.

[132]

A long stretch of years and several reigns lie between Anne of Brittany and Mary of Scotland, yet it is of these two twice-crowned queens that we think as we wander through the gardens and halls of the Château of Amboise. Both of these royal ladies came here as brides and both were received with joyful acclamations at Amboise. Mary's first visit to the château was in the heyday of her beauty and happiness, when as *la reine-dauphine* she won all hearts.

Do you remember a charming full-length portrait, that we once saw, of Mary and Francis standing in the embrasure of a window of one of the royal palaces? Although a year younger than Mary, Francis had been devoted to her little serene highness of Scotland ever since her early childhood, and she seems to have been equally attached to her boyish lover, as chroniclers of the time tell us that they delighted to retire from the gayety and confusion of the court to whisper their little secrets to each other, with no one to hear, and that they were well content when according to the etiquette of the period they established their separate court and *ménage* at Villers Cotterets as *roi et reine-dauphine*.

[133]

As the province of Touraine was one of the dower possessions of the young Queen, she entered into her own when she visited these royal castles. We think of her at Amboise, riding up the broad inclines to the royal apartments, her husband by her side, followed by a gay cavalcade, and what would we not give for a momentary glimpse of Mary Stuart in the bright beauty of her youth, before sorrow and crime had cast a shadow over her girlish loveliness! No portrait seems to give any adequate representation of Mary, probably because her grace and animation added so much to the beauty of her auburn tinted hair, the dazzling whiteness of her complexion and the bright, quick glance of her brown eyes.

"Others there were," says one of Mary's biographers, "in that gay, licentious court, with faces as fair and forms more perfect; what raised Mary of Scotland above all others was her animation. When she spoke her whole being seemed to become inspired. A ready wit called to its aid a well-stored mind." In fact, Mary was witty enough to afford to be plain, and beautiful enough to afford to be dull; and early and late she captured hearts, from the days when the poets, Ronsard, De Maison Fleur, and the hapless Chastelard, celebrated her charms in verse to a later and sadder time when, during her captivity in England her young page, Anthony Babington, was so fascinated by her wit and grace that he made a valiant and desperate effort to save her to his own undoing.

[134]

The sorrows and final tragedy of Mary Stuart's life have so overshadowed the events of her early years that we are wont to forget the power and influence that were hers in the eighteen months of her reign as Queen of France. Adored by her young husband, who evidently admired her for her learning as well as for her beauty and charm, she seems to have passed through her years at court with no breath of suspicion attached to her fair name, and this in an atmosphere of unbridled license and debauchery of which Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, wrote to her son, "No one here but is tainted by it. If you were here yourself you would only escape by some remarkable mercy of God."

[135]

In addition to her ascendancy over the mind of her husband the young Queen had always at her side her astute kinsmen, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, who were as clever as they were unscrupulous. With these powerful uncles near her, Mary was in a position to outwit the wily Catherine, between whom and the Guise faction little love was lost. Only when some scheme of devilry joined them together in common interests, as the massacre of the Huguenots at Amboise, were Catherine and the Guise brothers at one, and this triumvirate even Queen Mary was powerless to withstand.

We had wandered far afield with Mary Stuart in the joyous days of her youth when we were

suddenly brought back by the guide to her last sad visit to Amboise. He pointed out to us the Isle St. Jean opposite the balcony where we were standing, saying that the *conjuré* had met over there. Whether or not any of the conspirators met on this island in the Loire, the Conspiracy of 1560, which the Guise brothers were pleased to call the tumult of Amboise, was formed at Nantes. Although the Huguenots have had all the credit of this formidable uprising, a number of Catholics had joined them with the object of breaking down the great and growing powers of the Guise family. As one of the alleged plans of the conspirators was to seize Francis and Mary and remove them from the influence of the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, the young King and Queen were hurried from Blois to the stronghold of Amboise. If this plot had succeeded, as would probably have been the case had it not been for the treachery of a lawyer, named Des Avenelles, in whose house one of the leaders lodged, what would it not have meant to the Huguenots and to France? With the Guise brothers in their power and the King and Queen no longer under their dominion, the Huguenots might have made terms with the royal party, backed as they were at this time by some Catholics of influence.

[136]

The ever vigilant Duke of Guise, having discovered the plot, met it with the promptness, resolution, and relentless cruelty that belonged to his character and his time, and in this case an element of revenge was added to his wrath against the offenders, as his own capture and that of his brother, the Cardinal of Lorraine, was one of the chief objects of the conspirators. The life and liberty of the King and Queen were in no way included in this plot, as appeared later; but it suited the purpose of the Duke of Guise to shelter himself behind the young sovereigns and to represent the conspiracy as an act of high treason against the throne of France. Francis and Mary, only half believing the story told them, but not strong enough to resist the power of the Duke, the Cardinal and the Queen-mother, allowed themselves to be brought to Amboise.

[137]

We have been reading again Dumas's thrilling description of the "tumult of Amboise," and his pathetic picture of the young King and Queen, who shrank from witnessing the tortures and death to which their Huguenot subjects were condemned. Catherine insisted that they should take their places on the balcony overlooking the court of execution, chide her son as a weakling because he shrank from the sight of blood, while the Cardinal reminded poor, trembling, tender-hearted Francis that his "grandsire of glorious memory, Francis I, had always assisted at the burning of heretics."

[138]

"Other kings do as they please and so will I," Francis had the courage to say but not to do, as he and Mary, "poor crowned slaves," as the novelist calls them, were forced to appear upon the iron balcony and witness the execution of some of the noblest of their subjects.

Standing on the Tour des Minimes on this fair September day, looking down upon the balconies, terraces, and gardens of the château basking in warm sunshine, it was difficult to realize the scenes of horror and bloodshed that were enacted here on that sad day in March, 1560. The Duke had his troops ambushed in the forest of Château Regnault, in readiness to attack the conspirators as they approached in small detachments, and over the peaceful plain spread before us, through which the Loire winds its way, an army of Frenchmen was lured on to its destruction by false promises of safety, and in yonder forest of Château Regnault one of the prime movers in the uprising, the Seigneur de la Renaudie, a gentleman of Perigord, was overtaken and slain. Such other brave men and noble gentlemen as the Baron de Castelnau Chalosse and the Baron de Raunay were spared for a sadder fate, while for the Prince de Condé there was reserved the crowning horror of seeing his followers beheaded one by one. It is said that as they were led into the courtyard they turned to salute their "*chef muet*," a salute which he was brave enough to return, while they went to the block singing Clement Marot's adaptation of the Sixty-seventh Psalm:

[139]

Dieu nous soit doux et favorable
Nous bénissant par sa bonté
Et de son visage adorable
Nous fasse luire la clarté.

It is not strange that, in the face of such sublime faith and dauntless courage, the young Queen should have pleaded for the life of these noblemen, or that the Duke de Nemours, who had pledged his faith as a prince, "on his honor and on the damnation of his soul," that the Huguenot deputies should be fairly dealt with, should have added his entreaties to those of Mary.

The Duke of Nemours appealed to Catherine, who answered with feigned indifference that she could do nothing, then to the King who, pale and ill at the sight before him, would have stopped the massacre long before. The Queen, on bended knee, begged her husband for the life of the last victim, the Baron de Castelnau. The King made a sign that he should be spared; but the Cardinal of Lorraine chose to misunderstand, gave the fatal signal, and Castelnau's head fell with the rest.

[140]

In view of this wholesale slaughter, for it is said that over twelve hundred perished in and around Amboise, we do not wonder that the Prince de Condé exclaimed:

"Ah, what an easy task for foreigners to seize on France after the death of so many honorable men!" a speech for which the Guises never quite forgave him. Nor did we wonder, as we made our way to the garden through the bare unfurnished rooms of the château, that it ceased to be a royal residence after this carnival of blood, and later became a State prison, and place of exile for persons of high degree. The Cardinal de Bourbon was confined here, and it is said that Amboise opened its doors to the Superintendent Fouquet after his capture by D'Artagnan, for you must know that there was a real D'Artagnan from whom Dumas constructed his somewhat glorified

[141]

hero.

We wondered why so many feeble, old people were sitting about in the house and grounds, until the *gardienne* told us, that, the château having been restored to the Orleans family in 1872, they had established here a retreat and home for their old retainers.

"Well, I am thankful that some good deeds are done here to help to wash away the dark stains from the history of the château!" exclaimed Miss Cassandra. "But how do they manage to sleep with the ghosts of all these good men who have been murdered here haunting the place at night?"

Walter reminded her that the just were supposed to rest quietly in their graves, and that it was those of uneasy conscience who walked o' nights.

"Then Catherine must be walking most of the time. We certainly should see her if we could wait here until after dark."

When I translated our Quaker lady's remarks to the guide she laughed and rejoined, with a merry twinkle in her eye, that if "Her Majesty had to walk in all the palaces that had known her evil deeds she would be kept busy and would only have a night now and again for Amboise; beside which this château was blessed, having been dedicated to good works, and after all were not the Guises more involved in the massacre of the Huguenots here than Catherine?" [142]

Miss Cassandra reluctantly acknowledged that perhaps they were, but for her part she makes no excuses for Catherine, and refuses to believe that she was ever an innocent baby. She declares that this insatiable daughter of the *Médici*, like Minerva, sprang full grown into being, equipped for wickedness as the goddess was with knowledge.

With a clink of silver and a cheerful "*Au revoir, Mesdames et Monsieur*," we parted from our pleasant little guide. As we turned to look back at Amboise from the bridge, some heavy clouds hung over the castle, making it look grim and gray, more like the fortress-prison that it had proved to so many hundreds of brave, unfortunate Frenchmen than the cheerful château, basking in the sunshine, that we had seen this morning.

We motored home, in a fine drizzle of rain, through a gray landscape; and surely no landscape can be more perfectly gray than that of France when it is pleased to put on sombre tints, and no other could have been as well suited to the shade of our thoughts. [143]

Lydia, by way of reviving our drooping spirits, I fancy, as she is not usually given to conundrums or puzzles, suddenly propounded a series of brain-racking questions. "Who first said, 'Let us fly and save our bacon;' and 'He would make three bites of a cherry;' and 'Appetite comes with eating;' and 'It is meat, drink, and cloth to us;' and——"

"Stop!" cried Miss Cassandra, "and give us time to think, but I am quite sure that it was Beau Brummel who made three bites of a cherry, or a strawberry, or some other small fruit."

Walter and I were inclined to give Shakespeare and Pope the credit of these familiar sayings; but we were all wrong, as Lydia, after puzzling us for some time, exclaimed triumphantly:

"No, further back than either Shakespeare or Pope; these wise sayings, and many more like them, were written by a Tourangeau, one Monsieur Rabelais."

"And where did you come across them?" we asked, quite put out with Lydia for knowing so much more than the rest of us. [144]

Then Lydia, who appears upon the surface to be a guileless and undesigning young person, confessed that she had extracted this information from a Frenchman with whom we all had some pleasant conversation on the way to Langeais, and she has been treasuring it up ever since to spring it upon us in an unguarded moment when we were far from the haunts of Rabelais. This gentleman, whose name is one of the things we shall probably never know, with the cheerfully appropriating spirit of the French, was ready to claim most of Shakespeare's aphorisms for Rabelais. We are willing to forgive him, however, because he introduced us to a phrase coined by the creator of Pantagruel, in slow-going sixteenth century days, which so exactly fits the situation to-day that it seems to have been made for such travellers as ourselves: "Nothing is so dear and precious as time," wrote M. Rabelais, long before tourists from all over the world were trying to live here on twenty-four hours a day and yet see all the châteaux and castles upon their lists. [145]

My brother Archie has been talking of coming over to join us either here or in Paris. As he is a rather sudden person in his movements, it would not surprise me to have him appear any day. I only hope that he may come while we are in Touraine. He is so fond of everything in the agricultural line that he would delight in this fertile, well-cultivated country.

VIII

A BATTLE ROYAL OF DAMES

[146]

THIS being a beautiful day, and the sunshine more brilliant than is usual on a September morning in this region, we unanimously agreed to dedicate its hours to one of the most interesting of the neighboring châteaux. The really most important question upon which we were not unanimous was whether Chenonceaux or Chinon should be the goal of our pilgrimage. Miss Cassandra unhesitatingly voted for Chenonceaux, which she emphatically announced to be the château of all others that she had crossed the ocean to see. "It was not a ruin like Chinon," she urged, "the buildings were in perfect condition and the park and gardens of surpassing loveliness."

"Of course we expect to go to Chinon, dear Miss Cassandra," said I; "it is only a question of which we are to see to-day."

"Yes, my dear, but I have great faith in the bird in the hand, or as the Portuguese gentleman expressed it, 'One I have is worth two I shall have.' The finger of fate seems to point to Chenonceaux to-day, for I dreamed about it last night and Diana (Miss Cassandra always gives the name of the fair huntress its most uncompromising English pronunciation) was standing on the bridge looking just like a portrait that we saw the other day, and in a gorgeous dress of black and silver. Now don't think, my dears, that I approve of Diana; she was decidedly light, and Lydia knows very well that the overseers of the meeting would have had to deal with her more than once; but when it comes to a choice between Diana and Catherine, I would always choose Diana, whatever her faults may have been."

[147]

"Diane," corrected a shrill voice above our heads.

We happened to be standing on the little portico by the garden, and I looked around to see who was listening to our conversation, when again "Diane" rang forth, followed by "*Bon jour, Madame*," all in the exquisite accent of Touraine.

"It is Polly, who is correcting my pronunciation," exclaimed Miss Cassandra, "and I really don't blame her." Looking up at the cage, with a nod and a smile, she cried, "*Bon jour, joli Marie!*"

[148]

"Good-by, Madame," rejoined the parrot, proudly cocking her head on one side and winking at Miss Cassandra in the most knowing fashion, as if to say, "Two can play at that game."

Polly has learned some English phrases from the numerous guests of the house, and cordially greets us with "Good-by" when we enter and "How do you do?" when we are leaving, which, you may remember, was just what Mr. Monard, who had the little French church in Philadelphia, used to do until some person without any sense of humor undertook to set him straight. We trust that no misguided person may ever undertake to correct Polly's English or Miss Cassandra's French, for as Walter says, "To hear those two exchanging linguistic courtesies is one of the experiences that make life and travel worth while, and the most amusing part of it is that the Quaker lady is as unconscious of the humor of the situation as the parrot."

[149]

"And, after all," said Miss Cassandra, returning to her argument after Polly's interruption, "when a woman is so beautiful at fifty that a young king is at her feet, giving her jewels from morning until night, it is not strange that her head should be turned. And you must remember, Zephine," added Miss Cassandra in her most engaging manner, "that your favorite Henry James said that he would rather have missed Chinon than Chenonceaux, and that he counted as exceedingly fortunate the few hours that he passed at this exquisite residence."

After this Parthian shaft Miss Cassandra left us to put on her hat for Chenonceaux, for to Chenonceaux we decided to go, of course. Miss Cassandra's arguments were irresistible, as usual, and as Walter added philosophically, "Her choice is generally a wise one, and where everything is so well worth seeing one cannot go far astray." We took a train that leaves, what our local guidebook is pleased to call the monumental railway station of Tours, between ten and eleven o'clock and reached the town of Chenonceaux in less than an hour. All of these jaunts by rail are short and so conveniently arranged that one always seems to have ample time for the inspection of whatever château and grounds one happens to be visiting.

[150]

At the station we found an omnibus which conveyed us to the Hôtel du Bon Laboureur, the Mecca of all hungry pilgrims, where a substantial luncheon was soon spread before us, enlivened, as Walter puts it, by a generous supply of the light wine of the country. Looking over my shoulder, as I write, he declares that I am gilding that luncheon at the Bon Laboureur with all the romance and glamour of Chenonceaux, and that it was not substantial at all; but on the contrary pitifully light. Perhaps I am idealizing the luncheon, as Walter says, but as part and parcel of a day of unallayed happiness it stands out in my mind as a feast of the gods, despite all adverse criticism. Being a mere man, as Lydia expresses it, Walter feels the discomforts of travel more than we women folk. He says that he is heartily tired of luncheons made up of flimflams, omelettes, entrées, and the like, and when the inevitable salad and fowl appeared he quite shocked us by saying that he would like to see some real chicken, the sort that we have at home broiled by Mandy, who knows how to cook chicken far and away better than these Johnny Crapauds with all their boasted culinary skill.

[151]

Lydia and I were congratulating ourselves that no one could understand this rude diatribe when we noticed, at the next table, our acquaintance of Langeais, Lydia's aphoristic Frenchman, if I may coin a word. This did not seem a good time to renew civilities, especially as he was evidently laughing behind his napkin. I motioned to Walter to keep quiet and gave him a look that

was intended to be very severe, and then Miss Cassandra, with her usual friendly desire to pour oil upon the troubled waters, stirred them up more effectually by adding: "Yes, Walter, but in travelling one must take the bad with the good; we have no buildings like these at home and I for one am quite willing to give up American social pleasures and luxuries for the sake of all that we see here and all that we learn."

Can you imagine anything more bewildering to a Frenchman than Miss Cassandra's philosophy, especially her allusion to American social pleasures and luxuries, which to the average and untravelled French mind would be represented, I fancy, by a native Indian picnic with a menu of wild turkey and quail? It was a very good luncheon, I insisted, even if not quite according to American ideas, and variety is one of the pleasures of foreign travel,—this last in my most instructive manner and to Lydia's great amusement. She alone grasped the situation, as Walter and Miss Cassandra were seated with their backs to the stranger. In order to prevent further criticisms upon French living I changed the subject by asking Walter for our Joanne guidebook, and succeeded in silencing the party, after Artemus Ward's plan with his daughter's suitors, by reading aloud to them, during which the stranger finished his luncheon and after the manner of the suitors quietly took his departure.

[152]

"We shall never see him again," I exclaimed, "and he will always remember us as those rude and unappreciative Americans!"

"And what have we done to deserve such an opinion?" asked Walter.

"Attacked them on their most sensitive point. A Frenchman prides himself, above everything else, upon the *cuisine* of his country, and considers American living altogether crude and uncivilized."

[153]

"And is *that* all, Zephine, and don't you think it about time that they should learn better; and who is the *he* in question, anyhow?"

When I explained about the Frenchman, who was seated behind him and understood every invidious word, Walter, instead of being contrite, said airily that he regretted that he had not spoken French as that would probably have been beyond Mr. Crapaud's comprehension.

A number of coaches were standing in front of the little inn, one of which Miss Cassandra and Lydia engaged in order to save their strength for the many steps to be taken in and around the château; but they did not save much, after all, as the coaches all stop at the end of the first avenue of plane trees at a railroad crossing and after this another long avenue leads to the grounds. Walter and I thought that we decidedly had the best of it, as we strolled through the picturesque little village, and having our kodaks with us we were able to get some pretty bits by the way, among other things a photograph of a sixteenth century house in which the pages of Francis I are said to have been lodged.



[CHENONCEAUX, MARQUES TOWER AND GALLERY ACROSS THE CHER](#)

Passing up the long avenue we made a *détour* to the left, attracted by some rich carvings at the end of the tennis court,—and what a tennis court it is!—smooth, green, beautifully made, with a background of forest trees skirting it on two sides.

[154]

The approach to the château is in keeping with its stately beauty. After traversing the second avenue of plane trees, we passed between two great sphinxes which guard the entrance to the court, with the ancient dungeon-keep on the right and on the left the Domes buildings, which seem to include the servants' quarters and stables. Beyond this is the drawbridge which spans the wide moat and gives access to a spacious rectangular court. This moat of clear, running water, its solid stone walls draped with vines and topped with blooming plants, defines the ancient limits of the domain of the Marques family who owned this estate as far back in history as the thirteenth century. Where the beautiful château now stands there was once a fortified mill. The property passed into the hands of Thomas Bohier, in the fifteenth century, who conceived the bold idea of turning the old mill into a château, its solid foundations, sunk into the Cher, affording a substantial support for the noble superstructure; or, as Balzac says, "Messire de Bohier, the Minister of Finances, as a novelty placed his house astride the River Cher." A château built over a river! Can you imagine anything more picturesque, or, as Miss Cassandra says, anything more unhealthy? The sun shone gaily to-day, and the rooms felt fairly dry, but during the long weeks of rain that come to France in the spring and late autumn these spacious *salles*

[155]

must be as damp as a cellar. Miss Cassandra says that the bare thought of sleeping in them gives her rheumatic twinges. There are handsome, richly decorated mantels and chimney-places in all of the great rooms, but they look as if they had not often known the delights of a cheerful fire of blazing logs.

The old building is in the form of a vast square pavilion, flanked on each corner by a bracketed turret upon which there is a wealth of Renaissance ornamentation. On the east side are the chapel and a small outbuilding, which form a double projection and enclose a little terrace on the ground floor. Over the great entrance door are carvings and heraldic devices, and over the whole façade of the château there is a rich luxuriance of ornamentation which, with the wide moat surrounding it, and the blooming parterres spread before it, give the entire castle the air of being *en fête*, not relegated to the past like Langeais, Amboise, and some of the other châteaux that we have seen. [156]

However Diane de Poitiers and Catherine de Médici may have beautified this lovely palace on the Cher, its inception seems to have been due to Bohier, the Norman *général des finances* of Charles VIII, or perhaps to his wife Katherine Briçonnet, a true lover of art, who like her husband spent vast sums upon Chenonceaux. The fact that Bohier died before the château was anywhere near completion makes the old French inscription on the tower, and elsewhere on the walls, especially pathetic, "*S'il vient a point, m'en souviendra*" (If completed, remember me). Even unfinished as the Norman financier left Chenonceaux, one cannot fail to remember him and his dreams of beauty which others were destined to carry out.

Unique in situation and design is the great gallery, sixty metres in height, which Philibert de l'Orme, at Queen Catherine's command, caused to rise like a fairy palace from the waters of the Cher. This gallery of two stories, decorated in the interior with elaborate designs in stucco, and busts of royal and distinguished persons, is classic in style and sufficiently substantial in structure, as it rests upon five arches separated by abutments, on each of which is a semicircular turret rising to the level of the first floor. Designed for a *salle des fêtes*, this part of the castle was never quite finished in consequence of the death of Catherine, who intended that an elaborate pavilion, to match Bohier's château on the opposite bank of the river, should mark the terminus of the gallery. The new building was far enough advanced, however, to be used for the elaborate festivities that had been planned for Francis II and Queen Mary when they fled from the horrors of Amboise to the lovely groves and forests of Chenonceaux. [157]

Standing in the long gallery, which literally bridges the Cher, we wondered whether the masques and revels held here in honor of the Scotch Queen were able to dispel sad thoughts of that day at Amboise, of whose miseries we heard so much yesterday. Mary Stuart, more than half French, was gay, light-hearted and perhaps in those early days with a short memory for the sorrows of life; but it seems as if the recollection of that day of slaughter and misery could never have been quite effaced from her mind. To Catherine, who revelled in blood and murder, the day was one of triumph, but its horrors evidently left their impress upon the delicate physique as well as upon the sensitive mind of the frail, gentle Francis. [158]

Since we have heard so much of the evil deeds of Catherine it has become almost unsafe to take Miss Cassandra into any of the palaces where the Medicean Queen is honored by statue or portrait. When we passed from the spacious *salle des gardes*, later used as the dining hall of the Briçonnet family, into the room of Diane de Poitiers, it seemed the very irony of fate that a large portrait of the arch enemy of the beautiful Diane should adorn the richly carved chimney-place. I should not say *adorn*, for Catherine's unattractive face could adorn nothing, and this severe portrait in widow's weeds, with none of the pomp and circumstance of royalty to light up the sombre garb, is singularly undecorative. Although she had already announced that she had no great affection for Diane, Catherine's portrait in this particular room excited Miss Cassandra's wrath to such a degree that her words and gestures attracted the attention of the guide. At first he looked perplexed and then indignantly turned to us for an explanation: "What ailed the lady, and why was she displeased? He was doing his best to show us the château." We reassured him, smoothed down his ruffled feathers, and finally explained to him that Miss Cassandra had a deep-rooted aversion to Queen Catherine and especially resented having her honored by portrait or bust in these beautiful French castles, above all in this room of her hated rival. [159]

"Diane was none too good herself," he replied with a grim smile; "but she was beautiful and had wit enough to hold the hearts of two kings." Then, entering into the spirit of the occasion, he turned to Miss Cassandra and by dint of shrugs, and no end of indescribable and most expressive French gestures, he made her understand that he had no love for Catherine himself, and that if it lay within his *pouvoir* he would throw the unlovely portrait out of the window; no one cared for her,—her own husband least of all. This last remark was accompanied with what was intended for a wicked wink, exclusively for Walter's benefit, but its wickedness was quite overcome by the irresistible and contagious good humor and *bonhomie* of the man. Finding that his audience was *en rapport* with him, he drew our attention to the wall decoration, which consists of a series of monograms, and asked us how we read the design. [160]

"D and H intertwined" we answered in chorus.

At this the guide laughed merrily and explained that there were different opinions about the monogram; some persons said that King Henry had boldly undertaken to interlace the initial letters of Catherine and Diane with his own, but he for his part believed that the letters were two Cs with an H between them and, whether by accident or design, the letter on the left, which looked more like a D than a C, gave the key to the monogram, "and this," he added with the air of

a philosopher, "made it true to history; the beautiful favorite on the left hand was always more powerful than the Queen on the right, not that the ways of King Henry II were to be commended; but," with a frank smile, "one is always pleased to think of that wicked woman getting what was owing her."

[161]

"Rousseau thought that both the initials were those of Diane; he says in his *Confessions*: 'In 1747 we went to pass the autumn in Touraine, at the castle of Chenonceaux, a royal mansion upon the Cher, built by Henry II for Diane de Poitiers, of whom the ciphers are still seen.'"

We turned, at the sound of a strange voice, to find the Frenchman of the Bon Laboureur standing quite near us.

"These guides have a large supply of more or less correct history at hand, and this one, being a philosopher, adds his own theories to further obscure the truth." This in the most perfect English, accompanied by a shrug of the shoulders entirely French. "Chenonceaux being Diane's château and this her own room, what more natural than that her cipher should be here, as Rousseau says? And yet, as Honoré de Balzac points out, this same cipher is to be found in the palace of the Louvre; upon the columns of *la Halle au Blé*, built by Catherine herself; and above her own tomb at Saint Denis which she had constructed during her lifetime. All the same, it must have pleased Henry immensely to have the royal cipher look much more like D H than like C H, and there is still room for conjecture which, after all, is one of the charms of history, so, Monsieur et Mesdames, it is quite *à votre choix*," with a graceful bow in our direction.

[162]

Evidently Monsieur Crapaud does not consider us savages, despite Walter's unsavory remarks about the *cuisine* of his country, and noticing our interest he added with French exactness: "Of course, the château was not built for Diane, although much enlarged and beautified by her, and when Catherine came into possession she had the good sense to carry out some of Diane's plans. Francis I came here to hunt sometimes, and it was upon one of these parties of pleasure, when his son Henry and Diane de Poitiers were with him, that she fell in love with this castle on the Cher, and longed to make it her own. Having a lively sense of the instability of all things mortal, kings in particular, she took good care to make friends with the rising star, and when Francis was gathered to his fathers and his uncles and his cousins,—you may remember that his predecessor was an uncle or a cousin,—Henry promptly turned over Chenonceaux to Diane."

[163]

"There is a curious old story," said Monsieur Crapaud, "about Chenonceaux having been given to Diane to soothe her vanity, which had been wounded by the publication of some scurrilous verses, said to have been instigated by her enemy, Madame d'Etampes. Naturally, the petted beauty, whose charms were already on the wane, resented satirical allusion to her painted face, false teeth and hair, especially as she was warned, in very plain language, that a painted bait would not long attract her prey. These verses were attributed to one of the Bohiers, a nephew or a son of the old councillor who had built the château, and, to save his neck, he offered Chenonceaux to Henry, who begged Diane to accept it and forget her woes."

"Which she did, of course," said Walter, "as she always seemed to have had an eye to the main chance."

"I cannot vouch for the truth of the story; I give it to you as it came to me. There is no doubt, however, that certain satirical verses were written about the Duchesse de Valentinois, in which she and the King also are spoken of with a freedom not to be expected under the old régime. Perhaps you are not familiar with the quatrain:

[164]

"Sire, si vous laissez, comme Charles désire,
Comme Diane veut, par trop vous gouverner,
Foudre, pétrir, mollir, refondre, retourner,
Sire vous n'êtes plus, vous n'êtes plus que cire."

"Rather bold language to use in speaking of a king, to be told that he is but wax in the hands of Diane and the Cardinal of Lorraine," said Lydia; "that was at the time of the disaster of St. Quentin, was it not?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle; you seem to be quite up on our history, which was really deeply involved in cabals at this juncture. I shall be afraid of you in future, as you probably know more about it all than I do."

The French gentleman's natural use of Americanisms in speech was as surprising to us as was Lydia's knowledge of French history to him, and the ice being now fairly broken, we chatted away gaily as we passed through the handsome dining room, the ancient *salle des gardes* of Queen Catherine, where our new *cicerone* pointed out to us in the painted ceiling her own personal cipher interwoven with an arabesque. From the great dining room a door, on which are carved the arms of the Bohiers, leads directly, one might say abruptly, into a chapel, "as if," said Monsieur Crapaud, "to remind those who sit at meat here that the things of the spirit are near at hand."

[165]

The chapel is a little gem, with rich glass dating back to 1521. Another door in the dining room leads to Queen Catherine's superbly decorated salon, and still another to the apartments of Louise de Vaudemont. In these rooms, which she had hung in black, the saintly widow of Henry III spent many years mourning for a husband who had shown himself quite unworthy of her devotion. The more that we saw of this lovely palace, the better we understood Catherine's wrath when she saw the coveted possession thrown into the lap of her rival. She had come here with

her father-in-law, Francis, as a bride, and naturally looked upon the château as her own.

"But Diane held on to it," said Walter. "We have just been reading that remarkable scene when, after Henry had been mortally wounded in the tournament with Montgomery, Catherine sent messages to her, demanding possession of the castle. You remember that her only reply was, 'Is the King yet dead?' and hearing that he still lived, Diane stoutly refused to surrender her château while breath was in his body. We have our Dumas with us, you see."

[166]

"Yes, and here, I believe, he was true to history. That was a battle royal of dames, and I, for my part, have always regretted that Diane had to give up her palace. Have you seen Chaumont, which she so unwillingly received in exchange? No! Then you will see something fine in its way, but far less beautiful than Chenonceaux, which for charm of situation stands alone."

And after all, Diane still possesses her château; for it is of her that we think as we wander from room to room. In the apartment of Francis I her portrait by Primaticcio looks down from the wall. As in life, Diane's beauty and wit triumphed over her rivals; over the withering hand of age and the schemes of the unscrupulous and astute daughter of the Médici, so in death she still dominates the castle that she loved. Pray do not think that I am in love with Diane; she was doubtless wicked and vindictive, even if not as black as Dumas paints her; but bad as she may have been, it is a satisfaction to think of her having for years outwitted Catherine, or as Miss Cassandra said, in language more expressive if less elegant than that of Monsieur Crapaud, "It is worth much to know that that terrible woman for once *did* get her *come uppings*."

[167]

If it was of Diane de Poitiers we thought within the walls of the château, it was to Mary Stuart that our thoughts turned as we wandered through the lovely forest glades of the park, under the overarching trees through whose branches the sun flashed upon the green turf and varied growth of shrubbery. We could readily fancy the young Queen and her brilliant train riding gaily through these shaded paths, their hawks upon their wrists, these, according to all writers of the time, being the conventional accompaniments of royalty at play.

Ronsard was doubtless with the court at Chenonceaux, as he was often in the train of the young Queen, whom he had instructed in the art of verse making. Like all the other French poets of his time, he laid some of his most charming verses at the feet of Mary Stuart, whose short stay in France he likened to the life of the flowers.

[168]

"Les roses et les lis ne règnent qu'un printemps,
Ansi vostre beauté seulment apparrue
Quinze ou seize ans en France est soudain disparue."

I think Ronsard, as well as Chastelard, accompanied Mary upon her sad return to Scotland after the death of Francis, and how cold and barren that north country must have seemed after the rich fertility and beauty of Touraine! Do you remember our own impressions of Holyrood on a rainy August morning, and the chill gloom of poor Mary's bedroom, and the adjoining dismal little boudoir where she supped with Rizzio,—the room in which he was murdered as he clung to her garments for protection? I thought of it to-day as we stood in the warm sunshine of the court, with the blooming parterres spread before us, realizing, as never before, the sharp contrast between such palaces of pleasure as this and Mary's rude northern castles. An appropriate setting was this château for the gay, spirited young creature, who seems to have been a queen every inch from her childhood, with a full appreciation of her own importance. It seems that she mortally offended Catherine, when a mere child, by saying that the Queen belonged to a family of merchants while she herself was the daughter of a long line of kings. In some way, Mary's words were repeated to Catherine, who never forgave the bitter speech, all the more bitter for its truth.

[169]

Finding that we had not yet seen the Galerie Louis XIV, which, for some reason, is not generally shown to visitors, our friendly *cicerone* who, as he expressed it, knows Chenonceaux as he knows the palm of his hand, conducted us again to the château. For him all doors were opened, as by magic, and we afterwards learned that he had some acquaintance with Monsieur Terry, the present owner of this fair domain.

Although the Galerie Louis XIV, on the upper floor of the long gallery, is not particularly beautiful or well decorated, it is interesting because here were first presented some of the plays of Jean Jacques Rousseau, *L'Engagement Téméraire* and *Le Devin du Village*. Such later associations as this under the *régime* of the *Fermier Général* and Madame Dupin are those of an altogether peaceful and homelike abode. In his *Confessions* Rousseau says: "We amused ourselves greatly in this fine spot. We made a great deal of music and acted comedies. I wrote a comedy, in fifteen days, entitled *L'Engagement Téméraire*, which will be found amongst my papers; it has not other merit than that of being lively. I composed several other little things: amongst others a poem entitled, *L'Allée de Sylvie*, from the name of an alley in the park upon the banks of the Cher; and this without discontinuing my chemical studies or interrupting what I had to do for Madame D—n." Rousseau was at this time acting as secretary to Madame Dupin and her son-in-law, Monsieur Francueil. Elsewhere he complains that these two *dilettanti* were so occupied with their own productions that they were disposed to belittle the genius of their brilliant secretary, which, after all, was not unnatural, as the "New Eloisa" and his other famous works had not then been given to the world.

[170]

Monsieur Crapaud explained to us that Madame Dupin was not only a beauty and a *précieuse*, but an excellent business woman, so clever, indeed, that she managed to prove, by hook or by crook, that Chenonceaux had never been absolutely crown property and so did not fall under the

[171]

coup de décret. She retained this beautiful château during the Revolution, and lived here in heroic possession, during all the upheavals and changes of that tumultuous period.

Thanks to Monsieur Crapaud, we missed no part of the château, even to the kitchens, which are spacious and fitted out with an abundant supply of the shining, well-polished coffee pots, pans, and *casseroles* that always make French cookery appear so dainty and appetizing. He accompanied us, with charming amiability, through this most important department of the château, and never once, amid the evidences of luxurious living, did he even look supercilious or, as Lydia expressed it afterwards, "As if he were saying to himself, 'I wonder what these benighted Americans think of French cookery now!'" Not even when Miss Cassandra asked her favorite question in royal palaces, "How many in family?" was there a ghost of a smile upon his face, and yet he must have understood her, as he turned to a guide and asked how many persons constituted the family of Monsieur Terry. This Cuban gentleman who now owns the château is certainly to be congratulated upon his excellent taste; the restoration of the building and the laying out of the grounds are all so well done, the whole is so harmonious, instinct with the spirit of the past, and yet so livable that the impression left upon us was that of a happy home. In the past, Chenonceaux witnessed no such horrors as are associated with Amboise and so many of the beautiful castles of Touraine. Small wonder that Henry II wrote of this fair palace, as we read in a little book lying on one of the tables: "Le Château de Chenonceau est assis en un des meillures, et plus beaulx pays de nostre royaume."

[172]

"I must confess that I feel sorry for poor Diana," said Miss Cassandra, as we lingered among the flowers and shrubbery of the lovely gardens. "What became of her after Catherine turned her out of her château?"

"You remember, Madame, that Chaumont was given her in exchange, although Catherine gave her to understand that she considered the smaller château of Anet a more suitable place for her to retire to, her sun having set. For this reason, or because she preferred Anet, Madame Diane retired to this château, which she had beautified in her early years, and in whose grounds Jean Goujon had placed a charming figure of herself as Diane Chaseresse. This marble, destroyed during the Revolution, has been carefully restored, and so Diane now reigns in beauty at the Louvre, where this statue has found a place."

[173]

Monsieur Crapaud, whose name, it transpires, is La Tour, an appropriate one and one easily remembered in this part of the world, returned to Tours in the same train with us, and to our surprise we found that he also was stopping at the Pension B——. The manner in which he said "My family always stop at the Pension B——" seemed to confer an enviable distinction upon the little hostel, and in a way to dim the ancient glories of the Hôtel de l'Univers.

IX

[174]

A FAIR PRISON

PENSION B——, TOURS, Wednesday, September 7th.

WALTER has been triumphing over me because, even after his unseemly behavior yesterday, M. La Tour has formed a sudden attachment for him which is so strong that he insisted upon staying over to go with us to Loches this afternoon. He says that we may miss some of the most interesting points there if left to the tender mercies of the guides, who often dwell upon the least important things. Our new acquaintance proved to be so altogether delightful as a *cicerone*, when he conducted us through the old streets of Tours this morning, that we are looking forward with pleasure to an afternoon in his good company.

The old part of the town, M. La Tour tells us, was once a quite distinct ecclesiastical foundation, called Châteauneuf, of which every building, in a way, depended upon the Basilica of St. Martin. When the dreadful Fulk, the Black, set fire to it, in the tenth century, twenty-two churches and chapels are said to have been destroyed. Among those that have been restored are Notre Dame la Riche, once Notre Dame la Pauvre, and St. Saturnin, which formerly contained, among other handsome tombs, that of Thomas Bohier and his wife Katherine Briçonnet, the couple who did so much for Chenonceaux. This ancient Châteauneuf, like the court end of so many old cities, has narrow, winding streets overtopped by high buildings. These twisting streets are so infinitely picturesque with their sudden turns and elbows that we are quite ready to overlook their inconvenience for the uses of our day, and trust that no modern vandalism, under the name of progress, may change and despoil these byways of their ancient charm. Wandering through the narrow, quaint streets of the old city, with their steep gabled and timbered houses, through whose grilled or half-opened gates we catch glimpses of tiled courtyards and irregular bits of stone carving, over which flowers throw a veil of rich bloom, we feel that we are living in an old world. Yet M. La Tour reminds us that beneath our feet lies a still older world, for as we follow what is evidently a wall of defence we come upon the remains of an ancient gateway and suddenly realize that beneath this Martinopolis, Châteauneuf and Tours of the fifth century, lie the temples, amphitheatres, and baths of the more ancient Urbs Turonum of the Romans.

[175]

[176]

In the midst of our excursion into the past, Miss Cassandra suddenly brought us back to the

present by exclaiming that she would like to go to some place where the Romans had never been. She has had quite enough of them in their own city and country, and now being in Touraine she says that she prefers to live among the French.

M. La Tour laughed heartily, as he does at everything our Quaker lady says, and answered, with French literalness, that it would be hard to find any land in the known world that the Romans had not occupied, "Except your own America, Madame." Then, as if to humor her fancy, he conducted us by way of little streets with charming names of flowers, angels, and the like, to the Place du Grand Marché, where he showed Miss Cassandra something quite French, the beautiful Renaissance fountain presented to Tours by the unfortunate Jacques de Beaune, Baron de Semblançay. This fountain was made from the designs of Michel Colombe by his nephew, Bastian François. It was broken in pieces and thrown aside when the Rue Royale was created, but was later put together by one of the good mayors of Tours and now stands on the Place du Grand Marché, a lasting monument to the Baron de Semblançay, treasurer under Francis I, who was accused of malversation, hanged at Montfaucon and his estates, Azay-le-Rideau with the rest, confiscated by the crown. M. La Tour considers the treatment of the Baron de Semblançay quite unjust, and says that he was only found to have been guilty of corruption when he failed to supply the enormous sums of money required by Francis I and his mother, who, like the proverbial horseleach's daughters, cried ever "Give! give!" It seems one of the reprisals of time that the name of the donor should still be preserved upon this beautiful Fountain de Beaune of Tours, as well as upon the old treasurer's house in the Rue St. François, a fine Renaissance building.

[177]

From the Rue du Grand Marché we turned into the Rue du Commerce, where on the Place de Beaune is the Hôtel de la Crouzille, once the Hôtel de la Vallière, with its double gables and the graceful, shell-like ornamentation which the restaurateur who occupies the house has wisely allowed to remain above his commonplace sign of to-day. In the same street is the famous Hôtel Gouin, now a bank. This house, which dates back to the fifteenth century, has been carefully restored, and its whole stone façade, covered with charming arabesques, is a fine example of early French Renaissance style.

In the ancient Rue Briçonnet, quite near,—indeed nothing is very far away in this old town,—is the house attributed to Tristan l'Hermite, who held the unenviable position of hangman-in-chief to His Majesty, King Louis. There is no foundation for this tradition, which probably owes its origin to a knotted rope and some hooks on the wall, which are sufficiently suggestive of hanging. This sculptured cord, or rope, not unlike the emblem of Anne of Brittany, may have been placed here in her honor, or in that of one of her ladies in waiting, as she frequently urged her attendants to adopt her device of the knotted rope, whose derivation has never been quite understood.



[178]

Neurdein Freres, Photo.

HOUSE OF TRISTAN L'HERMITE

[179]

"However," as Miss Cassandra says, "we are not here in search of associations of the head executioner of Louis or of those of his royal master," and so we were free to enjoy the beauty of this fourteenth century house, which is quite picturesque enough to do without associations of any kind, with its substantial walls in which brick and stone are so happily combined, its graceful arcades, lovely spiral pilasters and richly carved Renaissance doorways. We noticed the words *Priez Dieu Pur* carved over a window in the courtyard which, M. La Tour says, is thought to be an anagram upon the name of Pierre de Puy, who owned the house in 1495. In the wide paved courtyard is an ancient stone well, near which is a spiral stairway leading to a loggia, from which we had a fine view of the picturesque gables and roofs of the old town, and beyond of the broad river shimmering in the sun, and still farther away of a line of low hills crowned with white villas.

Noticing the Tour de Guise as it stood out against the blue sky, M. La Tour told us an interesting tale about this tower, which is about all that is left of the royal palace built here or added to by Henry II, who was also hereditary Count of Anjou, and did much building and road making in the Touraine of his day.

[180]

The young Prince de Joinville, son of the Duke de Guise, who for some reason was imprisoned here after the murder of his father at Blois, was permitted to attend mass on Assumption Day, 1591. Tasting the sweets of freedom in this brief hour of respite, the Prince took his courage in his two hands and suddenly decided to make a bold dash for liberty. Laying a wager with his guards that he could run upstairs again faster than they, he reached his room first, bolted the door and seizing a cord, or rope, which had been brought to him by his laundress, he made it fast to the window, slipped out and dropped fifteen feet. With shots whistling all about him he flew

around the tower to the Faubourg de la Riche, where he leaped upon the back of the first horse that he saw; the saddle turned and threw him and a soldier came up suddenly and accosted him. Fortunately, the soldier proved, by some happy chance, to be a Leaguer, who gave him a fresh mount, and soon the Prince had put many miles between himself and his pursuers. Ever since, the tower has borne the name of the young De Guise who so cleverly escaped from it.

[181]

Wednesday evening.

We experienced what our Puritan ancestors would have called a "fearful joy" during our afternoon at Loches, for anything more horrible than the dungeons above ground and under it would be difficult to imagine. I shall spare you a full description of them, as I refused to descend into the darkest depths to see the worst of them, and Walter is probably writing Allen a full-length account of them,—iron cages, hooks, rings, and all the other contrivances of cruelty. Loches, however, is not all cells and dungeons, as the *château* is beautifully situated upon a headland above the Indre, and the gray castle rising above the terraces, with its many towers, tourelles, and charming pointed windows, presents a picturesque as well as a formidable appearance. Our way lay by winding roads and between high walls. We thought ourselves fortunate to make this steep circuitous ascent in a coach; but once within the *enceinte* of the castle we were on a level and felt as if we were walking through the streets of a little village. Many small white houses, with pretty gardens of blooming plants, lie below the fortress on one side, in sharp contrast to the frowning dungeons of Fulk Nerra and Louis XI which overshadow them.

[182]

The great square mass of Fulk Nerra's keep stood out dark against the blue of the sky to-day; this with the Tour Neuf and the Tour Ronde are said to be the "most beautiful of all the dungeons of France," as if a dungeon could ever be beautiful! And it was Louis XI, that expert and past master in cruelty, who is said to have "perfected these prisons," which only needed the iron cage, designed to suit the King's good pleasure, to complete their horror.

The invention of the iron cage has been accredited to Jean la Balue, Bishop of Angers, and also to the Bishop of Verdun. Perhaps both of these devout churchmen had a hand in the work, as fate, with a dash of irony, and the fine impartiality of the mother who whipped both of her boys because she could not find out which one had eaten the plums, clapped them both into iron cages. Louis XI was in these instances the willing agent of avenging fate. Cardinal la Balue survived the sorrows of his iron cage for eleven years, "much longer than might have been expected," as Mr. Henry James says, "from this extraordinary mixture of seclusion and exposure."

[183]

The historian, Philip de Commines, described these cages as "Rigorous prisons plated with iron both within and without with horrible iron works, eight foote square and one foote more than a man's height. He that first devised them was the Bishop of Verdun, who forthwith was himself put into the first that was made, where he remained fourteen years."

Louis was so enchanted with this fiendish device that he longed to put all his state prisoners into iron cages. We are glad to know that when he recommended this treatment to the Admiral of France for one of his captives of high degree, the jailer replied, with a spirit and independence to which the tyrant was little wont, "That if that was the King's idea of how a prisoner should be kept he might take charge of this one himself."

"De Commines knew all about the horrors of the iron cage," said M. La Tour, "for he was himself imprisoned in one of them by the Lady of Beaujeu, who was Regent of France after the death of her father, Louis XI. De Commines joined the Duke of Orleans in a conspiracy against the government of the Regent, which was discovered. He was seized and also the Duke, afterwards Louis XII. Louis himself was imprisoned by his cousin of Beaujeu and was set free by her brother Charles."

[184]

The guide pointed out the iron cage in which Philip de Commines was confined, which was horrible enough to answer to his description. Some of the lines inscribed on the walls of the round tower were doubtless composed by De Commines, among these a wise saying in Latin which Walter deciphered with difficulty and thus freely translated:

"I have regretted that I have spoken; but never that I remained silent."

A most ironical invitation, we read in the corridor leading to the tower: "Entrés, Messieurs, ches le Roy Nostre Mestre."

One poor captive, who showed a cheerful desire to make the best of his lot, inscribed upon the wall of his cell these lines, which Lydia copied for you:

Malgré les ennuis d'une longue souffrance,
Et le cruel destin dont je subis la loy,
Il est encor des biens pour moy,
Le tendre amour et la douce espérance.

In the Martelet where we went down many steps, we saw the room in which Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, was imprisoned by Louis XII for eight years, and the little sundial that he made on the only spot on the wall that the sun could strike. He also whiled away the weary hours of captivity by painting frescoes on the walls, which are still to be seen. By such devices Ludovico probably saved his reason, but his health broke down and when relief came he seems to have

[185]

died of joy, or from the sudden shock of coming out into the world again. A sad end was this to a life that had begun in happiness and prosperity and that was crowned by a felicitous marriage with beautiful Beatrice d'Este.

"And why did Louis, the Father of his people, the good King Louis, imprison Ludovico all those years?" asked Miss Cassandra.

"King Louis, although the best and wisest King that France had known for many a day, was but mortal," said M. La Tour, twisting his moustache as if somewhat puzzled by our Quaker lady's direct question, "and having a sound claim to the Duchy of Milan, through his grandmother Valentine Visconti, he proceeded to make it good."

"By ousting Ludovico, and his lovely wife, Beatrice, who was really far too good for him; but then most of the women were too good for their husbands in those days," said Miss Cassandra. [186]

"Fortunately," said M. La Tour, "the Duchess of Milan had died two years before Ludovico's capture and so was spared the misery of knowing that her husband was a prisoner in France."

We were glad to emerge from the dismal dungeons into the light and air by stepping out upon a terrace, from which we had a fine view of the château and the Collegiate Church of St. Ours adjoining it.

The Château of Loches, once a fortress guarding the Roman highway, later belonged to the house of Anjou and was for some years handed about by French and English owners. As might have been expected, this fortress was given away by John Lackland (whose name sounds very odd, done into French, as Jean-Sans-Terre), but was regained by his brother, Richard Cœur de Lion. It was finally sold to St. Louis, and the château, begun by Charles VII, was completed by Louis XII.

The tower of Agnes Sorel, with its garden terrace, is the most charming part of the château, crowning, as it does, a great rock on the south side which overlooks the town. [187]

Charles seems to have met the enchanting Agnes while at Loches, whither she had come in the train of the Countess of Anjou, whose mission to France was to gain the liberty of her husband, King René, who had been taken prisoner in battle, and was confined in the Tour de Bar, which we saw at Dijon.

From all accounts Agnes appears to have been a creature of ravishing beauty and great charm, as the ancient chroniclers describe her with a complexion of lilies and roses, a mouth formed by the graces, brilliant eyes, whose vivacity was tempered by an expression of winning sweetness, and a tall and graceful form. In addition to her personal attraction, this "Dame de Beaulté" seems to have had a sweet temper, a ready wit, and judgment far beyond that of her royal lover. According to many historians, Agnes was the good angel of the King's life, as Joan, the inspired Maid, had been in a still darker period of his reign. Brantôme relates a story of the favorite's clever and ingenious method of rousing Charles from his apathy and selfish pursuit of pleasure while the English, under the Duke of Bedford, were ravaging his kingdom. "It had been foretold in her childhood, by an astrologer," said Agnes, "that she should be beloved by one of the bravest and most valiant kings in Christendom," adding, with fine sarcasm, "that when Charles had paid her the compliment of loving her she believed him to be, in truth, this valorous king of whom she had heard, but now seeing him so indifferent to his duty in resisting King Henry, who was capturing so many towns under his very nose, she realized that she was deceived and that this valorous king must be the English sovereign, whom she had better seek, as he evidently was the one meant by the astrologer." [188]



"Brantôme was a bit out here," said M. La Tour, "as Henry V. had died some years before and his son Henry VI was only six or seven years of age at this time, and it was the Duke of Bedford who was ravaging the fair fields of France and taking the King's towns *a sa barbe*. However, that is only a detail as you Americans say, and there must be some foundation for Brantôme's story of Agnes having aroused the King to activity by her cleverness and spirit, for more than one historian gives her the credit of this good work for Charles and for France. You remember that Brantôme says that these words of the *belle des belles* so touched the heart of the King that he wept, took courage, quitted the chase, and was so valiant and so fortunate that he was able to drive the English from his kingdom." [189]

"It is a charming little tale," said Lydia, "and I, for one, do not propose to question it. Brantôme may have allowed his imagination to run away with him; but the good influence of Agnes must have been acknowledged in her own time and later, or Francis I would not have written of her:

"Plus de louange son amour s'y mérite

"And I, for my part, don't believe a word of it!" said Miss Cassandra emphatically. "No ordinary girl, no matter how handsome she might be, would sit up and talk like that to a great King. I call it downright impertinent; she wasn't even a titled lady, much less a princess."

For a Quaker, Miss Cassandra certainly has a great respect for worldly honors and titles, and Lydia took pleasure in reminding her that Joan of Arc was only a peasant girl of Domremy, and yet she dared to speak boldly to Charles, her King. [190]

"That was quite different, my dear," said Miss Cassandra. "Joan was an *honest* maid to begin with, and then she was raised quite above her station by her spiritual manifestations, and she had what the Friends call a concern."

Then noticing the puzzled expression on M. La Tour's face, she explained: "I mean something on her mind and conscience with regard to the King and the redemption of France, what you would call a mission."

"Yes," Lydia added, "*une mission* is the best translation of the word that I can think of; but it does not give the full meaning of the expression 'to have a concern,'" and as he still looked puzzled, she added, comfortingly: "You need not wonder, Monsieur, that you do not quite understand what my aunt means, for born and bred in Quakerdom as I have been, I never feel that I grasp the full spiritual significance of the expression as the older Friends use it." [191]

For some years Charles seems to have been under the spell of the beauty and charm of Agnes Sorel, upon whom he bestowed honors, titles, and lands, the Château of Loches among other estates. From her false dream of happiness the royal favorite was rudely awakened by the Dauphin, afterwards Louis XI, who entered the room where the Queen's ladies in waiting were seated, and marching up to Agnes in a violent rage, spoke to her in the most contemptuous language, struck her on the cheek, it is said, and gave her to understand that she had no right to be at the court.

"Which," as Miss Cassandra remarks, "was only too true, although the Dauphin, even at this early age, had enough sins of his own to look after, without undertaking to set his father's house in order."

Agnes took to heart the Dauphin's cruel words, and resisting all the solicitations of the King, parted from him and retired to a small house in the town of Loches, where she lived for five years, devoting herself to penitence and good works.

"It seems," said Miss Cassandra, "that repentance and sorrow for sin was the particular business of the women in those days; when the men were in trouble they generally went a hunting." [192]

M. La Tour, being a Frenchman, evidently considers this a quite proper arrangement, although he reminded Miss Cassandra that the wicked Fulk Nerra, "your Angevin ancestor," as he calls him, "expiated for his sins with great rigor in the Holy Land, as he dragged himself, half naked, through the streets of Jerusalem, while a servant walked on each side scourging him."

After living quietly at Loches for five years Agnes one day received a message that greatly disturbed her and caused her to set forth with all haste for Paris. Arrived there, and learning that the King was at Jumiéges for a few days' rest after the pacification of Normandy, she repaired thither and had a long interview with him. As Agnes left the King she said to one of her friends that she "had come to save the King from a great danger." Four hours later she was suddenly seized with excruciating pain and died soon after. It was thought by many persons that the former royal favorite was poisoned by the Dauphin; but this has never been proved. [193]

The body of Agnes Sorel was, according to her own request, transported to Loches and buried in the choir of the Collegiate Church of St. Ours, where it rested for many years. The beautiful tomb was first placed in the church, but was later removed to the tower where it stands to-day and where Agnes still reigns in beauty. Upon a sarcophagus of black marble is a reclining figure, modest and seemly, the hands folded upon the breast, two lambs guarding the feet, while two angels support the cushion upon which rests the lovely head of *la belle des belles*, whose face in life is said to have had the bloom of flowers in the springtime. The inscription upon the tomb is:

"Here lies the noble Damoyse Agnes Seurelle, in her life time Lady of Beauté, of Roquesserie, of Issouldun, of Vernon-sur-Seine. Kind and pitiful to all men, she gave liberally of her goods to the Church and to the poor. She died the ninth day of February of the Year of Grace 1449. Pray for her soul. Amen."

You may remember that at the Abbey of Jumiéges we saw a richly carved sarcophagus which contains the heart of Agnes Sorel. M. La Tour says that she left a legacy to Jumiéges, with the request that her heart should be buried in the abbey. At one time a beautiful kneeling figure of Agnes, offering her heart to the Virgin in supplication, surmounted the black marble sarcophagus; but this was destroyed, when and how it is not known. [194]

In one of the oldest parts of the château are the bedroom and oratory of Anne of Brittany. From these rooms there is a lovely view of the Indre and of the old town with its steep gables, crenelated roofs, and picturesque chimneys. The walls of the little oratory are richly decorated

with exquisite carvings of the Queen's devices, the tasseled cord and the ermine, which even a coat of whitewash has not deprived of their beauty.

M. La Tour, whom Lydia has dubbed "our H.B.R." handy-book of reference, tells us that the origin of Queen Anne's favorite device is so far back in history that it is somewhat mythical. The ermine of which she was so proud is said to have come from her ancestress, Madame Inoge, wife of Brutus and daughter of Pindarus the Trojan. It appears that during a hunting expedition an ermine was pursued by the dogs of King Brutus. The poor little creature took refuge in the lap of Inoge, who saved it from death, fed it for a long time and adopted an ermine as her badge. [195]

We had spent so much time in the Château Royale and in the various dungeons that there was little space left for a visit to the very remarkable Church of St. Ours adjoining the château, which, as Viollet le Duc says, has a remarkable and savage beauty of its own. After seeing what is left of the girdle of the Virgin, which the verger thought it very important that we should see, we spent what time we had left in gazing up at the interesting corbeling of the nave and the two hollow, stone pyramids that form its roof.

Miss Cassandra and I flatly refused to descend into the depths below, although the verger with a lighted candle stood ready to conduct us into a subterranean chapel, which was, at one time, connected with the château. We had seen quite enough of underground places for one day, and were glad to pass on into the more livable portion of the castle, which is now inhabited by the sous-prefect of the district, and from thence into the open, where we stopped to rest under the wide-spreading chestnut tree planted here by Francis I so many years since. [196]

M. La Tour reminds us, among other associations of Loches, that the Seigneur de Saint Vallier, the father of Diane de Poitiers, whose footsteps we followed at Chenonceaux, was once imprisoned here. Even the powerful influence of Diane scarcely gained her father's pardon from Francis I. His sentence had been pronounced and he was mounting the steps of the scaffold when the reprieve came.

With our minds filled with the varied and vivid associations of Loches, we left the castle enclosure and from without the walls we had a fine view of the massive dungeons, the Château Royal, with the beautiful tower of Agnes Sorel, and the charming terrace beside it. Through many crooked, winding lanes and postern doors M. La Tour conducted us by the gate of the Cordeliers, with its odd fifteenth century turrets, to a neat little garden café. Here we refreshed ourselves with tea and some very dainty little cakes that are a *spécialité de la maison*, while Walter gracefully mounted his hobby, which, as you have doubtless gathered ere this, is the faithfulness of Alexander Dumas to history. "What need had Dumas to call upon his imagination when the court life of France, under the Valois and Bourbons, furnished all the wonders of the Thousand and One Nights?" Walter really becomes eloquent when launched upon his favorite subject, and indeed we all are, more or less, under the spell of Dumas and Balzac. With the heroes and heroines of Alexandre Dumas, we have spent so many delightful hours that Touraine seems, in a way, to belong to them. It would not surprise us very much to have Porthos, Athos, and Aramis gallop up behind our carriage and demand our passports, or best of all to see that good soldier and perfect gentleman, D'Artagnan, standing before us with sword unsheathed ready to cut and come again; but always it must be remembered quite as reckless of his own precious skin as of that of his enemies. [197]

"I wonder if we shall ever again see their like upon the pages of romance," said Walter turning to M. La Tour.

"Good soldiers and brave gentlemen, better and braver than the royal masters whom they served so faithfully!" said M. La Tour, raising his hand in the delightfully dramatic fashion of the French as if proposing a toast: "May their memories long linger in Touraine and the Blésois, which they have glorified by their deeds of valor!" [198]

What do you think we have been doing this evening? Still under the spell of Loches and its weird associations, we have been trying to turn the French verse, which Lydia copied for you, into metrical English. It seemed so strange that we four twentieth century Americans and one Franco-American should be translating the pathetic little verse of the poor prisoner who,

"Malgré les ennuis d'une longue souffrance,"

kept up a brave heart and counted his blessings.

We all tried our hand at it, Miss Cassandra, M. La Tour and all. I send you the verse that seemed to our umpire the best. One of the charming Connecticut ladies, whom we met at Amboise, called upon us this evening and was kind enough to act as umpire in our little war of wits. She was so polite as to say that all of the translations were so good that it was difficult to choose between them, but this is the one that she thought most in the spirit of the original lines: [199]

Despite the weary hours of pain
A cruel fate ordains for me,
Some dear possessions yet there be;
Sweet hope and tender love remain.

It is for you to guess who wrote this verse. One thing I tell you to help you out or to puzzle you still more with your guessing, M. La Tour wrote one of the verses; his knowledge of English construction is remarkable.^[A]

This young Frenchman, who is usually politely reticent about his own affairs, although so generously expansive in communicating his historic and legendary lore, confided to Walter, this evening, in the intimacy of smoking together, that his mother is an American. This accounts for his perfect and idiomatic English and for his knowledge of our cities. He talks about Washington, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston as if he had seen them and yet he has never crossed the water, being like most Frenchmen entirely satisfied with what his own country affords him.

[200]

Since Walter has learned that M. La Tour is half American, he begs to be allowed to call him Mr. La Tour. Foreign handles and titles, as he expresses it, do not sit easily upon his tongue.

The Frenchman laughed good naturedly at this and said, "Yes, yes, M. Leonard, call me what you will. Philippe is my name; why not Philippe?"

Walter says this would be quite as bad as Monsieur, unless he could change it to plain Philip, which would seem quite too simple and unadorned a name for so elegant and decorative a being as M. Philippe Edouard La Tour, who shines forth radiantly in the rather sombre surroundings of the Pension B— like the gilded youth that he is. What havoc he would make among the hearts of the *pensionnaires* if this were indeed the young ladies' seminary that Walter calls it! M. La Tour is particularly resplendent in evening costume, and when he appears equipped for dining Madame B— calls him "*beau garçon*." He possesses, as Miss Cassandra says, that most illusive and indescribable quality which we call distinction for lack of a better word. While admiring him immensely, she solemnly warns Lydia against the wiles of foreigners. And I think myself that Archie had better turn his steps this way if he expects to find Lydia heart whole, as M. La Tour loses no opportunity of paying her charming little attentions in the way of choice offerings, from the flower market on the Boulevard Béranger near by. This evening he produced some delicious bonbons which he must have imported from Paris for her delectation, although I must admit that they were properly and decorously presented to Madame Leonard, your old, and, to-night, your very sleepy friend,

[201]

ZELPHINE.

X

[202]

COMPENSATIONS

TOURS, THURSDAY, September 8th.

WE HAVE been having what they call "golden weather" here; but to-day the skies are overcast, which does not please us, although this cloudy weather may still be golden to the wise Tourangeau, who, as George Sand said, "knows the exact value of sun or rain at the right moment."

This most unpromising day is our one opportunity to see Chinon, and as luck will have it Miss Cassandra is laid up in lavender, with a crick in her back, the result, she says, of her imprisonment at Loches yesterday, and what would have become of her, she adds, if she had sojourned there eight or nine long years like poor Ludovico? The threatening skies and Miss Cassandra's indisposition would be quite enough to keep us at home, or to tempt us to make some short excursion in the neighborhood of Tours, were we not lured on by that *ignis fatuus* of the traveler, the unexplored worlds which lie beyond. There will be so much to be seen in and near Blois, and in order to have time for the château, and to make the excursions to Chambord and the other castles, we must be at Blois to-morrow evening. So this is the only day for Chinon, which Walter wishes so much to see while M. La Tour is with us.

[203]

Although, like Mr. Henry James, I may be obliged to write you that I have not seen Chinon at all, I decided to stay at home to-day with Miss Cassandra and sent the men off to Chinon, Lydia with them. Miss Cassandra expostulated and so did Walter and Lydia; but I held my position with great firmness, and I observed that the trio set forth without me in gay good spirits. Of course my good man will miss me, especially when he comes across the interesting Joan of Arc landmarks; but he is in excellent company with M. La Tour, and I have gained a day of repose which one needs when the associations are as interesting and thrilling as they are here in Touraine. Miss Cassandra slept so sweetly all morning that I had another long ramble in and out of the quaint streets of the ancient Châteauneuf, which is what you and I love best to do in old cities whose very stones, like those of Venice, are written over with legend and story. The sun came out at noon, and I was fortunate in getting enough light on the house of Tristan l'Hermite to take a photograph from the court, which will give you some idea of this interesting old building. So you see my day at home has had its compensations, a crowning one being a letter from Archie, who is in Paris, saying that he would join us at Blois to-morrow. This news proved so stimulating to Miss Cassandra that she was able to get up and come downstairs in time to greet the travelers on their return from Chinon. They were most enthusiastic over their morning among the ruins, and full of the lore of the old stronghold where the Maid of Orleans first met the King, Lydia quoting:

[204]

"Petite ville grand renom
Assise sur pierre ancienne

until I stopped their rhapsodies over the ancient by giving them my bit of up-to-date information that Archie was *en route* for Blois. Walter uttered such a shout of joy as this old hostel has not heard since the victories of the first Napoleon were celebrated here. I tried to see Lydia's face, but she turned away at the critical moment to speak to Miss Cassandra, and so I lost my chance of seeing whether she was surprised and excited over my news. When she turned to me later and said, "How glad I am for you, Zelfphine, and what a pleasant addition Dr. Vernon will make to the party," her face wore its wonted expression of sweet composure. [205]

Walter says, "You really must see Chinon, Zelfphine; we can make a separate trip there with Archie. It is much farther from Blois than from Tours, but by taking a motor car we can go to Angers at the same time."

Mr. La Tour (you notice that I take Walter's privilege in writing of him) says that we really should pay our respects to Angers, the cradle of our Angevin kings. He quite resents Mr. Henry James having written down this old town in his notebook as a "sell," and says that although Angers has become a flourishing, modern city, there is much of the old town left and the château is well worth seeing.

Like John Evelyn, we have found the sojournment so agreeable here that we could stay on and on for weeks, spending our days in visiting one interesting château after another. We want so much to see Villandry and Ussé, and we would love to have a day at Mme. de Sévigné's, Les Rochers, or better still at Chantilly, where poor Vatel, the cook, through the letters of *la belle Marquise* and the failure of the fish supply, took his place one summer day among the immortals. Lydia reminds me that the Château of Chantilly is too far north to be easily reached from here, but La Châtre is not far away, and a day and night among the haunts of George Sand would be a rare pleasure, especially if we could drive to Nohant along the road once travelled by such guests of the novelist as Théophile Gautier, Dumas, Alfred de Musset, and Balzac. The latter found her living, as he says, after his own plan "turned topsy-turvy; that is to say, she goes to bed at six in the morning and rises at midday, whilst I retire at six in the evening and rise at midnight." [206]

Miss Cassandra, who in whatever portion of the globe she may be travelling is sure to meet people with whom she has a link of acquaintance or association, has discovered in the course of a long talk with M. La Tour, this evening, that she knows some of his American relatives. Indeed his Browns (how much more distinguished Le Brun would sound!) are connected in some way with her family, and she and M. La Tour are delighted to claim cousinship through these New York Browns. I am sure that to establish the exact degree of relationship would defy the skill of the most expert genealogist; but they are quite satisfied with even a remote degree of kinship, especially as this discovery brings Lydia, in a way, into the La Tour connection. [207]

M. La Tour, who talks of visiting his American relatives next winter, is evidently preparing himself in more ways than one for his projected trip. Although his English is faultless, he seems to think it important to be familiar with a certain amount of American slang. Yesterday he turned to me, with a quite helpless expression upon his handsome face, exclaiming, "This word 'crazy' that the Americans use so much—I am crazy about this and crazy about that,—now what does that mean, Madame?—*fou de ceci, fou de cela? Vraiment il me semble qu'ils sont tous un peu fou!*" [208]

It is needless to say that I quite agreed with M. La Tour, and after I had given him the best explanation in my power, he laughed and said: "It appears that what you call Quakers do not use this extreme language so much. Miss Mott, for example, never uses such expressions." Yesterday, when a party of our compatriots were drinking tea at a table near us, he was again much puzzled. "These young people all say that they are 'passing away' on account of the heat of the sun, from fatigue, for various reasons. Now what is it to pass away, is it not to die, to vanish from the earth?"

The seriousness of his manner, as he gave us this literal and somewhat poetical translation of the popular slang of the day, so amused Walter that I had to send him off to make some inquiries about the route in order to prevent an outburst of laughter which our French friend, who is endowed with little sense of humor, could never have understood. Dear Miss Cassandra, who enjoyed the humor of the situation quite as much as any of us, but possesses the rare gift of laughing inwardly (the Friends do so many things inwardly while presenting a serene face to the world), exclaimed: "One of the foolish exaggerations of our modern speech! You will probably notice that the young people who are always passing away are usually uncommonly healthy and strong and blessed with vigorous appetites. For my part, I consider it tempting Providence to be always talking about passing away; but of course," her pride coming to the fore, "the best people among us do not use such expressions." [209]

HÔTEL DE FRANCE, BLOIS, September 9th.

As Blois is only about an hour from Tours, we reached here some time before Archie appeared, and thus had time to feel quite at home in this pleasant little hotel, and to kill the fatted calf in honor of his arrival. This latter ceremony was exceedingly simple, consisting, as it did, in supplementing the fairly good *table d'hôte* luncheon with a basket of the most beautiful and delicious fruit. Such blushing velvet skinned peaches as these of the Blésois we have not seen, even in Tours, and the green plums of Queen Claude are equally delectable if not as decorative as

the peaches. These, with great clusters of grapes, and a bottle of the white wine of Voudray, which Walter added to the *mênu*, made a feast for the gods to which Archie did ample justice. He looks handsomer than ever, and as brown as a Spaniard after the sea voyage. I am glad that we are by ourselves, agreeable as M. La Tour is, for as you know, Archie does not care much for strangers and our little family party is so pleasant. Archie's idea of enjoying a holiday is to motor from morning until night. We humored his fancy this afternoon and had a long motor tour, going through Montbazon and Couzieres, which we had not yet seen, although we were quite near both places at Loches. Our chauffeur, knowing by instinct that Lydia and I were of inquiring minds, told us that Queen Marie de Médicis came from Montbazon to Couzieres after her escape from Blois, and that here she and her son Louis were reconciled in the presence of a number of courtiers. This royal peacemaking we have always thought one of the most amusing of Rubens's great canvases at the Louvre, as he very cleverly gives the impression that neither the Queen nor her son is taking the matter seriously.

[210]

You will scarcely believe me, I fear, when I tell you that we only stopped at one *château* this afternoon. This was Archie's afternoon, you know, but the *Château* of Beauregard is so near that we simply could not pass it by, and the drive through the forest of Russy in which it stands was delightful. The *château* was closed to visitors, for which Archie said he was thankful, which rather shocked Lydia, who is as conscientious in her sightseeing as about everything else that she does. It was a disappointment to her and to me, as there is a wonderful collection of pictures there, an unbroken series, they tell us, including the great folk of fifteen reigns. Suddenly realizing our disappointment, Archie became quite contrite and did everything in his power to gain a sight of the treasures for us, but to no purpose, as the *concierge* was absolutely firm, even with the lure of silver before his eyes, and when he told us that the family was in residence we knew that it was quite hopeless to expect to enter. The *Duchesse de Dino*, whose interesting memoirs have been published lately, was the *châtelaine* of Beauregard in the early years of the last century.

[211]

We had a delightful afternoon, despite our disappointment about the *château*, and in the course of this ride Archie, who can understand almost no French, extracted more information from the chauffeur with regard to the soil, products, crops, and characteristics of Touraine than the rest of the party have learned in the ten days that we have spent here. These investigations were, of course, conducted by the aid of such willing interpreters as Lydia and myself.

[212]

"M. La Tour could tell you all about these things," said Lydia.

"And pray who is this M. La Tour that you are all quoting? Some Johnny Crapeaud whom Zephine has picked up, I suppose. She always had a fancy for foreigners."

"He is a very delightful person, and if you wait long enough you will see him," said Miss Cassandra, "as he has taken a great fancy to Walter."

"To Walter!" exclaimed Archie, and seeing the amused twinkle in Miss Cassandra's eyes he suddenly became quite silent and took no further interest in the scenery or in the products of Touraine, until Lydia directed his attention to the curious caves in the low hills that look like chalk cliffs. This white, chalky soil, M. La Tour had explained to us, is hard, much like the tufa used so much for building in Italy. We thought that these caves were only used for storing wine, but our chauffeur told us that most of those which are provided with a door and a window are used as dwelling houses, and they were, he assured us, quite comfortable. These underground dwellings, burrowed out like rabbits' warrens, with earth floors, no ventilation except a chimney cut in the tufa roof to let the smoke out, and only the one window and door in the front to admit light and air, seem utterly cheerless and uncomfortable, despite our chauffeur's assurances that they have many advantages. From the eloquence with which he expatiated upon the even temperature of these caves, which he told us were warm in winter and cool in summer, we conclude that he has lived in one of them, and are thankful that he could not understand our invidious remarks about them, for as Archie remarks, even a troglodyte may have some pride about his home.

[213]

HÔTEL DE FRANCE, September 10th.

It is so delightful to be lodged so near the beautiful *Château* of Blois that we can see the *façade* of Francis I by sunlight, twilight, and moonlight. Built upon massive supporting walls, it dominates a natural terrace, which rises above the valley of the Loire and the ravine of the Arroux. No more fitting site could be found for the *château* than the quadrilateral formed by these two streams. The wing of Francis I, with its noble columns, Italian loggie, balustrades, attics, picturesque chimneys, grotesque gargoyles and other rich and varied decorations, displays all the architectural luxury of the Renaissance of which it was in a sense the final expression. It was while gazing upon this marvelous *façade* that Mr. Henry James longed for such brilliant pictures as the figures of Francis I, Diane de Poitiers, or even of Henry III, to fill the empty frames made by the deep recesses of the beautifully proportioned windows. We would cheerfully omit the weak and effeminate Henry from the novelist's group, but we would be tempted to add thereto such interesting contemporary figures as the King of Navarre and his heroic mother, Jeanne d'Albret, or his beautiful, faithless wife, La Reine Margot, the Pasithée of Ronsard's verse, who, with her brilliant eyes and flashing wit, is said to have surpassed in charm all the members of her mother's famous "*escadron volant*." And, as Miss Cassandra suggests, it would be amusing to see the portly widow of Henry IV descending from one of the windows, as she is said to have done, by a rope ladder and all the paraphernalia

[214]

[215]



Neurdein Freres, Photo.

ENTRANCE TO CHÂTEAU OF BLOIS WITH STATUE OF LOUIS XII

of a romantic elopement, although, as it happened, she was only escaping from a prison that her son had thought quite secure. The poor Queen had great difficulty in getting through the window, but finally succeeded and reached the ditch of the castle; friends were waiting near by to receive her with a coach which bore her away to freedom at Loches or Amboise, I forget which. This window from which Marie de Médicis is said to have escaped is in one of the apartments of Catherine. The guide, a very talkative little woman, told us that there is good reason to believe that the stout Queen never performed this feat of high and lofty tumbling; but that she made her escape from a window in the south side, and with comparative ease, as in her day there were no high parapets such as those that now surround the château on three sides. Our cicerone seemed, however, to have no doubts about the unpleasing associations with Catherine de Médicis, and took great pleasure in showing us her *cabinet de travail*, with the small secret closets in the carved panels of the wall in which she is said to have kept her poisons. These rooms are richly decorated, the gilt insignia upon a ground of brown and green being a part of the original frescoes. The oratory, of which Catherine certainly stood in need, is especially handsome and elaborate.

[216]

Even more thrilling than the poison closets are the secret staircase and the *oubliette* near by, into which last were thrown, as our guide naïvely explained, "*tous ceux qui la gênait*." Cardinal Lorraine is said to have gone by this grewsome, subterranean passage. Not having had enough of horrors in the rooms of the dreadful Catherine, we were ushered, by our voluble guide, into those of her son, Henry III. In order to make the terrible story of the murder of the Duke of Guise quite realistic, we were first taken to the great council chamber, before one of whose beautiful chimney places Le Balfré stood warming himself, for the night was cold, eating plums and jesting with his courtiers, when he was summoned to attend the King. Henry, with his cut-throats at hand, was awaiting his cousin in his *cabinet de travail*, at the end of his apartments. As the Duke entered the King's chamber he was struck down by one and then by another of the concealed assassins. Henry, miserable creature that he was, came out into his bedroom where the Duke lay, and spurning with his foot the dead or dying man, exclaimed over his great size, as if he had been some huge animal lying prone before him.

[217]

"It seems as if the victims of Amboise were in a measure avenged; the Dukes of Guise, father and son, met with the same sad fate, and at the time of the assassination of Le Balfré Queen Catherine lay dying in the room below." This from Lydia, in a voice so impressive and tragic that Archie turned suddenly, and looking first at her and then at me, said: "Well, you women are quite beyond me! You are both overflowing with the milk of human kindness, you would walk a mile any day of the year to help some poor creature out of a hole, and yet you stand here and gloat over a murder as horrible as that of the Duke of Guise."

"We are not gloating over it," said Lydia, "and if you had been at Amboise and had seen, as we did, the place where the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal, his brother, had hundreds of Huguenots deliberately murdered, you would have small pity for any of his name, except for the Duchess of Guise, who protested against the slaughter of the Huguenots and said that misfortune would surely follow those who had planned it, which prediction you see was fulfilled by the assassination of her husband and her son."

[218]

"That may be all quite true, as you say, dear Miss Mott; but I didn't come here to be feasted on horrors. I can get quite enough of them in the newspapers at home, and it isn't good for you and Zephine either. You both look quite pale; let us leave these rooms that reek with blood and crime and find something more cheerful to occupy us."

The first more cheerful object which we were called upon to admire was the handsome *salle d'honneur*, with its rich wall decorations copied after old tapestries; but just a trifle too bright in color to harmonize with the rest of the old castle. In this room is an elaborately decorated mantel, called *la cheminée aux anges*, which bears the initials L and A on each side of the *porc-épic*, bristling emblem of the twelfth Louis, who was himself less bristling and more humane than most of his royal brothers. Above the mantel shelf two lovely angels bear aloft the crown of France, which surmounts the shield emblazoned with the *fleur-de-lis* of Louis and the ermine tails of Anne, the whole mantel commemorative of that most important alliance between France and Bretagne, of which we have heard so much. The guide repeated the story of the marriage, Lydia translating her rapid French for Archie's benefit.

[219]

Observing our apparent interest in Queen Anne, our guide led us out into the grounds and

showed us her pavilion and the little terrace called *La Perche aux Bretons*, where the Queen's Breton guards stood while she was at mass. She is said to have always noticed them on her return from the chapel, when she was wont to say, "See my Bretons, there on the terrace, who are waiting for me." Always more Breton at heart than French, Anne loved everything connected with her native land. This trait the guide, being a French woman, evidently resented and said she had little love for Anne. When we translated her remarks to Miss Cassandra she stoutly defended the Queen, saying that it was natural to love your own country best, adding that for her part she was "glad that Anne had a will of her own, so few women had in those days; and notwithstanding the meek expression of her little dough face in her portraits, she seemed to have been a match for lovers and husbands, and this at a time when lovers were quite as difficult to deal with as husbands."

[220]

Walter, who says that he has heard more than enough of Anne and her virtues, insists that she set a very bad example to French wives of that time, as she gave no end of trouble to her husband, the good King Louis.

"Good King Louis, indeed!" exclaimed Miss Cassandra. "He may have remitted the taxes, as Mr. La Tour says; but he did a very wicked thing when he imprisoned the Duke of Milan at Loches. He and Anne were both spending Christmas there at the time, and we are not even told that the King sent his royal prisoner a plum pudding for his Christmas dinner."

"It would probably have killed him if he had," said Archie; "plum pudding without exercise is a rather dangerous experiment. Don't you think so yourself, Miss Cassandra?"

[221]

"He might have liked the attention, anyhow," persisted the valiant lady, "but Louis seems to have had an inveterate dislike for the Duke of Milan, and Mr. La Tour says that one of his small revenges was to call the unfortunate Duke 'Monsieur Ludovico,' which was certainly not a handsome way to treat a royal prisoner."

"No, certainly not," Walter admitted, adding, "but from what we have seen of the prisons of France, handsome treatment does not seem to have been a marked feature of prison life at that time; and Anne herself was not particularly gentle in her dealings with her captives."

Probably with a view to putting an end to this discussion, which was unprofitable to her, as she could not understand a word of it, the guide led us back to the château and showed us the room in which Queen Anne died. Whatever may have been her faults and irregularities of temper, Anne seems to have had a strong sense of duty and was the first Queen of France who invited to her court a group of young girls of noble family, whom she educated and treated like her own daughters. She even arranged the marriages of these girls entirely to suit herself, of course, and without the slightest regard to their individual preferences, which was more than she was able to do in the case of the young princesses, her children. She lived and died adored by her husband, who gave her a funeral of unprecedented magnificence, and although Louis soon married again, for reasons of state, he never ceased to mourn his *Bretonne* whom he had loved, honored, and in many instances obeyed.

[222]

Anne's insignia of the twisted rope and the ermine tails are to be found in nearly every room in the château, and here also is the emblem of her daughter, a cygnet pierced by an arrow, which seems symbolic of the life of the gentle Claude of France, whose heart must often have been wounded by the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, as she was made to feel keenly, from her wedding day, that the King, her husband, had no love for her.

Matrimonial infelicities are so thickly dotted over the pages of French history that it is impossible to pause in our excursions through these palaces to weep over the sorrows of noble ladies. Indeed, for a French king to have had any affection for his lawful wife seems to have been so exceptional that it was much more commented upon than the unhappiness of royal marriages. These reflections are Miss Cassandra's, not mine; and she added, "I am sorry, though, that Anne's daughter was not happy in her marriage," in very much the same tone that she would have commented upon the marriage of a neighbor's daughter. "I hope the beautiful garden that we have been hearing about was a comfort to her, and there must be some satisfaction, after all, in being a queen and living in a palace as handsome as this." With this extremely worldly remark on the part of our Quaker lady, we passed into the picture gallery of the château, where we saw a number of interesting portraits, among them those of Louis XIII and of his son Louis XIV, in their childhood, quaint little figures with rich gowns reaching to their feet, and with sweet, baby faces of indescribable charm. Here also is a superb portrait of Gaston, the brother of Louis XIII, and a portrait bust of Madame de Sévigné, whose charming face seems to belong to Blois, although she has said little about this château in her letters. Here also are portraits of Madame de Pompadour, Vigée Lebrun, as beautiful as any of the court beauties whom she painted, and a charming head of Mademoiselle de Blois, the daughter of Louise de La Vallière, whom Madame de Sévigné called "the good little princess who is so tender and so pretty that one could eat her." This was at the time of her marriage, which Louis XIV arranged with the Prince de Conti, having always some conscience with regard to his numerous and somewhat heterogeneous progeny.

[223]

[224]

And in this far off gallery of France our patriotism was suddenly aroused to Fourth of July temperature by seeing a portrait of Washington. This portrait, by Peale or Trumbull, was doubtless presented to one of the French officers who were with Washington in many of his campaigns, and the strong calm face seemed, in a way, to dominate these gay and gorgeously appareled French people, as in life he dominated every circle that he entered.

We were especially interested in a bust of Ronsard with his emblem of three fishes, which delighted Walter and Archie, who now propose a fishing trip to his Château of La Poissonnière. We love Ronsard for many of his verses, above all for the lines in which he reveals his feeling for the beauties of nature, which was rare in those artificial days. Do you remember what he said about having a tree planted over his grave?

[225]

"Give me no marble cold
When I am dead,
But o'er my lowly bed
May a tree its green leaves unfold."

XI

[226]

THE ROMANCE OF BLOIS

HÔTEL DE FRANCE, Saturday afternoon.

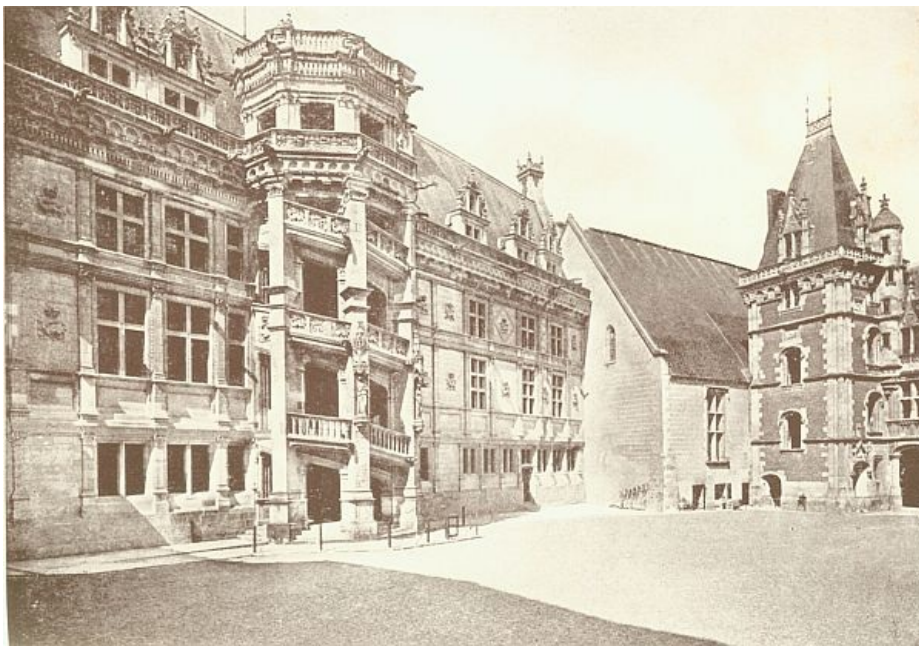
WALTER and Archie have elected to spend a part of this afternoon in the Daniel Dupuis Museum, over whose treasures, in the form of engraved medals, they are quite enthusiastic. We women folk, left to our own devices, wandered at will through the first floor rooms and halls of the Château of Blois. The great Salle des Etats, with its blue ceiling dotted over with fleur-de-lis, is said to be the most ancient of them all. Beautiful as many of the rooms are, despite their somewhat too pronounced and vividly colored decorations, and interesting as we found the remains of the Tour de Foix upon which tradition placed the observatory dedicated by Catherine and her pet demon, Ruggieri, to Uranus, the crowning glory of the Château of Blois is the great Court of Honor. We never pass through this impressive portal, surmounted by the gilded equestrian figure of Louis XII, without a feeling of joy in the spaciousness and beauty of this wide sunny court. At a first glance we were bewildered by its varied and somewhat incongruous architecture, the wing of Louis XII, with its fine, open gallery; that of Charles d'Orléans, with its richly decorative sculpture; the Chapel of St. Calais, and the modern and less beautiful wing of Gaston, the work of Francis Mansard, but after all, and above all, what one carries away from the court of Blois is that one perfect jewel of Renaissance skill and taste, the great staircase of Francis I. An open octagonal tower is this staircase, with great rampant bays, delicately carved galleries and exquisite sculptured decorations. Indeed, no words can fully describe the richness and dignity of this unique structure, for which Francis I has the credit, although much of its beauty is said to have been inspired by Queen Claude.

[227]

We all agreed that this staircase alone would be worth while coming to Blois to see, with its balustrades and lovely pilasters surmounted by Jean Goujon's adorable figures representing Faith, Hope, Abundance, and other blessings of heaven and earth. The charming faces of these statues are said to have been modeled after Diane de Poitiers and other famous beauties of the time. While wandering through the court, we came suddenly upon traces of Charles of Orleans, who was taken prisoner at the battle of Agincourt, and was a captive for twenty-five years in English prisons. A gallery running at right angles to the wing of Louis XII is named after the Duke of Orleans, probably by his son Louis. This gallery, much simpler than the buildings surrounding it, is also rich in sculpture and still richer in associations with the poet-prince, who is said to have solaced the weary hours of his imprisonment by writing verses, chansons, rondeaux, and ballades, some of which were doubtless composed in this gallery after his return from exile. The lines of that exquisite poem, "The fairest thing in mortal eyes," occurred to Lydia's mind and mine at the same moment. We were standing near the ruins of an old fountain, looking up at the gallery of Charles of Orleans and repeating the verses in concert like two school girls, when Miss Cassandra, who had been lingering by the staircase, joined us, evidently not without some anxiety lest we had suddenly taken leave of our senses. Finding that we were only reciting poetry, she expressed great satisfaction that we did not have it in the original, as she is so tired of trying to guess at what people are talking about.

[228]

[229]



COURT OF BLOIS WITH STAIRCASE OF FRANCIS I

Indeed, Henry Cary's translation is so beautiful that we scarcely miss the charm of the old French. We wondered, as we lingered over the lines, which one of the several wives of the Duke of Orleans was "the fairest thing in mortal eyes,"—his first wife, Isabelle of France, or Bonne d'Armagnac, his second spouse? His third wife, Marie de Cleves, probably survived him, and so it could not have been for her that there was spread a tomb

"Of gold and sapphires blue:
The gold doth show her blessedness,
The sapphires mark her true;
For blessedness and truth in her
Were livelily portrayed,
When gracious God with both his hands
Her goodly substance made.
He framed her in such wondrous wise,
She was, to speak without disguise,
The fairest thing in mortal eyes."

It was pleasant to think of the poet-prince spending the last days of his life in this beautiful château with his wife, Marie de Cleves, and to know that he had the pleasure of holding in his arms his little son and heir, Louis of Orleans, afterwards the good King Louis, our old friend, and the bone of Walter's contention with Miss Cassandra. [230]

By the way, I do not at all agree with that usually wise and just lady in her estimate of Louis XII. As M. La Tour says, he was far in advance of his age in his breadth of mind and his sense of the duty owed by a king to his people. Perhaps something of his father's poet vision entered into the more practical nature of Louis, and in nothing did he show more plainly the generosity and breadth of his character than in his forgiveness of those who had slighted and injured him,—when he said, upon ascending the throne, "The King of France does not avenge the wrongs of the Duke of Orleans," Louis placed himself many centuries in advance of the revengeful and rapacious age in which he lived.

Another poet whose name is associated with Blois is François Villon. A loafer and a vagabond he was, and a thief he may have been, yet by reason of his genius and for the beauty of his song this troubadour was welcomed to the literary court of Charles d'Orléans. That Villon received substantial assistance and protection from his royal brother poet appears from his poems. Among them we find one upon the birth of the Duke's daughter Mary: *Le Dit de la Naissance Marie*, which, like his patron's verses, is part in French and part in Latin. [231]

In this château, which is so filled with history and romance, our thoughts turned from the times of Charles of Orleans to a later period when Catherine sought to dazzle the eyes of Jeanne d'Albret by a series of fêtes and pageants at Blois that would have been quite impossible in her simpler court of Navarre. The Huguenot Queen, as it happened, was not at all bedazzled by the splendors of the French court, but with the keen vision that belonged to her saw, through the powder, paint, tinsel, and false flattery, the depravity and corruption of the life that surrounded her. To her son she wrote that his fiancée was beautiful, witty, and graceful, with a fine figure which was much too tightly laced and a good complexion which was in danger of being ruined by the paint and powder spread over it. With regard to the marriage contract which she had come to sign, the Queen said that she was shamefully used and that her patience was taxed beyond that of Griselda. After many delays the marriage contract was finally signed, and a few days later the good Queen of Navarre was dead, whether from natural causes or from some of the products of Queen Catherine's secret cupboards the world will never know, as Ruggieri and Le Maître were both at hand to do the will of their royal mistress with consummate skill, and to cover over their tracks with equal adroitness. [232]

It was to a still later and less tragic period in the history of the château that our thoughts turned most persistently, when Gaston, Duke of Orleans and his wife, Marguerite of Lorraine, held their court here and a bevy of young girls brought charm and grace to these great bare rooms. Gaston's eldest daughter, the Grande Mademoiselle, was often here in those days, acting in amateur theatricals with her stepsisters, one of whom, the little Princess Marguerite d'Orléans, cherished vain hopes of becoming Queen of France by marrying her own cousin, Louis XIV.

There is an amusing passage in the diary of Mademoiselle de Montpensier, in which she describes the visit of the King at Blois. "My sister," she said, "came to the foot of the stairs to receive his Majesty," this was of course the beautiful stairway of Francis I, which bears the lovely sculptured figures of Diane de Poitiers and other beauties of the time; but alas, the little Princess Marguerite had been stung by certain flies called gnats which quite spoiled her beautiful complexion, and, adds the frank sister, "made her look quite an object." This circumstance added greatly to Marguerite's chagrin when she learned that Louis was on his way to wed the Spanish Infanta, she herself having been flattered with the hope of marrying her cousin, having been frequently addressed as the "little queen." Louis, never insensible to his own charms, confided to Mademoiselle on his way to Blois that he had not changed his coat or dressed his love-locks; in fact had made himself "*le plus vilain possible*," in order to spare the regrets of his cousin Marguerite and her parents that he had slipped through their fingers.

[233]

Other young girls in the family group were Mademoiselle de Saint-Remi, whose father, Jacques de Courtarval, Marquis of Saint-Remi, was first steward to Gaston, Duke of Orleans, and Mademoiselle Montelais, whose name occurs in one of the court rhymes of the day in company with that of another young girl, whose history is closely associated with the château,

[234]

"Guiche of love the ally
The maids of honor did supply,
He has caged a pretty pair,
Montelais and La Vallière."

This other girl, who was destined to be a companion to Mademoiselle Montelais at court, was Louise de La Vallière, the stepdaughter of Saint-Remi and the daughter of the Marquis de la Baume-Le Blanc, Sieur de la Gasserie, who took the title of La Vallière after the death of an elder brother. These high-sounding titles of the La Vallières did not stand for much in gold or gear at this time, although there are still ruins to be seen in Bourbonnais of a very ancient castle of the La Baumes. An heroic record was theirs, however, as one of the name, Pierre le Blanc, served under Joan of Arc, and the father of Louise successfully bore the brunt of the enemies' attack at the passage of Brai, in 1634, and secured the retreat of the Spanish.

[235]

We had seen the house at Tours where Louise was born, but it was at Amboise that the La Vallières lived during her childhood, and here she may have seen the fourteen-year-old Louis, who came with the Queen Mother and Mazarin to this town, which was so gallantly held for him, its rightful lord, against Gaston and his bellicose daughter, by the honest soldier, Laurent de La Vallière. Whether or not little Louise de La Vallière saw the young King at Amboise during the war of the Fronde she certainly saw him when he stopped at Blois, some years later, on his way to Saint-Jean de Luz and the Spanish marriage. Louis and his court were the guests of Gaston in 1660, although they had been openly arrayed against each other at Amboise in 1651. Mademoiselle de Montpensier, in her frank and amusing chronicles, tells us that the King evidently found her father's château a dull place to stop in over night. The customs and costumes of the household failed to please the fastidious young monarch; the meal was served in "old-fashioned style, and the ladies were dressed like the dishes—all out of fashion."

Dumas makes Louis remark facetiously to Madame Gaston, that his teacher in geography had not told him that Blois was so far from Paris that the fashions could not reach the provincial town for several years. Only one figure in the group, which had gathered in the vast *salle* to do honor to the monarch, appeared to him worthy of royal regard. This was a slight, girlish form, in white muslin, a costume so simple that it could never be quite out of date.

[236]

Standing this afternoon in the Salle de Reception, we pictured to ourselves the first meeting of the King and Louise de La Vallière on the night of the arrival of the court at Blois. The fast-fading light lent a semblance of reality to the scene, as the torches and candles used in those early days could not have brilliantly lighted the vast hall. We fancied the chairs placed in half circle for the accommodation of the royal guests, the King's not a half-inch higher than that of Mazarin or of the Queen, Anne of Austria. The astute Italian Prime Minister is seated, his body is bent, his face pallid, the hand of Death is already laid upon him, but his mind is as keen and alert as in youth, his eyes as penetrating. The courtiers are grouped around Mazarin, the real king; Gaston, the indolent father of the energetic and courageous Mademoiselle de Montpensier, is talking to Mazarin, and chronicles of the day tell us that the Duke was an admirable *raconteur*. The Grande Mademoiselle, now over thirty, and in the full flower of a beauty which, according to Petitot's miniature and her own rose-colored description, was not inconsiderable, is in another group at one side of the hall, with her half-sisters and the other young girls of the house. Called forth from her modest station behind the princesses of the House of Orleans by the command of her hostess, Louise de La Vallière stepped forward, confused and blushing, to make her deep courtesy before the King, while the Duchess presented her in due form as Mademoiselle de la Baume-Le Blanc, daughter of the Marquis de La Vallière and stepdaughter of the Marquis de Saint-Remi.

[237]

As Madame de Motteville described her at seventeen, we see the slight girlish form of La

Vallière making her reverence before royalty, owing her charm, as the court lady relates, more to a certain grace, modesty and tenderness in bearing and expression than to the dazzling whiteness and rosiness of her skin, the exquisite blueness of her eyes and the brilliancy of her blonde hair of the shade which the French call *cheveux argentés*.

[238]

Although Madame de la Motte's description of Louise de La Vallière is charming and sympathetic, we long for the graceful and vivifying pen of Madame de Sévigné to picture for us the young girl as she appeared at her home in Blois, before the equally baneful breath of court favor or court scandal had brushed the bloom from her innocent loveliness.

Dear Madame de Sévigné, with her graceful fancy, her *joie de vivre*, and her inimitable skill in presenting a situation and making her characters live before us, should have been immortal as well as universal. We wish for a letter from her in every château of the Loire, most of all here at Blois, of which she has written so little. When Madame de Sévigné saw Louise de La Vallière some months later at court, she likened her to a modest violet, hiding beneath its leaves; but not so completely as to evade the eyes of royalty. And if Louise was lovely in her gown of virginal white, the King was a no less pleasing object to gaze upon. At all times courteous and graceful, at twenty-three Louis is described as handsome, well-formed, with deep blue eyes, and a profusion of curling hair which fell over his shoulders. Although somewhat under the middle height, he bore himself with an air of majesty and dignity, inherited from his royal mother, and would have been "every inch a King," said Saint-Simon, "even if he had been born under the roof of a beggar." It was this grace and personal charm, which Louis possessed in no small degree, that appealed to the girl's imagination, rather than the grandeur of his station. If Louise had not seen him again the image of this young prince from fairyland might in time have faded from her mind, especially as an incipient love affair with a neighbor's son already existed. Some notes and occasional shy glances had been exchanged between Mademoiselle de La Vallière and young Bragelongne, who lived next door to the Saint-Remis at Blois, and had she not been suddenly carried off to court this nebulous romance might have materialized into a happy marriage, and a career more honorable, if less brilliant and exciting, than that which lay before her.



[239]

LOUISE DE LA VALLIÈRE

It was this early affair with a neighbor's son which gave Dumas some historic foundation for his captivating and pathetic story of the Vicomte de Bragelonne. Whether or not the young lover wore his heart upon his sleeve to the end of his days, it is quite evident that M. de Bragelongne was speedily forgotten by Louise amid the pleasures and distractions of the gayest court in Europe. As maid of honor to the English princess, Henriette, Louise was plunged into all the festivities of Fontainebleau, Versailles, and the Palais Royal, of which the King was always the soul and centre.

[240]

You will think that my pen has run away with me in following the fortunes of Louise de La Vallière from Blois to Paris and from Paris to Versailles; but Lydia and I have been reading a book about Blois which M. La Tour had sent to us from Paris. This book, which dwells particularly upon the story of Louise de La Vallière and her association with the Château of Blois, has brought the life of that time before us so vividly that we feel as if we had some part and lot in the pathetic tale. The festivities and intrigues of Fontainebleau and Versailles may seem a far cry from the old Château of Blois, and yet the court life of that older time, dramatic and picturesque as it was, was curiously limited. The characters were always the same, the pageant alone shifted from palace to château, and from one château of the Loire to another. Now the court is at Amboise, again at Chenonceaux, and again at the stately palace of Chambord. The King is always surrounded by the same courtiers and the same favorites, whether he is riding through the forest of Fontainebleau or hunting at Chambord, in which princely domain Louis boasted that he had shot fourteen of his Uncle Gaston's cherished pheasants in one afternoon. The distances are short, and even in the days of slow-going coaches the court could breakfast at Chambord and sup at Blois.

[241]

Through the influence of a distant relative Louise de La Vallière was given a place at court in the service of the English princess, the beautiful, captivating and capricious Henriette, daughter of Charles I and wife of the King's young brother, Philippe d'Orléans. Chroniclers of the time all agree in attributing to her rare charm of manner, a lively wit and a keen intellect. A patron of the great writers of the day, she encouraged Corneille and the older poets and emboldened the younger by her appreciation. Henriette wept over the *Andromaque* when Racine read it to her, until the happy youth's head was well-nigh turned by what he considered the most fortunate beginning of its destiny. This combination of beauty, charm, and intellect, found more frequently, perhaps, in France than in any other country, rendered Madame the most irresistible of women, and as Saint-Beuve says, the most touching of princesses. The King, who at sixteen had refused

[242]

to dance with the thin and not especially attractive child of eleven, because, as he explained to his mamma, he did not care for little girls, took himself to task later for not realizing before she became his brother's fiancée that Henriette was the most beautiful woman in the world.

At the time that Louise de La Vallière entered her household Madame Henriette was enjoying her hour of triumph. The King, who had been slow in discovering her charms, was at her feet. The death of Mazarin, the miserly, had given Louis a freedom in his own kingdom that he had never before known. Entertainment followed entertainment, all given in honor of the English bride, his own Spanish bride having been relegated to the background of this gay court, from which she was never destined to emerge. "It seemed," wrote Madame de Lafayette, "as if the King had no interest in these *fêtes* except through the gratifications they gave to Madame." It was in the summer time, and the royalties were at Fontainebleau, which delightful palace of pleasure, with its extensive grounds, made a charming background for the succession of *fêtes* and dances that Louis planned for his sister-in-law. There were expeditions on land by day, water parties on the lake by the light of the moon, and promenades in the woods by night. Madame delighted to bathe in the Seine; accordingly parties were arranged for her pleasure, the ladies driving to the river and returning on horseback, in elaborate costumes with wonderful plumes in their hats, to an *al fresco* breakfast in the park.

[243]

A theatre was erected in the grounds and Lulli was installed as superintendent of the royal music. Among other entertainments a Ballet des Saisons was given, in which the King, in a gorgeous costume representing Spring, danced with his usual grace and skill, while Madame, in a gown of shining tissue, delicate as a butterfly's wing, led her troupe of Bacchantes, Louise de La Vallière among them.

[244]

It was after one of these entertainments, which were sometimes followed by rambles in the park lasting until two or three o'clock in the morning, that the scene under the Royal Oak took place which Dumas has so ingeniously woven into his romance of La Vallière. You remember that the three maids of honor of Madame,—Montelais, Athenais, and Louise,—were grouped together under the famous oak in the forest of Fontainebleau, which had witnessed the sighs for love or glory of the great Henry and many another monarch. The conversation of the three girls on life and love sounds trite and commonplace as we read the story, and yet in the light of the events that followed in quick succession the sentimental platitudes of the innocent child, La Vallière, and the worldly aphorisms of the ambitious Athenais, afterwards Madame de Montespan, gain both dignity and pathos. That Louise, the timid and gentle, should express herself so warmly upon her admiration for the King reveals the fact that the handsome young sovereign had already made an impression upon her sensitive heart. For her it seemed that there had been no one worthy of notice at the dance except the King, the living embodiment of the springtime he personified. When she exclaimed with fervor, "Have you ever seen any one to be compared with the King?" even the bold Athenais was surprised at the frankness of the little Blésoise. A still greater surprise was in store for the Three Graces under the Royal Oak when a rustling was heard in the undergrowth of the adjoining quincunx, and with cries of "A wolf! or a wild boar!" they all scampered away as fast as their feet could carry them to the safe and sure shelter of Madame's apartments, to learn later to their dismay that the rustling in the bushes had been caused, not by a wolf or a wild boar, but by the King himself, who was sauntering through the park with M. de Saint-Aignan.

[245]

Whether or not Louise ever thus openly expressed her admiration for the King, one may readily believe that even a slight impression made upon the girl's imagination would be inevitably deepened and strengthened in these days when the court life at Fontainebleau is described as a delirium of ambition, pleasure and love. The merry-making and feasting continued, the *fêtes* still being given in Madame's honor, and "the modest violet" might have remained hidden beneath its leaves had not Madame Henriette's schemes involved Louise. It appears that the Queen Mother, having in common with others observed the King's growing admiration for his beautiful sister-in-law, expostulated with him, entreating him, in the name of dignity and decorum, to discontinue his attentions to her. The King, angry and disconcerted that his actions should be criticised, formed with the aid of the quick-witted Madame, who cared little for Louis but greatly enjoyed her position as queen of the hour, a plot which involved several of the maids of honor. So infamous was this plot of Madame's that one wonders that a woman, to whom kindness of heart has been attributed, could have countenanced a scheme so cruel. "In order to hide their own game," said Saint-Beuve, "the King was to pay make-believe attention to several of Madame's maids of honor." The three selected were Mademoiselle de Pons, Mademoiselle de Chimerault, and Mademoiselle de La Vallière. It soon appeared that the latter was the one whom the King preferred to seem to be in love with. The plot soon thickened quite beyond Madame's anticipations, the make-believe attentions became real, the other maids of honor were quite neglected, Madame herself was forgotten, and while trying to dazzle the eyes of the public Louis himself was bewildered, and soon found himself seriously in love with La Vallière, at least as seriously in love as it was in his nature to be. And Louise was then and ever after deeply, hopelessly in love with the King.

[246]

[247]

Is it strange that this innocent girl, little more than a child in years and experience, with many to flatter and criticise, but none to counsel or protect, should have fallen into the trap that was laid for her unwary feet? From her quiet village home she was suddenly, as Madame's dame d'honneur, introduced to a new world, in which the King, young, handsome, and possessed of all the graces and accomplishments of his age, was the central figure. Before she had time to become accustomed to the life around her, the greatest temptation that could be offered to a

[248]

Frenchwoman of that day was presented to her. This monarch, the Roi Soleil to his adoring satellites, was at her feet, telling her that he loved her, and her only, little Louise de La Vallière, whom the haughty court dames had looked down upon as insignificant, lacking in grace and even beauty. It was only a few short days since water parties, ballets, and *fêtes* had been given in Madame's honor; the gayety continued, but Henriette was no longer the inspiration of these festivities, which were planned for other *beaux yeux*, whose she does not know. Louise was so modest and retiring, so anxious to spare the Queen sorrow and pain, that it was some time before it transpired that the little Blésoise, whom Madame would not have condescended to look upon as a possible rival, was the reigning favorite.

In the midst of the scheming, love making, jealousy, and carousing, the King's second child—the little Princess Anne Elizabeth—opened her eyes to the light of the world, only to close them again before the rejoicings at her birth were well over, even before the foreign ambassadors who came to welcome her had reached Paris. The Queen was deeply grieved at the loss of her child, Louis wept copiously over the family affliction, but being in greater need of distraction than before we find him a few weeks later dancing gayly in a Ballet des Arts in company with Mademoiselle de Mortmart, *la belle Athenais*, Mademoiselle de Sévigné, whom her fond mother called the "prettiest girl in France," and Mademoiselle de La Vallière, who, despite her slight lameness, danced to perfection, her slim figure, of the lissome slenderness that belongs to early youth, showing to great advantage in the figures of the cotillon.

[249]

You know the sad story far better than I do. The few short years of enchantment when Louise lived in the delirium of love's young dream, yet was never really happy, never enjoying her honors as Duchesse de La Vallière, the royal favorite, because her conscience was ever awake and her tender heart filled with remorse for the sorrow she had caused the Queen. The brief years of enchantment were soon over, to be followed by disillusionment, when it was revealed to Louise that the fickle heart of Louis had succumbed to other charms; the final flight from court and the long years of repentance at the Carmelites.

[250]

Twice before Louise had taken refuge in a convent. The first time she sought to fly from her passion and herself, to be brought back to court by the adoring King, the second flight was when Louis had begun to transfer his attentions to Madame de Montespan, and finally, at thirty, Louise de La Vallière retired to Chaillot to expiate whatever sins she had committed by thirty-six long years of prayer and penitence. Having entered the Carmelites in the bright bloom of her beauty, her lovely blonde hair severed from her graceful head, La Vallière was known ever after as Sister Louise de la Miséricorde, and as if anything more were needed to complete the tragedy, the King whom she had loved so deeply, to whom she had sacrificed her life, although at the time much engrossed with Madame de Montespan, was incapable of forgiving Louise for quitting the court, and never made the slightest effort to see her again. "He has forgotten her," wrote the vivacious and outspoken Madame, mother of the Regent, "as much as if he had never known her."

In her repentance, which was evidently deep and sincere, La Vallière likened herself to three great sinners, the Canaanitish woman, the woman of Samaria, and the Magdalen, and asked only that her sins be forgiven. Bossuet, who received her confession, compared her to a dove taking its flight heavenward, while Madame de Sévigné, who visited her at the Carmelites about the time of the marriage of La Vallière's daughter to the Prince de Conti, wrote to Madame de Grignan: "But what an angel she appeared to me! To my eyes she possessed all the charms of early days, the same eyes and the same expression: the austere life, meagre fare and little sleep *ni les lui ont ni creusés ni battus*. The severe costume has despoiled her of no grace or dignity; indeed, this dress and this retreat add greatly to her dignity."

[251]

Just as we were leaving the château a pleasant diversion came in the form of a call from M. La Tour, who had motored over from his father's country seat to dine with us to-night. I was glad to see him, as I wished to thank him for a book which we found at the hotel, when we reached here yesterday, which has added so much to our interest in the château. I tell M. La Tour that if we dream to-night of court pageants at Blois, midnight strolls in the forest, and girlish confidences under the Royal Oak, at Fontainebleau, it will be quite his fault for making the story so real to us. Then, as if to deepen the impression already made, he proceeded to draw us a picture of the *cortège* attending Louis XIV on his arrival at Blois,—the great state carriages of wood and leather, with their Genoa velvet cushions and wide wheels, surrounded by outriders advancing in perfect order, at a foot's pace, the musketeers in their brilliant uniform, the horns of varying sorts exciting the dogs and horses,—movement, noise, color, a mirage of light announced the King's approach to the château, of which nothing can now convey any adequate idea unless it be the picturesque splendor and false majesty of a theatrical spectacle.

[252]

As M. La Tour described this brilliant scene, another arose before me unbidden, this last in the dim religious light of the convent, where a woman still young, in the full maturity of her beauty, is taking the veil, which is held for the former royal favorite by the neglected Queen of Louis, Maria Teresa. Although some chroniclers tell us that the King's eyes were red with weeping all the day before, he probably went hunting that day after pheasants, or whatever game was in season, amid the flatteries and acclamations of his courtiers. So short was the memory of a King! So long and deep was the repentance of a woman more sinned against than sinning!

[253]

The floral offerings, this evening, were handsomer than usual, having come from M. La Tour's paternal gardens. Miss Cassandra and I have bouquets of sweet peas of exquisite shades of mauve, purple and white, quite suitable for chaperones, while for Lydia was reserved a choice posy of the blue forget-me-nots, that the French adore, surrounded by mignonette. Lydia is

wearing a soft grey voile gown to-night, cut low enough to reveal the roundness and whiteness of her throat, and the blue flowers against her grey corsage made a perfect finish to the simple, dainty costume, beside which they are exactly the color of her eyes. Upon this fact M. La Tour is probably expatiating this minute, as they are talking together in the embrasure of a window in this odd little room which answers the purpose of salon and writing room, in which I scribble off these lines to you. We are all enjoying the young Frenchman's visit, with one exception perhaps, Archie, who is smoking on the terrace alone. I can see his face from where I am sitting, and it wears a rather careworn expression,—much as he used to look when he was interne at the P—Hospital and had a particularly bad case under his care. Walter, who is writing at a table near me, is laughing over my description, and says that this is a bad case for Archie and M. La Tour, whatever it may be for Lydia, who Quaker-like is so self-contained and serene of countenance that she does not betray her feelings by so much as the lifting of an eyelash. She treats both of her admirers with charming impartiality.

[254]

"How is Archie ever going to find out whether Lydia cares for him, Zephine?" This from Walter's writing table, in a stage whisper. "Even you, inveterate matchmaker that you are, have met your Waterloo for once. Angela, with all her roguish ways, wasn't a patch to this demure Lydia. You certainly are having experiences, Zephine, and are keeping your hand in for Christine and Lisa when they come along. I feel sorry for poor old Archie; but we all have to have our troubles in this line sooner or later."

[255]

"Then why have you added to Archie's troubles by urging M. La Tour to go with us to-morrow?"

"How could I help asking him," this in Walter's most persuasive tone, "when he has taken the trouble to come over here to dine with us? In common decency I could do nothing else."

"Of course nothing will ever come of this, as M. La Tour's parents have no doubt arranged an advantageous marriage for him, but——"

"Do you want anything to come of it, Zephine?"

"How you tease! You know very well that I do not; but poor Archie's holiday is being spoiled, all the same."

"Well, he can't go with us anyhow, Zephine dear, for to-morrow is his mother's birthday, and he will have to leave here betimes, in order to be at home to lunch with Madame La Tour. I must go out on the terrace now and comfort Archie."

[256]

"Don't be *too* comforting, Walter, and why didn't you tell me before that M. La Tour could not go with us to-morrow?"

"I did not quite realize how important his movements were, and after all he holds out a hope of rejoining us at Chinon, on Monday."

This conversation with my good man, dear Margaret, will give you a fairly satisfactory idea of a very unsatisfactory state of affairs except that I am not quite sure about Chinon. Walter looked so mischievous, when he added that bit of information, that I am inclined to think he made it up, on the spur of the moment, just to give me something to think about.

By the way, I am leaving the most important item for the end of this long letter. M. La Tour brought a charming note from his mother, inviting us to lunch with her any day that suits us. The Château La Tour is somewhere between Blois and Paris, not much out of our way; but we really have not time to stop over even for a few hours, as Angela writes from Paris that the Dudleys leave her on Tuesday to sail from Cherbourg. The child cannot stay at a hotel alone, and she says that she is so busy over her trousseau that she has not time to join us here even for a few days. So you see we have only Monday for Chinon, a night at Angers and a full day on Tuesday, as we return to Paris, via Orleans, where we wish to have several hours *en route* for the Joan of Arc associations.

[257]

It would be a delightful experience to lunch at the Château La Tour, but under the circumstances, a trifle embarrassing. Archie would flatly refuse to go, I am sure, and Walter would think it a perfect bore, so it is just as well that we have a good, ready-made excuse. I don't know what Miss Cassandra thinks about the situation of affairs, as for once in her life she is as discreet and non-committal as Lydia; but she is evidently much disappointed about the luncheon at the Château La Tour. She is always ready for a new experience, and is eager to meet Madame La Tour, who claims cousinship with her. However, this last pleasure may be only deferred, as Madame hopes to call upon us in Paris later in the month.

XII

[258]

THREE CHÂTEAUX

HÔTEL DE FRANCE, Blois, September 11th.

THIS has been a golden day of pure delight, with a brilliant sunshine from early morn to dewy

eve, and a cool, refreshing air, an altogether ideal day for our prolonged visitations among the châteaux around Blois! Lydia and I went to the little Protestant church with Miss Cassandra this morning, as a salve to our consciences, Archie says, in view of the giddy round of pleasure that we had planned for the afternoon. He and Walter tried to beguile Lydia from our side, to spend the morning in roaming about Blois with them; but she is a loyal little soul and resisted all their blandishments with sweet steadfastness, saying that after following the Huguenots through all the miseries that were heaped upon them, the least that we can do is to honor their memories in their chapel here at Blois.

Archie says that we are quite right and that this sentiment is praiseworthy; but that as he and Walter were unable to honor these heroic souls in their own language, to attend such a service would be a mockery. [259]

"Yes," Walter added, "it would seem like a bit of play-acting to sit there in church, like two whited sepulchres, trying to look as if we understood when we should not know six words of what was being said."

Miss Cassandra, being accustomed to religious service where not a word is spoken in any language, naturally does not think much of these arguments; but having a strong liking for my two men she is quite willing to excuse them from accompanying us to the chapel. Nor do I wonder that they are glad to have a fine morning in which to roam about this interesting old town together, and to give zest and point to their rambles, M. La Tour has told them of an ancient coin associated with the history of Blois. This coin is said to be the oldest document in existence on, or in, which the name of Blois is inscribed, it also bears the name of the officer of the mint at Blois at the time of its issue, far back in history. Of course Walter and Archie are very anxious to see this ancient coin, and M. La Tour has given them a letter of introduction to the man who has charge of it, which he assured them would admit them to a view of it Sundays or holidays, or any time in the day or night. [260]

We enjoyed the service in the little church, where we heard a really eloquent discourse from an old *pasteur* with the most beautiful, benevolent face that you can imagine. We are quite sure that this handsome, venerable clergyman comes from a long line of heroic Huguenot ancestors, and Miss Cassandra says that she did not mind so much not understanding what he said, as she was quite sure that it was all to edification, which she evidently does not always feel with regard to the long tales that the guides spin off for us, and in truth Lydia and I have tripped them up more than twice in their history. We returned to the hotel quite enthusiastic about the chapel and its pastor, and Miss Cassandra is already planning some benevolent scheme to help the evidently struggling congregation. If her means were equal to her charitable intent, what would she not do for the benefit of mankind in all quarters of the globe? Walter and Archie were so impressed by her description of "the venerable descendant of a long line of massacred Huguenots" that they have made substantial acknowledgments to be sent by Lydia and myself to the patrons of the little chapel. [261]

The idea of visiting three châteaux in one afternoon was rather appalling at first; but the afternoon was long, beginning soon after our twelve o'clock *déjeuner*, and the roads are fine for motoring in this level country. Our way lay for some miles by Loire, first on one bank and then on the other. This flat country, with its wide reaches of meadow land and distant horizon lines, has a charm of its own, its restfulness suits the drowsy autumn days, and no trees could be better fitted to border these roadsides and river banks than the tall slim Lombardy poplars, with their odd bunches of foliage atop like the plumes and pompons on soldiers' caps. Down by some of the streams large white poplars have spread out their branches, making coverts from the sunshine for man and beast. On these poplars we noticed what looked like huge green nests. "Are they crows' nests?" we asked, as there seem to be no end of crows all about here. [262]

"No, not for the *corbeaux*," said the chauffeur, shaking his head and looking fairly puzzled, as he explained with some elaboration that this was a parasitic plant which drew its nourishment from various trees, and that later in the season white, waxlike berries would appear upon it.

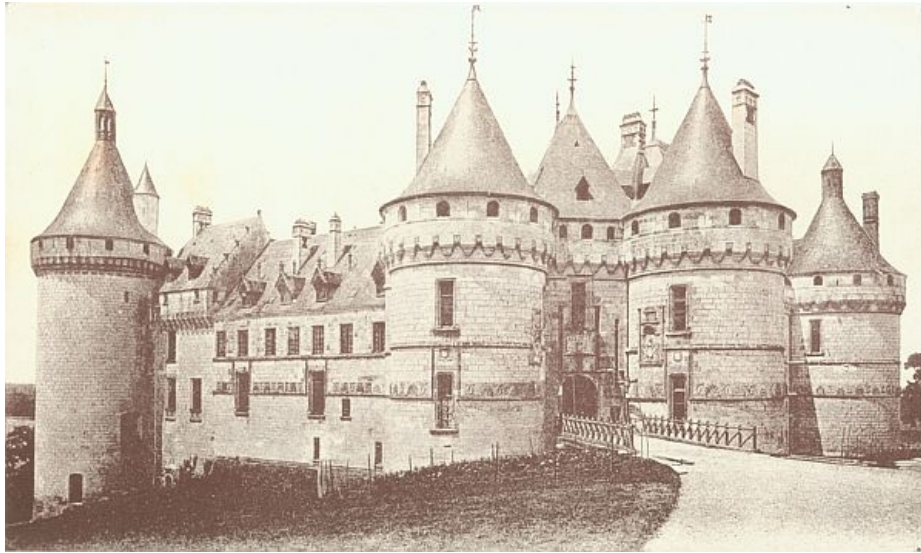
"It is the mistletoe!" exclaimed Lydia, joyously, as if meeting an old friend in a strange land, and as she was, as usual, conducting the general information course, she asked the chauffeur if it was not used for decoration at Christmas and the New Year, being hung where lovers were likely to pass, a custom derived from the rites of the ancient Druids. The chauffeur was evidently unacquainted with the ways of the Druids, his studies in folk lore not having been extensive; but the bit about the lovers he understood, and in that curious way, that has so often surprised us, perhaps by a certain mental telepathy, he suddenly understood, slapped his hand upon his knee, and exclaimed, "Yes, yes, Mademoiselle, it is the same thing, le mis-le-toe, *le gui*."

So it is *le gui*, that we see on so many trees, and this man, evidently of the soil, as he knows all about the products here, tells us that it grows upon pear, apple and other trees and is cut off and sent in great quantities to the large towns for holiday celebrations. [263]

From the level landscape with low-lying meadows and fields of turnips in which men and women were at work, we suddenly saw the great round towers of Chaumont rising from among the trees of a well-wooded ridge. Like Langeais, Chaumont is a strong fortress of the middle ages, dark and lowering at a first view, but with much beauty in its hillside park and gardens. We crossed a creaking, swaying suspension bridge, one is always crossing bridges here, as the Loire winds itself around these châteaux as if it delighted to encircle them in its shining arms.

The best view of the château is from this bridge, which connects the villages of Chaumont and Onzain. From this coign of vantage it rises before us, crowning the hill-crest with its many towers and dominating the little village at its feet and the broad river. The Loire is twice as wide here as at Blois, its surface broken up by many sand bars and stretches of pebbly beach, such brilliantly colored pebbles as we used to see in Northern Italy, when the rivers were low as these are here to-day. Much the same view is this as John Evelyn's first sight of Chaumont, on a May day long ago: "We took boate," wrote Evelyn, "passing by Chaumont, a proud castle on the left hand; before it a small island deliciously shaded with tall trees." As we motored through the village street, whose houses run parallel with the river, we noticed that the town seemed to be *en fête*. The outside of the little church was decorated with banners, lanterns and flowers, while within it was so filled to overflowing with villagers, and small maidens in white frocks and pink and blue sashes, that we could scarcely get our noses within the doorway. The village was celebrating some church festival, the chauffeur told us; but we stupidly forget which saint was being honored, perhaps because the remainder of the afternoon was spent among those who had small claim to saint-hood, and then as Miss Cassandra says, "There are so many of these saints, how can we ever keep track of them all?"

[264]



CHÂTEAU OF CHAUMONT: THE LOIRE ON THE LEFT

"And it is so much easier to remember the sinners," Walter adds, "because there is always something doing among them."

[265]

Leaving the auto in the village, we climbed up to the castle by a steep and narrow path and entered the great doorway where the moat and drawbridge between the huge round towers again reminded us of Langeais. Over this entrance are the graven initials of Louis and Anne of Brittany, the arms of George of Amboise with his cardinal's hat, and the double C's of Charles of Chaumont and his wife, Catherine of Chauvigny. Here also are some scattered D's which stand for Diane of Poitiers, who consented to accept this château when Catherine offered her a Hobson's choice of Chaumont or nothing. We were especially interested in a rich frieze in which were intertwined the double C's and the odd device of the burning mountain, "Chaud-mont," from which, it is said, the name of the château was derived. As Chaumont is still inhabited, we were not shown the whole of the castle, but fortunately for us the suite of historic rooms was on view. Here again we came upon associations with the dreadful Catherine, whose bedroom and furniture are shown to visitors. Whether or not these articles are genuine, and grave doubts are thrown upon their authenticity, they are very handsome and of the proper period. The tapestries in these rooms are all old and charming in color, of old rose and pink. A description which I came across in a delightful book by Mr. Theodore A. Cook, which M. La Tour brought us from his mother's library, gives a better idea of this tapestry than any words of mine: "Beside the door a blinded Love with rose-red wings and quiver walks on the flushing paths, surrounded by strange scrolls and mutilated fragments of old verses; upon the wall in front are ladies with their squires attending, clad all in pink and playing mandolins, while by the stream that courses through the flowery meadows small rosy children feed the water birds, that seem to blush with pleasure beneath the willow boughs of faded red."

[266]

Next to the so-called room of Catherine de Médicis is the chamber attributed to Ruggieri, the chosen aide and abettor of her schemes, which apartment very properly communicates with a private stairway leading to the platform of the tower which is said to have been used by him as an observatory. Whether or not Catherine ever inhabited these rooms, and we know that she never lived for any length of time at Chaumont, I must confess that seeing them thus conveniently placed for plotting and adventure, they impressed us even more than her secret stairways and poison cupboards at Blois. This may have been because these rooms are small and dark and dreary, Ruggieri's being in one of the corner towers, with small windows cut in the wall, which is over two metres in thickness. From whatever reason, these apartments are the most weird and ghostly that we have seen, fitted up as they are with many memorials of Catherine, and two portraits of her, one in a rich costume, an extinguisher gown with pink underskirt and wide full sleeves bordered with a band of fur, each one as large as an ordinary muff. There is also a portrait of Ruggieri here, whose dark, sinister face adds much to the grewsomeness of the room,

[267]

and standing here we could readily imagine the scene, described by a chronicler of the time, when the Queen sought Ruggieri here among his philters, minerals, foreign instruments, parchments and maps of the heavens, to consult him about the future of her offspring. This was soon after the death of Henry II, when the young King's health had begun to break down. When the Queen desired to be shown the horoscopes of her children, by some skillful arrangement of mirrors the astrologer made her four sons to pass before her, each in turn wearing crowns for a brief period; but all dying young and without heirs, each figure was to turn around as many times as the number of years he was to live. Poor Francis appeared, wan and sickly, and before he had made an entire circle he passed out of sight, from which the Queen knew that the young King would die before the year was out, which, as we know, came true, as did some of the other prognostications. What must have filled to the brim the cup of misery which this ambitious, disappointed woman had held to her lips, was to see the rival of her sons, the bitterly hated Henry of Navarre, following their shadows upon the mirror and making over twenty turns, which meant that he would reign in France for twenty years, or more. By whatever means the astrologer accomplished these predictions, the remarkable thing about them is that the account of this interview at Chaumont was written during the reign of Henry III, before some of them had been fulfilled. Catherine, firmly believing in Ruggieri's prognostications, left the château a sadder if not a wiser woman.

[268]

[269]

The rooms of Catherine communicate directly with the chapel, where there is a most realistic picture of The Last Judgment, and her book of the hours lies open on her *prie dieu* as if she had just finished her devotions. For good and sufficient reasons, we do not think of this Queen at prayer as readily as we figure her taking part in affairs of state, plotting for the destruction of her enemies and trying to hoodwink the Huguenots and Leaguers in turn.

"And yet," as Walter reminds us, "Catherine was extremely devout, with all her devilry." You may remember a portrait of her in fine enamel at the Louvre, which represents Catherine kneeling before an altar, her hands devoutly clasped, and as if to give point to the time-honored adage "handsome is that handsome does," the Queen's face, in this enamel, possesses some claim to good looks.

M. La Tour has been telling us of some old papers, recently brought to light, which prove that Catherine, during the babyhood of her children, was an anxious and watchful mother. She seems to have written careful and minute directions regarding the food and clothing of her little ones, in one instance directing that her son Henry should not be encouraged to eat largely, adding, like any wise mother of to-day, "I am of opinion that my children are rather ill from being too fat than too thin." The evidence of this opinion is borne out by Clouet's drawings of the chubby face of Henry and the fat, heavy cheeks of Francis II, both in their babyhood. It was little Francis, an unassertive prince in after years, who at the age of two insisted upon discarding his petticoats, upon which the King, when consulted upon this important question, wrote to the governor of the royal nursery, "It is right indeed that my son should wear breeches if he asks for them; for I do not doubt that he knows perfectly well what is needful."

[270]

These intimate details of the youth of the royal children, trifling as they are, add a human interest to the figures of Henry II and Catherine, whom we only think of as sweeping through these châteaux in form and state, and raise a question as to whether, after all, this cruel Queen had not a heart somewhere tucked away under her jewelled bodice.

[271]

Chaumont has many associations earlier than the days of Catherine, reaching back to Charles of Amboise, who built much of the château, and to his father Georges, one of the chief ministers of Louis XII. It is said that Georges of Amboise used his tact and influence to gain the papal bull necessary for the King's divorce from Jeanne of France, which was brought to Chinon by Cæsar Borgia, with great state and ceremony. It was this same papal envoy who brought Georges d'Amboise his cardinal's hat. Unscrupulous as he may have been in some instances, Cardinal d'Amboise seems to have been, in the main, a wise and judicious minister and helped Louis to institute many important reforms.

The romance of Chaumont is its association with the knightly figure of Henri Coiffier de Ruzé, Marquis de Cinq Mars. The opening scene of De Vigny's novel rises before us, as we pass through the rooms of Chaumont. The young Marquis was about to set forth upon his ill-fated journey into the great world, and the members of his family were gathered together for a solemn, farewell meal. De Vigny represents the poor youth neglecting his dinner, and even indifferent to his mother's sorrow over his departure in his desire to meet the beautiful eyes of Marie de Gonzague, who was seated at the other end of the table, from whom he was soon to part forever. It was by a lattice window in the rez-de-chaussée of the western tower that Cinq-Mars found Marie waiting for him, when he retraced his steps and came back at midnight for a last word with her. We looked in vain for the window by which the lovers swore eternal fidelity to their love and to each other; but the château has doubtless undergone some changes since those early days, although it looks so ancient. Lydia and I were wishing for a copy of Cinq-Mars in order to follow the young Marquis through his sad and singular experience at Loudun, his meeting with his old friend De Thou, his brilliant exploit at Perpignan, his rapid preferment at court, and—just here Walter called us from our rapid review of the career of Cinq-Mars to show us a head of Benjamin Franklin in terra cotta. This excellent low relief of Franklin is in a case with a number of other medallions, made by an Italian, Nini, whom the owner of Chaumont brought here in the hope of turning to account some clay found on the estate. This admirable medallion excited the two antiquarians of the party more than anything we have seen here, even more than the weird sky parlor of Ruggieri. Walter is wondering whether this is not the medallion about which Dr.

[272]

[273]

Franklin wrote to his daughter soon after his arrival at Passy, as the first of its kind made in France. This idea seems more probable, in view of the fact that the same M. Le Ray, who owned Chaumont at that time, was Franklin's host at Passy for nine years. All of which, as Walter says, makes it more than likely that the old philosopher came to Chaumont to have his portrait modelled by Nini, especially as his relations with the master of Chaumont were of the most friendly nature. The old potteries in which the Italian artist worked have long since been turned into stables and a riding school.

Another familiar and even more recent figure associated with Chaumont is Madame de Staël, who took refuge here, while reading the proofs of her work upon Germany, Chaumont being the requisite forty leagues from Paris. M. Le Ray and his family, with whom Madame de Staël was upon the most intimate terms, were in America at this time. Here in the old château the De Staëls lived for some time, the authoress working in peace and quietness upon her great work. When M. Le Ray and his family returned to Chaumont, although hospitably invited to remain at the château, Madame de Staël insisted upon removing with her family to a villa in the neighborhood, which was placed at her disposal by M. de Salaberry. At this place, called Fossé, Madame de Staël welcomed Madame Récamier and other friends, and with the charming French trait of making the most of the joys of the hour, she wrote with enthusiasm of the happy days that she passed near her friends at Chaumont. Even if the old Vendean soldier, the châtelain of Fossé, took little care of his estate, she said that his constant kindness made everything easy and his original turn of mind made everything amusing. "No sooner had we arrived," wrote Madame de Staël, "than an Italian musician whom I had with me, to give lessons to my daughter, began to play the guitar. My daughter accompanied on the harp the sweet voice of my fair friend, Madame Récamier; the peasants assembled below the windows astonished to find this colony of troubadours who came to enliven the solitude of their master. It was there that I passed my last days in France, with a few friends whose memories are cherished in my heart. Surely this reunion so intimate, this solitary sojourn, this delightful dalliance with the fine arts could hurt no one."

[274]

[275]

Charming, innocent, pastoral seems this life, as Madame de Staël described it, and yet even such simple pleasures as these she was not allowed to enjoy, for during a brief visit to the home of M. de Montmorency, an attempt was made to seize her manuscripts, which her children had fortunately put in a place of safety; her book was suppressed and she was ordered to leave France within three days.

When Madame de Staël asked why she was treated with such harshness by the government and why her book was censored, the answer given under the signature of the ministry plainly stated that the head and front of her offending consisted in her not having mentioned the Emperor in her last work. It is difficult to believe that a man who could do such great things as Napoleon could be so small as to follow this brilliant woman with bitter, relentless hatred, because she failed to burn incense at his shrine.

[276]

Although we were not given the freedom of the grounds, we were shown the beautiful court of honor with its one fine tree, a cedar of Lebanon which spreads its branches quite close to the chapel walls. There is an old Italian well in this court, with low reliefs carved upon its sides, and graceful ornaments of wrought iron above the sweep. We pictured to ourselves the Marquis de Cinq Mars and Marie de Gonzague meeting in this court, under the friendly branches of the great cedar, and so with a tender thought for these hapless old-time lovers, we turned away from Chaumont. Still musing and dreaming over its numerous and varied associations, we motored along toward Cheverny. This was an afternoon in which to dream,—the air was full of a delicious drowsy autumnal warmth, and a soft haze hung over the Loire and its tributaries. Involuntarily our thoughts turn back to the time when the kings and nobles of France made their stately progress along these same roads, many of them Roman roads, for the great road-builders were all over this country as in England. Upon these highways over which we speed along in an auto, great lumbering stage coaches once made their way, and in the fields, as to-day, were the toilers, the husband and wife, as in the *Angelus* of Millet. For an instant they would look up from their work to see what all the racket was about, and take a momentary interest in the gilded coaches, the gay outriders, the richly caparisoned horses, and all the pomp and circumstance of royalty. If near the highway, they would catch a fleeting glimpse of the beautiful face of some royal or noble dame, and seeing only the rich brocade of her gown, the jewels upon her breast and the gay feathers and flowers in her hat, they would turn back to their toil with a half-formulated wonder why life was a holiday to these favored ones and only bitter toil and hardship to *nous autres*. Thomas Jefferson's proposition, that all men are created free and equal, would have shocked these simple souls as it would their lords and masters, and yet a seed of thought was slumbering in their slow minds, germinating for a future awakening, a small seed that was destined to become a thousand in the sad and terrible reprisals of the French Revolution. To these starved peasants luxury stood for happiness, never themselves knowing the satisfaction of a full comfortable meal, it would have been impossible to make them believe that this outward show and splendor did not mean that these men and women, who rolled along in coaches and fed sumptuously every day, were the supremely blessed of the earth. And yet along these roads passed the coaches of the heavy hearted as well as of the gay. By much the same way that we are going journeyed the unhappy Princess Joanne when her husband, Louis XII, was minded to put her away to give place to a more ambitious marriage. Another royal lady to whom a crown brought naught but sorrow and disappointment was the gentle Louise de Vandemont-Lorraine, wife of Henry III, who fared this way to the home of her widowhood at Chenonceaux, and by much the same route passed Marie de Médicis when she fled from Blois and found refuge and aid at Loches.

[277]

[278]



SMITHY NEAR GATE OF CHEVERNY

As Cheverny and Chaumont are not far apart, we were aroused from our reflections by a sudden stop at a little smithy near the gates of the park. A most charming little smithy is this, with a niched saint on the outside, vines clambering all over the wall, and a picturesque outside staircase with a little balcony above. The blacksmith, himself, as he stood framed in by the doorway, made a picture that we thought well worth taking. Unfortunately the saint in the niche could not come in, as it was some distance from the door, but just at the right moment Lydia, quite unconsciously, stepped before the lens, and near the stone stairway which she had been examining.

[279]

"Far better than a saint!" said Archie under his breath, and then aloud, "Keep still, Miss Mott, the blacksmith will stay, I am sure, as he looks as if he had been built into that door."

I think we shall be able to send you a photograph of our little smithy, and perhaps one of the church across the road, which is quaint and interesting, with its timbered verandas (one cannot, by any stretch of courtesy, call them cloisters) and something like a lych-gate at the entrance. Within are some marbles and memorial tablets of the Hurault family. It seems that the Huraults owned the Seignory of Cheverny as long ago as the fourteenth century, "before we Americans were discovered," as Miss Cassandra says. Early in the sixteenth century, one Raoul Hurault built a château here, of which little or nothing is left. The present château was built by a later Hurault, in 1634, and, after passing through several hands, it was bought, in 1825, by the Marchioness Hurault de Vibraye, and being thus returned to the family of the original owners, is still in their possession. A wonderful tale was this for American ears!

[280]

Cheverny, with its well wooded park, and its avenue six kilometres in length, is a noble domain; but the outside of the château, although its architecture has been highly praised, did not impress us particularly. This may be because the mansion is situated on a level sweep of lawn, laid out after the English style, instead of crowning a great bluff like Blois, Amboise and Chaumont. The interior of Cheverny leaves nothing to be desired. It is elegant, aristocratic, and yet most delightfully homelike, with its spacious hall, richly decorated royal bedroom, and salon as livable as an English drawing room, with books, magazines and writing materials scattered over the centre table. On the panelled walls are gathered together a goodly and graceful company of noble lords and beautiful ladies, among them a fine full-length portrait of Philippe Hurault, Count de Cheverny, Chancellor of Finance under Henry IV, and opposite him his beautiful and stately wife, Anne de Thou, Dame de Cheverny, in a gown of black velvet garnished with rich lace. This noble lady was related, in some way, to the gallant young De Thou who perished on the scaffold with his friend Cinq Mars. Over the chimney-place is a charming portrait by Mignard of the daughter, or daughter-in-law, of Anne de Thou, Marie Johanne de Saumery, Marquise de Montglat, Countess de Cheverny. The subject of this lovely portrait bears with distinction her long array of cumbersome titles, while the airy grace of the figure and the innocent sweetness of the rounded girlish face are irresistibly attractive. Above the chimney-place, in which this portrait is set in the white wainscot, is the monogram (HV) which one finds all over the château, a proof that this ancient family is *légitimiste* to the core, and devoutly loyal to whatever is left of the ancient line of the Bourbons. In the *salle à manger*, the monogram of the last Henry of this royal house is especially conspicuous. We were puzzling over the name of the pretender of to-day when the guide informed our ignorance, with a most superior manner of knowing it all and wondering that we did not know it also. From what he gave forth in rapid French with many gestures, we gathered that on the death of the Comte de Paris his eldest son, Philippe Robert, Duc d'Orléans, became heir to the house of Bourbon, founded in 886 by Robert le Fort, with the title Philippe VII. The Duc de Bourdeaux, always known as the Comte de Chambord after he became owner of the château of the same name, was heir to the throne, through the elder branch of the house, that is, as the grandson and eldest descendant of Charles X, the last of the elder branch that reigned in France. Some little time before his death, the Comte de Chambord was reconciled to the younger or Orleans branch, which had usurped the throne after the expulsion of Charles X. By this act the Comte de Paris was recognized as the

[281]

[282]

legitimate successor to the throne. The present Duke of Orleans, should the monarchy be restored, would rule as Philippe VII. The Comte de Chambord took the title Henri V, as the next Henri after the king of Navarre, Henri IV. The Comte de Chambord bequeathed the Château of Chambord, which was his personal property, to his kinsman, the Duke de Parme, who was a Bourbon of the Spanish line, being the descendant of the grandson of Louis XIV, who was elected to the Spanish throne in 1700. From the pride with which this information was communicated we realized that this very superior *gardien* was, like the noble master and mistress of Cheverny, legitimist to the ends of his fingers.

While listening to this genealogical disquisition our eyes turned to a most attractive looking tea table which was set forth with superb silver, and thin slices of bread and butter and cake. With appetites sharpened by our long ride through the fresh air, I fear that we all gazed longingly at that tempting regale, and for Miss Cassandra, Lydia and I positively trembled. With her strong feeling that the world was made for herself and those whom she loves, it would not have surprised us to see the good lady sit down at this hospitable looking table and invite the rest of the party to join her. Lydia adroitly led the conversation toward Chambord and the afternoon tea which our chauffeur had promised us there, adding, gracefully, "It is very kind of the Marquise to allow us to go through her beautiful château while the family is in residence." "Yes," assented Miss Cassandra, "but how much more hospitable if she would invite us to drink tea with her!" After admiring the beautifully decorated ceiling and the handsome leather hangings, we left the dining room and its temptations for what was a much greater attraction to the men of the party, the fine suits of armor in the Salle des Gardes.

Although Cheverny cherishes its Bourbon traditions, like the proverbially happy nation and happy woman it has no history to speak of, having even escaped the rigors of the French Revolution. In the past, as to-day, this château seems to have been a homelike and peaceful abode, its long façade and pavilions having looked down through many centuries upon a smiling garden and a vast lawn, which shut it in from the world beyond even more effectually than its great gates.

From Cheverny our way lay across a stretch of open, level country and then through the forest of Chambord, which includes 11,000 acres of woodland. By the time we reached the château, we were, as Miss Cassandra expresses it in classic phrase, "faint yet pursuing" for lack of the refreshment to which we were not made welcome at Cheverny. Our chauffeur, being accustomed to famished pilgrims, conducted us at once to a garden café quite near the château, from whence we could study its long façade while enjoying our tea and *pâtisserie*. And what a huge monument is this château of Chambord to the effete monarchy of France, built up from the life-blood and toil of thousands! It impressed us as more brutally rich and splendid than any of the palaces that we had seen, rising as it does in its great bulk so unexpectedly from the dead level of the sandy plain, with no especial reason for its existence except the will of a powerful sovereign. It is not strange that the salamander of Francis I appears upon so many of the châteaux of France, for to this art-loving, luxurious, and *débonnaire* King she owes Chambord, Fontainebleau, St. Germain and the smaller châteaux of Azay-le-Rideau, Anet and Villers-Cotterets. Although Francis I brought from Italy, to beautify his palaces, Leonardo Da Vinci, Primaticcio, Benvenuto Cellini, Florentin Rosso and other foreign artists, it has been decided by those who know more about the matter than we do, that Chambord owes more to its first architect, Maître Pierre le Nepvue, dit Trinqureau, than to anyone else. It seemed to us that this master hand was happier in the construction of Chenonceaux, Blois and some of the other châteaux of France, than here at Chambord, but this is a matter of individual taste. Vast, palatial, magnificent Chambord certainly is, and much more attractive on the north façade, where the château is reflected in the waters of the Cosson, than from the café where we were seated. The long line of buildings in the south front is somewhat monotonous, even broken as it is by the several towers, and the great central lantern, which appears to the best advantage from this side. Rich as is all the ornamentation of Chambord, it is skyward that it breaks forth into the greatest exuberance of Renaissance decoration. We reached the central lantern, with the single fleur-de-lis atop, by one of the remarkable staircases for which the palaces of Francis I are so famous. This staircase, which is formed by two spirals starting from different points, and winding about the same hollow shaft in the centre, is so constructed that persons can go up and down without meeting. Mr. Henry James considered this double staircase "a truly majestic joke," but in days when courts lived and moved and had their being in intrigues, schemes and plots, it doubtless had its uses.



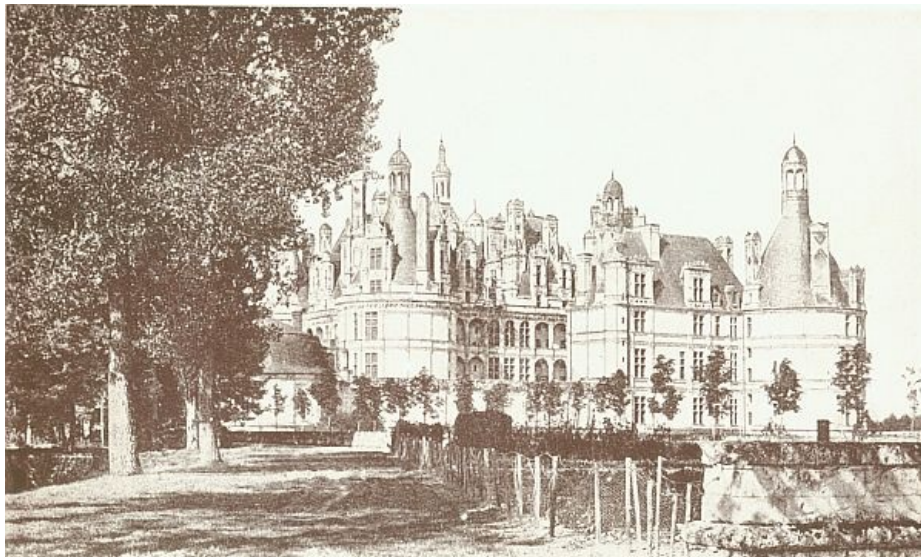
Neurdein Freres,
Photo.
ANNE DE THOU, DAME DE CHEVERNY

[284]

[285]

[286]

[287]



Neurdein Freres, Photo.

CHÂTEAU OF CHAMBORD

Mademoiselle de Montpensier gives in her diary an amusing account of her first acquaintance with this double stairway. She came, when a child, to Chambord to visit her father, Gaston, Duke of Orleans, who stood at the top of the stairs to receive her, and called to her to come to him. As she flew up one flight her agile parent ran down the other; upon which the little girl gave chase, only to find that when she had gained the bottom he was at the top. "Monsieur," she said, "laughed heartily to see me run so fast in the hope of catching him, and I was glad to see Monsieur so well amused."

Having reached the central lantern we found ourselves upon a flat roof, surrounded by a perfectly bewildering maze of peaks, pinnacles, lanterns, chimneys and spires, which constitute what our guide is pleased to call the *ensemble de la toiture*. This vast terrace, which covers the main building of the palace, is one of the architectural marvels of France. Here it seems as if the architect had allowed himself unlimited freedom in decoration, in which he was aided by such artists as Jean Goujon and Cousin, who zealously worked upon the ornamentation of these bell turrets, balconies and towers, as if to prove the sincerity and beauty of French art. This luxuriant flowing forth, in stone carving, of foliage, flower, boss and emblem, has resulted in an ensemble of indescribable charm, the dazzling light stone of Bourré, of which the chateau is built, lending itself harmoniously to the elaborate Renaissance decoration.

[288]

It was of Jean Goujon, whose exquisite work we see now and again in these châteaux, that some writer has said, that the muse of Ronsard whispered in the ear of the French sculptor, and thus Goujon's masterpieces were poems of Ronsard translated in marble. It is a rather pretty fancy, but Lydia and I cannot remember its author. Walter says that he can understand why the Counts of Blois built their castle here, as this place seems to have formed part of a system of fortresses which guarded the Loire, making it possible, in the time of Charles VII, for Joan of Arc to move her army up the river to Orleans; but why Francis should have transformed this old castle into a palace is not so easy to understand. When so many more attractive sites were to be found, it seems strange that he should have chosen this sandy flat upon the border of what was then the sad and barren Solange. One reason given is that the country about Chambord was rich in game, and we know that Francis was an inveterate hunter; another theory is that a charming woman, the Comtesse de Thoury, one of the early loves of the King, had a manor in the neighborhood.

[289]

"Both excellent reasons!" exclaimed Archie, "Dame Quickly is evidently an apt student of human nature."

These various surmises and bits of information were poured into our ears by the guide, a plump and merry soul, whom Archie at once dubbed Dame Quickly. As she conducted us from room to room, she turned to me and, with a flash of her black eyes, exclaimed, "If these walls could speak, what tales they could tell!" adding that, for her part, she believed that the King came here for the hunting, the Comtesse de Thoury having been a love of his youth, and, with a knowing shake of her head, "You know, Mesdames, how short is the memory of man for an early love, especially a king's memory, when another is always to be found to take the vacant place." When we explained this philosophic reflection upon their sex to the men of the party, they declared that an unfair advantage was being taken by this facetious dame, simply because they were not able to answer back and vindicate the eternal fidelity of man. Then, as if divining what was being said, through her quick woman's instinct, she drew us toward a window in the study of Francis I and showed us these lines scratched upon one of the panes:

[290]

Souvent femme varie;
Mal habile qui s'y fie.

Some discredit is thrown upon the authenticity of these lines, and if Francis wrote them in his old age, his point of view must have greatly changed since his earlier days, when he so gaily and gallantly said that a court without ladies was a year without spring and a spring without roses.

[291]

Francis spent much of his time in his later years at Chambord, his chief solace being the companionship of his lovely sister, Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, the author of the Heptameron, whose beauty and intellect were the inspiration of many French poets.

One of the pleasing sides of the character of the King was his devoted affection for this sister, with whom he had spent a happy youth at Amboise, and she, loving him beyond any other being, wrote verses to express her grief when they were separated. A varied, many-sided, personality was Francis I, and with all his faults possessed of a charm of his own, and a taste in the fine arts that added much to the beauty of his kingdom. Something of this we said to Dame Quickly, who replied, with another wise shake of her head, "The history of Francis is a wonderful history, Mesdames, made up of many things. There is always state policy, and religion, *et un peu les femmes*," the knowing look and shrug with which this bit of wisdom was communicated is simply untranslatable.

[292]

Only a few of the 365 rooms of Chambord are furnished; we were shown the bedroom of the late Comte de Chambord, a ghostly apartment, it seemed to us in the fading daylight, the bed hung with elaborate tapestries, the work of the loyal hands of the ladies of Poitou. Miss Cassandra asked the guide if she would not be afraid to sleep in this dismal chamber. "No," she answered, "there are no *revenants* here, the great people who lived here do not walk, they had such an active life with their hunting and fêtes that they are content to rest quietly in their beds."

We passed through the council chamber of the château, where there are more tapestries, these presented by the loyal inhabitants of Blois and the Limousin districts, and here also is a quite useless throne donated by some devoted legitimists. In the chapel, we were shown some tapestry worked by Madame Royale, during her imprisonment in the Temple, that daughter of Marie Antoinette who alone survived her unfortunate family and as Duchesse d'Angoulême lived to quite an advanced age.

The fast-fading daylight made it impossible to see many of the portraits in the great reception room; among them we noticed two portraits of Anne of Austria, and a Van Loo of the beautiful unloved Queen of Louis XV, Marie Leczinska. In this picture she appears so graceful and charming that one wonders how the King could have been insensible to her attractions; but one need never be surprised at the vagaries of royalty, and it is not to be expected that diplomatic alliances should be happy.

[293]

What interested the men of the party especially, was the little light wagon in which, we were told, the owner of Chambord, the Duc de Parme, went a hunting with that good legitimist, the Master of Cheverny.

"I am glad," said Walter, "that the noble Duke has a neighbor of the same stripe to go a hunting with him, the grandeur of this great palace without a friendly neighbor to come in and take a hand at cards or crack a joke with him, would be simply appalling."

"The idea of jokes in this vast mausoleum of departed grandeur!" exclaimed Miss Cassandra. "It would be like dancing in a cemetery. Do ask that lively black-eyed dame how many there are in family when the owners are at home."

[294]

"Monsieur le Duc has twenty-two children," was the reply. "He lives in Italy, but comes here sometimes for the hunting."^[B]

"And does he bring his family with him?"

"*Pas tout le monde* at the same time, Madame, although we have enough rooms for them all."

Laughing over this ready rejoinder, we parted from our merry cicerone with exchanges of compliments and a clink of silver. I am quite sure that Walter and Archie gave her the fee twice over because of her *beaux yeux* and her merry wit.

It is late, and I am tired after the *grande tournée*, as they call our afternoon trip here, and Walter reminds me

"That the best of all ways
To lengthen our days
Is *not* to steal a few hours from the night, my dear."

XIII

[295]

CHINON AND FONTEVRAULT

LE CHEVAL BLANC, ANGERS, September 12th.

FATE certainly seemed to be against my seeing Chinon to-day, as we awoke this morning to hear the rain pattering against our windows. A rather disconsolate party, we gathered around the table for the breakfast, which we had ordered an hour earlier, in order to make the day as long as possible. Miss Cassandra, who was the only really cheerful member of the party, reminded us of

the many days of sunshine that we have had in Touraine, adding with her usual practical optimism, "And thee must remember, my dear, that constant sunshine makes the desert," this to Lydia, but we all took the wise saying to heart and were quite cheerful by the time we had finished our breakfast, perhaps also for the more material reason that Walter, through various gratuities and persuasions, had succeeded in making it of better cheer than the ordinary light *déjeuner*. Another pleasing circumstance was the assurance of the chauffeur, who arrived while we were still in the breakfast room, that the clouds were breaking away and that we should have sunshine by noon. By the time we had reached Villandry the sun was struggling through the clouds, and as we approached Chinon, its long line of ancient ruins and the little town clustered beneath were bathed in sunshine.

[296]



Neurdein Freres,
Photo.
RUINS OF CHÂTEAU OF COUDRAY AT CHINON

Although from several points the old château on the crest of the hill, dominated by the lofty Tour de l'Horloge, is beautiful and impressive, the best general view of it is from the middle of the lower bridge, from which we could see the three distinct foundations, the Château of St. George at the upper or right side, the bridge which connects it with the Tour de l'Horloge, the Château du Milieu, and finally the Château de Coudray at the extreme lower or left end of the plateau. The whole is far more ruinous than the other famous castles of Touraine and requires as much imagination to make it whole and habitable as some of the ruins along the Rhine. Of the Château of St. George, built by the Plantagenet Kings to protect the one vulnerable point in a position almost impregnable in its day, nothing is left but parts of the lower wall. So ruinous, indeed, is this château, that one is almost ready to accept Pantagruel's derivation of the name of Chinon, or Caino, from Cain, the son of Adam its founder.

[297]

We climbed up the hill and rang the bell at the Tour de l'Horloge, which is the only part of the buildings still boasting a roof, and here the concierge and his family tuck themselves away somewhere within its high, narrow walls. The bell that we rang is on the outer side of the tower, and in the course of time a girl, about as big as the old key she carried, unlocked a door in the archway through which we entered. The level spaces inside between the different buildings have been laid out

as a sort of promenade which is open to the public on Sundays and holidays. The view up and down the slow, shallow river with its yellow sand-flats, little green islands, and the softly wooded country beyond seemed to us one of the most charming in Touraine. The concierge, who was attempting to act as guide to two separate parties at once, hurried us around in such a bewildering fashion that it would be almost impossible for me to give the exact locations of the different buildings. What we all remember distinctly is the bare, roofless hall, of which only a western gable and a vast chimney-piece remain, in which Joan had her audience with the King. This hall was the throne room, in 1429, when the fearless Maid appeared at Chinon, having journeyed one hundred and fifty leagues through a country occupied, in many places, by English and Burgundian troops, in order to deliver her message to the King. Although the meeting between Charles VII and Joan was by candlelight, even in the garish light of day it seemed strangely real here in this great ruinous hall. Nearly three hundred knights were present, and the King is said to have stood a little apart amidst a group of warriors and courtiers, many of them more richly dressed than himself, with the idea, perhaps, of testing Joan.

[298]

There are various accounts of this audience, but the one that we like best because it seems the most probable is that Joan knew the King at once, although she had never seen him, and going straight to him, accosted him humbly and reverently like the poor, little shepherdess that she was.

"Gentle Dauphin," she said to the King (for she did not think it right to call him King so long as he was not crowned), "My name is Joan the maid; the King of Heaven sendeth you word by me that you shall be anointed and crowned in the city of Rheims, and shall be lieutenant of the King of Heaven who is King of France. It is God's pleasure that our enemies, the English, should depart to their own country; if they depart not evil will come to them, and the kingdom is sure to continue yours."

[299]

Even after these earnest words from Joan, the King, although impressed, was not convinced, and with some reluctance allowed her to remain at Chinon. We were afterwards shown the lodgings, which this inhospitable royal host gave to the persistent visitor, in a very thick-walled little tower, and according to our guide, Joan could get in or out of her room, on an upper floor, only when her guards put a ladder up to her small window, permanent stairways being considered unsafe for such guests.

The King saw Joan again several times. She did not delude herself as to the doubts he still entertained. "Gentle Dauphin," she said to him one day, "Why do you not believe me? I say unto you that God hath compassion on you, on your kingdom and your people; St. Louis and Charlemagne are kneeling before Him, making prayer for you, and I will say unto you, so please you, a thing which will give you to understand that you ought to believe me." Charles gave her audience on this occasion, in the presence, according to some accounts, of four witnesses, the most trusted of his intimates, who swore to reveal nothing, and, according to others, completely alone. "What she said to him there is none who knows," wrote Alan Chartier a short time after [in July, 1429], "but it is quite certain that he was all radiant with joy thereat, as at a revelation from the Holy Spirit."

[300]

Archie, who read the most recent life of Joan of Arc, on the steamer, as a preparation for Chinon, reminds us that after much sifting of history and tradition, it has been decided by learned authorities that the revelation of the Maid, which filled the King with joy, was a positive assurance that he was the rightful heir to the throne of France and the true son of his father, Charles VI.

[301]

It is not strange that Charles VII should have doubted his own paternity with a mother as unnatural and depraved as Isabel of Bavaria, and that with a kingdom chiefly in the hands of the English he should have seriously questioned his right and title to the throne, being himself of a weak and doubting nature. It is said, that in an hour of great despondency, Charles prayed to God from the depths of his heart that if he were the true heir of the house of France, and the kingdom justly his, God would be pleased to help him and defend it for him. This prayer, which he thought known to God alone, the Maid recalled to the mind of the King, thus giving the sign and seal of her mission, and by this revelation she not only caused the King to believe in her, but strengthened his confidence in himself and in his right and title. True to herself and "the voices," for she never spoke as of her own motion, it was always a superior power speaking through her, as the mouthpiece. She said: "I tell thee on behalf of my Lord that thou art the true heir of France and son of the King."

After some weeks of discussion and delay, Joan's plan for the relief of Orleans was adopted, troops were gathered together, of which she was given the command, or as she naïvely expressed it, she was made the "war-chief." Yolande, Queen of Sicily, the young Queen's mother and the Duc d'Alençon, were her zealous advocates. Yolande gave of her treasures for the relief of Orleans, and soon at the head of her army, her banner flying, upon which was inscribed the name of the Prince of Peace, surrounded by the lilies of France and with her troops singing *Veni Creator*, the dauntless Maid passed through these gates and Chinon knew her no more.

[302]

We know that Joan accomplished in less than a year all that she had promised. The city of Orleans was relieved, she had led Charles to Rheims to be crowned and had done much toward delivering France from the English. Then came the sad part of the story, which you know so well. While we were following the fortunes of the Maid, and here where she had so courageously taken up what she deemed her heaven-appointed task, feeling more than ever before the cruelty and rank injustice of her treatment, Lydia exclaimed: "Nothing could prove more forcibly the old saying about the ingratitude of princes than the King's treatment of Joan!"

[303]

A voice behind us echoed, "Nothing," and we turned to see M. La Tour, who had followed us and entered the hall so quietly that we had not known that he was anywhere within miles of us. "No," he said, when the first greetings were over, "I am not here to defend my country for her treatment of the noble and fearless Maid. She did much to regain the territory of France from the English and to establish the King upon his throne; she came to him in the darkest hour and inspired him with hope and courage, and yet in the time of her trial he basely deserted her. No, there is no excuse except that at the King's side there were many men jealous of the success and military glory of Jeanne, to whisper tales in his ear. He was a weak and vacillating creature, at the best, ready to follow the last person who talked to him, and he probably believed some of the stories told him about the good Maid."

"And then," as Archie reminded him, "Joan was given papers to sign which she was not able to read and thus set her mark to her own death warrant."

[304]

"A sad and shameful tale!" exclaimed the young Frenchman, as we passed by the donjon where Joan had been lodged and by the scanty ruins of the little chapel where she stopped to pray, and wept because the angels left her.

Just then, as we were passing on to find some traces of the several Angevin kings, who lived and died at Chinon, something happened which I cannot quite explain. In some way Lydia was separated from us, as we were passing from one ruinous castle to another. She has not told me, and indeed there has been little time to have a word with her, but I shall always think that she was so impressed by the wonderful story, which seems so real here, where Joan saw the angels and revealed her mission, that Lydia was in a way overwhelmed by the mysterious, spiritual power of it all, and lingered behind us for the peace and rest of being alone, and away from all the talk and from that small child, with the big key, who recited her monotonous tale like a parrot. Then later, in trying to find us, Lydia must have gone off quite a distance in the wrong direction, and so became confused and lost her way among the ruins. This is only my explanation. Lydia is writing to you and may give you another. All that I know is that we heard a sharp, sudden cry and turning we saw the poor dear perched up quite high on the ruins of a wall, with a steep, precipitous descent between her and ourselves. Miss Cassandra was scared out of her wits, M. La Tour begged Lydia to be calm, in French and English, with the most dramatic gestures, while

[305]

Archie, without a word, sprang up the steep ascent, agile and surefooted like the good mountain climber that he is, and without more ado picked Lydia up in his strong arms and bore her down the precipice as if she had been a baby, and she is no light weight, as you know. All that Lydia said, when she found herself in Miss Cassandra's embrace, was "I am so ashamed of myself for losing my head. I think I was just a little dizzy, and I was so afraid of falling from that wall."

"Don't think about it, dear," said Miss Cassandra, "now that you are safe and sound, thanks to Dr. Vernon."

The good lady was so overjoyed at having her treasure beside her again that she would have been quite ready to include her deliverer in the warm embrace with which she welcomed Lydia, nor do I think that Archie would have objected. The situation was somewhat strained, for the moment, as he had been living at rather high pressure with the Joan of Arc associations when Lydia's escapade came to cap the climax. Miss Cassandra's eyes were brimming over with tears, and I was more ready to weep than to laugh, when Walter, as usual, came to the rescue with his sound common sense, saying to Lydia, whose modesty and reserve were distinctly shocked by the idea of having made a scene.

[306]

"You would never have lost your head up there, Miss Mott, if you had had your luncheon before you ascended to the heights above," this in Walter's most comforting manner. "We have gone through a lot of history and emotion on a breakfast that is a good many hours away. Let us go down to the town and see what they can do for us in the way of luncheon or afternoon tea."

M. La Tour, who had been rather left in the background during the last excitement, now came forward and offered to conduct us to a nice little hotel for luncheon,—insisting, however, that we should first go with him to see the part of the castle in which Henry II of England died, in the midst of the dissensions of his rebellious sons.

[307]

"The most pitiful, disgraceful death-bed scene in all history!" exclaimed Miss Cassandra. "I don't see why we need trouble ourselves about it. Henry was lying half dead, here or somewhere else near Chinon, when his son Richard, who had joined the French King against him, approached his father to receive from him the kiss of peace, and such a kiss of peace as it was!—the dying King muttering under his breath as he gave it, 'May God keep me alive till I have given you the punishment you deserve!'"

"That was at Colombiers, near Villandry," said M. La Tour, laughing over the Quaker lady's picture, gruesome as it was. "Henry was too ill to return to Chinon, and so passed the night at Azay-le-Rideau, or at the Commanderie of the Templars at Ballan. It was there or at Chinon that his clerk, at his request, read to him the list of the rebellious barons. 'Sire,' said the man, 'may Jesus Christ help me! The first name that is written here is the name of Count John, your son.' Then Henry turned his face to the wall, caring no more for himself or the world, and lay there muttering, 'Shame upon a conquered King!'"

[308]

It really seemed to us as if M. La Tour took a certain ghastly satisfaction in telling us of the unseemly behavior of these English kings and princes who had appropriated, justly or unjustly, so much of his country's territory. The only human incident in the last hours of the great King was the devotion of his son Geoffrey, who sat through the hours of the long summer day fanning away the insects from his father's face, the dying man's head resting upon his shoulder while a knight supported his feet. The King opening his eyes, recognized his son, blessed him, and said that he of all his children was the only one that showed any affection for him, and that if his life was spared he would make him the most powerful prince of them all. This, like many another death-bed resolution, was not carried out, as Henry died the next day, before the high altar of the church of St. Melaine, which was within the château, at Chinon.

We did not feel at all sure that we had seen the spot where the King breathed his last; but it really does not much matter, as Miss Cassandra says, and it is not easy to locate the scene of remote events among these ruinous buildings.

[309]

The trial of the Grand Master of the Knights Templars was held here in one of the halls of Chinon in 1309, and swift retribution was meted out to the members of the order, more for the love of gold than for the love of justice, as the Templars had become the bankers of Christendom and were possessed of vast treasures, which were seized upon forthwith.

A carving in the donjon of Coudray of three kneeling knights, each one bearing a sword and a shield, is thought to have been carved by the Templars on their prison wall.

As we made our way down the hillside to the town, M. La Tour reminded us of a more cheerful association connected with Chinon than those upon which we had been dwelling, for here it was that the historian Philippe de Commines was betrothed. He had been created Prince of Talmont by Louis XI, who arranged a marriage for him with Hélène de Chambès, daughter of the Lord and Lady of Montsoreau. This betrothal was attended by the whole court, and Louis heaped honors and rewards upon his favorite who was made Governor of Chinon. A few years later, after the death of the King, Commines entered into the involved politics of France, and incurred the displeasure of Anne de Beaujeu who imprisoned him at Loches; or, as he expressed it in Scripture phrase, "I ventured on the great ocean, and the waves devoured me." He, however, escaped from this sea of troubles and gave to the world his valuable history, composed, it is said, in the hours of his enforced retirement.

[310]

"Which is," as Walter says, "a delicate and extremely polite manner of referring to his

imprisonment in one of those infernal iron cages at Loches." (Pray notice that the language is Walter's, not mine.)

On our way to the café we passed by the statue of Rabelais, and although this was not a market day, to M. La Tour's infinite regret, there were some booths in the busy little square and a number of traffickers. The face of the humorist who loved his kind, even if he often made game of them, looked down upon the gay, chattering, bargain-making crowd in the square beneath him, with an expression half satirical, half laughing and wholly benevolent. [311]

There is some uncertainty as to the date of the birth of Maître François at Chinon, and he may or may not have lived in either of the old houses pointed out as his, but he certainly belonged to this part of the country, and we are grateful to his fellow-townsmen for honoring him so fittingly.

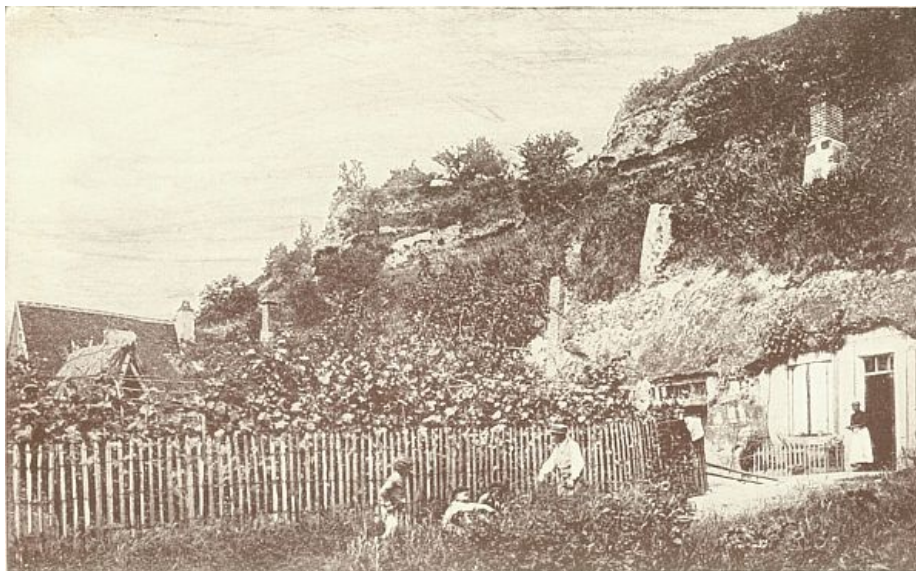
In the centre of the little square a fountain, surrounded by acacia trees, was playing, and beyond was the welcome Hôtel de France opening its doors to us. After we had ordered our luncheon, Walter suddenly remembered the chauffeur, and started to hunt him up and tell him where to meet us with the automobile, and I joined him for the pleasure of another stroll through the town. M. La Tour, who accompanied us, again regretted that this was not a market day, when the peasants come in from the surrounding country, and we could then see just such a noisy merry crowd as Rabelais described when Couillatris goes to Chinon, which he calls "that noble, antique city, the first in the world," to buy oxen, cows and sheep, pigs, geese and capons, dead and alive, and all manner of country produce. An antique city Chinon appeared to us, above all that we had seen; and to add to this impression we met a number of peasant women and black-eyed girls with the picturesque lace caps of this province, veiling but not concealing their fine dark hair. [312]

After a luncheon that more than answered our expectations, we strolled about the old town, through its narrow winding streets and by the Place Jeanne d'Arc, with its remarkable statue which represents the Maid riding roughshod over the prostrate bodies of her foes; her horse has all four feet off the ground, his means of support, a bronze rod as a sort of fifth or middle leg, being more practical than artistic. "The rider's position in the saddle," as Archie says, "would turn any circus performer green with envy." An altogether atrocious piece of sculpture is this, with an element of grotesqueness in its conception quite unworthy of one of the most serious characters in all history, the Maid to whom, as Carlyle says, "all maidens upon earth should bend."

Finally, and I must say with some reluctance, we turned our backs upon Chinon and our faces toward Fontevault, journeying by much the same route that Henry II was carried on his last journey, over the bridge that he had built and by the river and the village of Montsoreau. [313]

By the way, M. La Tour showed an amiable desire to accompany us to Angers, and as our touring car is of hospitable proportions we were glad to have his good company. At Fontevault, which has been turned from an abbey into a reformatory for criminals, we were fortunate to have some one with us to speak to the sentinel, as this seemed to be a day when visitors were not welcomed here. After some parleying with the officials, M. La Tour gained permission to have us enter and see all that is left of the fine old church, whose buttresses and roofs we had admired from a distance. In the little chapel we saw the four Plantagenet statues that still remain, after the vandals of the French Revolution had broken open the tombs and destroyed all that they could lay their hands upon. These four statues have been restored and the faces repainted. Here lies Henry II, robed and sceptred as he was when borne forth from Chinon for burial at Fontevault, and Richard Cœur de Lion, both in the middle of the group. To the left is Eleanor of Guienne, the wife of Henry II. Three of these recumbent figures are of colossal size, hewn out of the tufa rock and painted. The other statue of smaller size, carved in wood and colored, represents the English queen, Isabel of Angoulême, one of the most beautiful as well as the most depraved queens of history; only excelled in wickedness by her French sister of a later time, Isabel of Bavaria. This earlier Isabel, daughter of Aymar, Count of Angoulême, upon the day of her betrothal to Hugues de Lusignan, was carried off by John of England, who put away his wife, Avice, to marry this beautiful, wicked enchantress. After the death of John, Isabel came back to France to marry her old lover. [314]

As we left Fontevault and motored down the hill towards the Loire, M. La Tour recalled to us the ancient glory of this abbey, whose walls now echo to the clank of arms instead of to the *Ave Marias* of the gentle sisters. Fontevault was founded in the eleventh century by Robert d'Abrissel, a monk, as a place of refuge for a vast and ill-assorted company of men and women who gathered around him when he was preaching a crusade to Palestine. From this strange beginning the abbey became one of the most famous in Christendom, as it was richly endowed by kings and princes, especially by the early English kings who loved this beautiful valley of the Loire. Many noble and royal ladies presided over Fontevault, among them, Renée de Bourbon, sister of Francis I who, while she was Abbess, rebuilt the beautiful cloister which we saw to-day. Another and later Lady Abbess was Marie Madelaine Gabrielle de Rochechouart, who found time in the midst of her religious duties to make translations of some of Plato's works. New ideas, you see, were finding their way into the convent, it being the fashion about that time for women to be learned, Mary Stuart having led the way by delivering a Latin oration at the Louvre to the edification of all who heard her. And here came Mary Stuart herself, while Louise de Bourbon was Lady Abbess, brought hither by her aunt, the Duchess of Guise, to charm and delight the nuns by her beauty and ready wit. As a religious establishment for men and women, ruled over solely by a woman, the Abbey of Fontevault was unique in Christendom. [315] [316]



FRENCH CAVE DWELLINGS NEAR SAUMUR

As we motored along the river bank beyond its low-lying sand marshes and line of small hills, we noticed tiny black wind-mills spreading out their arms to the breeze, and wreaths of smoke curling up from the cliffs. Here and there the lowering sun would light up a window pane in the cliff, as if to remind us that these hillsides are burrowed out by the workers in the vineyards who make their homes here as in Touraine and in the valley of Vendomois.

"It seems that we are again in the land of the troglodytes," said Walter. "Alfred de Vigny says these peasants 'in their love for so fair a home have not been willing to lose the least scrap of its soil, or the least grain of its sand.' I think myself that it is for more practical and economic reasons that they live underground."

These cliff dwellings continue for nearly eight miles around Saumur, and M. La Tour tells us that many of them go back to the days of the Roman occupation when they served the conquered tribes as a last retreat from the invader. Some one has said that every step to the southward takes us further back in the history of France. Chinon and Fontevault are not far south of Tours and Blois, and yet we are far back in history to-day, living with the Angevin kings and with the cave-dwellers of Gaul.

[317]

Even the *coiffes* of the women are different here from those worn in other places on the Loire, and in a very distinct way we realize that we have left Touraine and are in Anjou.

In the fields the peasants were gathering in their stores for the winter; the women pass along the road constantly with their odd panniers upon their backs, full of treasures. Sometimes they are filled with fruit and vegetables and again it is only grass for the cattle or faggots for the fire. As we drew near Saumur, grapes filled the *hottes* to overflowing, for this is the land of the vine, one of the great grape-growing regions of France.

We are spinning along all too rapidly over these perfect roads, as we long to stop at so many places, especially at that tiny Venice on the Loire, a republic of fishermen and laborers established by King René when he was still in power. From its sole palace, the Château de l'Ile d'Or, René's daughter went forth to be the unhappy Margaret of Anjou, the Red Rose of the House of Lancaster, during the war of the succession which raged in England for so many years.

[318]

M. La Tour tells us there is much to see at Saumur, a very old Hôtel de Ville, a twelfth century church, and other ancient buildings. This city, once a favorite residence of Angevin princes and English kings, was in the reign of Henry IV, the headquarters of Protestantism, with DuPlessis-Mornay, the Pope of the Huguenots, as its governor. All that we had time to see, this afternoon, was the fortress château, which stands high up on the Quay de Limoges, overlooking the junction of the Loire and the Thouet. We were warned that if we stopped again we should not reach Angers until after dark, and so we sped along past many an historic landmark of interest.

XIV

[319]

ANGERS

LE CHEVAL BLANC, ANGERS, September 13th.

WE were glad to have our first view of Angers by daylight, as the dark slate roofs and the great black château in the old part of the town, made us understand what Shakespeare meant when he wrote of "black Angiers." The towns, old and new, had their full share of sunshine to-day and of a warmth that would have been oppressive had it not been tempered by a fresh breeze from the River Maine that flows by the château, for here we quitted our Loire, for a while, a river with a

distinct individuality which we have come to love like the face of a friend. A little below Angers, the Loire and the Maine unite, and in the land lying between these rivers is the richest agricultural region in all France, its nurseries and kitchen gardens having made a fortune for this little corner of the world.

The town of Angers, which is a place of some consequence, being the capital of the Département de Maine et Loire, is situated upon a height crowned by the slim spires of the Cathedral of St. Maurice. On a first view, we must admit that Angers is disappointingly modern, with its straight, wide boulevards and regular rows of trees; but to-day we have spent most of our time in the old town which has not been despoiled of its ancient charm. And here in this inn, the Cheval Blanc, which has opened its hospitable doors since 1514, we live in an atmosphere of antiquity surrounded by modern comforts. The Rue St. Aubin, upon which our hostel is situated, is so narrow that Lydia says she is tempted to shake hands with the little dressmaker who is sewing away busily at a window across the street, and she doubtless hears everything that we say, and looks politely interested in our remarks although she probably cannot understand a word of English. As we see her there, looking up from her sewing, from time to time, neat and dainty, her black hair dressed to perfection, a pathetic expression in the dark eyes with which she regards us from time to time, we think of Marie Claire, and wonder if this little seamstress has not a story of her own to tell, and one which like the story of that other sewing girl, would touch the heart because of its perfect simplicity.

This hotel is so unpretentious, in its style and furnishings, that we are more than surprised at its comfort. Miss Cassandra says that she has never in her life seen floors scrubbed to such immaculate whiteness, and we know that Quakers know all about cleanliness. The service which the men chambermaids give us is exceptionally good and quite discouraging to Miss Cassandra and myself who have always persistently upheld the superiority of our sex. It is like my uncle's bachelor housekeeping, a little too good to be gratifying to our woman's pride. Everything runs so smoothly here, like magic, under these ministering angels of the male sex, in their white shirts, red waistcoats and green aprons. We really don't know what to call them, although the one who attends to my room informed me quite frankly that he was the *femme de chambre*. This was, I think, in order to avoid confusion with regard to fees; the double service of waiter and *valet de chambre* entitling him to a particularly generous *douceur*.

One expects good meals in all of these French inns, and at the Cheval Blanc they are as good as the best and served in a cool, quiet dining-room, between the front courtyard with its palms and pleasant lounging places and the rear court, around which are the kitchens, the garage and the offices generally. Good as we find the cuisine, what most delights us is the fruit. We have been in great fruit-growing countries before, as at Canterbury, where we had no evidence of the excellence and profusion of the fruit on the table d'hôte; but here each meal is crowned with a great dish of plums, peaches, grapes and pears. Beautiful and delicious as they all are, the pears are supreme, as the Italians say, in size and flavor. We are feasting upon fat things in this land of plenty, as we have seen nothing to compare with the fruit of Angiers in Touraine or elsewhere. M. La Tour made no mistake when he conducted us to the *Cheval Blanc*, where he himself was received with warm friendliness as well as with great respect by the proprietor. Shining in his reflected light, we are treated as if we belonged to the royal family, or to the President's family, which is the popular thing in the France of to-day. In view of our French friend's many kind attentions and charming good nature, Archie has overcome his racial prejudices sufficiently to say:

"Zelphine, that French friend of yours is really no end of a good fellow."

"Why *my* friend?" I ask. "M. La Tour is the friend of us all. Walter is devoted to him, and he is Lydia's 'Handy Book of Reference,' as you know." This last was distinctly cruel; but Archie, instead of retaliating, answered quite amiably:

"Yes, he is a good fellow, with no superior foreign airs about him."

Walter says that it is only fair that Archie should admit this much of his rival, after carrying Lydia off under his very eyes at Chinon, which, he says, is prophetic of coming events. I must confess that I do not feel as sure of the outcome as Walter. Lydia is the most self-contained young person that I have ever encountered.

By the way, we decided, after our arrival yesterday, that we could not possibly do justice to Angers in the short half day that we had allowed ourselves. We telegraphed to Angela that we really could not meet her in Paris until Wednesday night. Even if the Dudleys leave to-day, she will have only one night by herself, and with her usual good luck she will probably meet some friends in the hotel.

Again we echo the sentiments of Maître François, and saying "There is nothing so dear and precious as time," rejoice in this one long, golden day in Angers. I am writing after our second *déjeuner*. We have all spent the morning in the most strenuous sightseeing, going to the cathedral first, which is quite near, its apse blocking the street on which the Cheval Blanc stands. From the west front of the cathedral, which is very narrow in proportion to its height, the ground suddenly descends to the river, a long, broad flight of steps taking the place of a street. There are, on the façade, some fine carvings of armed warriors; but the side walls are flat and plain, solid masonry replacing the flying buttresses which lighten most of the French churches. This last feature we find to be characteristic of Angevin churches, as are two other characteristics which impressed us as we entered the cathedral. One of these is the absence of aisles in the

nave, and a consequent sense of light and spaciousness; the other, the small dome-like roof into which the vaulting of each section of the nave rises. There are some curious old tapestries hung on the walls of the nave, a handsome carved pulpit and some fine glass of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the chapel to the left is a Calvary by David d'Angers, a sculptor not without honor in his native town. The chief object of interest in the cathedral is the tomb of King René and his wife, which was discovered beneath the choir only about fifteen years ago.

On our way to the château, on a broad open space at the intersection of two boulevards and in the midst of a treeless expanse, stands a statue of the mild, poetic sovereign of Anjou by David d'Angers. This bronze statue is on a high, light-colored stone foundation, and shows him no more kingly and rather less amiable than history, which has always surrounded René d'Anjou with the sympathetic charm that belongs to a king in exile. Around the base of the monument are smaller statues representing such founders and leaders of his house as Dumnacus, defender of the Angevins, Foulques Nera, Robert the Strong and Henry Plantagenet. Here also are statues of René's two wives, Isabelle de Lorraine and Jeanne de Laval, and of his daughter Margaret, Queen of England. This monument naturally carried our thoughts back to the days when the valor of Anjou's counts, and their connection with the thrones of England and Sicily, gave this land an importance far beyond its natural value.

[326]

King René himself, with his three titles, Count of Anjou, King of Sicily and Duke of Provence, seems to have been born to misfortune as the sparks fly upward. Had he been endowed with the spirit and courage of his daughter Margaret, René might have been able to cope with his enemies; but being of a gentle and reflective nature, he yielded to what he deemed his fate. One possession after another was wrested from him, and he finally retired to Aix in Provence, where he devoted himself to literature and the fine arts, or, as Miss Cassandra expresses it, "He amused himself by writing verses and pottering about his garden. And a very much more respectable way of spending his time, it was, than quarreling with his neighbors, which was the chief occupation of Louis XI and most of the other kings of that period!"

[327]

We afterwards saw the noble statue of Margaret of Anjou, a regal figure, wearing the crown and bearing the sceptre of which she was so soon deprived by Edward IV. When she went to England, as the bride of Henry VI, she was received with rejoicings and the London streets were decorated with the Marguerite flower in her honor. No man, it was said, surpassed Margaret in courage, and no woman in beauty, and it might well be added that none of the princesses who had left France to share the British throne had to endure such misfortunes. Her son was captured and slaughtered under her eyes; then and then only, the strong purpose and high courage, that had supported her during years of adversity, deserted her. She lost heart. After being dragged from prison to prison, Margaret was restored to her country and her family, upon which King René, being more of a poet than a king, wrote a madrigal to celebrate his daughter's sad homecoming.

The castle, which is across the way from René's statue, dates back to the twelfth century, when English and French were disputing over the ownership of Anjou. Standing on a hillside above the Maine, this château, with its massive stone walls and heavy drawbridge, suggests brute force more completely than any of the other castles that we have seen. As we passed through the dungeons at Loches, we shuddered at the cruelty which they represent; as we looked at the bare black walls of this castle, we were even more appalled by the dread relentless strength against which enemy after enemy battered himself in vain.

[328]

The castle was built on the hill, as it sloped up from the Maine, and originally stood at the lower corner of the city ramparts. Broad quays have taken the place of the outer fortifications on the river bank, and most of the moat has been filled in to make boulevards, but between the quay and the river front of the castle a crumbling mass of crazy old houses still cluster around the castle, as if to remind us of the days when the thick walls behind them meant safety. The seventeen round towers and the battlements have all been torn down, leaving only the slate-built walls, striped near the top with horizontal panels of a lighter stone, and still so high that they look like precipices. We entered by a heavy drawbridge and under a massive arch, and were duly shown around by the guide, a man this time, whom we found far less interesting than the women who have conducted us through most of the other châteaux. He did, however, give us some interesting associations with the Château of Angers, as he reminded us that Henry IV was here in 1598 with *la belle Gabrielle*, and their little son, "*Cæsar Monsieur*." Henry seems to have come to Angers to reduce Brittany to subjection, and to punish the rebellious Duke de Mercœur. The latter, however, by a fine stroke of policy, sent his wife and her mother to Angers to make his submission to the King and to propose an alliance between his daughter, who was his sole heiress, and the little Cæsar. An interview with Henry took place here, in the château, we were told. With two noble dames in tears, on their knees before him, and his own fair duchess quite on their side, the King could refuse nothing, and accordingly his son, aged four, was betrothed to Françoise de Lorraine, who was in her sixth year and with no less magnificence than if the little Cæsar had been the legitimate heir to the throne of France. Dancing and rejoicing took the place of the fighting and bloodshed to which the old castle had been much more accustomed.

[329]

[330]

We are glad to turn from the stormy revengeful counts of Anjou and kings of England to the reign of Henry of Navarre, that heroic figure whom we still love whatever his shortcomings may have been. His faults and failings were those of his time; his virtues, his sense of justice, his large benevolence and desire to give every man a chance, and his broad constructive policy, were far in advance of his age. He doubtless inherited his noble traits from his mother, Jeanne D'Albert, while from the less distinguished paternal side may have come the traits that marred the

character of the great Huguenot leader.

Miss Cassandra can never quite forgive Henry for his abjuration, and says that to have renounced the religion for which they had both sacrificed so much was unworthy the son of so great a mother. Member of the Peace Society as she is, our Quaker lady will make no excuses for Henry, although M. La Tour insists it was a wise and humane act on the part of the King, as it put an end to the long war that was devastating France, or, to use Henry's own forcible phrasing, "By my faith, I have no wish to reign over a kingdom of dead men." The favorite expletive of the Béarnois, "Ventre Saint Gris," seems to have gone out of favor after he became a Catholic, having fallen into bad repute, as it was considered a Protestant oath. There is little doubt that the traditions of his early years had great influence over him, and that Henry of Navarre was always at heart a Protestant.

[331]

Gabrielle d'Estrées, to whom Henry IV was far more devoted and more faithful than to any other woman, had almost unbounded influence over him, which she generally used with wisdom and moderation. Affectionate, intelligent, and good tempered, she seemed an ideal companion for the generous, impetuous and often ill-governed monarch. Henry was himself wont to say that he loved her far more for her noble qualities of mind and heart than for her dazzling beauty. That the King consulted Gabrielle upon more than one occasion is evident, and equally so that she did not hesitate to express her opinion frankly. After the King's famous speech at the Abbey of St. Ouen, when he besought his noble subjects to counsel him and generously invited them to share with him whatever glory should fall to his share, Gabrielle, then Marquise de Monceaux, was present, secluded from the general gaze by a screen or curtain. Later, when questioned by Henry as to how she liked his speech, she replied that she had rarely heard him speak better; but that she was indeed surprised at his asking for counsel and offering to place himself *en tutelle* in the hands of the assembly.

[332]

"Ventre Saint Gris!" exclaimed the Béarnois, "That is true; but as I understand it, in tutelage, with my sword by my side."

Gabrielle's womanly pride was doubtless satisfied with this quick-witted rejoinder of her royal lover, who never seemed to be at a loss for an argument or a *bon mot*. As Dumas says of his beloved hero, "In default of money, something to which the Béarnois was accustomed all his life, he was in the habit of paying his debts with that which he never stood in need of borrowing, a ready wit."

[333]

The only influence that the great minister Sully feared was that of Gabrielle, whom the King had promised to marry when the tie that bound him to his beautiful, wilful, dissolute cousin, Marguerite of Valois, should be annulled by the Pope. Sully, however, had other ambitions for Henry and for France, as he was already entering into negotiations with the Médici with a view to a marriage with a daughter of their house, which would swell the depleted coffers of France and bring some coveted territory to the kingdom.

Here in the old château at Angers, the scene of Gabrielle's most signal triumph over the favorite minister, during whose absence her son was created Duke of Vendôme and affianced to the little heiress of the Duke of Mercœur, we could not help wondering whether Henry of Navarre's life would not have been very different had he been allowed to marry the woman of his choice. As the daughter of the Baron d'Estrées, and connected with royalty through the Courtenays, it seemed to us that Gabrielle was quite as suitable a consort for the French King as one of the daughters of the Médici who had never brought good fortune to France. Sully, who evidently thought more of the coffers of the kingdom than of the happiness of the King, was the persistent enemy of Gabrielle from the early days when Henry incurred untold dangers in passing the enemy's lines in order to secure a brief half hour with her, to a later time when as Duchesse de Beaufort she seemed to be perilously near the throne. The tragedy of her sudden death, which has been attributed to poison at the instance of Sully, and the King's agony of grief have added a pathetic interest to the history of Gabrielle d'Estrées, Duchesse de Beaufort.

[334]

It should be said, in justice to Sully, that there is no proof that he had anything whatever to do with the death of the Duchesse de Beaufort; but there is little doubt that the tidings of her death brought relief to his mind, after the first shock was over.

The Château of Angers is bare and unadorned, with nothing to remind us of the ceremonies and festivities that so annoyed Sully in the far away time when Henry of Navarre and the charming Gabrielle held high festival here. After its days of fighting and feasting were well over, the castle was used as a prison. Now, with the thrift for which the French are proverbial, this substantial building is used as a depot for military stores. The only things suggestive of the gentler side of life are the little chapel, and the castle within the castle, a small Renaissance house in which the family of the prince lived in times of siege. The walk around the top of the walls is well worth taking, not only because it intensifies the impression of size and strength, but also because it gives a charming view of the country round about. In front the Maine flows calmly by to its junction with the Loire three or four miles to the left; across the river there is an old suburb of the town with a few good churches and old houses, and farther upstream near the river's edge, stands what Walter calls "a business-like looking old tower" which he thinks must have guarded a bridge connected with the ramparts. To the right the cathedral looms up, its clumsy base hidden by other buildings and its slender spires dominating the town. Beyond the town stretch rich, green fields, with an occasional old windmill flapping its arms and a slow boat drifting lazily down the river.

[335]

[336]

Even if Angers has never been one of the most important cities of France, it seems always to have been a place of moderate consequence, as it still is. There are a few good private houses dating several centuries back, the most pretentious of these being the Hôtel de Pincé, a charming Renaissance building, standing in the heart of the town and now used as a museum of antiquities and *objets d'art*. There was no guide to tell us the history of this house and the books are equally reticent about its traditions. The Hôtel de Pincé looks like a charming miniature château, suggesting Azay-le-Rideau or some of the Renaissance houses in Tours, in its general style, and like them it makes one feel that the builders of those days understood elegance and beauty better than they did comfort and ease. Whatever king or noble or knight-at-arms lived in this house, his women-folk had to drag their brocaded trains up and down steep twisting stone staircases, and also to be content with very little light and air in many of their elegant rooms. The rich Angevin *bourgeoisie* built these half-timbered houses, which are somewhat like those that one sees so often in Normandy. One of the most elaborate of these is the so-called Maison d'Adam, just behind the cathedral, which, although it does not date back to our first ancestor, is sufficiently ancient in appearance to satisfy our antiquarian tastes. Much of the carving on the uprights is elaborate and effective, even if bearing evidences of frequent restorations. The most noticeable thing about this building is its height, as houses of six stories were not usual in the days of the Renaissance in France. [337]

So little is done for Angers by local guide books that the joy of discovery adds a zest to our pleasure in this old town, and, although Archie is usually the least enthusiastic of sightseers, he has never been bored once to-day. Perhaps Lydia's presence and delight in it all has something to do with his contented frame of mind. However that may be, he has listened with polite attention to M. La Tour's long disquisitions, architectural as well as historical, and in return has asked him many questions about the products and industries of this prosperous town. It seems that the extensive slate quarries have not only roofed and housed a great part of Angers, but have added considerably to its revenue. Archie is in a merry mood to-day and after M. La Tour's disquisition upon these extensive slate quarries, he asked Lydia if she did not think that King René must have missed his slate when he was scribbling verses in the south. We all laughed heartily over this very slight *bon mot*; but our Frenchman looked dreadfully puzzled and asked to have it explained to him. He proved even more difficult than Sydney Smith's Scotchman; or, as Walter expresses it, "It had to be driven in with a sledge hammer," and he warns Archie solemnly to attempt no more pleasantries in the presence of our Gallo-American, guide, philosopher and friend. [338]

On our way back to the Cheval Blanc, we stopped at the Préfecture whose superbly carved arches and columns are said to date back to the Roman occupation. While we were enjoying these noble arches and rich carvings, M. La Tour told us that Julius Cæsar and one hundred thousand of his troops were encamped upon the triangle upon a part of which Angers is now situated. Here they lived for months on the resources of this somewhat restricted area, which does not seem at all wonderful if the soil was cultivated in those days as it is now; and how those soldiers must have enjoyed the rich vintage of Anjou!—to say nothing of the choux-fleurs, artichokes, peas, and the various fruits which are now shipped in carloads to Paris every night. [339]

The idea of a Roman camp in the neighborhood of Angers appealed strongly to our antiquarians, and while we were at luncheon Archie, after politely inquiring what we proposed to do with our long afternoon, and finding that we had no plans except to visit some place of interest in the motor car, presented a well arranged programme. What Archie suggested, evidently after collusion with Walter and the chauffeur, was to motor to Nantes, stopping *en route* at the Roman camp, if indeed its site can be found.

Lydia and I would have shouted for joy had there not been other guests in the *salle à manger*. As it was we contented ourselves with congratulating Archie upon his fertility of resource, adding that we had been longing to see Nantes, with its fortress-château and the tomb of François, the father of our old friend, Anne de Bretagne. [340]

Upon this Miss Cassandra waked up from a little nap she had been taking between courses, and expressed her delight at the thought of seeing Nantes in whose ancient château her favorite Anne was married to Louis XII. "Not," she added, "that I approve of that marriage, it is the one sad blot upon Anne's otherwise fine character that she was willing to marry Louis after he had divorced poor Jeanne."

"I must warn you, before we set forth," said Archie, raising his finger admonishingly, "that this is to be an afternoon in the open; the chauffeur tells me that we shall have barely time to see the surroundings of Nantes, to get a general view of the town, and return to Angers in time for a late dinner."

"Of course we shall stop at the Roman camp," said Lydia, tactfully, looking at Archie as she spoke. "It would never do to miss that, and I plead for twenty minutes or a half hour at the cathedral to see the tomb of François, and the gold box in which the heart of the Duchess Anne was sent back to Brittany."

"You shall have your half hour at the cathedral, Miss Mott," said Archie gallantly, "even if we don't get home 'till morning." [341]

"'Till daylight doth appear," sang Walter as he went out to tell the chauffeur to be ready for an early start.

M. La Tour looked his surprise, he had never seen us in quite so merry a mood. There is

something exhilarating in the air here, which is crisp and fresh, almost like that of October at home, and we were further stimulated by the thought of doing something as unexpected as it was delightful.

We set forth promptly, a gay party, the three women folk upon the back seat, M. La Tour and Archie vis à vis, and Walter with the chauffeur in front. A nice intelligent young fellow is this chauffeur, with whom Walter has become so intimate that he seems to be able to converse with him without any apparent language. His name is François and Walter has, in some way, fathomed the secrets of his soul and tells us that he is the *fiancé* of the pretty black eyed Eloisa who showed us around the château of Langeais. The confidence came about in this wise, François asked us if we had seen Langeais, a very noble château, and did the little *gardienne*, the pretty, dark-eyed one, take us about? Yes! that is the one he knows, they both belong to the country around Tours, than which there is nothing finer in the known world. Although living at Blois, for financial reasons, he hopes to go back to that garden spot of France and there to end his days. After which Walter, by means of gestures and signs, extracted the story of his love. We did not feel it incumbent upon us to reveal to François the sad fact that Eloisa was flirting quite openly with one of the red-legged upholders of the military glory of France, when we saw her at Langeais.

[342]

"That was doubtless an innocent diversion to which she resorted, in order to pass away the time during her lover's absence," Archie remarked, with a fine touch of sarcasm in his tone, for at this moment Lydia, who is wearing some forget-me-nots that were beside her plate this morning, is having a very animated conversation with M. La Tour.

Lydia is very charming in a blue linen suit, the tang of salt in the air, which is quite evident here, has given her a brilliant color, and every stray lock of her golden brown hair has curled up into bewildering little ringlets. I don't wonder that Archie resents the forget-me-nots. "Where the deuce does the fellow get them?" he asked me this morning. "François and I have been looking all about the town before breakfast and we can't even find a bunch of pansies."

[343]

Pansies would be a good offset to forget-me-nots; but as only sweet peas and roses were to be found, Archie scorned to bestow these which grow in such abundance, and so contented himself with a beautiful basket of fruit which we all enjoyed.

I need not tell you, after our experience with Roman camps, that there was little to be seen upon the site of this one of Angers; but we were interested in the glimpse that we had, in passing through Ancenis, of its ancient château with its tower-flanked doorway, the work of an Angevin architect. Within this château, M. La Tour tells us, an important treaty was signed by François II of Brittany and Louis XI.

As we drew near Nantes the strong salt air blowing in our faces made us realize that we were near the sea. Nantes and St. Nazaire, which is a little north and west of Nantes, are among the great sea ports of the world. And here we find ourselves again in the Dumas country, for it was along the part of the Loire that we have seen to-day that Fouquet fled pursued relentlessly by Colbert. If only Fouquet could have reached Nantes and his own Belle Ile, out beyond St. Nazaire, a different fate might have been his. We follow again in imagination, with almost breathless interest, that close pursuit, of one boat by the other, until we suddenly find ourselves winding through the streets of a town and know that we are in Queen Anne's city of Nantes, that also of the monk Abelard and of the famous warrior surnamed "Bras de Fer."

[344]

Gazing upon the redoubtable Château of Nantes with its six towers, its bastions and its wide and deep moat, into which the sea poured its rising tide twice each day, we could understand Henri Quatre saying, as he stood before it, "Ventre Saint Gris! the Dukes of Brittany were not men to be trifled with!" It was into the dungeon of this château that Fouquet was first thrown, and here Mazarin had Henri de Gondi imprisoned, and from whence, as M. La Tour tells us, he escaped over the side of the Bastion de Mercœur, by means of a rope smuggled into the prison by his friends. There are no end of interesting associations connected with Nantes, of which not the least important is that Henry of Navarre here signed the Edict of Nantes, the Huguenot charter of liberties.

[345]

We needed a full day here, but remembering our promise, we did not even ask whether the château was open to visitors, which was really very good behavior on our part. We turned our faces toward the Cathedral of St. Pierre, and spent there our half hour, no more, no less. Here over the sculptured figure of its patron saint are some lines, in old French, which tell us that this building dates back to the year 1434. The chief treasure of the cathedral is the beautiful tomb of François II, and his wife Marguerite de Foix, the father and mother of the little Duchess Anne, on which the ermine tails are in full feather, if we may so express it, and also the hound and the lion which are symbols of this ancient house. The tomb, which is one of the masterpieces of that good artist, Michel Colombe, was brought here from the old Église des Carmes which was pillaged and burned during the Revolution.

Although we reached Angers only in time for a very late dinner, we were inclined to wander again to-night. I don't know just how it came about; Archie was out on the terrace smoking, and when Lydia appeared at the door he threw away his cigar and joined her. As they walked off together, Lydia turned back and said, in her sweet, demure way:

[346]

"Dr. Vernon is taking me to see the ruins of the Abbey of Toussaint by moonlight. Why don't you and Mr. Leonard come too?"

"Oh! no, we don't spoil sport; do we, Zelphine?" said Walter, "and it seems to me, dear, if my memory does not fail me, that moonlight upon ruins has brought good luck to your matchmaking schemes before this. Do you remember how Angela and the Doctor trotted off to see the ruins at Exeter by moonlight?"

"Yes, of course, how could I forget that evening? Poor dear Angela will be thinking of us and missing us to-night."

"Well, she will only have this one night to miss us and this day in Angers has been worth so much to us."

"We have had many delightful days on this trip; but this has been one of the most perfect. Why do many of the people, who do the châteaux so conscientiously, skip Angers?"

[347]

"I hope that many may continue to skip it," said Walter, "tourists and trippers would ruin this lovely old place and turn this comfortable, homelike Cheval Blanc into a great noisy caravansary. And now that the lov—I mean, now that your brother and Lydia have had a good start of us, let us go to see the ruins of the old Abbey, Zelphine," and then with a mischievous twinkle in his eye:

"Don't you think that Miss Cassandra and M. La Tour could be persuaded to pair off and go with us?"

Miss Cassandra was just then sleeping sweetly in her chair; she does not confess to any fatigue after our long motor trip, but she must be very tired, and M. La Tour is engaged with some friends from Paris. Much as we like him, and indeed no one could help liking him,—for this one evening we are content to dispense with his kind attentions.

The ruins of the Abbey of Toussaint must be interesting at any time, reminding us of those of Nettley and Jumiéges, with their exquisite carved arches and windows all overgrown and draped with vines and shrubbery, but by moonlight, like fair Melrose, they take upon them an added charm. We lingered long before the lovely carved window, through which the moonlight streamed in silvery radiance; but we saw nothing of Archie and Lydia. They had probably gone to take a last look at the Castle of Angers by the light of the moon, and when they returned to the Cheval Blanc Miss Cassandra and I had gone upstairs, feeling that we had indeed had a full day, and that the wanderers would probably be quite as happy without us.

[348]

XV

[349]

ORLEANS AND ITS MAID

ORLEANS, September 14th.

WE set forth early this morning, as we had a long day before us, and as Walter warned us, little time to loiter by the way, great as the temptation might be to stop *en route*.

I don't know that anything has happened, but the atmosphere seems somewhat electric, and if anything has occurred I am quite sure that it is of a cheerful nature, as there is a telltale light in Archie's eyes that seems to say when they meet mine: "I have been sworn to secrecy, find out if you can!" Lydia's face is inscrutable; but her color is a little brighter than usual and she seems to avoid meeting my gaze, and drops her eyelids in a way that she has when the sun is bright. Then, she is beside me and consequently I cannot see her face as I can Archie's. Our places have been changed in the auto; Lydia and Archie are vis à vis this morning and M. La Tour is opposite to me, but this may be quite accidental.

[350]

After Walter's solemn warning about the shortness of time, I was afraid to suggest stopping anywhere; but Lydia had told me that she intended, if possible, to see the Château de Morains, near Saumur, where Margaret of Anjou died. She made her request with some hesitation.

"Of course we can stop," said Walter, "it won't take long, if François knows the way."

François did not know the way to the historic shrine, which is evidently neglected by English and American pilgrims; but by making inquiries he found it without much trouble. We saw the outside of the little château and what interested us especially, the inscription over the gateway which relates that this Manoir of Vignole-Souzay, formerly Dampierre, was the refuge of the heroine of the War of the Roses, Marguerite of Anjou and Lancaster, Queen of England, the most unfortunate of queens, wives and mothers, who died here the 25th of April, 1482, aged fifty-three years. This little French tablet in memory of the English Queen, who was received with such rejoicings in England upon her marriage with Henry VI, seemed to us most pathetic.

[351]

As a return for this stop at Morains, which Walter considered a particular concession to the women of the party, he suggested that we take time to stop at Villandry to see a Druid stone which M. La Tour has been telling him about. You may remember that he and Archie are somewhat insane upon the subject of Druidical remains, but I notice that Archie is not as keenly interested in the Druids, this morning, as usual. He and Lydia are talking over some places that they mean to see in or near Paris. Archie has been reading a description of Fouquet's Château of

Vaux-le-Vicomte, which is only an hour's ride from Paris, near Melun. Wise in his day and generation is this brother of mine, for nothing could so appeal to Lydia's historic soul as just such an expedition as this! This was the château at which the great financier entertained the King with such magnificence that he aroused the jealousy of his royal master. You remember Dumas's description of it, and La Fontaine's *Songe de Vaux*, in which he says that everything conspired for the pleasure of the King, music, fountains, Molière's plays, in which he was praised,—even the moon and the stars seemed to shine for him, on those nights at Vaux.

[352]

"And the fruits of the earth, and of the greenhouses yielded up their treasures for him," said M. La Tour. "In his old age Louis was wont to say that no peaches were equal to those of Vaux-le-Vicomte in flavor and quality."

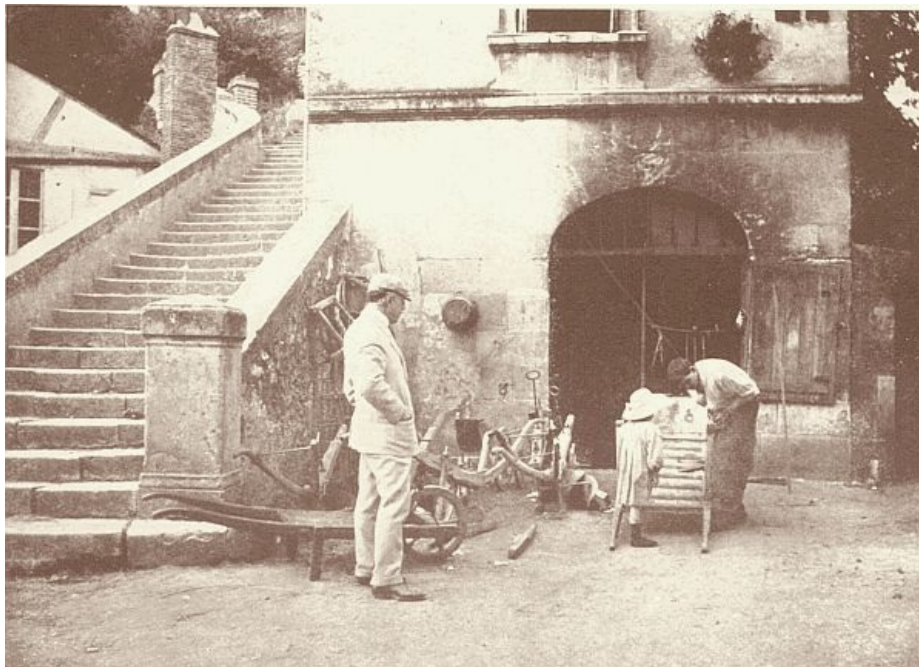
"I am quite sure that he had never tasted those of Anjou!" exclaimed Walter, and at this most opportune moment François produced a basket of these same Anjou peaches, and some pears also, all surrounded by green leaves, as only the French know how to set them forth. We feasted on the fat things of the earth, as we made our way to Villandry, where we saw the ancient monument of the Druids, which was not much to see after all. Walter, however, takes a solid satisfaction in visiting the things that he feels it is his duty to see. The same sort of a rainbow illuminates his horizon after a duty of this sort is performed, that irradiates our path when you and I have accomplished a series of perfunctory visits, and yet he tells Lydia and me that we take our sightseeing quite too seriously.

M. La Tour has been telling us about the elaborate New Year's ceremonies once held at Chartres, by the Druids. The mistletoe was cut by the eubage, with a golden *faucelle*, or sickle, belonging to one of the Druidesses and then distributed to the people. The eubage was, it appears, a combination of priest and bard whose pleasing task it was to cut the throats of the human victims offered upon the Druidical altar of sacrifice. This distribution of the mistletoe at the beginning of the year may have led to our later use of the mistletoe in the Christmas holiday festivals. Walter says that he does not know about this, nor does M. La Tour; but they intend to look it up and communicate the result one to the other. From this conversation you will naturally infer that we are again in the land of the mistletoe.

[353]

In the meadows we noticed a delicate little mauve-colored flower, something like an orchid, which François told me was a crocus, blooming for the second time this season, and in the gardens of the little gray houses, with their red-tiled roofs, and by the roadside were gorgeous asters of all shades of purple. In the less cultivated places, heather blooms luxuriantly and yellow gorse which attracted Miss Cassandra's trained botanist's eye, and she suddenly quoted the old Scotch saw, with about the same appropriateness as some of the remarks of "Mr. F's Aunt" in *Bleak House*: "When gorse is out of season, kissing is out of fashion," and looking straight at Archie, she added encouragingly "you see it is still blooming."

[354]



FORGE NEAR STONE STAIRWAY AT LUYNES

It would be impossible to accuse Miss Cassandra of flirtatious intent, and yet at her glance and words Archie blushed a beautiful scarlet. I tried not to look at him, as I knew that he was inwardly swearing at the thinness of his skin, or whatever it is that makes people blush. I couldn't see Lydia without turning around and staring at her; but Walter, who enjoyed the whole scene from his coign of vantage beside François, told me afterwards that "Lydia never turned a hair, and so you see, Zéphine," he said, laughing gaily, "it all rests between Miss Cassandra and Archie."

Seeing in the distance the curious, enigmatical Pile de Cinq Mars, we suddenly realized that we were quite near Luynes, and Walter told François to stop there as he knew that Archie would be charmed with the beauty of the situation of this château which hangs high, like an eagle's

[355]

nest, upon a bluff above the lowlands and the river. While we were walking around and about the château, we suddenly came upon Mr. and Mrs. Otis Skinner standing at the entrance to a little smithy, quite near the rock-hewn steps that lead up to the château. We have seen so few Americans, and no friends or acquaintances since we left Tours, and now, as we are again approaching the old town, to meet these good friends was a great pleasure. Mr. Skinner took us into the smithy, which is so charmingly situated, and we wondered again, as at Cheverny, why even a blacksmith's workshop is so much more picturesque here than in England or America. While Mr. Skinner was standing talking to the blacksmith, Lydia and Archie and Mrs. Skinner managed to get snapshots of the forge. If it is satisfactory, I will send you a photograph, as we intend to exchange pictures and you shall have the very best.

After this encounter, we sped along on our way toward Tours, wondering whether Mr. Skinner was collecting material, atmosphere, etc., for a French play. We are glad that our way lay through Tours and that Archie could have even a fleeting glimpse of the old capital. To motor across the great bridge and along the wide Rue Nationale, and to have another look at St. Gatien, with its two beautiful towers, and at those other towers of Charlemagne and de l'Horloge was a joy, even if there was not time to stop over at Tours for an hour.

[356]

At Blois we gathered up our luggage, left the automobile and took the train for Orleans. We parted from our François with much regret, as we have come to like his honest, frank face and his pleasant French ways. Walter and Archie, I am quite sure, gave him a generous remembrance, Archie especially being quite in sympathy with his dreams of love in a Touraine cottage. We all wished him happiness, not without some misgivings on my part, I must admit, lest his Eloisa of the bright eyes should play him false for the charms of some one of those red-legged soldiers, who seem to possess an irresistible charm for French women, who are always ready to sing "J'aime le militaire."

From Blois to Orleans is a railroad journey of a little over an hour, through a fertile, but a rather monotonous country abounding in fields of turnips. From the quantities of this vegetable raised here, we naturally conclude that the peasants of this part of France subsist chiefly upon turnips, as the Irish do upon potatoes. We passed through many gray villages, which tone in with the shades of the silver poplars, and this with certain gray atmospheric effects in the landscape makes us realize how true to life are the delicate gray-green canvases of many of the French artists.

[357]

The Orleans station, like that of Tours, is a delusion and a snare, as we were suddenly landed at Les Aubrais, one of the outskirts of the old city and from thence had to make our way to Orleans as best we could. We had fortunately been able to send our small luggage directly through to Paris by putting it in the *consigne*, and paying ten centimes on each article. This convenient and economical device, which with all our travel we had never discovered, was revealed to us by the two charming Connecticut ladies whom we met at Amboise. Walter calls down blessings upon the pretty heads of these two wise New England women whenever we make a stop over between trains; and Miss Cassandra ejaculates: "It takes a Yankee, my dears, to find out the best way to do everything on the top of the earth!"

[358]

Having only ourselves to dispose of, we soon found an omnibus which conveyed us to the Place du Martroi, the soul and centre of the ancient city of Orleans, where is fitly placed an equestrian statue of Jeanne d'Arc, by Foyatier. This statue does not, however, happily suggest the Maid, as the peasant girl of Domremy is here represented with a fine Greek profile, and, as Archie noticed, with his keen horseman's eye, the charger upon which she is mounted is a race-horse and not a war-horse. It is, however, a noble and dignified memorial, on the whole, in which it differs from the grotesque affair at Chinon, and Dubray's low reliefs on the sides of the pedestal, representing important scenes in the life of the Maid, are beautiful and impressive.

Here in Orleans, the scene of Joan's first and most remarkable success, we live more completely in the life and spirit of that wonderful period than at Chinon. The marvel of it all impressed us more forcibly than ever before. That this peasant girl, young and ignorant of the art of war, by the power of her sublime faith in her heaven-sent mission and in herself as the divinely appointed one, should have wrested this city from the English, seems nothing short of the miracle that she and her soldiers believed it to be. Even that hard-headed and cold-hearted sovereign, Louis XI, was so overawed by the story of Joan's victories that he marked with tablets the little room at Domremy where she was born, and also the convent of Sainte Catherine de Fierbois, where she was received and where she found her sword with the five crosses.

[359]

We knew that the Place du Martroi was not the scene of Joan's martyrdom, and yet this wide, noble square, with her monument in the centre, from which diverge so many streets associated with her history, stood for infinitely more to us than anything we had seen at Rouen, the actual place of her martyrdom.

From the square, M. La Tour conducted us to the cathedral, which has been criticized by Victor Hugo and many others, and which we, perhaps from pure perversity, found much more harmonious than we had expected. The façade, which the local guidebook pronounces majestic, even if *bâtarde* in style, is rich in decoration, and the little columns on the towers I thought graceful and beautiful, however *bâtarde* they may be. Two cathedrals have stood upon the site of the present Sainte Croix, the last having been destroyed by the Huguenots, to whom are attributed the same sort of destruction that marked the course of Oliver Cromwell's army in England. It is said that the great Protestant leader, Théodore de Bèze, himself blew up the four noble pillars that once supported the belfry. However this may be, and Miss Cassandra says that

[360]

we are all free to believe such tales or not, as we choose, very little is left of the old edifice except the eleven chapels and the side walls. Even if Théodore de Bèze destroyed the old cathedral, the building as it now stands was the work of his former chief, for it was Henry of Navarre who laid the corner stone of the new edifice, in 1601, to fulfill a vow made to Pope Clement VIII who had absolved him from the ban of excommunication.

In the side windows, in richly colored glass, is the story of the Maid of Orleans, from the day when she heard the voices and a vision appeared to her while she kept her father's sheep in the fields near Domremy, to the hour when she and her troops gave thanks for the victory of Orleans in this cathedral. On through the eventful months of her life to the sad and shameful scenes at Rouen, where the innocent and devoted Maid was burned at the stake, while France which she had delivered, and Charles whom she had crowned, made no sign, the story is told in a series of pictures. Even if of modern glass and workmanship, these windows seemed to us most beautiful, especially those on the right-hand side through which the light streamed red, yellow and blue from the jewelled panes. The window representing the crowning of Charles VII at Rheims is especially rich in color. Joan, with a rapt ecstatic expression on her face, is here to see her King crowned and with her is the banner that she loved even more than her mystic sword. Below are inscribed her own simple words, "It has been with him in the suffering, it is right that it should be with him in the glory." Ever self-effacing, it was of her beloved banner that Joan was thinking, never of herself.

[361]

The whole wonderful story is written upon these windows so plainly that any child may read it. We have been thinking of Christine and Lisa, and wishing that they were here to read it with us. They will learn of Joan of Arc in their histories, but it will never be so real to them as it is here where her great work was done, and where she is so honored. Some day we promise ourselves the pleasure of bringing the children here and going with them through all the Joan of Arc country. M. La Tour, who has made the journey, says that, as the Joan of Arc cult is increasing all the time, every spot associated with her is marked and everything most carefully preserved.

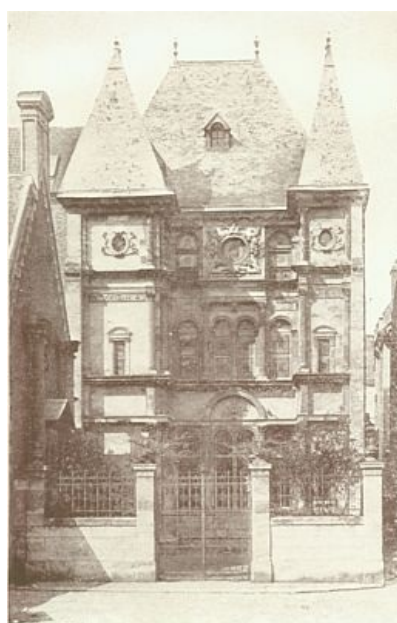
[362]

"Most interesting of all," he says, "is the little church where Jeanne worshipped. Although badly restored by Louis XVIII, the nave remains intact, and the pavement is just as it was when the bare feet of Jeanne trod its stones, in ecstatic humility, during the long trance of devotion when she felt that supernatural beings were about her and unmistakable voices were bidding her to do what maid had never dreamed of doing before. In a little chapel, beside the main edifice, is the stone fount where the infant Jeanne was baptized. Fastened to the wall there hangs a remnant of the iron balustrade, that Jeanne's hands must have rested on during the hours that she passed in rhapsody, seeing what never was seen on land or sea. A few steps from the church stands the cot where the maid was born, almost as humbly as the Christ Child. Entering through the small doorway, you see the room in which Jeanne first opened her eyes to the light. On one side stands the 'dresser,' or wardrobe, built half way into the wall, where the housewife stored the family belongings. Beside this is the iron arm which held the lamp, used during midnight watches. Beyond this general room is the alcove that served Jeanne as a sleeping-room. In this narrow chamber, more like a cell than a sleeping-room, Jeanne heard 'voices,' and dreamed her dreams."

[363]

M. La Tour's description is so interesting that we all long to follow in his footsteps and in those of the Maid, from the clump of oak trees—of which one still stands—and the "Fountain of the Voices" to the ruins of the Château of Vaucouleurs, where the chivalrous Robert de Baudricourt, impressed by the girl's serene confidence, gave her a letter for the King, who was at Chinon, as we know.

[364]



[HÔTEL CABU](#)



[HOUSE OF JOAN OF ARC](#)

ORLEANS

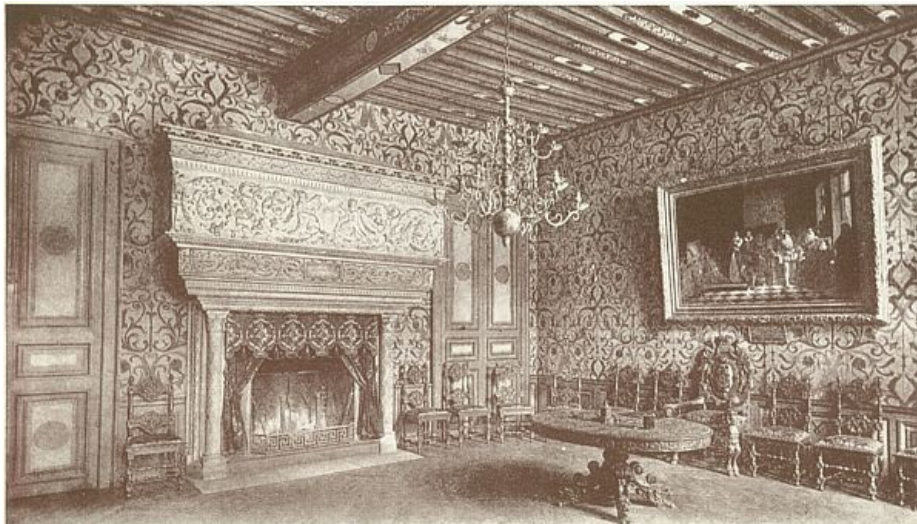
The Porte de France is still standing, M. La Tour tells us, through which the shepherd maid, with her four men-at-arms and her brother Jean, embarked on her perilous journey of eleven days across a country filled with roaming bands of British and Burgundian soldiers. The places are all marked, Saint-Urbain, Auxerre, Gien, Sainte Catherine de Fierbois, where Jeanne was received in the "aumonerie" of the convent, now transformed into a Mayor's office. When we come to Orleans with the children, we must try to be here on the 8th of May, when the whole city is *en fête* celebrating the glorious victory of the Maid. Still talking over the projected Joan of Arc pilgrimage, M. La Tour led us by the Rue Jeanne d'Arc which faces the cathedral and to the Maison de l'Annonciade where Jacques Boucher, treasurer of the Duke of Orleans, received the Maid. In the court of this building, now used as a Dominican convent, is a small statue of Joan, above the well. This house is also called the Maison de Jeanne d'Arc, and in a charming Renaissance building, near by, is a collection of relics of the Maid. For some unknown reason this house is sometimes spoken of as the house of Agnes Sorel; and with about the same authority another house at the corner of the streets, Charles-Sanglier and Des Albanais, is called the *Maison de Diane de Poitiers*. This latter mansion, with its small towers and richly ornamented façade, is now an historical museum and is better known as the Hôtel Cabu.

[365]

By the Rue Royale, which suddenly changes its name and becomes the Rue de la Republique after it crosses the Place du Martroi, we made our way to the Hôtel du Ville, a handsome sixteenth century building of brick and stone. On a tablet upon the façade is a long inscription telling how many kings, queens and notable personages have stopped here; but what interested us much more is a statuette in bronze of Joan, the work of the Princess Marie d'Orléans, daughter of Louis Philippe. The modest, devout little maid, represented by this statue, is more like the real Joan, to our thinking, than most of the more pretentious monuments.

In the Salle des Mariages of the Hôtel du Ville, we came suddenly upon souvenirs of a much later period than that of Joan, for here, in this room, Francis II died. He and Mary came here from Chenonceaux, and becoming violently ill from a malady in his ear which had tortured him for some time, the poor young king took to his bed never to rise again. His mother followed him here, and at Mary's instance the great surgeon Ambrose Paré was summoned. He wished to operate; the young Queen had full confidence in his judgment and skill, but Catherine resolutely opposed the use of the surgeon's knife, and poor Francis lingered a few days in great pain, and finally died in the arms of his wife. There is a painting in the Salle des Mariages of this sad scene; Mary is kneeling by the bedside of her husband and Catherine is seated nearby, her face cold and expressionless. It has been intimated that Catherine opposed Ambrose Paré because she wished to have poor Francis removed to make way for a son whom she could control and bend to her will; but with all her wickedness, it is impossible to believe in such a motive. One may, however, understand her ignorant horror of the use of the knife, and the superstitious terror that haunted her in view of the recent revelations of Ruggieri at Chaumont.

[366]



Neurdein Freres, Photo.

SALLE DES MARRIAGES, ORLEANS

"I think it is quite evident what was amiss with King Francis!" exclaimed Miss Cassandra. "He was suffering from mastoiditis, of course, and Ambrose Paré was clever enough to find it out, and might have saved his life if he had been allowed to have his way. I have no patience with Catherine, and she knew what she was about when she set up her opinion against that of a great surgeon."

[367]

Archie says that to diagnose a case at a distance of several hundred miles requires considerable skill; but still greater is the insight into obscure maladies of our Quaker lady, who bridges over the centuries and tells us just what disease afflicted Francis II in the year of grace 1560; and he added quite seriously:

"You may be quite correct in your surmise, Miss West. Your niece and I will hunt up Ambrose Paré's diary when we get to Paris, and see what he says about the case. If you are right, I'll take you into my office as a partner."

After a somewhat strenuous morning of sightseeing and a sumptuous regale at the Hôtel St.

Aignan, whose name pleased us on account of its Dumas flavor, we climbed up to a lovely terrace garden from which we could overlook the town and the cathedral, to which distance certainly lends enchantment. In this pleasant resting place I am writing to you, dear Margaret, while we wait for a late train to Paris. M. La Tour expects his auto to meet us and convey us to the station and then to take him to his home. We shall miss him, as his kind attentions and vast fund of information have added much to the pleasure of our sojourn in Château Land. To-day he has managed our time so judiciously that we have seen everything of importance in Orleans without being hurried, and we now have this quiet hour on the hillside garden before setting forth upon our journey. He evidently has no idea of what is happening in our midst, and is as attentive as ever to Lydia, talking to her and walking with her, whenever Archie gives him a chance; and who can blame him? I have never seen Lydia more charming than she is to-day; but the soft light that shines in her eyes is not for the young Frenchman, I am sure. Walter says:

[368]

"If La Tour had his wits about him he would see what is going on under his nose; it takes a sledge hammer to drive in some other things beside a joke."

Here comes the auto, and in five minutes we shall be *en route* for Paris.

XVI

[369]

A CHÂTEAU FÊTE

PARIS, September 16th.

WE found Angela eagerly awaiting us when we reached our destination, and I must admit still more eagerly awaiting another arrival, as Mr. McIvor was expected by a train due here later than ours. Since she had been with his Scotch and English relatives, Angela insists upon having her fiancé called Mr. McIvor, as that is the custom in his own country. She, however, much prefers our calling him by his own delightful Scotch name, Ian, and we like him well enough to fall in with her desires. Ian arrived in due time, and our party is now complete.

"How fortunate it is that the hour was in our favor instead of the Doctor's," exclaimed Walter; for according to French etiquette to have left Angela here unchaperoned with her lover in the same city, even if not in the same hotel, would have shocked all ideas of propriety. "I fancy that M. La Tour, good fellow as he is, couldn't understand our leaving Angela here by herself even for a single night."

[370]

"No," I said, "and I didn't think it necessary to tell him."

"Queer notions these people have! As if Angela didn't know how to take care of herself!"

No one knows better, and I told Walter how Angela managed in London. She reached there in the afternoon, instead of in the morning as she had expected. Something about the automobile had given out and they had finally to take a train from York. When she reached the hotel where she was to meet the Dudleys, she found a note telling her to follow them to Southampton as they were obliged to take the night boat. Angela immediately looked up trains and finding that the next train would be one hour too late for the boat, what do you think she did? She telegraphed to the Captain to wait for her! Did you ever hear of anything so delicious? Walter calls it a piece of American effrontery, but I call it quickwitted, don't you? Of course the Captain could not keep his boat waiting for any person of less distinction than the Queen; but by good luck (Angela is always lucky) the vessel was late in sailing that evening. The Dudleys, who were anxiously waiting for her on deck, saw her coming, just as the sailors were about to take up the gang-plank, and begged the Captain for a moment's delay. Of course Angela looked charmingly pretty as she tripped up the incline; and she never realized that her little telegram could be taken otherwise than seriously until she heard the Captain say to the first officer, as she stepped on deck: "She was worth waiting for, after all." At this the child was so overcome with confusion that she did not know which way to look, and evidently did not recover her self-possession during the crossing. Walter insists that she is still blushing over her own daring. If she is, it is vastly becoming to her, as I have never seen Angela look more brilliantly beautiful.

[371]

We are living in an atmosphere so charged with romance, that it would be positively dangerous for two unmated beings to join our party at this time. Miss Cassandra pays Archie and myself the compliment of appearing to be radiantly happy over Lydia's engagement, although I know that she drops a tear in secret over M. La Tour and his château. I tell her that this is not an entirely safe environment for her, especially as one of her old time suitors is in Paris; he met us at Morgan's this morning and has been dancing attendance on Miss Cassandra this evening, which last, Walter says, is a very disrespectful way to speak of the decorous call of a dignified Quaker gentleman.

[372]

However that may be, Miss Cassandra laughed gaily at my serious warning, and with a flash of her bright blue eyes dismissed her quondam suitor and my solicitude in one brief sentence:

"Thee is very flattering, my dear, and I admit that Jonah is an excellent person; but he is quite too slow for me!"

"That may be; very few people are quick enough for you, dear Miss Cassandra; but you must acknowledge that Mr. Passmore was not at all slow about calling upon you to-night."

It is really too bad to tease our Quaker lady; but she takes it all so literally and is so charmingly good-humored withal that it is a temptation not easy to resist. [373]

We are making the most of our few days in Paris, as we leave here early next week. Lydia announced at breakfast that she felt it *her* duty, and she hoped that we should feel it to be ours to make a pilgrimage to St. Denis this afternoon.

"After enjoying ourselves in the châteaux of the Kings and Queens of France, it is," she says, "the very least that we can do to go to St. Denis and see them decently and honorably buried."

Miss Cassandra quite agreed with Lydia, and Archie, although he says that it is a ghoulish sort of expedition, would go anywhere with her, of course.

It is rather odd that none of us have ever been to St. Denis, not even Ian McIvor who lived in Paris for months while he was studying medicine. We set forth this afternoon in truly democratic fashion on top of a tram, on one of the double-deckers that they have over here, to Angela's great delight. A rather lively party we were, I must admit, despite the sobriety of our errand.

There was nothing that especially interested us in the prosperous manufacturing town of St. Denis, and we went directly to the basilica, which with the mingling of the Romanesque and Gothic in its architecture is much more beautiful than we had expected. It is sufficiently ancient to satisfy our antiquarian taste, as the site of the original abbey dates back to 275, having been erected over the remains of St. Dionysius or St. Denis. The present edifice owes its existence to the Abbé Suger who reigned here in the days of Saint Louis. There have been many restorations, of course, and some very bad ones as late as the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte. In this basilica the Emperor Napoleon was married to the Archduchess Marie Louise and, what is more interesting to us, here Joan of Arc hung up her arms, in 1429. It is wonderful to see the monuments to royalties as far back in French history as Queen Frédégonde and King Dagobert, who founded an abbey here as early as 638. The tomb of Dagobert is a most remarkable and realistic representation of the King's soul leaving his body and its reception in heaven; the means of transportation is a boat with oarsmen, both going and coming, if I may so express it, that is the soul of Dagobert goes forth upon the unknown sea in a boat, and in another carving on the tomb he is welcomed to the shores of heaven, still in a boat. It is very interesting, as there is a poetic as well as a realistic side to the strange conception. Near Dagobert's monument some one had left a visiting card, after the curious French fashion. [374] [375]

"It seemed so very late in the day to be calling upon King Dagobert," as Walter remarked.

After this ancient mausoleum, that of Louis and Anne de Bretagne seemed quite modern, and very handsome, much in the style of the Visconti monument at the Certosa near Pavia. Not far from this tomb we came upon that of Henry II and Catherine de Médicis, in which they are represented in that gruesome fashion so frequent in English cathedral tombs,—the nude figures below, while above in a beautiful chapel, with marble columns and pillars, there are handsome bronze figures of the King and Queen devoutly kneeling. Very inappropriately at the four corners are placed bronze figures of Faith, Hope, Charity and Good Works. Catherine is said to have planned this mausoleum herself, and, strange to relate, in the choir we found another monument to the same King and Queen. [376]

"Just like the grasping creature to want two tombs!" exclaimed Miss Cassandra. "Most people are satisfied with one."

It appears that in her old age Catherine disapproved of the nude figures on the first monument, and had this one made with two decently robed effigies, in marble, resting upon a bronze couch.

We went down into the crypt, all of us except Angela, who still has an aversion to underground resorts. Ian went with us; but after a hurried glance at the most important tombs he made his way back to the sunshine and to Angela. The rest of the party went through everything quite resolutely, although we found this ancient crypt of the good Abbé Suger even more gruesome than most crypts. The guide directed us to a tiny window, through which we could see the place where poor Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI were finally buried, at least all that could be found of their remains. Here a light was burning, which they told us was never allowed to go out. In strange contrast to this solemn little chapel, there is a kneeling figure of the Queen on one side of the crypt in a ball dress with jewels around her neck. This statue, by Petitot, although strangely inappropriate in costume, is beautiful in expression, and in the modelling of the face, arms, and hands, the latter being very lovely. [377]

Here also is a "Caveau Impérial," constructed by the order of Napoleon III, as the burial place of his dynasty. This tomb is quite untenanted, of course, as no Bonapartes lie at St. Denis; although the bones of the Valois, Orleans and Bourbon families, who have come and gone in France, probably forever, are royally entombed here, from their early sovereigns down to Louis XVIII.

I tell you all this because I think you have not been to St. Denis, and we found it so much more interesting than we had expected. Walter and Archie made their acknowledgments to Lydia, in due form, and indeed we should never have made this pilgrimage had she not been enterprising

enough to lead us forth toward St. Denis and its royal tombs.

September 17th.

Madame La Tour and her son made a formal call upon us yesterday. M. La Tour had already dropped in, in his friendly way, to inquire after our comfort and to offer his services, as a guide to anything that we might wish to see. As Madame had announced her coming we were at home to receive her. She is pretty and graceful, a charming combination of the American and French woman. We all fell in love with her. M. La Tour is frankly proud of his mother and was anxious that we should meet her. He has evidently not yet grasped the situation of affairs, although during the visit, which was brief if somewhat embarrassing, I could see nothing but the sapphire that sparkled upon Lydia's finger. Madame La Tour very cordially invited Lydia to go to the opera with her, and M. La Tour was evidently much disappointed when she declined in consequence of another engagement.

[378]

"Lydia never said a truer word in her life!" exclaimed Walter, after the visitors had departed; "but La Tour is very stupid not to know what sort of an engagement it is that she has on her hands."

Upon which I suggested that Walter should mention the engagement to M. La Tour, quite casually, in the course of conversation.

[379]

"Why not tell him yourself, Zephine? You are so much more adroit at that sort of thing."

"It is really becoming embarrassing. Some flowers came last night, forget-me-nots again, to Archie's amusement. Now if Lydia had been anything but just ordinarily nice and pleasant to him, as she is to everyone, it would be different."

"Well, and even if she had been more than ordinarily nice to La Tour why do you trouble yourself about it, Zephine? It is something that only concerns Lydia and La Tour, and Archie perhaps in a way, but we really have nothing to do with it."

Thus, manlike, does Walter push aside all part and lot in the *affaires du cœur* of his fellow-travellers; but I have just had a brilliant and beautiful idea, which I intend to communicate to Archie at once. We were all talking *en route* of the Château of Vaux-le-Vicomte.

As this is a land where people make a fête upon every occasion, Archie shall give a breakfast at Melun or some place near the château, and invite us all, and the La Tours also, an engagement party. I have no doubt the French have some charming name for this sort of an entertainment, which we can find out. I shall write you later of the success of my plan.

[380]

September 18th.

Of course Archie was delighted with my suggestion, as he and Lydia have been promising themselves the pleasure of an excursion to Vaux-le-Vicomte which seems to go by the name of Vaux-Praslin at the present time. Archie and Walter did the very kindest and most friendly thing, which in the end proved to be the most advantageous to themselves. They took M. La Tour into their confidence and consulted with him as to how the little excursion should be made and where the breakfast should be given. Naturally the poor boy was very much surprised, and quite downhearted when he found out what event was to be celebrated, and we did not see him for two whole days, not until this evening, when he called and offered his congratulations to Lydia in pretty French phrases.

Angela is charmed with M. La Tour and his manners, and says that she does not see how Lydia could possibly resist his fascinations; this with a mischievous glance at Archie, who, serene and confident in his own happiness, replies that Lydia is probably making the mistake of her life in turning away from the young Frenchman and his château.

[381]

But Lydia knows that she is making no mistake and takes all this jesting in good part; but she insists that the little celebration shall be called a château fête, as Vaux-le-Vicomte is our objective point. This is in much better taste, and, after all, we don't know the French name for an engagement fête.

"We certainly don't want to ask La Tour to inform our ignorance," as Walter says. "It would be like requiring the man who is down on his luck to name the happy day. It is quite better taste, and, after all, we don't know the occasion."

Miss Cassandra and Walter and I went to the American church this morning because we like the simple service there, and the rest of the party went to the Russian Church to hear the music, which was very good to-day. The afternoon we all spent at Versailles, where we were so fortunate as to see the fountains play. Nothing, not even the châteaux of the Loire, gives us so realizing a sense of the gayety and splendor of the life of the French court, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as this vast palace of pleasure when the gardens bask in sunshine and the fountains are playing. We recalled Madame de Sévigné's spirited description of the court and royal family setting forth upon some pleasure party, herself among them, tucked in snugly in the same *carosse* with her favorite, Duchesse de La Vallière, or Madame de Montespan of the many ringlets, for whom she cares nothing,—these two ladies in close quarters although cordially hating each other. The Queen is in another *carosse* with her children, and the King, being a free

[382]

lance, drives in the coach with the royal favorites or rides beside it as his fancy dictates.

Our fête is to be on Tuesday, and M. La Tour came to the hotel this evening with a well arranged plan. He really is a dear, and having plenty of spirit and a certain kind of pride that seems to belong to well-bred French people, he has no idea of wearing his heart upon his sleeve, even for the love of Lydia. His suggestions are most practical and sensible, and his advice to Archie is to go to Fontainebleu first and have a walk through the forest, breakfast at one of the hotels there, and motor to Vaux-le-Vicomte, by way of Melun, in the afternoon. It all sounds perfectly delightful, and I have secured a copy of the Vicomte de Bragelonne, at Brentano's, in order to read over again his account of Fouquet's reception of the King at Vaux. [383]

We shall be glad to see Fontainebleau again. Since we have seen the châteaux of the Loire, all of these palaces near Paris are most interesting to us, as they make us realize, as we have never done before, what a great pleasure park much of France was under the Valois and the Bourbons. If the forest of Chambord was vast with its many acres, so also was that of Fontainebleau with its 42,500 acres. Palaces of pleasure, all of these châteaux were intended to be, as were Chenonceaux, Azay le Rideau, Blois and Chambord, although many of them are stained by dark and bloody crimes. Passing through the gardens and park of Versailles to-day we forgot the terrible scenes that were enacted there in 1793, until the guide pointed out to us the Queen's apartments, and showed us the little room from which Marie Antoinette fled for safety to the King's rooms, on that October night of horror, when the Parisian mob swept down upon the palace. [384]

September 20th.

Our day in the open was a brilliant success. Archie had a large automobile, or perhaps I should say a touring car, large enough to hold us all. Madame La Tour declined, and so we have our château party, with the pleasant addition of Angela and Ian, who naturally entered with great spirit into the celebration. We had all the time we needed at Fontainebleau, entering by the old Cour du Cheval Blanc, but avoiding the interior of the palace, as we had all been here before, some of us several times, and spending all our time in the gardens and forest which are ever new and always beautiful. We looked for the quincunx near which Louise de La Vallière and her companions were hiding when the king and St. Aignan overheard their girlish confidences, but not finding anything answering to Dumas's description we had to content ourselves with a labyrinth which M. La Tour thinks should answer quite as well. At the end of it is the huge grapevine, called the King's Vine, which reminded us of the vine at Hampton Court, and like it is said to produce an enormous crop of grapes. [385]

Archie's breakfast was delightful, an *al fresco* entertainment under a spreading horse-chestnut tree in the garden of a hotel at Fontainebleau. The table was beautifully decorated with flowers and fruit, and the menu, which was suggested by M. La Tour, was the sort to tempt one's appetite on a warm day like this, for it is summer here and much like our September weather at home.

Walter complimented M. La Tour so heartily upon his good taste that he laughingly reminded Walter of our first acquaintance at the *Bon Laboureur*, and asked him if he still had a poor opinion of the French *cuisine*. "Not when you have anything to do with the ordering, my dear fellow!" was the response. "Perhaps my taste needed to be cultivated, for I have come to like some of your French dishes very much, and as for your wines, my taste did not need to be cultivated to like them; I took to them quite naturally." There were toasts, speeches and good wishes, Angela and Ian coming in for their full share. Altogether something to be remembered was that luncheon under the chestnut tree, and near the great forest of Fontainebleau, one of the many pleasant things to be stored up in our memories in connection with our days in Château Land. [386]

This motor trip, to Vaux-le-Vicomte, which seemed so short to us, was evidently quite an affair to Louis XIV and his court, as, according to Dumas, there was some talk of stopping at Melun over night. As we know, large bodies move slowly, and the royal party must have been sufficiently cumbersome, with the heavy coaches of the King, of the two Queens, Anne of Austria and Maria Teresa, and the several coaches of their maids of honor, to say nothing of the outriders, the Swiss Guards and the Musketeers with our friend D'Artagnan at their head. A small army was this, that passed over the road that we travel to-day, lighting up the gray-green landscape with all colors of the rainbow.

At the Château of Vaux-le-Vicomte, of which we had only expected to see the outside, M. La Tour had a surprise for us, as he had managed, in some way, to secure tickets of admission. We mounted the great steps, entered the vast vestibule and passed through the salons in which are beautiful paintings by Mignard and the two Le Bruns. As we wandered through these rooms, richly furnished and hung with old tapestries, and into the rotunda, capped by its great dome, we wondered in which of these rooms Molière's play had been given. [387]

The performance of *Les Fâcheux*, written especially for the occasion, was the crowning glory of the King's visit to Vaux. We learned that it was not given in any of these rooms, but in the garden, in the starlight. When the guests were seated, Molière appeared, and with well counterfeited surprise at seeing the King, apologized for having no players with him and no play to give. At this juncture, there arose from the waters of a fountain nearby, a nymph in a shell, who gracefully explained that she had come from her home beneath the water to behold the greatest monarch that the world had ever seen.

We can well believe that a play, set in this flattering key, was calculated to please the King, who was praised all through at the expense of his courtiers, who were *les fâcheux*, the bores. After this rare bit of adulation Molière's fortune was made.

For the host, Fouquet, who had gathered so much here to give the King pleasure, a far different fate was reserved. The sumptuous entertainment, the show of wealth on all sides, aroused bitter jealousy in the King's heart, and when some designing person (Colbert, it is said) whispered in his ear that Fouquet, not content with outshining his sovereign in the magnificence of his château, had raised his eyes to the royal favorite, Louise de La Vallière, the King's wrath knew no bounds. He was eager to have Fouquet arrested, while he was still accepting his hospitality. [388]

One of the finest passages in Dumas's description of the fête at Vaux-le-Vicomte is that in which Colbert tries to inflame his royal master's jealousy, while the usually timid and gentle Louise de La Vallière urges the King to control his wrath, reminding him that he is the guest of M. Fouquet and would dishonor himself by arresting him under such circumstances.

"He is my King and my master," said La Vallière, turning to Fouquet; "I am the humblest of his servants. But he who touches his honor touches my life. Now, I repeat that they dishonor the King who advise him to arrest M. Fouquet under his own roof. . . . Were M. Fouquet the vilest of men, I should say aloud, 'M. Fouquet's person is sacred to the King because he is the King's host. Were his house a den of thieves, were Vaux a cave of coiners or robbers, his home is sacred, his palace inviolable, since his wife is living in it; and it is an asylum which even executioners would not dare to violate.'" [389]

These words, from the woman whom he loved, influenced Louis, and for the time he relinquished his design; but eighteen days after the great festival at Vaux, M. Fouquet was arrested, near Nantes as we know, and ended his days in prison. This magnificent château, which the architect Le Vau, the artist Le Brun, and the landscape gardener Le Nôtre had conspired to make so beautiful, is still, in a way, a monument to the great financier, although it has passed from his family into the hands of the Duke de Praslin.

Unlike many of the châteaux, Vaux-le-Vicomte is still the home of people who love its beautiful lawns and parterres and keep them green and blooming. Armies of gardeners trim the hedges, plant the borders, and remove every stray leaf from the gravel paths. Here we saw the perfection of French gardening. [390]

As we motored home by the light of the stars, we felt that this, our last day in Château Land, was one of the happiest that we had known. We would like to stay longer in Paris and visit the many châteaux within motoring distance of the capital; but our holiday time is nearly over. Walter starts for Lausanne to-night, to gather up the children and bring them to London, whither we all go to-morrow. We shall have a few days there, and as many more in Oxford, where Walter has some engagements with old friends, and then to Southampton and home. We all sail October first, all except Ian McIvor, who comes over in December for a very important event. You and Allen must come some time, and visit with us the châteaux that we have seen, and see the others that we have not yet visited. For to-night, au revoir. Life has many joys, and not the least among them is to see the beautiful places of the earth, in congenial company, such as yours, dear Margaret.

Yours always devoted,
ZELPHINE.

FOOTNOTES:

[A] Mrs. Leonard added a postscript to her letter in which she gave Mrs. Ramsey two other translations, asking her which she thought M. La Tour had written:

Despite these dragging hours wherein I prove
The painful weight of destiny's decree,
Yet fare I well, for none can take from me
The gifts of gentle hope and tender love.

Despite the dreariness of durance long and sore,
Where fate's relentless hand still holds me fast,
My dungeon I have made my treasure-house; its store
Is love, and hope for freedom at the last.

[B] Since Mrs. Leonard wrote of this conversation at Chambord, the château has passed into the possession of Prince Sixtus de Bourbon, son and heir of the late Duke of Parma. The present owner of Chambord in making good his title to the château testified that not a penny of its revenue has ever been applied to any other purposes than the restoration and upkeep of the domain.

Transcriber's Notes:

Photographs were moved so that they did not interrupt paragraphs. Because of this, in this html version, a few of the links on the List of Illustrations will go to the actual photograph instead of the page listed.

Some of the illustrations will link to larger versions to allow more detail to be seen. These links are provided by clicking on the illustration caption and in most browsers will be underlined.

The word "livelily" is correctly quoted on page 229.

Text uses both Bragelonne and Bragelongne equally. This usage was retained.

Corrections made are indicated by dotted lines under the corrections. Scroll the mouse over the word and the original text will appear.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK IN CHÂTEAU LAND ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in

the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive

Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any

Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.