

CHAPTER XI

1843-44

VOYAGE TO GREECE—WINTER IN ROME—RETURN TO ENGLAND BY THE RHINE—VISIT TO FIELD OF WATERLOO

A FEW days after leaving Trentham, my party was reunited at Southampton, where Dr. Cumming, Howson, and myself embarked on board the steamer *Lady Mary Wood* for Lisbon, Gibraltar, and Malta. I have often since wondered how my father ever consented to my taking that route at a season of the year so exposed to equinoctial storms. To my family at least, my life was then a valuable one. I was an only son, and in the event of my death the titles and estates would have gone to a very distant heir, whose succession would not, certainly, have been desirable. But my father left all arrangements to the doctor, who was an old and experienced traveller, and youths at my time of life think little of such risks. As it actually happened, we did very nearly come to grief. The *Lady Mary Wood* was what would now be called a small paddle-steamer, which had been employed in the English coasting trade. We had some pleasant passengers, among whom was one whose immense stature, 6 feet 7 inches, inevitably attracted all attention. It turned out that this giant was no less a personage than the then celebrated occasional writer in the *Times*, whose well-known signature was 'Jacob Omnium.' His real name was Higgins.

Very early on the third morning of our voyage, when near Cape Finisterre, I was awakened by the

uneasy motion of the vessel, by a low continuous roar, and, above all, by the rapid tramping of feet upon the deck overhead. Jumping out of my berth, I dressed as best I could, and staggered through the state cabin to the foot of the deck-companion. But the door opening on the deck was closed, and an officer of the ship told me that all passengers must keep below. There was no need to ask the reason why. I could see the sky over the top of the door. It was a sky of dirty rags, and the rags were scudding across it at a rate indicating a strong gale. The captain in so small a vessel could not do what the great modern liners now do—he could not hold on his course, plunging through the billows, careless whether they broke on his decks or not. The *Lady Mary Wood* had no steam-power for that, and if she had had, and had used it, she would soon have been overwhelmed. The captain therefore stopped, and ‘lay to,’ using just enough steam-power to keep her bows steady to the seas. We passengers, like rats in a cage, could do nothing but hold on as best we could to the firm tables in the cabin, and most of us were of the opinion freely expressed by Higgins—that we had been very great fools to embark on such a passage at that season of the year. It is only fair, however, to our vessel to say that, for her size, she was a good sea-boat, shipping very little water, and rising over the huge waves like a cork. At one moment the captain, dressed in canvas overalls, and dripping with rain and spray, came rushing down the companion to get a glass of brandy from the steward. Howson, who was looking anxious and dejected, with childlike simplicity addressed him, ‘Captain, is there any danger?’ and was at once met by the well-merited snub, ‘There’s a great deal of fear, sir, but very little danger.’ Some time later in the day, however, the captain sent down a message to me that I might now come on deck if I wished to see the waves. It was indeed a sight. But though very awful, I did not think it beautiful. Water under all circumstances

reflects so much of the sky above it that a dirty sky makes dirty waves, and deprives the ocean of its lovely colouring. The sense of tremendous power was impressive, and the cockleshell size of our little vessel as it fell into the trough of the waves, and was lifted again upon their crests, added greatly but unpleasantly to that impressiveness. I recollected my father saying that the highest oceanic waves did not rise more than 15 feet above the level; therefore, allowing the same range to the trough, the aggregate height from bottom of trough to top of crest never exceeded 30 feet. In the presence of the Bay of Biscay waves, this seemed incredible to me, especially when I saw some vessels with tall masts completely concealed by an advancing wave.

After the discomfiting intimation from one of the officers that such gales at that time of year very often lasted for three days, it was a comfort to feel, after some thirty hours, that this one was sensibly abating, and to hear that the captain thought he might very soon be able to continue his course. Suddenly the sun broke and the ocean waters resumed their glory. The waves had thin crests of transparent green, and they were soon roaring under our counter as we turned our head and ran before them. Sometimes they looked as if they would certainly 'poop' us, but always just at the right moment they sank beneath us in lines of joyous foam. In a very few hours more we were steaming up the fine arm of the sea which runs up to the Spanish town and harbour of Vigo, under hills bare indeed, but bathed in sunlight, and with shining houses under a genuine Southern sky.

There cannot be a more sudden or joyous transition than to pass from England in November to any part of Southern Europe, and it was accentuated in our case by our having passed through such a disagreeable encounter in the Bay of Biscay. Verdure indeed is lost, for there is really no verdure in the general landscapes of the South; but light is gained—light and a

brilliancy of sunshine which is very delicious to the eye and very exhilarating to the spirits.

From Vigo a good night's passage carried us to the Tagus, and in the forenoon we were steaming under the shining houses and palaces of Lisbon. There is no city in Europe, or perhaps in the world, which stands on a nobler site. Built on a steep slope overlooking a fine river, and having a view over a great extent of prosperous country to the south and east, Lisbon holds a position as beautiful as it is commanding. But I saw nothing in the town which I should ever care to see again. We drove to Cintra, with the famed beauty of which I was bitterly disappointed. No doubt groups of cork and ilex growing out of fantastic rocks must be always beautiful. But the whole thing is on such a small scale, and the country to the north, over which the hills of Cintra look, is so utterly unattractive, and even hideous, that all beauty is limited to a narrow foreground. Nevertheless, there is one supreme interest in that landscape, which made me gaze upon it as if I could not take my eyes away. Across that strip of bare country, between a low line of hills to the east, and the shore-line of the Atlantic on the west, all as brown and monotonous as a ploughed field, across it from right to left, from hills to seashore, there once ran the ever-famous lines of Torres Vedras. Up to them rolled the tide of Napoleonic conquest: up to them, but no further—not an inch beyond. From that barrier it recoiled, and before the great captain who designed those lines, who held them, and who issued from them when he saw the time was come, the tide was rolled back by successive victories of unequalled strategy and triumphant perseverance. There is nothing more difficult for a civilian to realize than some of the great feats of military genius. Who, looking down from the hills of Cintra upon that wide expanse of dull and otherwise uninteresting country, could imagine that, by lines of hasty and temporary fortification drawn across it between the Upper Tagus and the coast, England

was enabled to secure her naval base for military operations which were the first to shake the conqueror of Europe and to prepare his downfall? I could hardly do so. Yet, knowing the facts, I drank in the view as well as I could, and to this day it is one of the landscapes most indelibly impressed upon my memory.

Resuming our voyage, we proceeded to Cadiz, and transhipping our luggage to a small coasting steamer, we ascended the Guadalquivir to Seville. On the great plains on either side of the river I saw, at a distance, objects which, from their size and colour, I knew must be the great bustard, a bird which our civilization has long banished from England, but which still abounds in the vast unenclosed lands which occupy a great part of the Peninsula.

With Seville I was delighted. The cathedral is, I think, by far the noblest specimen of Gothic architecture in the world, with its double aisles of majestic clustered columns, and its vast interchanging spaces of shadow and of light. For the famous palace of the Moors, the Alcazar of Seville, I could not get up any enthusiasm, although it possesses some prominent features of undoubted beauty, and its absolute novelty, as compared with any other building out of Spain, is remarkable. The great cathedral was indeed a glorious contrast. No two structures in one city could be more strikingly typical of the two races which once contended for mastery in the South of Europe—the magnificent strength, solemnity, and indefinite suggestiveness of the Christian church, and the graceful but flimsy pillars, and the rich but shallow repetitions of superficial surface ornament on the walls of the Moslem palace. Mere arabesque patterns, however ingeniously intricate, however pretty in form, and however set off by delicate and harmonious tinting, are as empty of meaning as they are destitute of substance. At the best they give only a kind of mindless and voluptuous pleasure to the eye, with nothing to incite the intellect or to rouse the heart.

Only one other feature was beautiful in Seville. The vista down each street is not only commonplace, but ugly. Windowless walls, uniform in height and destitute of any ornament, produce a dull effect. Yet every street is full of beauty to those who walk down it and look into the doorways as they pass. Those doorways are all wide-open arches, through which the eye is led into lovely interior courts, with flashing fountains and beautiful verdure—oleanders, bananas, and other plants of cool and pleasant leaves. Each court is enclosed from the street only by an iron grille or gateway, of the most delicate and graceful tracery; no two of these are alike. Hammered ironwork seems to have been an art native to Seville, on which an infinite richness of fancy found infinite variety of treatment. Coolness is, of course, the object of this arrangement, which descended from the habits of the Moors, as, indeed, of all Eastern peoples; for in Andalusia they had a fierce sun to deal with, at least in summer, and on the sweltering plains of the Guadalquivir.

Descending that river again, we caught the steamer at Cadiz, and proceeded to Gibraltar. Places of which one has heard much are always more or less prefigured in imagination. But none which I have seen has ever taken me so entirely by surprise as Gibraltar. Its familiar appellation of 'the Rock' had led me to imagine some glorified edition of hill-forts, such, on a smaller scale, as Dumbarton, or Stirling, or Edinburgh, or Ehrenbreitstein. Whereas, on entering that famous bay, I saw before me a fine mountain, ending in an abrupt precipice to the north, but sloping rapidly at the southern end into a long low point. The upper edges and sides are precipitously steep, but they slope gradually through gardens of orange-groves and other foliage to a considerable town, fronted by a forest of masts. It is in a magnificent position, a sort of advanced guard of the European Continent, facing the narrow entrance of the Mediterranean and the coast of Africa.

A short run across the Straits to Tangiers took me in a moment, as it were, from the western to the eastern world. On landing at Tangiers, all was absolutely new. Camels being loaded or lying on the quay; slave-girls from the interior, with true negro features, with lithe figures and skins shining in the sun with a curious lustre like that of black satin; fine-looking turbaned Moslems sitting under a gateway at the receipt of custom; narrow Oriental streets with open shop-fronts, and cross-legged owners looking imperturbably uninterested whether they had customers or not. Luncheon with our well-known Consul, Mr. Drummond Hay, and a ride into the country, completed my short visit to Africa. The country seemed to me largely waste, covered with a low evergreen scrub, with intervals of pasture in which the ploughing noses of wild boars had left conspicuous marks.

There was one other feature of the landscape between Tangiers and Gibraltar which interested and surprised me much, and that was the comparative nearness and the grandeur of the Atlas range of mountains. Whatever of African desert might lie behind that great barrier to the South, it was evident that there was a wide belt of glorious country between the Atlas and the Mediterranean coast, which, now under the barbarous and desolating government of the Mohammedan Sultan of Morocco, might have been the home of a rich and happy population. One cannot help speculating in this, as in many other cases, how different the course of European-African history might have been if Rome had never conquered Carthage, and if a Semitic race, full of genius, of enterprise, and of the spirit of commerce, had been allowed to develop a peculiar but a splendid civilization all along the northern shores of the African Continent.

Our passage from Gibraltar to Malta was uneventful, and I was glad to renew my acquaintance with the magnificent palaces of the old Knights, as well as to enjoy the hospitality of the new Governor, General the

Hon. Sir Patrick Stewart, who was an uncle of Lord Blantyre. He invited me to stay with him in the charming villa of San Antonio, embowered in fine orange-groves and other lovely evergreens. In company with his bevy of handsome and charming daughters, I rode all over the island to notable spots of interest, among others to St. Paul's Bay, at which a faithful tradition has fixed the scene of the Apostolic shipwreck. After a few days thus agreeably spent, we proceeded on our journey eastward.

I was bitterly disappointed when my eyes first lighted upon Greece. I had been full of expectation. In leaving Malta we had seen, far off, the magnificent white cone of Mount Etna breaking a cloudless sky to the north. We had passed the southern capes of Italy so distantly that the aerial colours of the Mediterranean had space to cover all local defects, and the faint tints of pink and blue could be interpreted by all that the memory or the imagination might hold of that fair land. But when we found ourselves close to the southern points of the Morea, it seemed to me that barrenness was not the word to describe the aspect of those promontories. I did not see a green thing on which a goat might live. Utter nakedness and desolation was the character of all I saw, and the hills were not even fine in form or grand in size. Burnt by the sun and blasted by the wind, they seemed to me the very abomination of desolation. The island of Syra, at which we stopped, was only a little better, with a considerable town built upon a conical hill, and covering it from base to crown. On landing, however, I was immediately struck by the beauty of the people—at least, of the men. With one man who was standing on the quay I was so impressed that I find an elaborate description of him in my journal, with the conclusion that he might have personated ideally any one of the greatest heroes of the Greek race. As we passed up the gulf which separates Attica from the Morea, and as we passed

the Cape of Sunium, with the remains of its columnar temple, I was glad to see that the elements of a really beautiful landscape were opening up before us, an impression fully confirmed when at last we anchored in the Piræus. The drive through the plain to Athens interested me much from its extensive olive-groves. But it was not until we reached Athens, and went out on the balcony of the hotel, that the singular beauty of the site burst upon me. I call it singular, because there is nothing else in Europe the least like it. It is a beauty that curiously suits its history. It is not majestic or imperial. There is nothing about it that suggests the centre of a wide dominion, or even of a considerable State. The plain that lies below it, and separates the range of Parnes on the west from that of Hymettus on the east, is but a limited area, and has nothing of the vastness of the Campagna of Rome. The mountains are lovely, but not majestic, and are so near as to give a sense of limitation to the whole scene.

I had never realized what a very small country belonged to the Athenian republic in its most glorious days, until I saw the close contiguity of the hills of the Peloponnesus, all of them belonging to rival and often antagonistic States. Of course, all the more illustrious and wonderful becomes the metropolitan rank which Athens attained in the history of the human intellect, so that in literature, philosophy, and art it became a veritable capital of the world. Its situation did indeed lend itself to one great source of political dominion—namely, naval power. Among the most beautiful features in the landscape are the far-penetrating and complicated lines of the immortal Gulf of Salamis. Close at hand appears the harbour of the Piræus, which was an admirable haven for such ships as the ancient triremes. Then, above and beyond this memorable inlet, yet at no great distance, rises out of the sea the whole range of the northern coast of the Morea. The meeting of the sea and land along varied and complicated shores, with bays and

caples and islands near enough to be distinguishable from one unvaried line, must always be beautiful, and this is one special feature in the view from Athens. The comparative smallness of the scale of the whole scene, especially when mentally contrasted with the crowded and memorable events with which it is inseparably associated, comes upon one with an absorbing wonder. From the more distant promontories of Sparta and the mountains above the mysterious Mycenæ in the south, to the dark hill which was the capital of Corinth on the west, the whole horizon of the Peloponnesus is comprehended within a mere turning of the eye. So much respecting the view from Athens; the view of Athens, when standing on the plain below, is not less striking and peculiar. The rocky hill of the Acropolis is just high enough to lift its majestic temple of the Parthenon above every other object in the landscape near it, whilst not too high to dwarf one of the greatest triumphs of human art under the dominance of any oppressive mountain. Hymettus is far enough away to be bathed always in the aerial hues of that sunny climate, and to afford an atmospheric background of blues and purples to set off the rich golden yellows which time brings out on the white marble of the majestic columns. When any rays of the setting sun strike upon the Parthenon, and when Hymettus behind is in purple shadows, the effect is lovely beyond the power of painting to express.

At no period of my life was I strong enough to stand the fatigues and exposure which were inseparable from such travelling as was alone possible then in the wilder parts of Greece, where generally there were no roads and no inns. I therefore was content with a good knowledge of Athens itself, and with such short excursions from it as could be easily made. We drove one day to Eleusis, a lovely drive through a depression in the Parnes range, into another valley opening on the sea. Above-ground there were no

remains worth seeing of the ancient temples which had been connected with the mysteries of Greek worship. I saw nothing but a miserable village, with some peasant women who were more like moving mummies than living creatures. But I was well repaid by the nearer view of the beautiful shores of Salamis, and the intricate curves in which it winds along the shores of the Morea, of the Isthmus of Corinth, and of Attica. On our return drive to Athens, looking eastward, and with the low sun behind us, we had a magnificent view of the Acropolis, and of the Parthenon gleaming in golden yellows against the purples of Hymettus.

Another excursion I took from Athens was farther afield, and not quite so easy. It was to ascend to the summit of Mount Pentelicus, as I knew that sites of the highest interest were thence visible, which otherwise I should not see. We drove along a tolerable road to the base of the mountain, and then made the best of our way to the top on foot. In ascending I saw nothing of interest except, high up, the impression of a wolf's tracks upon the frozen snow, and the old quarries out of which the famous Pentelic marble had been taken. These quarries formed a striking object, from the beautiful colouring of the ancient surfaces of rock, and from the knowledge that we were looking at the beds out of which the Parthenon had been hewn, and all the splendid temples for which Attica was famous. No wood of any size or beauty, nothing but a mere scrub of evergreen bushes, clothed even the lower slopes of the mountain, and near the summit it was almost absolutely bare. Even in December the sun was hot upon the southern face by which we ascended, but when we reached the top we found ourselves exposed to a strong and piercing wind from a whole horizon of snowy mountains to the north and north-east. Undoubtedly the view was splendid, and one of absorbing historical interest. At our feet was the narrow border of plain, between the hills and the sea, which was the site of Marathon. Even the

famous mound, said to have been heaped over the dead after that memorable conflict, was distinctly visible. The winding shores where the sea interpenetrates the land along the Gulf of Volo, between the long island of Eubœa and the mainland of Greece, were backed by the splendid ranges by which Thessaly is traversed or enclosed, and which, farther north, pass into that famous land which gave birth to the Macedonian Phalanx, and therewith founded one of the greatest empires the world has ever seen.

Here again, as at Athens, it was impossible not to be struck with the small geographical area occupied by such memorable names, which was the home of tribes which did much to civilize as well as merely to conquer the world. I could have stood long on that summit, until every line of it had been engraved on my memory, if I had dared to do so. But heated by the steep ascent in a blazing sun, I felt quite cut through by the bitterly icy wind, and I was soon driven back behind the shelter of the crest, and compelled to retrace my steps to the foot of the mountain. There was but one fault in that glorious view—the usual one all over the South of Europe, and that was the bare brown colour of all the plains, whilst any forests on the mountains were either wanting or were scanty and inconspicuous. But in all other respects the landscape which frames Marathon and Thermopylæ is as beautiful as its interest is intense. It was worth the severe bronchial cold which I did not escape, from the exposure to such sudden passages from great heat to extreme cold, and which confined me for several days entirely to our rooms in Athens. As, however, those rooms commanded a splendid view of Salamis and the Peloponnesus, I was not ill off, whilst one night a house very near us took fire, and the ruddy glow thrown by the flames on the range of Parnes produced effects of curious beauty.

But the whole of my time in Athens was not spent in looking at scenery and sites. I made the acquaint-

ance of our Minister at King Otho's Court—Sir Edmund Lyons, that able and energetic sailor who was destined ten years later to be the Commander of the British Fleet in the Black Sea during the Crimean War, and without whose ceaseless vigilance and forethought the siege of Sebastopol, resting as it did entirely on a naval base, could never have been conducted. Sir Edmund Lyons is the only man who ever reminded me of the descriptions and paintings of Nelson. Small in person, with a curious combination of gentleness and latent force in his expression, his address was charming. His daughter, then Miss Minnie Lyons, a very clever and agreeable woman, did the honours of his house; whilst his son, Mr. Bickerton Lyons, was beginning to develop those great diplomatic abilities and qualifications which at a later date made him, as Lord Lyons, the able representative of the British Government in France during many critical years.

Besides enjoying the interesting conversation and hospitality of this remarkable family, we were admitted, under the wing of the British Embassy, to seats in the Diplomatic Gallery at a very curious performance. We had arrived in Greece at a very critical moment of its political history. The strange superstition was then universal that new communities just relieved from barbarism, and altogether inorganic in their own nature, could be governed only under the full-blown Parliamentary system which has been the growth of centuries in England. A constituent Assembly, or House of Commons, had been called together, and in due form had been opened by a speech from the Throne. In stereotyped form, also, an answer to this speech had been issued as an address, and the debate was to come off on a day soon after we arrived. The scene was most curious. A considerable number of the deputies were in the common European dress, amongst whom was Mavrocordato, an illustrious name in the Greek War of Independence. He was Speaker, or President of the Assembly. But the great majority of the

Assembly were men clad in the white kilts and sheep-skin coats of the Greek or Albanian dress. In large proportion they were fine and handsome men, and the scene was curious and striking. Of course they had no idea of any rules or order of debate, and any number of them were on their legs at once shouting and gesticulating with all the excitement of their Southern natures. Poor Mavrocordato was armed with nothing but a little tinkling bell, which he kept continually ringing, in a vain endeavour to secure some order in the debate. The deputies had no idea of taking the speech from the Throne in the order of its sentences. One man attacked it in the middle, another near the end, whilst a third covered the whole of it with a few words. Mavrocordato kept repeating over and over again two words only—the first I ever heard and understood in modern Greek; their simple object was to insist that the speech must be taken ‘paragraph by paragraph’ in regular order as they occurred. ‘Paragraphon pros paragraphon,’ he kept repeating, whenever a moment’s interval in the noise enabled his voice to be heard. I do not recollect that any progress was made during the time I was able to wait, and when I left, the Assembly was apparently in helpless and hopeless confusion.

A comical incident occurred during this visit to the Greek Assembly, which afforded us great amusement at the time. It so happens that both my elder brother, who died in 1836, and myself, although the children of dark-haired parents, were born with hair of a brilliant golden-red colour. In my childhood I had always been accustomed to hear red hair spoken of with some disparagement, and I used to be much amused, and sometimes a little indignant, at a familiar illustration which was common in the Scottish Church controversy—namely, that of a congregation rejecting a presentee for no better reason than because he had red hair. But now here—in this eye of Greece, this ancient centre of all taste for beauty—my time of

revenge had come. Howson mingled among the deputies, and engaged them in such conversation as was possible between a Cantab, familiar only with classical Greek, pronounced in the barbarous forms of Anglican scholarship, and men who still use as a living language the glorious tongue of Plato and of Aristotle. One of the deputies, seeing that Howson had been sitting with me, and pointing to me with his finger, asked who I was. Howson told him that I was a young Scotsman, travelling for health and instruction, and that I had a great interest in seeing Greece. 'How does he dye his hair to produce such a colour?' asked the deputy. Howson told him that the colour was not produced by a dye, but was purely natural. 'Don't tell me that,' said the deputy. 'Nature never made anything so beautiful as that hair.' This was a view of red hair that was quite new to me. No doubt such colouring is unknown in Greece or in any part of the Levant. But absolute novelty in any feature of the human person is not always agreeable, so that the opinion of that Greek deputy was afterwards an occasional comfort to me under less favourable appreciations in my own Northern latitudes.

I was very sorry to leave Athens. Its charms did not wane, but grew upon us. Its beauty and interest seemed inexhaustible. We left it by a route which, for the first day at least, was one of surpassing glory. A steamer from the Piræus took passengers for the west to the head of the Gulf of Salamis, and landed them on the shore of the Isthmus of Corinth. There horses or mules were provided, and it was necessary to ride across the Isthmus and along its western shore, to its northern junction with the mainland of Greece. The beauty of the Gulf of Salamis seemed greater the more we saw of it. In riding across the Isthmus, we rode, of course, across the ground which used to be crowded by all the sons of Hellas in the tumult of the Isthmian games.

Nothing could be more impressive than the contrast

between the present, and the brooding memories of the past. Those memories were not without some silent but striking witnesses. We passed a few still standing columns of a very ancient and almost archaic form of Doric architecture. But the whole surface of the Isthmus was one unvaried desolation, unadorned even by trees, and covered only by a low scrub of uninteresting evergreen bushes. We stopped at the wretched village which is all that represents the ancient city of Corinth, and I tried to ascend the Acrocorinthus; but in that clear air the height of hills is deceptive, and I found that I had no time to reach the top. Resuming the saddle at Corinth, we rode along the Isthmus, through the splendour of a glorious sunset, with the mountains of the Morea in shadow, of an intense purple, and those of the Olympian ranges to the north in tints of brilliant rose and gold. The waters of the Gulf of Patras to the west reflected all the colours of the sky, with edgings of opal along the receding shores. During all that long ride the only living thing I saw was, appropriately enough, the bird of Minerva. On the top of a little rock, so close to the bridle-track, and sitting so absolutely still, that I thought it must be somehow disabled, I saw a lovely little owl staring at me with its yellow eyes. But on my dismounting to try to catch it, the bird darted off into the deepest shadow of the bush. It was nightfall before we reached the point off which the steamer was anchored under the northern shore, and we could only see her by her lights. Hailing her to send her boats, we got on board, thus closing with a day of surpassing beauty my visit to Greece.

It was at Corinth that I finally parted with Howson. He went farther east, and our connection was ended. He was an excellent man, and I derived much benefit from his knowledge of books.

Next morning, on our return voyage to Malta, as we passed down the whole of the Gulf of Patras, the scenery declined in interest and in beauty. The

northern hills of the Morea were naked and without striking forms. The ranges of Olympus were fine, but far off, with bare, sunburnt, low ground near the sea. At one point only my interest was awakened by a little scattered town of white houses on the shore, which was pointed out to me as Mesolonghi, the spot where Byron closed his short and brilliant but deplorable career. His final devotion to a great cause, and his willingness to sacrifice his life to it, were at least redeeming features of which it was pleasant to be reminded.

From Malta we took the first steamer to Naples, where I found my father with his wife, and my sister, who had come from England. Advising him strongly not to think of wintering anywhere but at Rome, I at once returned there myself, taking the route by sea to Civita Vecchia, and was soon after rejoined by my family, with whom I spent my second winter in that great centre of inexhaustible interest and beauty. As before, I did not go much into society, but made a few friendships which I valued. Foremost among these was that with the eminent American sculptor, Story, and his wife and family. They lived in one of the finest old Roman palaces, on the staircase of which there was a magnificent sculptured lion, and they gave pleasant dinners and evening entertainments. He had all the great charm (to me) of highly-cultured Americans, with the added charm which belongs to the artistic world. The worst of such friendships made in Rome is that they are cut off by departure from it. Those who settle there every winter generally spend the summer among the Italian or Swiss hills, and pay but rare and passing visits to England. The result is that even great friendships made at Rome do not continue. This is the case even with friendships between fellow-countrymen. Men and women belonging to widely different sets in the immense whirlpools of society at home may be thrown together in Rome, and pleasant intimacies be formed ;

but these are dissolved like soap-bubbles into thin air when the opportunities of meeting are ended. Several of these occurred in my case—associations with people whom I greatly liked, but whom I never met again in life.

There was, however, one friendship I made that winter in Rome which belonged only too much to this class, but which, in some measure at least, I was able to prolong. This was my friendship with a very remarkable woman, the celebrated mathematician, Mrs. Somerville. Her singular simplicity and modesty of character and conversation, completely masking her brilliant intellectual powers, were a perpetual astonishment and an irresistible attraction to all who met her. Small and inconspicuous in person, she had refined features, and must have been pretty when she was young. When I met her she must have been well past sixty, and was going about with two not very youthful daughters. Many years had passed since she burst upon the world with an English translation of one of the most profound and difficult mathematical works of the century—the ‘*Mécanique Celeste*’ of the great Laplace. The scientific world was taken by surprise, and all the savants of London, including Lord Brougham, were at her feet. She was dined and fêted as no woman had ever been, or had equally deserved to be. But no spoiling could move that gentle little woman from her quiet and dignified equanimity. She was as simple as a child. With no obvious look of power in her face, she had that inwardness of expression in her eyes which comes to all who habitually dwell in the higher regions of abstract thought. But she was fond of society, went much out, and did not at all seek to conceal her interest in even the most trivial of its concerns. A cousin of mine, J. F. Campbell (of Islay), had a droll example of this. He also had met her in Rome the year before my acquaintance with her. She was very kind to him, as a handsome, agreeable young Scotsman, and he gained some intimacy with her.

Sitting next to her one evening at dinner, he noticed that quite suddenly she fell into a profound fit of absence of mind. She seemed to see or to hear nothing. He was too shy to disturb meditations which he could not doubt were connected with high and difficult subjects of calculation. He continued, therefore, in respectful silence. But when he saw her suddenly awake, and begin to hear and to observe, he said to her: 'Pray do not think me impertinent, Mrs. Somerville, if I ask you what you were thinking of for some little time, for I could not but see that you were not here, but somewhere else.' 'Would ye like to know?' said Mrs. Somerville, with an arch expression in her eyes, and with an accentuated Scottish pronunciation, which lent itself to her sense of fun. 'Very much,' replied my cousin. 'Well, then, I'll tell ye. I was just thinking of a—new bonnet.' My cousin and she equally enjoyed the joke, for she saw the inference he had drawn, and was only too delighted to con-found it.

It may be well to relate here an explanation which Mrs. Somerville gave to me of her own literary history, not only as an interesting anecdote of a very remarkable woman, but as an indication of the real nature of such phenomenal powers as she possessed. I was very curious to know how she first came to discover them herself. Of course, in the present day, when there are women's colleges, and even women Senior Wranglers, no such question can arise. But in the days of Mrs. Somerville's youth, and in my own youth, women had no opportunity of learning mathematics. One day I put the question direct to Mrs. Somerville. 'Well,' she said, 'I'll tell ye that. An elder brother of mine had a tutor, and one day, when I was about, I think, twelve years old, I happened to find a little book on his table which I had the curiosity to open and look into. I was surprised to see single letters of the alphabet—*x*, *y*, *z*, and others—printed all over the pages, together with lines and crosses between them. I took

the book to my brother, and asked him the meaning of these signs. He said it was no use his trying to explain them to me, as girls never could understand algebra, which was the name for this branch of knowledge. It was a science for men, and not for women, so I had better give up any attempt of the kind. I was piqued by this answer of my brother, and determined to make another attempt by another way. So, watching for an opportunity, I got hold of the book which had so excited my curiosity, and took it, not to my brother, but to his tutor. He was very kind to me, and began to explain the significance of the algebraic signs. I at once felt able to understand his explanation, and followed him with delight, nor ever after did I feel the slightest difficulty in understanding anything in the nature of mathematical reasoning.'

This curious story arrested all my attention at the time, and has recurred to me again and again in later life. It bears directly on many problems of psychology and many of the facts of history. Men and women are born with an average equipment of innate capacities and powers—an average largely determined, no doubt, by an average organization, an average of common traditions and hereditary habits. But every now and then, at rare intervals, some one man or woman is born with some quite exceptional gift, or gifts, of intellect. When these are numerous and well combined, we have those extraordinary beings who, at distant intervals, have given a new direction to the world. But, short of this, there are many cases where the special power is a solitary gift, standing pretty nearly alone, or combined only with very ordinary aptitudes in other spheres of thought. The mathematical faculty seems to me to be, of all others, a separable and an innate mental power, occurring frequently in various degrees of congenital power and strength. Yet it appears very often to stand alone, if it be true, as I have heard it stated on good authority,

that the proportion of men who have been Senior Wranglers at Cambridge, and who have become otherwise distinguished in after-life, is by no means considerable. The comparative want or feebleness of this power is as marked as its occasional exceptional activity. My own consciousness had always told me that I have it not, inasmuch that abstract numerical relations have ever been to me a subject from which I instinctively recoil, admitting, however, all the time, and wondering at, the processes of pure thought which have yielded such splendid and sure results in our knowledge of the mechanical facts and laws of Nature.

As in the former year, I returned northward by posting to Florence and Bologna, enjoying much the very picturesque scenery to the north of the Roman Campagna and on the southern borders of Tuscany. Steep and sudden glens, with sides wooded often by ilex and pine, and little farms and old castles on the crests of hills, with vistas of the blue Apennines behind, made a paradise of artistic subjects. As in the previous year I had seen the Lombard Plain with its cities on the northern side, at the foot of the Alps, I wished now to see its southern side at the foot of the Apennines. We therefore posted from Bologna by that route, visiting Modena and Parma in succession. At Parma I was delighted with the famous frescoes of Correggio, especially those in the little room where the most charming 'putti' play in and out of spaces left among trellised vines. The greater frescoes on the cupolas and spandrils of churches are no doubt very wonderful, as exhibitions of a mastery of drawing and perspective which has never been equalled since. But I confess that to me the general effect is unpleasing. Tangles of human legs and bodies, foreshortened in every attitude of bending and of extension, never can be really beautiful, however wonderful the artistic ingenuity and power expended upon them. There was one object on this southern area of the

great Lombard Plain which above all others attracted my interest, and had in a great measure determined my route. This was the Bridge of Lodi.

As a boy I had been much under the glamour of Napoleon's military genius, despite the scathing denunciations of Mr. Pitt, some of which I had by heart. The action in which he forced the Bridge of Lodi is one of the most famous and extraordinary of his immortal Italian campaigns, and if it be true, as he himself is reported to have said, that it was after this action that he first began to dream of a future beyond the visions of mere military renown, then that bridge is one of the most interesting spots in Europe. I was not disappointed with it, seeing that its whole position, structure, and aspect make the wonder of Napoleon's success seem fateful, and almost miraculous. The bridge is a very long one, very narrow, and erected on wooden piles driven into the bed of the river. Every inch of it could be swept from end to end by a few guns planted on the southern bank to command it, yet, in face of the Austrian army, Napoleon, personally leading his men, carried that bridge by assault, and gained a splendid and a telling victory. Fuller knowledge of Napoleon's later character, cruel and villainous when he was drunk with power, has long destroyed the glamour under which I lay in early life. But if there ever was a moment in his career when genius and courage were alone so conspicuous as to challenge universal admiration, assuredly it was in that memorable campaign in Italy which saw his astounding victory at the Bridge of Lodi.

Having crossed the Alps by the Simplon in 1843, I now wished to see the Splügen, more famous for its scenery. Accordingly, passing again through Milan, we posted to the Lake of Como, and on the 30th of April, my twenty-first birthday, we slept at the southern foot of the pass, and next day we crossed it. It is indeed a splendid bit of engineering, and the grandeur of the scenery is beyond comparison greater than that of

the Simplon. It was interesting to me to think that every torrent on the northern side was to be counted among the head-waters of the Rhine, and at one point I was amazed to see the ultimate parent of that famous river contained in a cleft of rock so narrow that it was spanned from side to side by one tall pine that had been blown down on the nearer bank. But the precipices from which those torrents came, and the ragged forests through which they rushed, were less interesting and less beautiful than the rich and smiling valleys into which they fell, and through which they pursued their gentler course.

No part even of happy Switzerland struck me as happier than all the slopes and valleys which collectively are known as the Rheinwald. We posted through it with delight to the Lake of Zurich, and, once more embarking on the Rhine, followed it to Cologne. From thence we went to Brussels, as I wished much to see the field of Waterloo. Few famous fields of battle have had a plan so simple and so easily understood. The two ridges of slightly elevated country, with a shallow depression between them which separated the two armies; the hollow ways through which the roads passed behind the British position; the farmhouse and orchard walls of Hougomont, which were so long and so fiercely contested, were all just as they had been twenty-nine years before. The leaden splashes which marked the rain of French bullets were still conspicuous on the brick surfaces which had been exposed to it. The immense conical mound, surmounted by the Belgian Lion, which has been erected on the Allied position, is in itself an ugly object. But the bird's-eye view from the top of it enables one to see what a decisive effect must have been produced upon Napoleon's already discouraged armies by the sound of the Prussian guns, and the approach of old Blücher on their right flank and rear. In passing through the village of Waterloo, I was amused by seeing a very pretty young weeping-willow growing in one of

the cottage gardens by the road, and being told that it marked the burial-place, not of one of our heroes in that bloody fight, but only of one of the legs of Lord Paget, which he lost in a gallant but unfortunate cavalry charge, that charge of which the Duke of Wellington is reported to have said when he saw the blunder, 'Either Lord Paget or I must go home.'

I confess I looked and gazed on the field of Waterloo with an interest more intense than could possibly be connected with any mere military triumph. In my boyhood my mind had been saturated with the sentiments, with the policy, and with the very words, of the younger Pitt. I called to mind on that spot the splendid and indignant denunciations of the tyranny of Napoleon with which he animated the Parliaments of England, and the listening Sovereigns of Europe, in urging on them a policy of combined action against the usurper. I called to mind how long and weary, yet how steady and determined, his gallant and pre-scient struggle was; how under the tremendous blows of Jena and Austerlitz his spirit never quailed, although his physical strength gave way; and how he died with 'Oh, my country!' on his lips. There, on these two low ridges of farming land, there round two commonplace farm-houses, Hougomont and La Belle Alliance, the policy of Mr. Pitt, only nine years after his death, had been at last triumphant, and the united armies of Europe, under the great English captain, had advanced step by step from the lines of Torres Vedras, till on the fields then before me they had pulled the conqueror of Europe to the ground. It may and it must be right to 'lay our earthly fancies down.' But there is one of them which it is sometimes very difficult to abandon, and that is a longing that some great man had lived just long enough to see the full triumph of his great ideas, and the realization of hopes with which he had inspired the world. This earthly fancy was certainly not realized in the case of Pitt. But in the sphere of military action it was realized in

the case of Wellington. The deference shown to him by the Allied Sovereigns in Paris, when the full fruits of Waterloo had been grasped and secured, was but a presage of the universal honour which in his own country followed that 'good grey head which all men knew,' till, in the fulness of age and honours, I saw him followed to his grave in St. Paul's with the lamentation of a mighty nation.