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Title: The Lake of Geneva

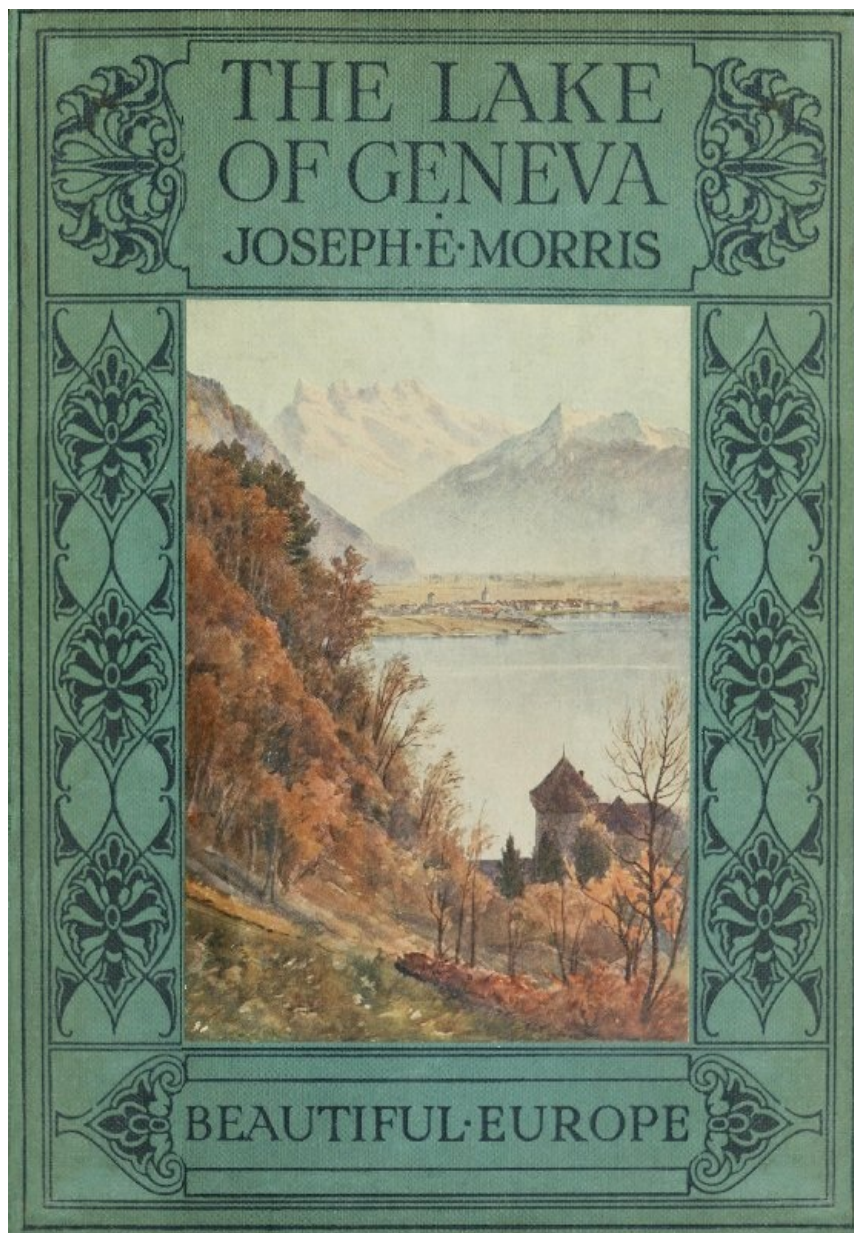
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Release date: May 2, 2014 [EBook #45560]

Language: English

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE LAKE OF GENEVA ***





THE DENTS D'OCHE, SAVOY ALPS.

Beautiful Europe

The Lake of Geneva

By
Joseph E Morris



*A. & C. Black, Limited.
Soho Square London W
1919*

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THE LAKE OF GENEVA

I.

Whether you feel sympathy, or not, with Calvin, the theologian, who gave us, at not more than twenty-eight years of age, the epoch-making Christian Institutes, or with Calvin, the inflexible governor, who helped to put to death poor Michael Servetus outside the city wall of Geneva, on the garden slopes of Champel, you can hardly fail to realize at least some transient flicker of interest when you contemplate, beneath its solitary fir-tree, and hard by a clump of box, the small, white, oblong stone—it is less than a foot long, and marked simply with the initials J. C.—that is supposed to mark the grave, in the old crowded cemetery near the Plaine du Plainpalais, of Jean Calvin, the politician and man. The cemetery itself is a little hard to find, for it lies hidden away in a commonplace back-quarter of the city, in a part that is far removed from all that is brightest, and most cosmopolitan, and therefore most familiar, in Geneva. Nor, even when you find it, is this grave of Calvin obvious, lost, as it is, amongst a thousand other tombs which rise in some disorder from amidst an inextricable tangle of daisies and long rank grass, of lady's-smock and dandelions. As happens almost always in old burial-grounds in Scotland, there is here an eloquent lack of Christian symbols: Catholics are buried here as well as Protestants, but the spirit of iconoclasm is none the less supreme—plenty of broken columns, of import purely Pagan, but never, I think, the Cross, lest it savour of superstition. This, too, was Wordsworth's experience in the burial-ground at Dumfries:

"Mid crowded obelisks and urns
I sought the untimely grave of Burns."

Yet here, in this half-forgotten old graveyard, where Calvin was laid to rest when not quite fifty-five years of age, at least there is none of that nightmare horror that broods over Knox's cenotaph in the Necropolis at Glasgow. Calvin and Knox! We group the two in fancy when we stand here in this silent spot, on the edge of that same Geneva—how transfigured to-day in outward aspect not less than in mental outlook!—where Knox once ministered for more than a year in the little church of the Auditoire, and where Calvin once ruled with a rod of iron. At any rate this sombre old burial-ground, when so much else in the Geneva of to-day is almost aggressively gay and modern, is surely not unfitted for the last repose of a spirit so austere, and of logic so relentless. And this is what is written above the entrance: "Heureux ceux qui meurent au Seigneur. Ils reposent de leurs travaux et leurs œuvres les suivent."

Calvin, indeed, is inseparably connected with the greatest moment in Geneva's history. His rule for nearly a quarter of a century of this little city state is chosen by Lord Morley in his Romanes lecture at Oxford in 1897 as an outstanding illustration of what can be accomplished by moral forces in the absence of giant armies and big guns. It is impossible, in fact, to think of historical Geneva without thinking of Calvin, though Calvin himself was by birth a Frenchman, and hailed from the sleepy little city of Noyon (the German guns have spared it), in the department of the Aisne. Rousseau, on the other hand, though Genevese by birth, seems to belong more properly to the French Revolution, and to France. The tall, white tenement where the future author of the "Contrât Social" lived as a child may still be seen in the St. Gervais quarter, on the right bank of the river, at the junction, if I recollect rightly, of the present Rue Rousseau with the Place de Chevelu, in close proximity to a modiste's establishment and to a shop for the sale of fishing-tackle, and virtually, if not wholly, within sight and hearing of the music and blue swiftness of the Rhone. Actually, however, he was born in his maternal grandfather's house, which has since been pulled down, in the Grande Rue, towards the summit of the hill that is crowned by the Cathedral, in the high-town of Geneva. The old workman's quarter of St. Gervais is perhaps seldom visited by Englishmen, though everybody skirts it, perhaps half-a-dozen times a day, as they traverse the very modern Rue du Mont Blanc on their way to the main railway station, or to the splendid new Hôtel-des-Postes. Yet its eighteenth-century streets—this is possibly their date—are at least as full of interest, and are certainly far more typical, than the Parisian-like blocks of new houses that front the modern quays. If you want to realize the aspect of old Geneva properly, before the advent of the railway and the hordes of modern trippers, you should study the curious model now preserved in the splendid new Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, in the Rue des Casemates. Then it had no front, in the ordinary sense, towards the lake; and the islands in the Rhone were laden with quaint old tenements. Moreover, the whole city was then surrounded by a ring of many-angled fortifications in the familiar manner of Vauban.



THE JURA RANGE FROM THONON, HTE. SAVOIE.

If the actual birth-place of Jean Jacques Rousseau in the Grande Rue has perished, no better piece of luck has befallen the house, at No. 11, Rue des Chanoines (now relabelled Rue Calvin), in which Calvin, as recorded by an existing tablet, resided from 1543 to his death in 1564. To find authentic associations with Calvin we must pass into the former Cathedral, now the Protestant Church of St. Pierre, where is still preserved a chair on which he is said to have sat to preach. The Cathedral itself, however, is his truest monument, for in this he constantly preached, and in this he delivered judgment. This last is a grand old Romanesque pile, with transeptal towers like those at Exeter; but sadly disfigured externally by an atrocious, Classical, eighteenth-century west front. This, with its Corinthian pillars, might be well enough elsewhere, but is quite out of keeping, like the west front at Fécamp, in Normandy, with the older work behind. It must also be acknowledged that here, as at Lausanne, the austere Calvinistic furniture is wholly out of keeping with an interior that was obviously intended for elaborate Catholic ritual. In a very odd position, at the south-west corner of the nave, is the striking fifteenth-century Chapel of the Maccabées that was built in 1406 by Cardinal Jean de Brogny, who was Bishop of Geneva between 1423 and 1426. The curious name is met with again as far away as Amiens, and may possibly derive from "macabre," the Chapel of the Dead: Brogny, indeed, is said to have built this chapel with a view to his own future interment. In the body of the church there are really several points to notice, though at first its general aspect is repellently cold and bare. In the chancel and south nave aisle remain a number of old stalls with misericordes, one of the last of which is unexpectedly carved with a frog. Other stalls have canopies, apparently much restored, the backs of which are sculptured with figures of Prophets and Apostles, greatly recalling those in the not far distant French cathedral of St. Claude. Included among the rest are David and the Sybil, who was credited with prescience of the coming birth of Christ:

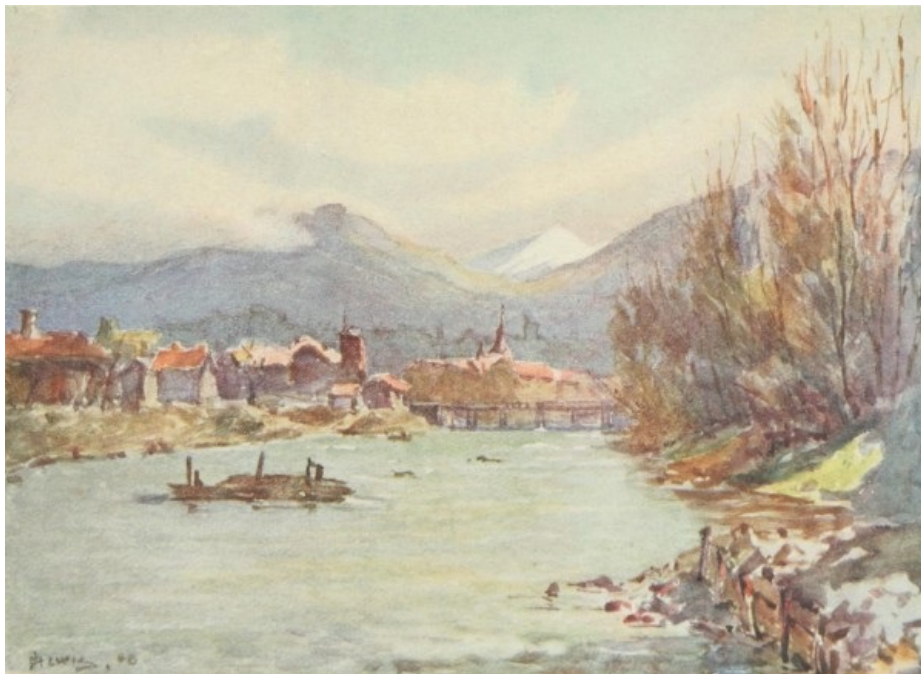
"Teste David cum Sybilla."

In a chapel on the east of the south transept is the tomb, with a modern statue, of Duke Henri de Rohan, the Protestant leader, who was slain at the battle of Rheinfelden in 1638. The church has, of course, been stripped of its ancient coloured glass, for we can hardly suppose that Calvinistic Geneva of the sixteenth century lacked its local "Blue Dick" or its incorrigible William Dowsing; but luckily two splendid windows have somehow escaped, and are now in safe possession in the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire. One is a large figure of St. John the Evangelist, and another of St. Julian or St. James-the-Less. Preserved in the same collection are two fifteenth-century bench-ends, and a fragment of broken stall canopy, that come also from the Cathedral.

Everyone should climb to the top gallery of the great south tower, for there, on a fine day, we are best in a position—it is the highest spot in the whole city save the adjoining leaden flèche—to study the topography of Geneva and the surrounding country. Geneva, we then see, though different from towns, such as Luxembourg, Richmond, or Le Puy, whose actual site and immediate environs in themselves are striking and beautiful, is none the less set in the heart of a general landscape which for varied splendour and loveliness is hardly to be rivalled by any other great city—and not at all in my experience—in the western half of Europe. Immediately to the east spread the waters of the lake, intensely and uniquely blue, and dotted perhaps with the graceful lateen sails that are only found here, on Lac Lemman, and again on the Mediterranean. Owing to the direction at this point of the axis of the lake (more or less to the north-east), which points directly at the heart of the great central plain of Switzerland, between the Jura and the Alps, the distance is closed along the water by no lofty chain of hills, but merely dies away into flat and fruitful vale. To the left of the lake, however, appears the noble limestone escarpment that constitutes the eastern boundary of the Jura, stretching for nearly half-a-hundred miles, like a vast blue wall, from its commencement on the Rhone, below the city, in the neighbourhood of Bellegarde, far away to the north-east, in the direction of Neuchâtel. The position of Bellegarde itself is roughly fixed by the great fort at Ecluse, seen clearly on its hill above the narrow glen of the Rhone; for at Ecluse (well

named, like Cluses, on the Avre, for the word means strait, or narrows) Jura and Alp come close together, and confront one another menacingly across the contracted gorge of the Rhone. The spot is almost exactly paralleled in England by the deep valley between Tebay and Lowgill, which is also threaded by a great trunk railway, though it happily needs no fort; and where the Lake mountains and Howgill Fells, which are out-liers of the so-called Pennine chain, similarly confront one another across the shallow stream of the Lune. Commencing then at Ecluse, where Jura challenges Alp, the line of the lower Alps may itself be slowly traced, as we slowly turn our faces, past the Grand and Petit Salève, which tower so immediately above Geneva itself, and so grandly, with their long, parallel belts of gleaming white limestone precipice, as we approach it from the lake; past the broad, rich valley of the lower Avre, which at this point opens deeply into the mountain bosom of Savoy; to the spot where the richly wooded Voirons sinks gently to the azure waters of the Lake. This, if the day be dull, or the distance indistinct, is roughly the view that the eye commands from the Cathedral tower across the old brown roofs, immediately below us, of the upper city of Geneva, and across the battalion of bright, white villas that gleam from suburban woods. Contrariwise, if the day be clear—and the number of such days in this sunny climate is astonishingly great—the whole landscape, at any time so beautiful, is embellished and transfigured by the presence of one grand object, that hangs so high in heaven, though forty miles distant in a bee-line, and that gleams so white and ætherial, that one almost hesitates for a moment whether to address it as cloud or mountain. For there, almost due south-east from Calvin's city, though one doubts whether Calvin's inward-brooding eye ever brightened at its prospect, or ever heeded it more than carelessly; there, in distant magnificence more supreme, and in majesty of height more completely realized than is experienced to my knowledge in the case of any other great hill in Europe (save only by Monte Rosa possibly, as seen between Milan and Pavia); there, with its glorious central dome enshrouded in deep masses of overwhelming snow, and even from this distance those snows are palpably deep and overwhelming, and not to be confounded for a moment with mere thin and transient sprinkling; there, towering above its immediate satellites with a complete and unquestioned supremacy that is never felt when we see it fore-shortened, as most people come to see it, in the naked valley of Chamonix; there, giving unity and perspective to the whole vast and varied panorama, is the dominating presence of Mont Blanc himself, even at this great distance still patently a king. There is a passage in *Præterita*, recalling one in Wordsworth, in which Ruskin describes his pure delight as a boy in the presence of the hills, without seeking further to read their lesson, as Wordsworth learnt to read it, and afterwards Ruskin himself, in the light of "the still sad music of humanity." "St. Bernard of La Fontaine," he tells us in the chapter headed "Schaffhausen and Milan," "looking out to Mont Blanc with his child's eyes, sees above Mont Blanc the Madonna; St. Bernard of Talloires, not the Lake of Annecy, but the dead between Martigny and Aosta. But for me the Alps and their people were alike beautiful in their snow and their humanity; and I wanted, neither for them nor myself, sight of any thrones in heaven but the rocks, or of any spirits in heaven but the clouds."

Immediately round the Cathedral, on the crest of the old acropolis, clusters most of what is still left in Geneva of the ancient city state. City state, in truth, it was, rather than capital, like Sion or Berne, of a canton: the territory, in fact, of Geneva was always insignificant, and merely a civic adjunct—a hundred odd square miles, or so, of suburban orchard, or garden. The Canton of Geneva, in short, was subordinate to the city, and never the city to the canton. "Quand je secoue ma perruque," said Voltaire, "je poudre toute la République."



GENEVA FROM THE ARVE

Of ancient municipal buildings, perhaps the most interesting is the Hôtel-de-Ville, which exhibits a picturesque Renaissance staircase or inclined plane. Opposite is the old Arsenal, with its outside paintings—a feature that is typically Swiss. We have noticed already the sites of the old houses that were associated respectively with Rousseau and Calvin in the Grande Rue and the former Rue des Chanoines. At the foot of the latter thoroughfare, in the Rue de la Pélisserie, and also marked by a tablet, is the house in which George Eliot resided between October, 1849, and March, 1850. From near the apse of the Cathedral we may descend steeply to the low town along the shore of the lake, either directly, by the Rue de la Fontaine, or, more indirectly, by a network of little streets that cluster round the mediæval church of the Madelaine. The Rue de la Fontaine in

itself is worth a visit, with its tall, old, shabby tenements, like those in the old town at Edinburgh. I forget from what fountain it gets its name; but Geneva, like other towns in Switzerland—like every village in fact—is full of them. None, that I know, has the character, or quaintness, of some of those at Berne; but the pretty Swiss custom of decorating them in summer with growing flowers may be noted here with gratitude and pleasure.

The modern splendour of Geneva, to which we descend almost reluctantly from the old, grey, upper city on the heights, if certainly very modern, is also certainly very splendid; and leaves us with the impression that the front towards the quays, with its gardens, and palatial hotels, and gigantic cafés, is one of the brightest, and gayest, and most animated scenes anywhere to be met with on the Continent. Moreover, it offers at least one point, where the Rhone, like an arrow from the string, suddenly discharges itself from the blue placidity of the lake, and storms in triumphant volume through the openings of the bridges to swirl past the little tree-shaded Ile-de-Rousseau and the other islands that lie behind it, where even the quiet lover of Nature, to whom gay throngs of all sorts are abhorrent, may feed his soul as completely with splendid, natural spectacle as anywhere among the torrents and glaciers of the remotest and most secluded valleys in which this magnificent stream has origin, and from which it descends in thunder, but never in purity like this, to traverse the whole Canton of the Valais from end to end, and to repose at length in quiet in the lake. To lean across the west parapet of the Pont-du-Mont Blanc at Geneva, and to gaze down into this deep volume of absolutely transparent and deep ultramarine water that shoots forward with Alpine strength and lightning-like rapidity, and is only broken into sheets of seething, delicately sky-blue foam at the point where its majestic impetuosity is arrested by the dams of the electric works, is to come face to face with just such a combination of natural force and loveliness as is nowhere, I think, to be found in Britain, and perhaps at few spots in the Alps. The extraordinarily deep-blue colour of the Lake of Geneva, and of the Rhone where it first emerges, and before it is polluted (alas! in half-a-mile or so) by the influx of the grey and glacier-stained Avre—till the last state of the Rhone, below Geneva, is no better than its first, above Villeneuve—has been the subject of comment and learned inquiry, but has never, unless I mistake, been satisfactorily explained. Most other Alpine lakes, whether in Switzerland or Italy, are deep, or emerald, green: and emerald, or deep green, are the strong rivers that discharge from them—the Linth from Zurich, or the Reuss at Lucerne, or the noble Aar that lends grace to Thun. Tennyson tells us how Guinevere and Lancelot rode together in the may-time woods

"Over sheets of hyacinth
That seem'd the heavens upbreking thro' the earth;"

but to sail on a sunny day on the waters of Lake Lemman is to sail on the perfect blue of heaven itself.

This exquisite phenomenon then, which has been compared with the tender, suffused blue that is seen when looking down into the depths of a crevasse, has never been accounted for, though theories are not lacking in profusion. And not only is this nascent river the most beautifully coloured and transparent thing on earth—every pebble at the bottom is visible through I dare not guess how many feet of depth—but its surface is also the most lustrous in the world. Even at night, when the moonlight glances on its water, or at least the electric lights on the promenade and bridges, this quality of lustre, and to some extent of colour, still remains proudly visible, when other rivers, if still lustrous, would be black. In daylight, too, this bridge is a pleasant spot to linger on, not merely for joy of the crystal depths below, but for joy of the scene above. Nowhere, I think, is Geneva seen to better purpose than hence: to the left the towers of its ancient Cathedral, high on their crowded hill above the stream; in the centre, the Ile-de-Rousseau, with its picturesque clump of trees; and to the right, above more old houses, the long blue wall of Jura, lofty enough and abrupt enough wholly to hold the eye, till, turning with an effort, we cease to sigh for Jura, because there, though at greater distance, are the altogether more dazzling splendours of the Alps.

Next to the ex-Cathedral the best object of artificial attraction in Geneva is undoubtedly the new Museum of Art and History. Few provincial collections exceed, or even rival, it in the interest of their specimens or their excellence of arrangement. Here, in addition to the remains of glass and wood-work, already mentioned, from St. Pierre, are several relics—ladders, helmets, a banner, etc.—of that famous Escalade by which the Duke of Savoy—always an uneasy neighbour to Geneva—attempted to take the city by stealth, and did in fact nearly succeed in taking it, during the night of December 11-12, 1602. Calvin had been already nearly forty years dead (in 1564), but his old friend and disciple, Theodore Beza, in whose arms he had expired, and who, like Calvin himself, was by birth a Frenchman, was still living in Geneva, though then eighty-three years old; and it was Beza who gave out the next day, in public thanksgiving in church, the one-hundred-and-twenty-fourth Psalm ("If the Lord Himself had not been on our side") that is said ever afterwards to have been sung on the anniversary of the Escalade. Stored with these relics in the basement are some important specimens of thirteenth-century glass, or even earlier. But perhaps the chief value of the museum is to be found in the cases upstairs, with examples, bronze and iron, of the pre-historic ages. Here, in addition to the usual celts, daggers, spear-heads, etc., that one finds in all collections of the sort, is a really wonderful assemblage of bronze bracelets, pins, knives, and razors from lake villages; whilst the Iron Age is represented by tridents, shears, safety-pins with spiral springs, choppers with hooked points, and reaping-hooks, many of which exactly resemble those still in use at the present day: the persistence of shape is really marvellous. Here too are long, deadly pins, with big bead heads, precisely like those that women still stick through their hats to-day, though the world is more than two thousand years older. Here too are human tibia bones, each with its four bronze anklets still *in situ*, and here is one end of a "dug-out" canoe that was found in the lake, at Morges, in 1878. Some museums of this sort are distinctly dismal; but this at Geneva is so rich in this particular direction, and so admirably marshalled, that even those who are little interested in origins will not regret an hour's loss of sunshine on lake and hill.



SUNSET ON MONT BLANC, FROM ABOVE GENEVA.

II.

I suppose one is justified, or even compelled, in writing even a short sketch, such as this, of Geneva and its lake, to say something of the valleys that penetrate southward from its basin into the mountain highlands of Savoy. The man is to be pitied who can gaze at the distant snows of Mont Blanc, or the Aiguille-du-Midi, from the quays at Geneva, yet is stirred by no violent passion to view them at closer quarters: who can linger by the junction of blue Rhone and turbid Avre, where the streams for a space flow parallel, but do not consent to mix, yet experiences no impulse to track up the Avre itself to its majestic source, where it issues in volume and thunder ("magno cum murmure montis") from the foot of the Mer-de-Glace. Few writers, in short, on Geneva fail to conduct their readers to the bleak upland vale of Chamonix; where they may worship "at the temple's inner shrine" what they have worshipped so long at a distance, in the Galilee, or vestibule. I do not, however, propose to expend a deal of space in dealing with the usual line of approach to Chamonix by way of Bonneville and the Baths of St. Gervais, or even on Chamonix itself. Nearly thirty years ago, when I first travelled between the two towns, but in the reverse direction, it was necessary to drive by diligence the whole distance between Geneva and Chamonix: now the journey that took formerly a whole long summer day is easily effected in a few short hours, and the old, leisurely, unrestricted view from the coupé of the diligence is bartered away for a series of flying glimpses—and hardly that, if the compartment is full—framed for half a minute, and lost before fairly realized; seen, like the film of a cinematograph, amid surroundings equally stifling and dull. From St. Gervais, it is true, where the ordinary railway terminates and the electric line begins, you may stand, if you like, on the open platform at the end of the little carriage, and marvel thence, as you mount steeply, at the depth of the wooded gorge below you, and at the fierce waters of the Avre, and look back at the bare, brown, limestone precipices of the colossal Tête-à-l'Ane, or forward to the more colossal snow-peaks that tower and still tower above you in ever-increasing splendour, till you climb at last to the bare strath of the cold, upland valley that was once the monastic *Campus Munitus*, and are shocked perhaps by the vulgarity and hopeless anti-climax of modern Chamonix itself. Chamonix, indeed, though emphatically no longer a mountain village, is picturesque enough inside in the picturesque French fashion, regarded, as it ought to be, as a mountain "ville-de-plaisir"—as Luchon, for instance, is picturesque in the Pyrenees, or as Mont Dore, among the highlands of Auvergne. Visit the place in spring, when winter-sports are over, and the tide of summer tourists has not yet commenced to flow, or visit it in autumn, when the tide has fairly ebbed, and you may still catch something of the solemn inspiration that filled the soul of Coleridge when he wrote his great "Hymn to Mont Blanc." At other times, I confess, the swarms of well-dressed idlers—they infest the paths to the Flegère, or Montanvert, like droves of human ants, and overflow in aimless wandering the unfenced, communal fields—are hardly less an annoyance than Wordsworth found the ragged children who tried to sell him pebbles when he landed on Iona. The Baths of St. Gervais, moreover, at the bottom of the hill—not the picturesque old village on the slopes above the Bon Nant—have been spoilt of recent years by one of those vast electric "usines" that form so vile a menace to the beauty of the Alps. The strath of this lower valley, from the gorge of Cluses, past Sallanches, to Chedde, can never have been distinguished for its charm. It is one of those lower Alpine valleys that are absolutely flat-bottomed—they look like dried-up marsh—and that are dusty and coarse in all their features, whether natural or due to man: dusty and coarse in their long, straight, unfenced roads; dusty and coarse in their wastes of tumbled boulders; dusty and coarse in their jungle of stunted scrub; in their straggling cottages, and untidy saw-mills; in the very flowers, parched and sun-dried, that survive by the side of their dull, dry roads. They are bordered, of course, by noble hills; but even these look monotonous and garish when seen across a foreground so ragged and entirely flat. Compared with the green valleys of the higher Alps, where the emerald pastures fall in soft curves to the exact level of the stream, and where every scrap of detail is fresh with moss or flower, these hot and arid vales are like the blazing hours of noon, with its pitiless lack of shade, in contrast with the long soft shadows of evening, or the dewy freshness of early morn.

Now for all these reasons—the presence of the railway, the electric works at Chedde and St. Gervais, and

the dullness of the actual bottom of the valley between St. Gervais and the "gate of the hills" at Cluses—one would scarcely choose to travel by this orthodox route from Geneva up to Chamonix—though fine enough in places, and almost everywhere full of interest—provided one were offered a prettier alternative, and one not otherwise too heavily handicapped in point of greater distance or fatigue. Such a route, in fact, there is, though for pedestrian, or horseman, only, which, beautiful throughout, attains supreme and final excellence in the section that lies beyond Sixt. Probably very few tourists of the annual thousands who visit Chamonix are ever sufficiently adventurous to shoulder pack, or *rucksack*, and thus desert the broad valley of the Avre, with its rather obvious graces, for the shy and retiring loveliness of the valley of the Giffre. The steam-tramway along the road may, I think, legitimately be taken as far as Samoëns, where it ends; for it is at Samoëns that the interest of the walk begins. Sixt, beyond Samoëns, is a charming old village, at the junction of two wild Alpine streams that descend respectively from the Buet (10,201 feet) and the Pointe de Tanneverge (9,784 feet). Here in the Middle Ages was a small Augustinian abbey, the domestic buildings of which are now utilized for a simple, but clean, hotel, and the chapel of which is now the parish church. The dining-room is the old refectory; and painted round the wall-plate of its wooden ceiling may still be read its history: "... hoc opus fecit fieri Hubit' de Mon XI Abbas de Six Ano. Dni. MDCXXII. Deus converset. I.H.S. Maria."

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From Sixt we ascend through forest by the side of the rushing stream, through a landscape that is enlivened with as many splashing waterfalls as greeted Ulysses and his companions with their music when they came to the afternoon land of the Lotos Eaters. A little below the Eagle's Nest, the pleasant summer home of the late Mr. Justice Wills, the forest virtually ceases, and the road ends altogether; and thenceforward on to Chamonix we have only a mountain track, or mule-path, which mounts at first abruptly by a series of sudden zig-zags, but afterwards for an interval keeps a leveller upland route across wild and desolate pastures that lie round the big mountain tarn known as the Lac d'Anterne, beyond which rise in superlative grandeur, for more than two thousand feet, the giddy, sheer rock precipices of the strangely named Tête-à-l'Ane. All this is very splendid, and every inch of going pleasant; but I have brought you all this distance for a single point of view that bursts suddenly into vision, without warning or preparation. Suddenly, as perhaps you are getting a little tired, or finding the landscape a trifle monotonous, literally almost a single step brings you to a little break in the ridge of the opposite hill, whence the whole majestic chain of Mont Blanc—not only the monarch himself, but his whole range of attendant satellites and regally shattered aiguilles, from the Aiguille du Tour, on the left, to the Aiguille du Gouter, on the right—leaps splendidly into view—such a vision of splintered crags, and snows of dazzling, unsullied purity, and dark hollows of sullen glacier, and plinth of green pasture and forest, as certainly you will not find anywhere else in the Alps, nor, for ought I know, though the scale may be bigger, among Andes or Himalayas. Nor does all this magnificence here rise, as it rises when seen from closer and more familiar quarters, from the Flegère or the Brévent, directly from the foreground of the rather shabby Vale of Chamonix, with its electric railways to Argentière and the Montanvert, and with its unspeakable vulgarity of an aerial flight, or whatever they call their piece of villainy, up the pinnacles of the Aiguille du Midi, and with Chamonix itself in the centre, a mass of obtrusive roofs; but here it springs heavenward from above, and beyond, the long, dark ridge of the sombre Brévent itself, which serves in its comparative humility at once for measure and foil; whilst immediately below us are the dark, unpeopled depths (save for a small, solitary inn) of the upland valleys of the Diosaz and its tributary streams. Around is utter solitude, and wherever the eye can penetrate; and in front this unspeakably splendid chain, revealed in a single second, and viewed in its total length. A man would perhaps do well, who wishes to appreciate to perfection this sovereign of Alpine hills, never to approach it more closely than this crest of the Col d'Anterne.

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**THE DENTS DU MIDI FROM GRYON,
ABOVE BEX.**

III.

In America, I suppose, if you stand in the centre of the Michigan shore of Lake Superior, you can no more make out Canada across the water than a man can make out Normandy though he strain his eyes for ever from Selsey or Beachy Head. A lake, in fact, may be so big that it ceases, for all landscape effect, to be a lake at all, and becomes merely an inland sea. Perhaps the most beautiful lakes of all are those of such modest dimension—yet more than mere ponds or tarns—that you can comprehend their total shore-line from some eminence on their bank, as Buttermere, for example, is comprehended from the slopes of Red Pike, or Loch Lomond, very nearly, from the summit of Ben Voirlich. The Lake of Geneva, from this point of view, is much nearer Buttermere than Lake Superior; but still, in a sense, not whimsical, but real, must be reckoned as much too big. And not only this, but its basin also is a hotch-pot of different kinds of scenery, and of different ranges of hills. It is encradled, as a whole, neither in Alp nor Jura, but lies rather in a plain between the two. Its head, indeed, penetrates superficially into the lower Alps of Vaud; whilst the greater Alps of the Valais, and in particular the noble Dent-de-Morcles, and the yet nobler Dent-du-Midi, guard its upper waters at such a distance that, though really far removed, they appear as we approach to rise almost from its margin, and form an immediate and splendid setting for its reaches above Evian and Vevey. Its southern shore, again, is bordered fairly closely, for almost its whole length, by rugged Alps of Savoy that open behind Thonon to admit glimpses even of the far-away snows of Mont Blanc himself, revealed in crowning majesty beyond the valley of the Dranse. So far, indeed, Lac Lemane may be fairly claimed for Alpine; but turn to the opposite shore, and we must tell another tale. From Geneva towards Lausanne the background is formed, though at considerable distance, by the south-east escarpment of the Jura, whose long, level-crested wall of limestone rock—exactly like the long limestone wall of the Pennine hills above the Vale of Eden, or of Mendip above the marshes of mid-Somerset—affords the strongest contrast in the world to the abruptly pointed, opposite, Savoyard summits of the Dent d'Oche or Pointe de Grange, though not without analogy, near the city of Geneva, in the hog-backed ridge of the Grand Salève, which might almost belong to Jura itself. Moreover, this ridge of Jura, which at Geneva itself is not more than some ten miles or so away from the lake, gradually, after Rolle, or Aubonne, in its straight course towards the north-east, trends farther and farther from the lake, which here begins to curve towards the south, so that part of the north shore of the lake, between Rolle and Lausanne, actually abuts on neither Alp nor Jura, but terminates, rather tamely, on the great central plain of Switzerland. Geneva, however, though thus diverse in setting and scenery—for the hill forms of the Alps, to go back again for a moment to our familiar home comparison, are as widely different from the hill forms of the Jura as are those of English Lakeland from those of the opposite Pennine chain—is superbly simple in shape. It is, in fact, an almost perfect crescent, or half moon (save that the south-east horn at Chillon is unduly blunted and truncated), the convexity of which is turned towards the north, whilst its concave face embraces the hills of Chablais, or Savoy. It follows that, in order to appreciate Geneva as a whole, so far as this can ever be achieved in the case of so big a sheet of water, it is necessary to view it from the high ground, and from the vineyards, above Aubonne or Lausanne, which command, more or less imperfectly, both curves of the bending lake. It follows again that Geneva, with this form of extreme simplicity, exhibits none of the mystery and surprises of such highly complex lakes as Lugano or

Lucerne: everything here is exceedingly straightforward, and depends for its effect, not on continually new grouping of interlocking ranges of hill, but on the gradual majestic unfolding of a short series of dignified scenes.



THE SAVOY ALPS IN WINTER, FROM THE ROAD TO CAUX.

It will be gathered from what has already been said that, for the greater part of its length, the finest shore views of Geneva are commanded from its north, or convex, margin, looking south across splendidly broad stretches of water—opposite Thonon, where it is nearly at its broadest, almost exactly eight miles—to the grandly marshalled Alps of Chablais that tower above the opposite shore. To look northward from this opposite shore, across the water to the Jura and Central Plain, is to contemplate quite a different lake, and one of less superlative degree. It so happens, again, that the north shore is the more interesting of the two, by reason of the succession of ancient and picturesque towns, such as Nyon, Rolle, Morges, and Aubonne—to say nothing of partially modernized Vevey, and of almost wholly modernized Lausanne (which has yet in its Cathedral a jewel of priceless worth), or of castles like Vufflens and Chillon—that stud its immediate shore, or lie barely a trifle inland. The best way, no doubt, to appreciate Geneva is to sail again and again up its gracious sheet of blue; yet no one who has leisure will repent a quiet pilgrimage, best made I think on bicycle, to the villages and towns along its north bank.

This pilgrimage we hope to make presently; but for the moment it will be as well to turn our attention to the two gay watering-places of Evian and Thonon (promoted of recent years to be Evian- and Thonon-les-Bains, though an old Murray in my possession, published in 1872, knows them as Evian and Thonon only), and to penetrate a little deeper up the valley of the Dranse to the roots of the rocky mountains that form so grand a background to the lake as viewed from the castle terrace at Nyon, or from the cathedral porch at Lausanne. Neither Thonon nor Evian need detain us long; for, though each has a nucleus of ancient town, each is now rather overwhelmed by its vast and fashionable modern hotels. Respectively they lie to the west and east of the Dranse, which, descending in three separate streams from the highlands of Savoy—the Dranse proper, the Dranse d'Abondance, and the Dranse de Morzine—here pushes out in united delta into the lake. Thonon is the capital of the old Savoyard province of Chablais, and has actually, in excuse of its modern pretensions, a set of chalybeate springs. Evian, however, with water containing bicarbonate of soda, is much the quainter and pleasanter, in its ancient parts, of the two; has also the great advantage, in comparison with Thonon, of being situated farther to the east, and thus commanding nobler views of the mountains above Vevey, and towards the head of the lake; and lastly is distinguished for its pleasant, tree-shadowed promenades by the actual water-side (whereas Thonon is on the cliff above the lake), whence you see across the blue expanse the white houses of Lausanne, clustered in profusion on the sunny slopes of the opposite shore, or twinkling in the twilight with a million electric lamps. No one should quit either Evian or Thonon without making first an "inland voyage" up the valley of the Dranse to visit the quaint little mountain villages of Abondance and St. Jean d'Aulph (*de Alpibus*). At Abondance is a small monastic church, with a picturesque cloister, that dates in its inception from as early as the sixth century; whilst at St. Jean (on the whole less charming) are the very pretty ruins of a little Cistercian abbey that is remarkable in more than one direction—its possession of a triforium and some foliated capitals—for its unusually early departure from the usual architectural severity of the early Cistercian rule. The valley of the Dranse d'Abondance is refreshingly green and pastoral, and is bounded in places by magnificently rocky hills; but it is only towards its head, beyond the Chapel of Abondance, and before reaching the low pass that leads to Morgins in Switzerland, that the sudden apparition of the splendid Dent-du-Midi—pre-eminently entitled, notwithstanding its comparatively low height (only 10,695 feet), to rank in point of form and truly Alpine aspect amidst the giants of the Alps—lifts the whole landscape in a moment to the level of Alpine sublimity. Abondance, though much frequented by French families in summer, has absolutely nothing of the modern fashionable spirit that is rather too apparent at Thonon or Evian-les-Bains. Its inns, though comfortable enough for those who are not unduly fastidious, are still genuine mountain hostelries; and the type of French family life, though possibly wholly bourgeois, that may be studied here in August is amusing and piquant

indeed, in contrast with the rather dull banalities of much more fashionable watering-places, such as Vichy or Aix-les-Bains.

IV.

We come at length to that north shore of the lake which already we have noted with critical preference. We shall penetrate no longer amidst royally wooded hills, nor linger on mossy banks by the side of impetuous mountain streams. Our immediate natural environment, on the contrary, will now be comparatively dull; but by way of compensation we shall have always across the water, provided the day be clear, the massed and tumultuous grouping of those stern and shapely mountains of Savoy, which hitherto we have inspected, in the three secluded valleys of the Dranse, by sample and parcel only (as one cannot see the wood for the number of the trees). Moreover, instead of fashionable Thonon, and perhaps still more fashionable Evian, we have now in rapid succession a series of villages and small towns, along the actual margin of the lake, that are mostly of very old-world aspect, and often of some historical regard. We shall begin, however, by deserting the actual littoral for a short digression inland over the frontier into France, to visit one of those two or three great literary shrines that are connected with Lac Lemman, and are not without interest to the student of the French Revolution and of modern thought.

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EVIAN LES BAINS, HTE. SAVOIE.

From Geneva to Ferney Voltaire is a pleasant jaunt of about five miles. There is a steam-tramway along the road, but this hardly detracts from its agreeable rurality, which is remarkable, as we first quit Geneva, for its number of good and old-fashioned residences, and especially for the abundance and luxuriant growth of the timber along its borders, which is more English-like in character than one usually finds in France. Ferney consists of a single long street of white houses, backed, as we approach it, by the long blue wall of the Jura, towards whose foot we have been steadily advancing ever since Calvin's Geneva was left behind. From Calvin's Geneva to Voltaire's Ferney is a journey, long indeed in the history of human thought, but quickly enough effected on bicycle or foot. The château where Voltaire lived from 1759 to 1777 lies towards the head of the village, and was built, like most of the village, by the philosopher himself. Unhappily, it is shown only in summer, and then only on a single afternoon in the week; but as it is said to have been greatly altered since Voltaire's residence—though his bedroom still remains—little, perhaps, is missed, especially as the front of the house is well seen through the iron gates at the end of the public drive, as well as the little chapel to the left that he raised to the honour of God: "Deo Erexit Voltaire." Whatever view may be formed of Voltaire's religious and ethical opinions, undoubtedly there are aspects of his life to be praised. It was at Ferney that he caused to be educated, under his superintendence, the grandniece of the dramatist Corneille, whom he had "rescued from extreme want," and whom he endowed with the proceeds of an edition of her ancestor's works that he himself was at pains to edit. It was at Ferney, again, that he interested himself so passionately in denouncing the breaking on the wheel of poor Jean Calas by the Parliament and priests of Toulouse. English poets, no doubt, have conspired to present his character in a very unfavourable light. His contemporary, Cowper, writes of him:

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"The Scripture was his jest book, whence he drew
Bon-mots to gall the Christian and the Jew;"

whilst Wordsworth styles his "Optimist," or makes his "Wanderer" style it:

"this dull product of a scoffer's pen,
Impure conceits discharging from a heart
Hardened by impious pride."

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It is fair after this to recall what is said by Mr. Lecky: "The spirit of intolerance sank blasted beneath his genius. Wherever his influence passed, the arm of the Inquisitor was palsied, the chain of the captive riven, the prison door flung open. Beneath his withering irony persecution appeared not only criminal but loathsome, and since his time it has ever shrunk from observation, and masked its features under other names. He died leaving a reputation that is indeed far from spotless, but having done more to destroy the greatest of human curses than any other of the sons of men."

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NYON CASTLE, LOOKING ACROSS THE LAKE TO MONT BLANC.

From Ferney we return to Switzerland, and the shores of the lake, at Versoix, which impresses one disagreeably as dusty and untidy, though the Duc de Choiseul in the eighteenth century destined it as a rival to Geneva. "A pier was built," says Murray, "a Grand' Place laid down, streets running at right angles were marked out; but beyond this the plan was never carried into execution. Hence the verses of Voltaire:

"A Versoix nous avons des rues,
Et nous n'avons point de maisons."

Probably the streets have been long since grassed up; certainly one does not note them in merely passing through as one notes the streets of Winchelsea (where the town, however, was built, though it since has largely perished). At Coppet, which comes next in succession, but before reaching which the Canton of Geneva is exchanged for Canton Vaud, the village, in pleasant contrast, is entirely delightful, with a little church that faces directly on the street, and that has a picturesque flamboyant west front and a delightful little bell-turret. This sleepy little village is the second literary shrine that we encounter on our pilgrimage along the northern shore of Lac Lemman; for here, in the ancient château on the slope above the lake, was the home for many years (between 1790 and 1804) of the famous Monsieur Necker, Minister of Finance to Louis XVI., and the occasional home, both then and later, of his still more famous daughter, the Baroness de Staël. Necker, of course, was Genevois by birth, though German by descent, and even Anglo-Irish. According to Carlyle, he was a man of boundless vanity: "Her father is Minister, and one of the gala personages; to his own eyes the chief one ... 'as Malebranche saw all things in God, so M. Necker sees all things in Necker'—a theorem that will not hold." Madame de Staël is perhaps now best remembered for her letters; but it is worth recalling at this moment, when the German genius has again been weighed in the balance and found wanting, that it was her book of German eulogy ("De l'Allemagne," published in London in 1813) that did for the German genius in France something of the same sort of friendly office that Carlyle himself performed for it in England. She is remarkable, too, indirectly, as the subject of an epigram, as neat in its way, and as cutting, as that which we have cited of her father. Napoleon, when he banished her, summed up her talents in a line (it may well have been unjust): "la manie qu'elle a d'écrire sur tout et à propos de rien." She died at Paris in 1817, and is buried here at Coppet; but I have not sought her grave. The château, at any rate, may be easily found, for it stands high above the town, a picturesque old pile, with the delightful mellow colouring—white walls, with gay green blinds, and vast slopes of soft brown roof—that for some odd reason unexplored is never found in England, but obtrudes itself at every turn in Switzerland, or Italy, or France. It is built round a courtyard, the entrance to which is framed outside with masses of wistaria.

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From Coppet on to Nyon the way is well enough, with the azure levels of the lake for companion on the right, and with Jura, of a darker blue, like a rampart on the left. Nyon, placed pleasantly just short of the point where the lake broadens suddenly from about three to about seven miles by a huge expansion to the south, and thus at the termination of the so-called Petit Lac, whose littoral we have hitherto followed from Versoix, and less closely from Geneva, is one of those delightful old towns—Rolle and Morges belong to the same category—that lend such grace and character to the Swiss shore of the lake, and have such delightful inland parallels at

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Aubonne, Morat, and Moudon. Morat, I suppose, though it lacks the glorious lake, and the majestic distant snows, here still visible, of Mont Blanc, must carry away the palm as a triumph of pure mediævalism; but, Morat put aside, there is hardly another small town in Switzerland so wholly delightful as this (the Roman *Noviodunum*) in its charm of situation, or so rich in varied combination of artificial and natural grace. High above the quays rises the old sixteenth-century castle, the residence of the Bernese bailiffs at a time when Canton Vaud was a mere appanage of Berne, though Geneva still succeeded in maintaining her independence. You may reach it from the shore by a multiplicity of ways—directly, by one of the narrow lanes that climb steeply from the lake; or, less painfully, by the broad terrace walk that rises gradually westward below the old town wall, through avenues of tortured plane-trees of the familiar foreign type, to the pleasant Promenade des Maronniers, with its growth of vigorous chestnuts, and its splendid prospect of lake and mountain. From here, or from the sister terrace that lies to the south of the château, the opposite hills of Chablais are now become noble objects: not merely Mont Blanc himself, always and insistently a king, but lesser rocky heights that lack only summer snow—the Dent d'Oche beyond Evian, the Pointe de Grange and the Cornette de Bise (curiously enough, according to some maps—and anyhow there is only a difference of a mètre—both exactly of the same height, and each of them, still more curiously, just exactly 8,000 feet high) on either side of Abondance, and the pinnacled Roc d'Enfer—to justify as attendant squires to their great and peerless king. On the way between the two terraces is passed the parish church, in part, I think, of the fifteenth century, but with traces of Romanesque. The castle itself, on its sovereign brow, is picturesque enough, with its round towers at the corners (but one is octagonal), and its extinguisher, or pepper-pot, turrets—which are found again in Scotland, who borrowed so industriously from France, but never, I think, in England—and with its curious wooden galleries in an additional courtyard to the east. Inside is the town museum, with some lake village antiquities of the Bronze Age, in addition to the usual banalities of stuffed animals and birds: it is perhaps just worth visiting when the door is open, but hardly when you have to get the key.

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THE SAVOY ALPS IN SUMMER. FROM VILLENEUVE.

From Nyon on to Rolle we still keep closely to the lake, though never on its margin, past unfenced woods at intervals that invite us to step aside to hunt for lily-of-the-valley and Solomon's seal in their "green of the forests' night." Always across the water are the solemn, splendid summits of Savoy: always on our left the level line of Jura, which after Rolle, however, retires from the lake to give place to the central plain of Switzerland, which here debouches on the waters till we meet the Alps beyond Lausanne. Rolle is another quaint old town, consisting chiefly of one long, old-fashioned street, with another typical castle placed at its farther end; but in this case both town and castle are built wholly on the level, on the margin of the lake. The Dent-du-Midi is now visible to the right of the Pointe de Grange, but has not yet assumed the isolated supremacy that it wears presently in the landscape, being partly merged for the moment in the company of hills. A little beyond Rolle a turning to the left mounts slowly up the hill past a lonely little burial-ground, and through the rich vineyards of La Côte, to the upland town of Aubonne. I took this road myself on a mild evening towards the close of April, chiefly because I was drawn to Aubonne by what Byron wrote of it in his Journal under date September 29, 1816. "In the evening reached Aubonne (the entrance and bridge something like that of Durham), which commands by far the finest view of the Lake of Geneva; twilight; the moon on the lake; a grove on the height, and of very noble trees. Here Tavernier (the Eastern traveller) bought (or built) the château, because the site resembled and equalled that of *Erivan*, a frontier city of Persia; here he finished his voyages, and I this little excursion,—for I am within a few hours of Diodati, and have little more to see, and no more to say." I am not sorry that I took this road, for, ever mounting higher, it commands ever wider and wider views of the crescent lake, whose centre we now approach, in both directions, with the glorious Chablais mountains embraced in its noble curve. Aubonne, however, is no more like Durham—I speak, of course, of my own impressions: Byron saw it with different eyes—than any other old town that is perched on the edge of a winding ravine, with a river and bridge at the bottom. Certainly any resemblance it has—I do not admit any—is due to natural situation, and not at all to artificial charm. The parish church, which contains, however, the grave of the great Admiral Duquesne, who is commemorated by a statue in the market square of his native town of Dieppe, is apparently of little architectural interest (I did not get inside), and the castle is of no account at all. Durham to my ignorance has only one real rival, where the great red-brick cathedral and castle of Albi are piled above the Tarn like Durham

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above the Wear. It is worth your while, however, to make this digression to Aubonne (quite a pretty little town) for the sake of the long ascent from Rolle, through miles of purple vineyard, and for the sake of the journey back to Morges, where we regain the margin of the lake and the main highroad from Geneva to Lausanne. The descent, by way of contrast, is through continuous apple-orchard and meadow, the pink and white blossom floating freely round your shoulders as you pursue the unfenced road in middle spring.

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LAUSANNE CATHEDRAL FROM MONTBENON.

Morges is another quaint old town, with yet another quaint old castle, and with a glorious view of Mont Blanc, seen in this case in long perspective up the valley of the Dranse, which opens deeply through the heart of the Savoyard mountains on the opposite shore of the lake. It is worth while landing here for a few hours, if only to mount the slopes behind the town, deep with wood and orchard, to the noble old castle of Vufflens, which is perhaps the best of its class in Switzerland. Seen from the surface of the lake—and it is seen thence conspicuously—this has a very modern look, and suggests that the whole building has been grossly over-restored. You never doubt, in fact, that the place is still inhabited, and most likely refurbished up to the point of loss of interest. You approach with heavy heart, but are pleasantly surprised to find only part of the pile still occupied, apparently as a farm, whilst the whole is quite unspoilt. The plan is widely different from that of Nyon or Chillon (themselves not really similar), and absolutely unparalleled by anything in Britain. Tower-houses were still built in England as late as the fifteenth century—Tattershall in Lincolnshire is a prominent example—but these were not really keeps; and they were primarily meant, not for places of refuge in the last resort, but principally for residence and comfort. The great fourteenth-century donjon at Vufflens, on the contrary, is plainly intended for defence not less than the Tower of London in the eleventh century, or than Rochester keep in the twelfth. Moreover, this enormous tower—it is one hundred and sixty feet high, and thus again without equal or rival in England, though formerly surpassed by the great cylinder at Coucy-le-Château in France, which was actually about two hundred feet—is girt about its base with four lower towers, or satellites, as though for extra strength: the whole is very grim and menacing. It is built of yellow brick, and everywhere heavily machicolated. The vaulted kitchen, towards the basement, has a very striking fireplace, with a vine pattern running round in a deeply hollowed moulding. A vice, or spiral stair, ascends in the thickness of the south wall, which is thickened out to hold it in the form of a circular turret. Most of the roof is modern; but the visitor should notice the heavy wooden shutters that close the big, segmental-headed openings for hurling stones or shooting arrows, and that run on wheels in wooden troughs, so that a man might discharge his missile and immediately close the aperture ere the enemy could reply. The view, of course, is magnificent, and would alone repay the climb, unless the visitor happens to be giddy-headed. To the south of this great tower lies an open courtyard, and to the south of this, again, is the dwelling-house, or palace. This planning, in my experience, is unique; but there seems to be something like it (I speak only from distant view) at the great country castle of the Bishops of Lausanne at Lucens, which forms so conspicuous and delightful a feature on the hill on the west side of the valley of the Broye between Moudon and Payerne, in that delightful central vale of Switzerland that is perhaps so seldom visited, yet combines such unexpected charm of pleasantly pastoral landscape with such wealth of old-world interest as we find at Avenches (the Roman *Aventicum*), Morat, and Estavayer.

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I mention these places with less reluctance, though certainly not on the shores of Lac Lemman, because they may all be easily visited from Lausanne, and to some degree may even be thought connected with it—Lucens, because the Bishop-Princes of Lausanne (who, like the Bishop-Princes of Coire, were also Electors of the Holy Roman Empire) had here a noble hunting-seat; Moudon, because its lovely thirteenth-century church is supposed to exhibit close analogies to Lausanne Cathedral; and Avenches, because this was actually the seat of the Bishop's stool before this was translated to Lausanne by Bishop Marius in 590. Lausanne itself is now a city of very modern aspect, stretching with its villas in the usual straggling Helvetic fashion—in contrast with the neat compactness of France: Neuchâtel and Bienne are other bad examples—for a distance of nearly eight miles along the gentle slopes of Mont Jorat that impend above the lake, and presenting, as seen from the water, a long line of clustered white houses (not unpicturesque in distant view), crowned by the lofty tower of its beautiful cathedral of Notre Dame. This is a purely residential city, and gives one the same impression as Milan

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of superabundant prosperity and wealth. These factors, indeed, have proved its ruin—I mean, of course, æsthetically—for the Swiss (they are great iconoclasts) have of recent years remodelled it so drastically that soon, one is afraid, there will be nothing ancient left save here and there a church, preserved like flies in amber. In every direction are fine new streets, with splendid new houses and blocks of tenements. The result, no doubt, will be very magnificent; but Morat is more to my taste, or Payerne. Certain old quarters of Bâle have thus recently been levelled, and Neuchâtel is now almost wholly of modern aspect. A city, no doubt, belongs primarily to the people who inhabit it; they have to live their lives in it, and consult their own convenience; but at least one may be permitted to hope that this sort of civic madness will not hastily lay criminal hands on Geneva, or Berne, or Fribourg.

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Lausanne itself is built at some little height above the lake, and visitors land from the steamer at Ouchy, which at once is port and suburb. Here, "at a small inn" (then the Ancre, but now the Hôtel d'Angleterre: everything at Lausanne expands to over-maturity), Byron wrote his "Prisoner of Chillon," perhaps the best of his poems in irregular metre, in the short space of two days, whilst detained "by stress of weather," "thereby adding one more deathless association to the already immortalized localities of the Lake." From Ouchy ascend at once by cable tramway, unless you have a particular fancy for perambulating miles of new streets, to the old "cité" on the height; and climb at once to the Cathedral of Notre Dame. Here, standing at the entrance to the great south porch, with its noble Romanesque statuary, and with its glorious views across the water to the splendidly rocky summits of Savoy, you can easily forget the gay swarms of pacing idlers, and even a great bunshop that for vastness and magnificence (and Lausanne has less than fifty thousand souls!) would strike you with astonishment in Piccadilly or Regent Street. This Cathedral of Notre Dame is of about the same length as Beverley Minster, or King's College Chapel at Cambridge; and is not only a splendid example of thirteenth-century architecture (the classic moment of Gothic), but far and away the finest monument of ecclesiastical art in Switzerland. Protestant since 1536, when its Bishop was deposed—he has now his throne at Fribourg—the interior suffers, of course, from the usual cold and bare austerity that characterizes a Calvinistic place of worship hardly less in Switzerland than Holland. Of recent years, however, it has been lovingly restored, and the lack of Catholic furniture and ritual—I write always from the æsthetic point of view, and never from that of divinity—is perhaps felt no worse at Lausanne, or, for the matter of that, at Geneva, than it is felt in Dunblane or Glasgow Cathedral. Remarkable externally is the north-west tower, with its curious open-work buttresses like those at Bamberg and Laon: remarkable inside are the early sixteenth-century stalls, now misplaced in the south nave aisle; the extravagant complication of the vaulting system in the nave (it is different in almost every bay); the exquisite beauty of the south end of the south transept; and the four or five recumbent effigies, or monuments, of mediæval Bishops that are still allowed on sufferance in this abode of rigid presbyterianism. One of these is said in Murray (but Baedeker ignores it) to be that of Pope Felix V., previously Duke of Savoy and Bishop of Geneva, who retired from the Papal throne to end his days as a mere monk at Ripaille, near Thonon, and died there in the monastery in 1451.

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MONTREUX FROM THE LAKE—AUTUMN.

Eastward from Lausanne, the hills, now foot-stools of the Alps, drop more immediately to the actual margin of the lake than any yet encountered from Geneva to Lausanne. From top to bottom they are richly dotted with vineyards, with hardly a green field in between; and everywhere among these vineyards, on the slope of the hillside, are innumerable little white villages, with their mellow red-brown roofs, clustered at frequent intervals round a central parish church. Opposite, as we advance, the prospect of distant Alps grows more and more magnificent, as the view opens deeper and deeper, beyond the head of the lake, into the great valley of the Rhone. So we come at last to Vevey, the second town of Vaud, from whose pleasant quay, with its lines of young chestnuts and planes, in the neighbourhood of the Marché pier, is got what is perhaps the last good littoral view, as we journey in this direction, of the glorious head of the lake, without base suburban admixture to disguise and disfigure the foreground. The Marché itself is open to the lake, but enclosed on its other three sides by old-fashioned brown-roofed houses, among which stand out prominent the picturesque open arcades of the Market House, and above which, on the hill, though backed itself by charmingly wooded lines of higher hill, rises the tower of the old town church. To the left, as we look eastward, is the prettily timbered promontory of the Tour de Peilz (the tower itself is visible), which luckily shuts out the long line of villas past Clarens and Montreux; and beyond this, again, the gaping valley of the Rhone opens in unrivalled magnificence deep into the bosom of now considerable Alps, guarded on the left by the sharp, horn-like precipices of the noble Dent-de-Morcles (9,775 feet), and on the right by the still nobler, boldly cut, square summit of the Dent-du-Midi (10,695 feet). The view is one of simple magnificence, not of such involved and complicated hill forms as we

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contemplate with a different kind of pleasure from the quays at Lucerne, but compounded only of a few grand elements. The lights are always changing on this stupendous mountain range; now the distant hills are intensely blue, now purple, or red, in the sunset; now their summits stand up sharply in an unbroken summer sky, now their edges are blurred by fleecy white clouds, or obscured by golden mists,

"curling with unconfirm'd intent,"

but never static for a moment, or less than unearthly and beautiful.

I have spoken deliberately of this grand view from the quays at Vevey as the last good littoral view (and I put the stress on "littoral") that one gets of the lake as one continues on one's journey eastward from Lausanne, or Ouchy, to Chillon. The littoral, in fact, from Vevey as far as Chillon is now virtually a continuous line of huge, flaunting hotels, restaurants, villas, and tea-rooms: not even the French Riviera between Cannes and Mentone, which I take to be the second vulgarest spot in Europe, has forfeited so entirely its original character, or, from the scenic point of view, been so utterly ruined. The line of devastation, it is true, is luckily very thin; and though the hills above Montreux and Territet are themselves loaded at frequent intervals with monster hotels, and laced in every direction with a perplexing network of lifts and mountain railways, it must frankly be confessed that to look at this five-mile-long string of pleasure towns from a distance—as, for instance, from those windows of Chillon Castle that project farthest into the lake—is a much less trying test of temper than to contemplate the glories of the head of the lake with Territet or Montreux for foreground. The destruction of these odd five miles of natural loveliness—and such natural loveliness—forms part of a fierce denunciation by the late Mr. Ruskin, which those who hardly think at all will probably think extravagant, but which seems to others entirely just: "You have destroyed the Clarens shore of the Lake of Geneva." Clarens, indeed, was formerly a place of such exquisite loveliness that Rousseau chose it as the ideal dwelling-place for the heroine of his "Nouvelle Héloïse." "Allez à Vevey," he says in the fourth book of his "Confessions," "visitez le pays, examinez les sites, promenez-vous sur le lac, et dites si la Nature n'a pas fait ce beau pays pour une Julie, pour une Claire, et pour un St. Preux; mais ne les y cherchez pas." Nor was Byron, coming here in 1816, any less enthusiastic. "I have traversed," he writes in a letter of June 27 of that year to Mr. Murray—"I have traversed all Rousseau's ground with the 'Héloïse' before me, and am struck to a degree that I cannot express with the force and accuracy of his descriptions and the beauty of their reality. Meillerie, Clarens, and Vevey, and the Château de Chillon, are places of which I shall say little, because all I could say must fall short of the impressions they stamp." And Byron himself, with the "Héloïse" in recollection, addresses Clarens in the third canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," in the stanzas beginning—

"Clarens! sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep Love!"

which Sir Edward Bridges pronounces "exquisite." Yet not the natural beauty of Clarens itself—

"'tis lone,
And wonderful, and deep, and hath a sound,
And sense, and sight of sweetness; here the Rhone
Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have reared a throne"

—nor the associations with Rousseau and Byron, could save this "little nook of mountain ground" from being sacrificed to the dictates of a thoughtless and idle fashion. "You have destroyed the Clarens shore of the Lake of Geneva."

One is glad indeed that the famous Castle of Chillon, with which we must now conclude our perambulation of the north shore of the lake, and the little walled town of Villeneuve, which now, however, notwithstanding its name, seems ancient and venerable indeed in comparison with this gay modernity that pulsates at its doors, should lie just beyond the limit of this land of ruined Edens, and should thus restore us to the right mood in which to take farewell of the Lake of Geneva. Chillon is far from the finest castle, considered merely as a building, in Switzerland (an honour due to Vufflens), nor, in fact, is it even the most beautifully situated (an honour surely due to the crag-perched residence of the old Bishop-Princes of the Valais on the towering rock of Sion). Its chief curiosity of site is the immense depth of water that lies immediately below its walls, which is sometimes said (I cannot vouch for so astonishing a statement) to have been "fathomed to the depth of 800 feet, French measure"—

"Lake Lemman lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement;"

but it is due neither to its value as a specimen of military architecture, nor to its charm of situation, nor to this marvel of subterranean precipice, that Chillon maintains the extended reputation that renders it perhaps the most visited and best known of all the many famous castles of the world. Its cult is rather due to its association with Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon," which was written, as we have seen, in the old Ancre Inn at Ouchy in the short course of a couple of days in 1816. Byron himself has entitled this a "fable," and it has certainly little or nothing to do with the historical Bonnivard, who was certainly imprisoned here for six years, between 1530 and 1536, but was released in the latter year, and subsequently became a Protestant, and married four wives in succession! Byron, however, in the last six lines of another poem—the "Sonnet on Chillon"—has paid a stately tribute to the actual Bonnivard, which will be recalled with interest in the striking, half-subterranean dungeon in which he was confined for more than four years of his captivity:

"Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if the cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God."

I do not know whether these footmarks are still visible, or, indeed, were ever visible; but if we choose to imagine them—Bonnivard was chained to the fifth pillar from the entrance—we shall not do much amiss. At least it would be better thus to err on the side of imagination than to imitate the English lady of whom Byron complained when he visited Chillon, not for the first time, on September 18, 1816, that he met her on his return fast asleep in her carriage—"fast asleep in the most anti-narcotic spot in the world."

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Punctuation, hyphenation, and spelling were made consistent when a predominant preference was found in this book; otherwise they were not changed.

Simple typographical errors were corrected; occasional unbalanced quotation marks retained.

Ambiguous hyphens at the ends of lines were retained.

This book does not have a Table of Contents.

Index not checked for proper alphabetization or correct page references.

Text uses both "Genevese" and "Genevois".

Page [28](#): "Ano" and "Dni" originally were printed with overscores above the lower-case letters.

Page [42](#): "a Grand' Place" was printed with the apostrophe.

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