

for the Winter. The pleasure of the excursion was greatly increased by the company of the daughter of the pastor of the French church, with her sister-in-law, the wife of another pastor of an ancient church in the Pyrenees, which, in spite of all trials and persecutions, has kept its faith unstained for hundreds of years.

This southern part of France has a history which ought to be known by every Protestant. We are now in ancient Languedoc, which, with Provence farther to the east, formed the country of the Albigenses, who were Reformers before the Reformation, holding that faith hundreds of years before Luther was born. They were a people refined and cultivated, having made great progress in science and learning and the arts. Says Macaulay in his famous review of Ranke's History of the Popes :

“This country, singularly favored by nature, was in the twelfth century the most flourishing and civilized portion of Western Europe. It was in no wise a part of France. It had a distinct political existence, a distinct national character, distinct usages, and a distinct speech. The soil was fruitful and well cultivated, and amidst the cornfields and vineyards arose many rich cities, each of which was a little republic; and many stately castles, each of which contained a miniature of an Imperial Court. It was there that the spirit of chivalry first laid aside its terrors, first took a humane and graceful form, first appeared as the inseparable associate of art and literature, of courage and love. . . .

“The language of Provence was already the language of the learned and polite, and was employed by numerous writers, studious of all the arts of composition and versification. A literature rich in ballads, in war-songs, in satire, and above all in amatory poetry, amused the leisure of the knights and ladies whose fortified mansions adorned the banks of the Rhone and Garonne. With civilization had come freedom of thought. . . .

“The danger to the hierarchy was indeed formidable. Only one transalpine nation had emerged from barbarism, and that nation had thrown off all respect for Rome. Only one of the

vernacular languages of Europe had yet been extensively employed for literary purposes, and that language was a machine in the hands of heretics. The geographical position of the sectaries made the danger peculiarly formidable. They occupied a central region communicating directly with France, with Italy, and with Spain. The provinces which were still untainted, were separated from each other by this infected district. Under these circumstances, it seemed probable that a single generation would suffice to spread the reformed doctrine to Lisbon, to London, and to Naples. But this was not to be. Rome cried for help to the warriors of Northern France. She appealed at once to their superstition and their cupidity. . . . A war, distinguished even among wars of religion by its merciless atrocity, destroyed the Albigensian heresy, and with that heresy the prosperity, the civilization, the literature, the national existence, of what was once the most opulent and enlightened part of the great European family."

This was one of the greatest calamities recorded in the annals of Europe. Those students of history who see everything through a veil of optimism, may argue, by some mysterious process of reasoning which they do not explain, that such reverses are in the end for the good of mankind. I cannot see it so. To me the crushing out of the Albigenses, their faith and their civilization, was an unspeakable calamity to France and to the world. It was so much lost in the influences which lift up a nation—a set-back in the advance of humanity which is only recovered in the lapse of ages.

What sort of faith was substituted for that which was destroyed, one has a good opportunity to see here, as it is but a two-hours' ride from Pau to Lourdes, the most famous place of pilgrimage in Europe. I gave up a forenoon to pay it a visit. As an excursion it was delightful. The morning was cool; a hoar-frost lay on the ground, which slowly dissolved with the rising of the sun; and the air grew warmer till we had a perfect Indian-Summer

day. Though it was near the beginning of Winter, the men, and the women also, were at work in the fields. As the peasants universally wear the flat caps worn by the Scotch, they might be taken for Highlanders.

The position of Lourdes is one of the most picturesque that can be imagined. It lies in a deep valley, nestled at the foot of the mountains, at one end of which is the famous grotto, in which a young girl of the village is said to have received some years ago a visit from the Virgin Mary! She told her story to her family and neighbors, who went to see the heavenly visitant, but saw nothing. Nevertheless, the girl, when she went alone, was favored with repeated interviews. Such was her story, to which she adhered till she died. For a time it passed as a child's tale. But at length it dawned on the minds of some priests—whether cunning or credulous I will not presume to say—that here was the nucleus for a great revival of faith; and accordingly the miraculous visitation was declared to be authentic, and the devout flocked to the spot in great numbers. In the first six months there were a hundred and fifty thousand pilgrims. In a few years there rose over the grotto a stately church, which, large as it is, was all too small for the multitudes who came from all parts of Europe to obtain, not only spiritual grace, but “gifts of healing.” The grounds about it were laid out like those of a large watering-place, which must provide for the influx of a multitude without number. When there is a great pilgrimage, the enthusiasm rises to a pitch of wild excitement. The church is crowded at all hours of the day, and far into the night. All the approaches are blocked up, and not unfrequently the hillside is covered with a dense mass of kneeling pilgrims. The scene is very impressive, especially at night, when a vast procession moves up the hill, bearing lights and singing hymns

with a spirit that is thrilling. Dr. Vincent, in his charming volume "In the Shadow of the Pyrenees," says that he was himself so moved that he joined the swelling chorus that waked the echoes of the hills.

Of all this I saw nothing, for "the season" was over, the pilgrims had come and gone; but the church was there, a visible sign of the devotion that "the visitation" has inspired. As I approached the door, a couple of women dressed in black (who seemed to disguise their occupation as beggars by assuming the dress of a Sisterhood) appealed in a whining tone for alms, offering "to light a candle for me" (of which they had a dozen in their hands) "before the shrine of the Virgin." Preferring to get whatever spiritual benefit there might be for myself, I entered and found the large church richly decorated, its arches hung with banners, and its walls literally covered with inscriptions of gratitude for miraculous deliverances. When the flood-tide of pilgrims is at its height, the press is relieved in part by an overflow from the church into the crypt below, where there are numerous altars at which masses are being constantly said, and confessionals at which priests are hearing penitents and giving absolution. But with all this squeezing together of compact masses of humanity, the space is so utterly inadequate that the faithful are now building another church, not in place of the old, but in addition to it. It stands in front of the former, but as it is on a lower level, does not hide it from view. Circular in shape, it is set within the wide-embracing arms of two immense flights of steps that sweep round the hill, leading to the church above. The walls are of great thickness, which, with the massive pillars, will support a dome like that of the Pantheon in Rome, through which the dim light will fall on thousands of pilgrims kneeling on the ample pavement, and making the arches ring with their Ave Marias.

After seeing the church, I asked the way to the grotto, when a young priest who was about to visit it offered to conduct me. As we passed the door, he dipped his hand in the holy water and extended it to me. I awkwardly gave him the back of my hand, but he still held his hand suspended, when I turned to him an open palm, and received the sacred touch upon one of my finger-tips. I hope it did me good. In the grotto only a few were kneeling, but evidently with the most fervent devotion. It was hung with crutches cast away by the cripples, whose limbs had been miraculously restored. I looked on, of course, with proper respect, and as I turned away took one of the tin cups that are placed below the fountain for the service of pilgrims, and drank of the water. It was pure and sweet, like that of one of our New England springs "that run among the hills," though I did not detect in it any miraculous virtue, nor feel made in any wise stronger or better by it. Nor could I discover why anybody should drink it so eagerly, or carry it away, as having an efficacy which no other "waters of Israel" could supply. And yet it is regularly bottled up like any mineral water, Vichy or Apollinaris, and sent to all parts of the world. Evidently "the business" is "worked for all it is worth."

Looking at it as religious worship, one is struck with the way in which all homage and adoration, as well as thanksgiving, is made to centre, not in God nor in Christ, but in the Virgin Mary, to whom every inscription is addressed, with thanks for spiritual grace, or for restoration from some incurable malady. The repetition of this form of pious devotion strikes a Protestant painfully, as if she were the only source through which blessings from God could be obtained. He who is the everlasting Son of the Father, is put quite in the background, if not entirely for-

gotten, in the chorus of supplication and of thanksgiving to His human mother. After reading these inscriptions to satiety, it was a relief to leave the church, and climb the neighboring hill, which is surmounted by a colossal crucifix, on which appears the body of our Lord. Here at least was something which spoke, not of Mary, but of her greater Son; and looking up to that Divine Sufferer, I found myself repeating with an energy made more intense by the contrast with the Ave Marias in the church below:

“Jesus, Lover of my soul,  
Let me to Thy bosom fly!”

I have no wish to speak lightly of the faith of any of my fellow-beings. So long as it gives comfort to any poor, stricken human heart, let them keep it and enjoy it. Yet if asked what I think of all this, I must say in all frankness that it seems to me the extreme of superstition, founded on a tale as absurd as ever imposed on the credulity of mankind. Yet as Macaulay well argues, beliefs in the supernatural are not subject to the ordinary rules of evidence, and men of intelligence who use their understanding in their business affairs, will accept without question the most childish tales, and proceed to construct on them a system of religious faith.

“But the bodily healings, the wonderful cures, what have you to say to these?” I have nothing to say to them until I know more about them, or can know without some personal investigation. I certainly do not accept the stories told by the invalids themselves, for there is nothing on which men and women are more liable to be deceived than their own bodily condition. It is hard to set limits to the power of the mind over the body. A sudden emotion of fear may stop the action of the heart so as to cause instant death without a blow, or any apparent cause, external or internal. So a powerful action of the mind,

a strong hope of relief, may produce such a reaction upon the system as shall have a restoring power that might almost bring the dead to life. All this is familiar to physicians, and involves no miracle whatever.

Further, there is something very revolting in the way in which the whole thing is turned into a speculation. It has become the business of the town. It brings pilgrims by tens of thousands into the little place every year, who depart leaving large sums of money behind them. And the priests who flock to the scene, find it a convenient means of restoring the faith that was growing weaker and weaker. Thus the whole affair is managed apparently with a double purpose : with the cool calculation of business, and all the resources of superstition.

On the whole, the impression was very painful. Not only did it *not* strengthen my religious faith, but it provoked a reaction, which tended strongly to throw me into a state of unbelief. If anything could make me a skeptic, it would be to witness such scenes as this. As I turned away, I had to struggle anew against doubts, from which I could recover only by confessing : "Lord, I believe : help Thou mine unbelief" ; and as I rode back to Pau, wondering at all that I had seen, I could but fear that it should make me a worse rather than a better man ; and again and again did I whisper to myself : "O my God ! in this darkness and tumult of the mind ; and in all the doubts and fears that beset this mortal state ; let me never fall from Thee !"

## CHAPTER II.

### BIARRITZ—CROSSING THE BORDER.

“In that sunny corner where the waves of the Bay of Biscay wash over a sandy barrier, and mingle with the waters of the Bidassoa stream” (so begins a recent novel, the scene of which is laid in Pau), “they tell the ancient story that a favored mortal won from the gods permission to ask three blessings for Spain. He asked that her sons should be brave, her daughters beautiful, and her government good. The first two were granted, but the third refused: for,” said the answer, “already she is an earthly paradise, and were this last blessing hers, the very gods themselves would desert Elysium, and go down to dwell in Spain.”

Leaving this pretty fancy to take care of itself, I was content, having left Pau in the morning, to find myself in the afternoon “in that sunny corner of the Bay of Biscay,” which seems to unite all the charms of land and sea. Having to wait some hours at Bayonne for the train which was to bring me into Spain, I took a carriage and drove out five miles on a long, straight avenue to Biarritz—a sheltered nook, that looks out upon a horizon partly of mountains and partly of the sea. To the south is the long



line of the Spanish coast, piled with mountains as far as the eye can reach, while in front "the watery plain" fills up the foreground of the picture. It is a rugged coast, even here where we stand in France, against which the waves have been beating for thousands of years, till the very rocks are honeycombed with arches and caverns, into which the waters rush and roar.

The Bay of Biscay has an ill reputation among mariners as well as landsmen. If it be not quite so vicious as the British Channel, yet as there is more of it, the agonies it produces are longer; so that it has had, and still has, the maledictions of the tens of thousands who are compelled to pass over it on their way to the Mediterranean. The cause of this is apparent at a glance on the map. The "Bay" of Biscay is not a land-locked harbor like the Bay of Naples or of New York, but is only partly enclosed by two enormous projections of the Continent, terminating at Brest in France and Cape Finisterre in Spain (the very name of which imports that it was once looked upon as the end of the habitable globe), into which powerful currents and the western gales drive the waters of the Atlantic till they seethe and whirl like one vast maelstrom.

And yet this tempestuous Bay, which is the very home of storms and wrecks, was to-day as calm as any Summer sea, and as I looked out upon it from the cliffs, it seemed tranquil enough to tempt the most timid voyager, and as I went down to the beach, and walked along the sands, its waves came rippling gently to my feet.

With such natural sublimity and beauty all round it, and the sunshine that even in mid-Winter lingers in this "sunny corner of the Bay of Biscay," near the very spot where "its waves mingle with the waters of the Bidassoa stream," I do not wonder that Biarritz should have become a favorite resort for English families fleeing from the rigors



of their northern climate. The great hotels perched on the bluff, with their many windows open to the south, drink in all the sunshine of the short Winter day, and the shivering Britons feel a warmth which they could not find in their own beloved but stormy islands.

Biarritz acquired its greatest celebrity a few years since, as a favorite retreat of the Emperor Napoleon, who was wont to come here at the beginning of Autumn and spend the month of September, during which time the little town was the seat of the French Government, when the spectacle of Ministers and Ambassadors arriving and departing gave animation to its streets.

Of course the Villa Eugénie, which bears the name of her for whose pleasure it was built, is the point of greatest interest, as it was for the time the centre of the Imperial court. Then the place was very animated and gay : now it is tenantless and desolate. The Empress has recently sold it to a French company, which proposes to turn it into a grand Casino, and its extensive grounds into a pleasure garden. Entering the open gateway, I walked along the drive, and round to the sea wall in front. Leaning against the parapet, one could not but recall the figure of the Emperor, as he stood often on this very spot, looking off upon the sea and musing over his own strange destiny, the curtain from which was but half raised, for if no man then living had had so sudden and so great an exaltation, no man was to have a more tremendous fall.

Except some workmen, there was no one whom I could find about the place but a withered old woman, sitting inside the glass enclosure which curtained the front, turning it into a kind of conservatory. Inquiring if one might penetrate within, she answered quickly "Oui, oui, Monsieur," and rising from her chair, ran as fast as her tottering frame could carry her, calling for her son, who directly

appeared and took me in charge. I counted it a piece of special good fortune that he had nobody else, and therefore did not rattle off the set speech of a guide, but gave me full opportunity to indulge my propensity for asking questions, as we walked deliberately from room to room. This large apartment was the grand salon : of course but a miniature of those in the great palaces of France, but still of interest from the crowd of courtiers and princes it had once contained. In this smaller room the Emperor took his morning cup of coffee ; and here is the dining-hall, very small compared with the magnificence of those at the Tuileries or Versailles, but yet one into which the first statesmen in Europe would have counted it an honor to be invited. Next the guide led the way into the rooms set apart for the high personages of the Imperial household, after which came the ante-rooms occupied by the officers of the guard. All, though on a diminished scale, was a miniature of the Court in Paris. More interesting still was the private Cabinet of the Emperor. It is but a small apartment on the ground floor, but what a tale its walls could tell ! Here he received the representatives of all the crowned heads of Europe. Here Bismarck came, it is said, to whisper soft flatteries in the Imperial ear, to propitiate the favor of the master of France, and especially to sound him as to the course he would be likely to take in the event, which the great Minister saw to be coming, of war between Prussia and Austria. Once again he came in 1869, perhaps with a presentiment of another struggle nearer and deadlier than the former. Never was an Emperor more completely deceived. At that time he felt that he was master of the destinies of Europe. Little did he dream that the very next year—in 1870—the battle of Sedan would throw him into the hands of the very power that now courted him, and that he would need to ask of

this Prussian Minister to make terms for his own surrender!

Did he have any presentiment of his fall? Did such a thought ever trouble him in his dreams? Such questions suggest themselves as we enter his sleeping apartment. Did he rest in tranquil security, or did he sometimes rise from a troubled sleep, go to the window and look out upon the sea, and see in it the type of his own stormy life that was to end in shipwreck and disaster greater than he could have imagined in his gloomiest hours?

Surely no such forebodings entered the private apartments of the Empress, who at Biarritz as at Paris drew all eyes by her queenly presence and marvellous beauty, while the air of graciousness which seemed natural to the perfect Spanish lady that she was, captivated all hearts.

But here is something of still more tender interest, the suite of rooms set apart for the Prince Imperial. This was his private cabinet, the furniture of which is unchangeable. These are the very chairs on which he sat. On this long divan against the wall, no doubt he threw himself down a hundred times as he came in from his rides, his studies, or his amusements, a tired but happy boy. On that pillow he rested his head, sleeping the sound sleep of youth and health, of innocence and peace. To him the world of care was as yet all unknown. What were his boyish dreams? Of home and love and happiness. Did any shapes ever arise out of the sea to affright him with horror? Certainly none which could have pictured him in far-off Africa, dying, not even on a field of battle, but speared to death by the assegais of Zulus!

If one is seeking for a place to moralize, it would be hard to find one more sadly suggestive than this Villa Eugénie, standing on the seashore, once so brilliant with the gaieties of a court, but now deserted. Its silent walls

preach a sermon more eloquent than ever was heard from the pulpit on the emptiness of human hopes and ambitions. Vanity of vanities! all is vanity!

Returning to Bayonne, I found at the station waiting for me, Rev. William H. Gulick of San Sebastian. The name of Gulick is an honored one in the annals of American missions. His father was a missionary before him, and he was born in the Sandwich Islands, where he was a companion in boyhood, a playmate and schoolmate of my friend General Armstrong of Hampton, Va. Several of his brothers are now engaged in missionary work in Japan, while he, having spent some time in South America, where he acquired the Spanish language, was chosen for similar work in Spain. Here he has been for fifteen years. Speaking the language like a Spaniard, he has kindly consented to accompany me in my wanderings through the Peninsula.

An hour from Bayonne brings us to the Bidassoa, which is but a narrow stream; indeed we hardly know when we pass over it, so quickly is it crossed, and we are in Spain!

I did not need anybody to tell me this, as I perceived it instantly by the new language that greeted my ears. How strange it seems, in crossing an invisible line, to lose one's power of speech, by losing his power of making himself understood. An hour ago I was a man among men: I looked in the face of a stranger, and asked him a civil question, and received a polite answer. But now I ask a railway official when the train goes, and he looks at me blankly, as if I had dropped down from the moon. Alas, I am no longer in mine own country, nor in any that I have visited before. One thing I have discovered already—that Spaniards do not know how to pronounce their own language. For instance, there is the grand old historic city of Saragossa—what Englishman or American does not know how it *ought* to be pronounced, viz: as it is written!

But here they must needs pucker up their lips into a lisp and say "Tharagotha"! The very letters of the alphabet are twisted out of the natural pronounciation, *g* being pronounced as if it were *h*, while *h* in most words is not pronounced at all! I will have nothing to do with such a perversion of human speech. Give me good, honest English, which no doubt Adam and Eve spoke in Paradise, and which is to this day sufficient for the intercourse of mankind. But if I can neither speak nor understand this very sonorous but to me unintelligible language, I have an excellent interpreter at my side, who will be both ears and mouth to me while I am in this land of the Moors and the Visigoths, until I cross over into Africa, where with English and French I can once more make myself understood.

The first town of Spain which we enter as we cross the Bidassoa, is Irun, where the train comes to a halt, and we "disembark" and are ushered into the inevitable Custom House, the first sign of civilization, or the want of it, in every European country. Our baggage is taken into the station, and laid out on long counters, to be opened for inspection. We could not complain of any want of courtesy on the part of the officials: on the contrary, they were very polite. It was only the detention which was trying, for we were very weary. But at length all was ended, and our baggage was replaced on the train. But now came our first experience of the Spaniards. We soon found that they were unlike Americans, in having no sense whatever of the value of time. The inspection over, we were at liberty to proceed, but nobody seemed to be in a hurry. We took our seats in the railway carriage, but the train did not stir. After long waiting, an attendant appeared, but only to shut the door. After this manifestation of energy, there was another long pause. Thus we were detained a full hour for an examination which need not

have occupied more than fifteen minutes. However, as we did not mean to be fretted by anything, we kept our good humor ; but it did seem a little absurd that an hour later, on arriving at San Sebastian, *the very same ceremony should be gone through with again!* Once more we were all marched into the station ; once more all the trunks, portmanteaus, and hand-bags were spread out on the long counter, the trunks were unlocked, and the officials with unmoved faces went through the solemn farce of a second examination. I inquired the object of this singular performance : if there were any *octroi*—a special municipal tariff—to be paid on coming into the city of San Sebastian. But the answer was “No ; it was only a precaution, to make assurance doubly sure.” When I smiled at this, I was comforted by hearing that it was probably the last time I should have such an experience in Spain.

And now, after these long delays, there came a pleasant change, as Mr. Gulick took me directly to his home. It was delightful to be ushered into a pleasantly-lighted room, where a cheerful fire was blazing, and to sit down to a cup of tea with those whom I had never seen before, but who now showed themselves such kind friends. When at last (wearied, but warmed and fed, and more than all, cheered by the presence of those who spoke “the tongue wherein I was born”) I lay down to sleep, it was with a grateful sense of all the goodness that had followed me hitherto, and that here, thousands of miles away, I had found the sweet security, the peace and comfort, of an American home.

### CHAPTER III.

#### ROUND ABOUT SAN SEBASTIAN.

The treacherous Bay of Biscay! that lay so fair beneath the sun, tranquil and smiling, as we looked out upon it from the cliffs of Biarritz! But scarcely had we turned away before it showed itself in another mood, as if angry that we should escape; heaving and moaning and muttering, with all the signs of a coming tempest. No sooner were we under shelter at San Sebastian, than the rain began to fall—first to patter, and then to pour—accompanied by the deep soughing of the wind; and in waking moments all night long, I heard the incessant dashing of the waves. Morning came, but the storm did not abate. On the contrary, it increased: to the rain was added hail, which beat upon the window-panes. There was an end to the projected excursion of that day.

But he is a poor traveller who is disturbed by such an interruption as this. On the contrary, he ought to welcome it as a grateful interval of rest from his daily fatigues. A rainy day gives him sufficient excuse (if he needs any) for staying indoors, "writing letters home"—the pleasant duty that comes so naturally when in "a home," with kindly faces passing in and out, and a hum of friendly



voices, like an undertone of music, giving a sense of quiet happiness to one's thoughts, while not disturbing their even flow.

In the afternoon the storm lulled so that Mr. Gulick took me out for a walk round the bay. The rain had ceased, but the wind still "blew great guns," and one or two small vessels, which had tried to enter the harbor, were now apparently trying to work off from it, as it is too open to the sea to furnish a sure anchorage, so that not infrequently ships are wrecked where they had seemed to be quite safe. But the sea was magnificent, dashing high on the rocks, and the air was fresh and bracing as we strode along the shore. And now I perceived, as I had not before, the exquisite beauty of this little bay, to which they give the name of the "Concha" (or shell), so perfect is the arc which curves round it, the two outer points of which, towards the sea, are marked, one by a small island on which stands the lighthouse, and the other by a hill five hundred feet high, which is crowned by an ancient Castle. The beach is perfect for bathing, as the water is not deep and the sand soft to the feet. This, with its other attractions, has made San Sebastian the chief watering-place for the North of Spain; and here in the heat of Summer may be seen a large representation of the fashionable world of Madrid—"grandees" and *grandes dames*, on the sands, getting health from the salt sea and the bracing air.

In the good old days of the late Queen Isabella, this was her favorite Summer resort, to which she came for the benefit of the sea-air and sea-bathing. Nor was it any drawback to her royal pleasure that in taking her sea-baths she was sometimes exposed "in the dazzling light of publicity" to the curious gaze of her faithful people. To tell the truth, she was never "backward in coming for-