Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith

TORRICELLA DI GRIMALDI.

MENTONE.

From the East.

GENOA ROAD.

solved by studying the new and progressive ideas which medical science has evolved! I do not write of causes, but effects.

It is no new thing—solar heat—for the prolongation of human life. It is an old medical maxim: *Levato sole levatur morbus.* Pliny, speaking of his uncle, says: *Post cibum aestate si quid otii, jacebat in sole.* I can well understand why in the eastern and southern land, the *solario* was built on the house-top, where the diseased were placed and the healthy took what was called their solar-air-bath. My baths of sun and air were taken upon the terraced mountain sides in Dr. Bennet's garden. I present in these pages a lithograph, copied from a water-colour drawing by a lady, for which I am under obligation to Dr. Bennet. It is from his volume of 'Winter Climates in the South of Europe.' In it, you will perceive but little of the garden; that I reserve for another sketch. The Saracenic tower of the foreground, which overlooks the panorama of Mentone to the west, is far above the Italian boundary line. That line is formed by the gorge of St. Louis,—a picture of which the reader will see, and over which the Corniche road leaps with an elegant bridge. The distant range of the sketch is that of the Estrelles, near Cannes. The view presented between the Estrelles and the gorge in the front, is of such varying loveliness in shape and colour, on land and sea, that it is impossible to keep the eye from its embrace. Nowhere does Nature unclasp a volume so full and splendid with illustration!

I had not been long in Mentone, before I was ordered up to this spot. I obeyed. The tower had, flying from its rounded top, an English flag. This was the sign that the Doctor was expected. Sometimes the Italian, sometimes the French, and sometimes the

star-spangled banner floats in the air—signs for the initiated, that the garden is open to all, or that the Doctor is busy or away, or something else. It has a curious utility, and has had a curious history, —this old tower of the middle ages. It was once used as a 'look-out' to the sea, that the people of this, then isolated and unfrequented coast, might be alarmed in time, before the Turks and Moors swept in with their corsairs, to capture, despoil, and destroy.

Let us walk up to the garden among the rocks. We pass a Roman ruin—never mind! Seats for rest line the path. We reach the gate. We read: '*Salvete amici!*' That welcome is inscribed, as the hospitable Pompeians used to inscribe it, on the portal. Out of these rocks—once bare, by skilful terracing, and in three years' time, the Doctor has made with the aid of water, which he leases from the proprietor of Grimaldi village above, and out of the Sunbeams which he has conscripted, and for which he has nothing to pay,—long avenues of vines, flowers, trees, and scented shrubs, whose forms, colours, and odours invade and capture the sense, as if from some unearthly, dreamy realm. Even his rude stone pillars, which appear in the picture, are clad in the festoons of Eden. The very stones seem floral. In a rustic arbour a hammock is swinging; and a fountain is dripping—whispering and dripping—over the fern leaves of the grotto. It is a monotone of tranquil, liquid lyrics. If you prefer a divan to a camp stool, there it is! There is a table too, with a green tapis, pen and ink, books and periodicals, and a lunch of mandarin oranges, good white bread, and pure red wine. Do you want more for comfort? This is the *salon de reception*; and while swinging in the hammock, and enjoying its *dolce far niente* delights, far up in the Elysian air, and warmed by the very rocks,

which have retained the geothermal heat of last summer for some purpose, either to man or flower, —I began to feel that Nature is exceedingly kind, the garden exceedingly paradisiacal, and the Doctor exceedingly clever! Who needs the Médoc of the lunch, or the novels and poems on the table or other adventitious aids, to enhance the enjoyment? Immersed in this warm bath of light and air, the eye will float out over range after range of mountains. It will catch the sparkle of the myriads of crisp waves of the many-hued sea beneath. Or it may watch the line of snowy breakers which swell and surge against Cape St. Martin; or it may pierce the misty distance, to see half-veiled the Isle of St. Marguerite, near Cannes. It may look below at the sea-gulls playing upon and above the waves, or at the soldiers of the two nations on the bridge of the boundary gorge, searching passengers for contraband; or very near, glance at the game of croquet, as it is played by the Doctor and a Russian princess in the little plateau of a lower terrace, near his conservatory, or it may observe the gardener, Antoine, petting his children—the flowers, and plucking violet, camelia, or rose, either for princess or caprice.

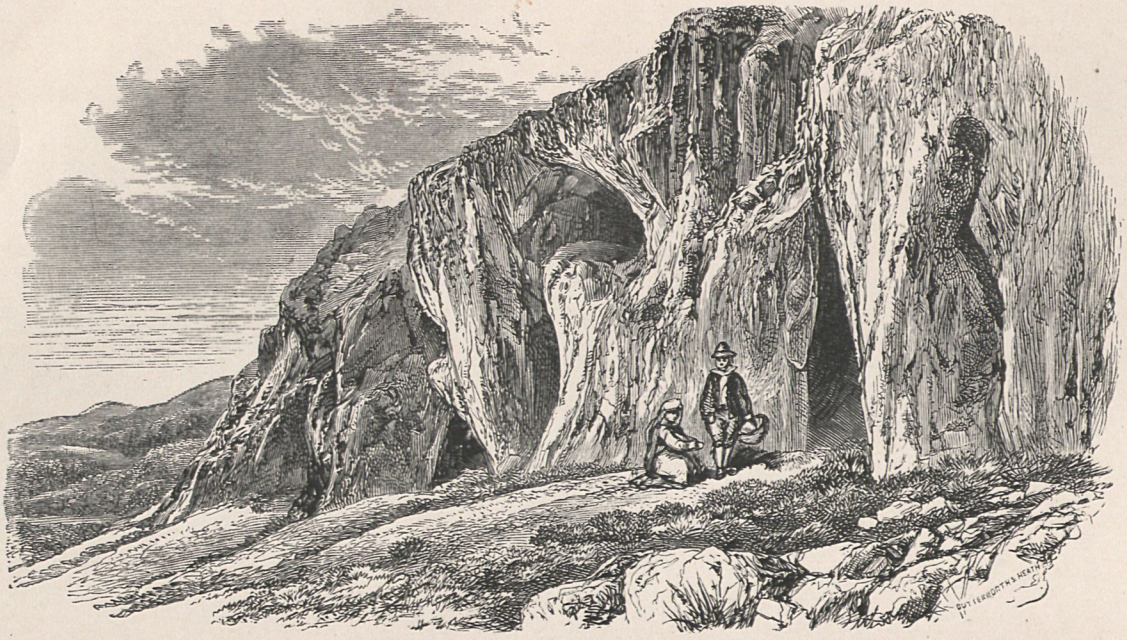
But most the eye rests upon the sea beneath. It is so easy to drift on its surface. Then you see so far into its clear depths. It is said that light cannot permeate further into the water than 700 feet. I have read that in the arctic regions shells are seen at 80 fathoms; and at the coral banks of the Antilles, it is said that the sea is as clear as the air; that coral and seaweed of every hue display all the tints of tropical gardens. Light has so much to do with these 'marine views' that physicists have made many experiments as to the photo-chemical and physiological qualities of the Beam on and under the ocean wave. Why the

waters below our garden are so lighted; why the very bottom can be seen, with its sand, weed, and rock, determining the various colours of the surface, depends, of course, upon its transparency. Various media may give varied colours to the ocean. The Gulf of Guinea is white; the sea is black around the Maldives; there is vermilion off California, owing to infusoria; the sea is very red near Algiers, owing to water plants; and the Persian Gulf is green. Around the Poles the transition is rapid from ultra-marine to olive-green. Minute insects have much to do with all these prismatic phases; but in a sea not so deep, the bottom has most concern with the hue. Chalk gives green; yellow sand gives dark green; a dark ground gives black or brown; and grey results from brown soil. But in the sea beneath the Doctor's garden all these colours, especially the blue tints, enchant the gaze; for they are as exquisite, changing, and evanescent as the colours of the opal. And these colours have their gamut—

"Hear I not—
The Æolian music of the sea-green plumes?"

Thus bathed in body and mind in these refreshing elements, and so far from the hum and hurry of active life—from which I had just emerged—is it strange that I failed to remember that it was winter, and in Europe, too, or that I was an heir to the ills of flesh?

Thus the winter wears away, amidst rock-land, sun-land, and flower-land, but very like dream-land. Of course, this experience is varied. Even the song of Philomel, oft repeated, loses its charm. You may, as I did, leave the hammock, and its reveries and rest, and if sure of foot and head, clamber through the olive and lemon terraces above the garden, into the red, rough rocks. You may follow the precarious goat-paths, below Grimaldi town, and investigate the grottos where the shepherds hide with their flocks



Bone Caves.

from the sun's glare in summer. You may thus obtain a more extended view; see the towering fort of Ventimiglia, and the white specks which indicate the villages of St. Remo and Bordighèra. You may, tired of rocky eminence, wander below into the Corniche road, and observe the vetture, *en route* for Genoa—full of English and American tourists rushing by—in sleepy content or disgust at these rocky defiles, little knowing the paradises above them. Or, still below the road you may follow the broken paths along the sea, under frowning red rocks, and look in upon the 'bone caves,' wherein the skeletons of the prehistoric men were found; or in rocky inlets and sheltered nooks, play with the white surf, as it rolls up the music of multitudinous pebbles, or smoothly washes the white sand; or if you desire human society, you may saunter among the washerwomen who line the rivulet, which steals down into the sea, and gossip in the worst patois with these useful dames. I remember them well. I shall never put on a particle of pale linen without invoking a blessing on them. They are a kindly company. When, venturing out one day upon the rocks, little recking of their slipperiness, and not observing a big wave, which was approaching, and 'abounding in grace,' from one mossy boulder to another, I fell in. Having emerged, all dripping and green—did these angels of the tub laugh? No! I did; but it was a sorry laugh. Whether because accustomed to the washing process, or whether from inbred courtesy,—they arose—each a Venus from the soapy foam—arose from their baskets, and proffered sympathy and succour! Bless ye! children of the sunny sheen and unsavoury suds—bless ye! When afterwards I strolled that way, was I not known? and their few sous per day, were they diminished by reason of their gentleness

to the awkward stranger? I do not, however, recommend hydropathy for steady treatment at Mentone. Still, one *drop*—into the sea—is not much. The sea scarcely feels it.

You may still more vary the life at Mentone by two kinds of excursion. The pony-basket phaetons of Nice are there; and what Nice has not, Mentone has, the promenade on a donkey. This latter is a most delightful recreation. If you are weary of the garden, or the shore, or the mountain and olive groves; if the hurdy-gurdy of the Tyrolese tramp, or the song of the strolling Figaro, fail to interest; if you can extract nothing from the Catalonian peddler of shawls and knives; if the lemon girls, with full baskets on their heads, trudging into town, knitting as they march, lose their picturesqueness; if the old town, with strolling acrobats, its noises, markets, narrow streets, churches, cemetery, and castle, fail to amuse or interest; if the drawing of the conscription, and its dancing, rollicking, singing saturnalia, do not arouse you out of ennui, then run down to Nice for the Carnival, dash over the mountain behind Sicilian ponies to Monaco, and try your little game on Monsieur Blanc and his Roulette, drive over to Bordighèra, and ramble amidst the palm trees, and make endless bouquets of wild flowers; or what is best, endorse the Mentone donkey!

A donkey ride is the climax of Mentone diversion. It will take all day, for owing to the change of temperature after sunset, you must be home before five. Send for the fair Judith, or her mother, and by nine o'clock you will find donkeys at the door, caparisoned for the ascent. Choose your animal. They are all sure-footed; but there is a choice. Get up an imposing cavalcade. It looks romantic, thus to be moving up the narrow, stony paths, which are trodden

only by the lemon girls, with their heads basket-laden, or by peasants driving their goats and sheep. Visit some of the towns which hang about the edges of the ridges, or go to the top of the beautiful ridges themselves, overlooking the sea. There you may make tea with the pine cones, or take lunch in the midst of aromatic shrubs.

The Mentone donkey is as handsome for a donkey as he is sagacious. Very rarely is he otherwise than docile. The voice of the driver from behind suffices to guide the animal. Our pet donkeys were 'Bijou' and 'Grisette.' They answered to their names with alacrity and serenity. Thus you may ascend to Grimaldi, Castellare, Roccobruna, and St. Agnese, rising from 800 to 2400 feet above the sea. There is an agreeable sort of timidity in thus creeping upon these safe little animals along the perilous, precipitous points, though it is more agreeably safe to follow the bridle or goat-tracks, under the shadow of the olives, and among the flower and grassy terraces. It is charming to go still higher, and play at hide-and-seek with the sunbeams, which glance through the resinous pine-trees. And it is still more buoyantly delightful, when you attain your best elevation, to gaze off into the blue-tinted air over sea and shore, and drink in, with the pure oxygen, the full spectacle!

The donkey is an archæologist. At least, he furnishes the opportunity to investigate the ancient castles, which were formerly built, away from the sea, in spots almost inaccessible. The pirates of Barbary, in making their raids for fair women and strong men, hardly ventured so high for their slaves. The castle at Roccobruna especially is hard to ascend—even if there were no foe to prevent. Under the guidance of the children, who meet you with flowers, and are ready to direct

you for a pittance, you may sound the old haunts and cisterns, and scour the nooks and prisons, from turret to foundation. These make Roccobruna the most interesting of the mountain towns. What adds to this interest, is the fact, that the town has slid away from the mountain. Its red rocks of lime-stone and pudding-stone have been torn by some convulsion or caprice from their 'old fellows'; and the town is curiously dropped about, and amidst the chaotic *débris*. Many of the families live in and between the fractured rocks.

We have visited the houses of these cheerful mountain people. They earn but little with their lemon, oil, and wine; but that little is much to them. Go with us into one of those twisted, contracted streets. It is hardly wide enough for the pannier of the donkey. There are many stories to the rude, stone, glassless houses. Many families live in one house. The first floor is for the donkey. His musical note advises you of his proximity and confinement. You ascend some dark stairways, and enter a neatly swept apartment with one window; it is adorned with pots of flowers. The floor is of red square earthen tiles; you see two small beds, a bureau, old chairs, some prints of saints, and, at the head of the bed, a dry white palm leaf, already blessed! A very little kitchen is near, only five feet square, with its cooking furnace, and windowless; huge piles of large, long loaves of bread with a big bottle of wine are massed together in a corner, both bought for a week in advance. All the dirt is given every day to the scavenger who takes it off to the terraces where it has its uses.

Going into one of those rooms in the old town of Mentone, I find that it accommodates a man and wife, and one child. The bread for the week costs thirty-six cents. The woman of the house is one of

my washerwoman-acquaintances of the sea-side—her name is Lisa. She earns, from sunrise to sunset, about thirty cents for her work. Her husband works on the railroad for the same wages. They have little or no cooking. The bread is bought at a co-operative bakery; and the wine is its only bibulous accompaniment. Said she:—'Sometimes we have soup. If my husband comes home first, he lights the faggot, and makes it; if I come home first, I do it. Once a week we have a pound of fish or meat—generally reserving this treat for Sundays; though when the railroad presses, he works often on that day.' After commending her frugality, she told us the secret of her discontent—the skeleton in her little household. She was labouring so hard to pay a debt of her first husband's last sickness; it was 200 francs. It has a year to run, but the interest is in arrear. How to make ends meet, pay the interest, and sink the principal, by her small earnings, this is the Sphinx's problem of Lisa's life. Chancellors of the Exchequer and Secretaries of the Treasury ponder similar problems about larger sums, and fret less about them than Lisa. We gave her our financial theory, and, what was better, we helped her. It is so easy here, with so little, to do so much. The flowers, wherewith every day our rooms were adorned, betokened the gratitude of the woman. She could not do enough for us. She acted as our guide among the relics of the old town. Meeting so many children, I remarked that they were all girls. 'Ah! Monsieur,' she said, 'it is the air, without doubt.' We asked her to show us the cemetery at the top of the town. She consented. Bonnetless, with a little handkerchief on her rich dark hair, her little girl tripping ahead, we began the ascent amidst the narrow and dark alleys. An old lady meets us. 'Where are you going, Lisa?'—'To the cemetery!'

—'Well,' sang out the crone, 'I won't go there till they carry me.' We reached the cemetery. I was almost sorry that we had asked Lisa to take us thither. She had not been there since her first husband's funeral; and though he was buried here, she had been too poor to mark his grave, even with a nameless wooden cross. Here was a fresh crucifixion of her love. Her child persisted in asking for her papa's grave. The tears came. She went within the chapel to hide her sorrow, where, doubtless, in fervent prayer —full of young memories—she found a prism of sunbeams through her tears! Around upon this rocky apex of the town, the wealthier families are buried. Their white marble tombs, in the shape of little chapels, are lighted with tapers, decorated with engravings, images, and paintings, and covered with bouquets of living flowers. I am not sure but this is as sweet a burial spot as I ever saw; for it is secluded from and above the world, and overlooks all the rare scenery of ravine and mountain, sky and sea!

I found the peasants of the Riviera, like Lisa, honest, simple, kind, and not ill-looking. They have not lost their original virtues by the increase of the foreign and invalid population, or by the enhancement of their lands, labour, and produce. This small Italian town, like the other towns of the Western Riviera, is becoming surrounded with suburban villas and pensions; but the primitive costumes and habits remain. It is seldom you see any one lazy, certainly not the women. How often we meet that old woman —a sample of the whole—who trudges along with her donkey, knitting; sometimes elevated between two casks of wine and the pine-branches, and sometimes afoot, but always knitting. When the railroad is completed from Monaco, and through to Genoa, all this undercliff of health stations, from Hyères to St.

My Italian Garden.—Entrance.

Remo, will be filled, the winter through, with visitors, tourists, and health-seekers. By that time the hanging garden of my friend, amidst the rocks of Grimaldi, above the Border, will have been enlarged, and still more beautified. Already he has completed the purchase of manifold more piles of rock; and soon he will throw fairy bridges over the abysses, around which I have climbed with him,—erect more terraces, employ more hydraulics, and cut more paths on the mountain sides. When I return to the scene, I shall no longer find the goat-caves, the limestone seats, and the elixir of the sunbeams, amidst their present ruggedness. I shall find all changed into the elegances which a cultivated taste and a skilful gardener can evoke out of the very rocks of this favoured shore.

CHAPTER III.

MONACO—ITS SCENERY—HISTORY—POLITY—PALACE — PRINCE — MYTHS — GAMBLING HELLS—ROADS AND PEOPLE.

'Aggeribus socer Alpinis, atque arce Monoeci
Descendens.' VIRG. ÆN. vi. 830.

'Power from hell,
Though heavenly in pretension, fleeced thee well.'
COWPER.

THE Prince—sovereign and independent—who rules this microscopic realm of Monaco, has a laureate. I have seen his verses, and read his prose. His prose is poor poetry, and his poetry is purely prosaic. He closes some prose by saying:—'If Horace had known Monaco, he would not so often have sung about the Tiber.' I agree with the laureate. Another writer has written, that to visit Nice and not see Monaco is like going to Rome and not seeing the Pope. So I resolved to go. In fact I have been there several times, and by several routes. I have seen it by day and by night, under light and shadow; but how shall I describe it?

I am at a loss whether to paint it under gas-light, moon-light, star-light, or sun-light. As I am in search of 'sunbeams,' a photograph would be best; although a photograph might not give all the shadows which Monaco, completely pictured—after Rembrandt—morally and physically, deserves. I have not been drawn hither by the enchanter, who flourishes his *râteau* over the green *tapis* of the gaming-table, but by the irresistible fascination of sky, sea, and land.

Last evening, when I arrived from Mentone, the globes of gas were illuminated throughout the gaming grounds of Mount Carlo, and in the palace grounds across the bay. This morning I have wandered about Carlo, in the fresh air and sunshine, and the enchantment is enhanced. But wandering soon grows irksome. You want to repose and dream. If the reader will sit on one of the green chairs which line the parterres of the Casino (or gambling palace) fronting the sea, and under the parasol which the palm, orient-like, lifts over him, and follow my errant eye, he may see a picture worth remembering.

Look out seaward first! Directly in front is my favourite isle, Corsica, now under the deep veil of distance, which this morning lends to it no enchantment, for the isle is not in sight. A white cloudlet hangs over the spot where the island, I trust, still remains. To the east and on the left, upon the horizon's rim, is a dark, azure band, which, as it runs round to the west, becomes fainter, till it fades into a glistening line of silver. Between that rim and your eye is the expanse of the sea. It is streaked with currents of lighter hue; some running as straight as canals, and some meandering like rivers, 'at their own sweet will.' Scarcely a wave is on its bosom; only diamond points, rippling in the sunshine. Six ships, sails set and blanched, are seen; but without motion apparently. They seem like 'painted ships upon a painted ocean.' The steamer from Nice with its flag of smoke, which itself takes the blue hue of the air and sea, moves along, leaving behind it a bright line made by the fretting of the tranquil element. Below us, on the right, is the little harbour, above which, separated from the Casino grounds of Mount Carlo where we sit, is the fort, palace, and village of Monaco, the old Phœnician harbour of Hercules, and now the little