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TRAVELS IN THREE CONTINENTS.

CHAPTER I.

From New York to the Frontier of Spain.

To London—In Paris—Anniversary of the *Coup d'etat*—Glimpse of Bordeaux—The Grotto of Lourdes—Pau and the Pyrenees—Bayonne and Biarritz.

ACCOMPANIED by a member of the senior class in Amherst College, whom my proposed outline of travel had allured from his studies at the expense of delaying his graduation, at 6:30 on Wednesday morning, November 21, 1888, I sailed for Liverpool, arriving on the seventh day. I contrast that flight with my first voyage to the same port early in 1863, which was fourteen days in length, and advertised in the English papers as a remarkably quick passage.

Five hours after our arrival in Liverpool we were in London, which was enveloped in a dense fog during the forty-eight hours of our stay. The business which called us there having been transacted, we hastened to Paris by way of Folkestone and Boulogne. How charming Kent looked as we rode through! The trees not yet denuded of leaves, the farmers plowing, the sheep and cattle on the green hillsides made a true English pastoral scene.

The British Channel, generally vicious, was smooth as "a painted ocean." The walk about Paris on Saturday evening showed the same smiling, gossiping, pleasure loving, flip-pant city as of yore. Sunday was bright, clear, and the air crisp as a New England October day, yet it was a time of apprehension to the citizens, the thirty-seventh anniversary of the *coup d'etat*. A procession took place under the management of the radical municipal council of Paris, ostensibly

to strew flowers on the tomb of Alphonse Baudin, a deputy who was shot down upon the barricades on the day when Louis Napoleon transformed the Republic into an Empire.

The procession, which was more than two miles in length, occupied two hours in passing a given point, and a chain of police kept back the crowds estimated at a half million, distributed along the route. Those who were marching did so, for the most part, in absolute silence. There were no arms; there was no instrumental music, though the Marseillaise hymn was frequently sung with spirit. Occasionally there was rillery between the crowds and those in the parade, and cries were heard of "*Vive Boulanger!*" and the counter cries of "*A bas Boulanger!*"

None of those terrible men with blue blouses, nor of the "unwashed" *sans culottes*, who have figured in mobs, took part in this procession. The only hostile demonstrations were incited by the raising of a socialistic red flag. For a moment the uproar was tremendous, the cries incoherent and furious, the attitudes menacing; men, women, and children fled like sheep; but the police seized the flag and an obnoxious placard, and the tumult subsided.

In the town where I was reared lived a retired sea captain who told me of some of his adventures at Bordeaux, and from then until I visited it the name has had a witching interest for me. I found a city with a quarter of a million of population, connected by water with both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic; its streets adorned with noble buildings; its commerce second in volume in France, sustaining the closest commercial relations to the United States, and having a romantic history.

Its wines have made it famous. A writer divides them into five classes as to quality. Half of the best goes to England; Paris takes a second, third, and fourth rate, with a small amount of the best; Russia, considerable of the best; Holland, the second and third; and the United States, the third, fourth, and fifth, with a limited quantity of the best.

When Benjamin Franklin went from the United States to represent the Colonies struggling for freedom, the sailing vessel landed him in Bordeaux, suggesting one of the most

important events in the history of this country, for the powerful intervention of France in its behalf depended much upon the influence of Franklin. One of the striking spectacles in Bordeaux is the miles upon miles of shipping, displaying every flag in the civilized world.

From a commercial city to the chief modern seat of alleged miraculous powers in western Europe, is indeed a transition, but we experienced it after traveling one hundred and sixty-seven miles to Lourdes. For fifty miles after leaving Bordeaux one could easily have imagined himself journeying in North Carolina, for the eye could see nothing but pines, interspersed with cottages and cultivated grounds. Such scenery is monotonous and desolate on a cloudy day; but when sunlight illumines earth and sky, and the warm breath of the pines finds its way to the face of the traveler, if not diversified, it is far from dull.

Gradually the face of the country became more hilly when, surmounting green valleys upon whose sides sheep and cattle were grazing, arose suddenly above the horizon the long line of the Pyrenees, snow-clad and resplendent in the full flood of sunlight, with here and there a fleecy cloud resting upon their loftiest peaks. A passenger in our compartment, a medical professor in the University of Paris, as the wonderful panorama greeted us, exclaimed: "This is my country! I was born in the Hautes-Pyrenees."

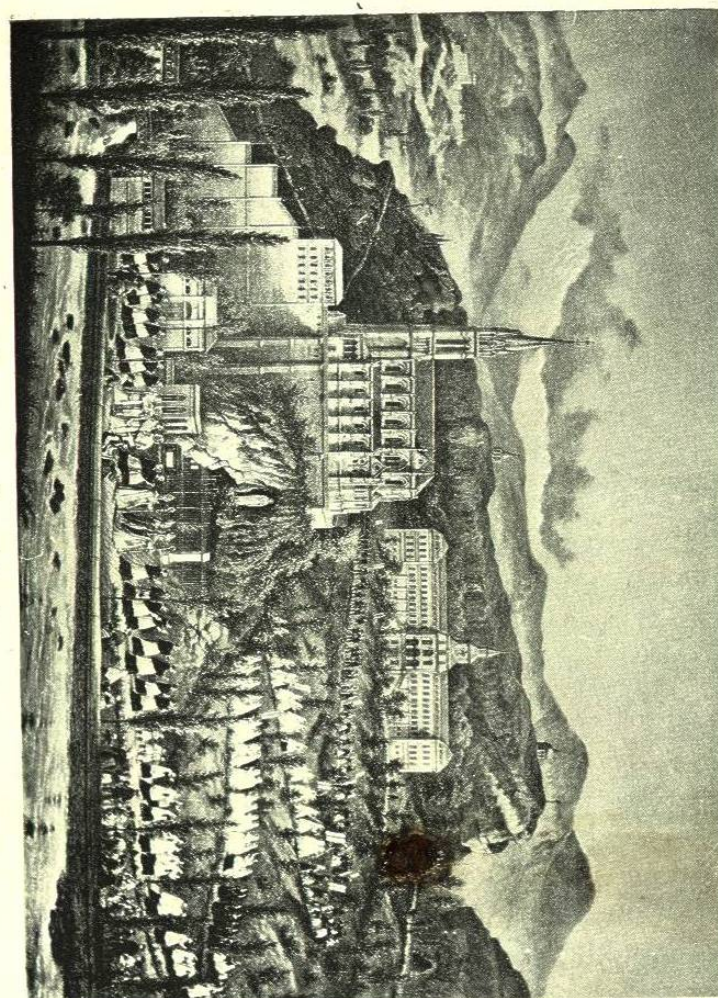
Lourdes is in the heart of the Pyrenees, surrounded by mountains, the highest of which glisten by day like ice palaces, are transformed at sunset into burnished pyramids of gold, and into huge lamps of silver when the moonlight whitens them. From a hundred elevations in and around the valley, varying in height from three hundred to three thousand feet, views may be had, any one of which, were it not for the wealth of splendor lavished upon the whole region of the Pyrenees, would make the place attractive to lovers of the beautiful, and a magnet even to those who worship the sublime. From some of these heights I beheld landscapes whose aspect could be so changed as to challenge recognition by a difference of not more than fifty yards in the point of view. We saw remains of walls built by the Romans, and

visited a ruined castle which withstood a protracted siege in the time of Charlemagne.

Till about thirty years ago Lourdes had scarcely been heard of; but in the year 1858, eighteen times between February and July, the Holy Virgin, it is alleged, appeared in a grotto at the foot of a rock, to a little peasant girl by the name of Bernadette Soubirous. The child was twelve years old, and her business that of feeding hogs. The substance of what it is claimed was said to her is: "I do not promise to make you happy in this world, but in the other. I desire that many people shall come here. You shall pray for sinners. You shall kiss the ground for sinners. Penitence! Penitence! Penitence! Go, tell the priests that a chapel must be built here. I desire that pilgrims may come here in procession. Go and drink of the fountain, and bathe there. You shall eat of the grass which is near it. I am the Immaculate Conception."

No one except Bernadette could see the vision, but one hundred and fifty thousand visited the grotto during the six months after the first of the visions. When subsequent trances occurred, multitudes of these were present watching the child, whose face, when she said the Virgin appeared, "seemed to be glorified by a holy light and beauty entirely unnoticeable at other times, and which continued till the vision fled." To prove her identity, the Virgin caused a spring of water to burst from the earth. It is certain that a spring, previously unnoticed, exists. Cures followed the drinking of the water and bathing in it, and such crowds flocked to the place that the authorities, not believing in the reality of the visions or of the cures, forbade persons to approach the grotto, and would not allow votive offerings placed in the church. But the people continued to come, the bishop of the diocese of Tarbes encouraging them.

Various medical men and other prominent citizens certified to the genuineness of the miracle. Finally Pope Pius IX was persuaded to sanction the opinions of the bishop. Revenues flowed to the church, the town grew rapidly, hotels and pensions were called for to accommodate the pilgrims, thirty or forty thousand sometimes arriving in one day. A handsome church and many other buildings have been constructed.



Characteristic View of Lourdes.

a square laid out, an image erected representing the Virgin as she appeared to the girl, and roads cut through the hills and rocks. We found the church filled with offerings from those helped or cured, or whose friends had been benefited. The grotto, which was formerly called the Grotte de Massavielle, is known as the Grotte de la Vierge (the Virgin).

Kneeling before the image of the Virgin were many pilgrims drinking the water, bottling and carrying it away, and some, both men and women, with outstretched arms, praying with intense earnestness. The town contains the ordinary proportion of cripples, lunatics, sick children, and more than the average number of persistent beggars.

As we were dining in the hotel a nun with attractive manners advanced to the table and inquired if we spoke English. As I was responding in the affirmative she gave us to understand that she could not speak a word of English, and began by signs to beseech us for money to assist in building a hospital to take care of poor pilgrims, aged and abandoned, and the sick who were brought there to drink and wash themselves in the miraculous fountains. She presented a paper stating that no matter how little we might bestow our names would be inscribed in a special register; that if we gave a thousand francs or more our names, with a title of "Founder," should be engraved in letters of gold on a marble tablet; five hundred francs would give us the title of "Benefactor," a mass would be said once a month in perpetuity, and the poor pray every day for us, and especially would the Blessed Virgin call down upon us the choicest celestial blessings, and God would give it back to us a hundredfold.

We drank of the water at the fountain, but were not a whit the better nor any the worse. It was pure and good, and we brought away a bottle of it.

Only nine miles from Lourdes is Betharram. Its church stands at the foot of a hill, and upon the slope are thirty-two praying places, erected of granite, and from the bottom to the top of the long declivity thirty years ago crowds of pilgrims climbed, many upon their knees, pausing for prayer at each place. Numerous cures were reported, but now Lourdes flourishes and Betharram is almost deserted.

It is so all over Europe under Greek, Roman, Armenian, and Mohammedan forms. The fame of supernatural cures arises, has its brief day, and a new locality or "Home" takes its turn. Similar traditions, connecting alleged supernatural healings with places, living persons, signs, and relics, have a strong foothold in Protestantism.

From Lourdes to Pau is but twenty-four miles, and the railway runs through the valley of the Gave, making a descent of several hundred feet before this fashionable resort is reached. I cannot conceive a more beautiful region for a pedestrian or equestrian tour. The successive villages with their churches, the diversified hill scenery, with occasional mountain views, the Gave meandering like a silver thread, and occasionally descending rapidly in short cataracts, form a charming picture.

Pau is a watering place, much affected by English and Americans. From the river rises sharply the hill on which the hotels and the city are situated, being more than two hundred and fifty feet in perpendicular height. The square is reached by a winding road. From the chief hotels, Gassion and De France, the western Pyrenees for a distance of fifty or sixty miles are in full view. In the center stand the Pic du Midi de Bigorre in the east, and the Pic du Midi d'Ossau in the west. This splendid view is by some compared to that from the streets of Bern; it does not equal it in grandeur, for the Pyrenees are not sufficiently high and are too near to rival the view of the Bernese Oberland.

The castle, celebrated as the birthplace of Henri of Navarre, is an interesting link between ancient and modern French history. John Calvin, by order of Margaret of Valois, was confined in one of the towers, five of which remain. Had not Calvin been persecuted in France, probably he would not have found his way to Geneva, and the larger part of his history might not have been written. Bernadotte, King of Sweden, was born in Pau, the son of a saddler; he went away as a drummer boy. In the castle are shown fine specimens of Swedish porphyry which he sent while king.

Pau is a delightful place in the winter for the well and those not much indisposed, but too cold and changeable for confirmed invalids.

The situation and fortifications of Bayonne have always made it a place of more than local interest. It is the last important town in France, and in the direct route to Spain. The Adour and Nive come together at this point, three miles from the place where they fall into the Bay of Biscay. They divide the town into three parts, and, with the three bridges, form not only an excellent harbor, but add to the beauty of the city.

After visiting the small but symmetrical cathedral, I explored the fortifications, having a better opportunity for forming an idea of their dimensions than I desired, as I lost my way about sundown and walked two miles in the wrong direction.

The bayonet, now used in every land, takes its name from Bayonne, owing to a circumstance which occurred in 1523. A Basque regiment, in an engagement with the Spaniards, having used up their powder, fastened their knives upon the ends of their muskets and made a successful charge upon the enemy.

It was here that Catherine de' Medici and the Duke of Alva planned the massacre of St. Bartholomew, but when the order was issued by Charles IX, Orthez, the governor of Bayonne, refused to execute it. Pau, where he was born, boasts of the fact to this day.

Five miles from Bayonne is Biarritz, which was the perfection of beauty on the two days that we were there. It is upon the shore of the Bay of Biscay, whose waters were smooth as glass, clear as crystal, and bright as sunrise. The view was limited on the one side by a long line of mountains, fading away in the blue ether in which blended sea and sky enveloped them. The guide directed our eyes to a lofty summit, and said, "France," and pointing to the mountains beyond it, said, "Espagne." Standing among the ruins of an old fort on the promontory of Atalye, we saw the bay, bounded on the right by Cape St. Martin, and on the left by the coast of Spain.

Biarritz has become a fashionable resort; the hotels are among the finest in France. The Empress Eugenie loved the place, having been in the habit of visiting it when a young girl. Her imperial husband and herself occupied an unpretending brick chateau there, now the only "lion" of the place. I should advise every American, who is an enthusiastic lover of natural scenery and traveling for pleasure, to visit Biarritz.