LETTER XXXVII.

HOTEL BYRON.

MY DEAR:--

Here I am, sitting at my window, overlooking Lake Leman. Castle Chillon, with its old conical towers, is silently pictured in the still waters. It has been a day of a thousand. We took a boat, with two oarsmen, and passed leisurely along the shores, under the cool, drooping branches of trees, to the castle, which is scarce a stone's throw from the hotel. We rowed along, close under the walls, to the ancient moat and drawbridge. There I picked a bunch of blue bells, "les clochettes," which were hanging their aerial pendants from every crevice--some blue, some white.

I know not why the old buildings and walls in Europe have this vivacious habit of shooting out little flowery ejaculations and soliloquies at every turn. One sees it along through France and Switzerland, every where; but never, that I remember, in America.

On the side of the castle wall, in a large white heart, is painted the inscription, Liberté et Patrie!

We rowed along, almost touching the castle rock, where the wall ascends perpendicularly, and the water is said to be a thousand feet

deep. We passed the loopholes that illuminate the dungeon vaults, and an old arch, now walled up, where prisoners, after having been strangled, were thrown into the lake.

Last evening we walked over the castle. An interesting Swiss woman, who has taught herself English for the benefit of her visitors, was our cicerone. She seemed to have all the old Swiss vivacity of attachment for "liberté et patrie."

She took us first into the dungeon, with the seven pillars, described by Byron. There was the pillar to which, for protecting the liberty of Geneva, BONNEVARD was chained. There the Duke of Savoy kept him for six years, confined by a chain four feet long. He could take only three steps, and the stone floor is deeply worn by the prints of those weary steps. Six years is so easily said; but to live them, alone, helpless, a man burning with all the fires of manhood, chained to that pillar of stone, and those three unvarying steps! Two thousand one hundred and ninety days rose and set the sun, while seedtime and harvest, winter and summer, and the whole living world went on over his grave. For him no sun, no moon, no star, no business, no friendship, no plans--nothing! The great millstone of life emptily grinding itself away!

What a power of vitality was there in Bonnevard, that he did not sink in lethargy, and forget himself to stone! But he did not; it is said that when the victorious Swiss army broke in to liberate him, they

cried,--

"Bonnevard, you are free!"

"Et Genève?"

"Geneva is free also!"

You ought to have heard the enthusiasm with which our guide told this story!

Near by are the relics of the cell of a companion of Bonnevard, who made an ineffectual attempt to liberate him. On the wall are still seen sketches of saints and inscriptions by his hand. This man one day overcame his jailer, locked him in his cell, ran into the hall above, and threw himself from a window into the lake, struck a rock, and was killed instantly. One of the pillars in this vault is covered with names. I think it is Bonnevard's pillar. There are the names of Byron, Hunt, Schiller, and many other celebrities.

After we left the dungeons we went up into the judgment hall, where prisoners were tried, and then into the torture chamber. Here are the pulleys by which limbs were broken; the beam, all scorched with the irons by which feet were burned; the oven where the irons were heated; and there was the stone where they were sometimes laid to be strangled, after the torture. On that stone, our guide told us, two

thousand Jews, men, women, and children, had been put to death. There was also, high up, a strong beam across, where criminals were hung; and a door, now walled up, by which they were thrown into the lake. I shivered. "'Twas cruel," she said; "'twas almost as cruel as your slavery in America."

Then she took us into a tower where was the oubliette. Here the unfortunate prisoner was made to kneel before an image of the Virgin, while the treacherous floor, falling beneath him, precipitated him into a well forty feet deep, where he was left to die of broken limbs and starvation. Below this well was still another pit, filled with knives, into which, when they were disposed to a merciful hastening of the torture, they let him fall. The woman has been herself to the bottom of the first dungeon, and found there bones of victims. The second pit is now walled up.

"All this," she said, "was done for the glory of God in the good old times."

The glory of God! What has not been done in that name! Yet he keeps silence; patient he watches; the age-long fever of this world, the delirious night, shall have a morning. Ah, there is an unsounded depth in that word which says, "He is long-suffering." This it must be at which angels veil their faces.

On leaving the castle we offered the woman the customary gratuity.

"No;" she would "have the pleasure of showing it to me as a friend." And she ran into a charming little garden, full of flowers, and brought me a bouquet of lilies and roses, which I have had in my room all day.

To-night, after sunset, we rowed to Byron's "little isle," the only one in the lake. O, the unutterable beauty of these mountains--great, purple waves, as if they had been dashed up by a mighty tempest, crested with snow-like foam! this purple sky, and crescent moon, and the lake gleaming and shimmering, and twinkling stars, while far off up the sides of a snow-topped mountain a light shines like a star--some mountaineer's candle, I suppose.

In the dark stillness we rowed again over to Chillon, and paused under its walls. The frogs were croaking in the moat, and we lay rocking on the wave, and watching the dusky outlines of the towers and turrets. Then the spirit of the scene seemed to wrap me round like a cloak.

Back to Geneva again. This lovely place will ever leave its image on my heart. Mountains embrace it. Strength and beauty are its habitation. The Salève is a peculiar looking mountain, striped with different strata of rock, which have a singular effect in the hazy distance; so is the Mole, with its dark marked outline, looking blacker in clear weather, from being set against the snow mountains beyond.

There is one peculiarity about the outline of Mont Blanc, as seen from Geneva, which is quite striking. There is in certain positions the profile of a gigantic head visible, lying with face upturned to the sky. Mrs. F. was the first to point it out to me, calling it a head of Napoleon. Like many of these fanciful profiles, I was some time in learning to see it; and after that it became to me so plain that I wondered I had not seen it before. I called it not Napoleon, however, but as it gained on my imagination, lying there so motionless, cold, and still, I thought of Prometheus on Mount Caucasus; it seemed as if, his sorrows ended, he had sunk at last to a dreamless sleep on that snowy summit. This sketch may, perhaps, give you some faint idea of how such an outline might be formed in one's imagination.

We walked out the other evening, with M. Fazy, to a beautiful place, where Servetus was burned. Soft, new-mown meadow grass carpets it, and a solemn amphitheatre of mountains, glowing in the evening sky, looked down--Mont Blanc, the blue-black Mole, the Saleve! Never was deed done in a more august presence chamber! Ere this these two may have conferred together of the tragedy, with far other thoughts than then.

The world is always unjust to its progressive men. If one fragment of past absurdity cleaves to them, they celebrate the absurdity as a personal peculiarity. Hence we hear so much of Luther's controversial harshness, of Calvin's burning Servetus, and of the witch persecutions of New England.

Luther was the poet of the reformation, and Calvin its philosopher. Luther fused the mass, Calvin crystallized. He who fuses makes the most sensation in his day; he who crystallizes has a longer and wider power. Calvinism, in its essential features, never will cease from the earth, because the great fundamental facts of nature are Calvinistic, and men with strong minds and wills always discover it. The predestination of a sovereign will is written over all things. The old Greek tragedians read it, and expressed it. So did Mahomet, Napoleon, Cromwell. Why? They found it so by their own experience; they tried the forces of nature enough to find their strength. The strong swimmer who breasts the Rhone is certain of its current. But Ranke well said, that in those days when the whole earth was in arms against these reformers, they had no refuge except in exalting God's sovereignty above all other causes. To him who strives in vain with the giant forces of evil, what calm in the thought of an overpowering will, so that will be crowned by goodness! However grim, to the distrusting, looks this fortress of sovereignty in times of flowery ease, yet in times when "the waters roar and are troubled, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof," it has been always the refuge of God's people. All this I say, while I fully sympathize with the causes which incline many fine and beautiful minds against the system.

The wife of De Wette has twice called upon me--a good, plain, motherly, pious old lady as any in Andover. She wanted me to visit her daughter, who, being recently deprived of her only little girl, has since been wholly lost to life. The only thing in which she expressed

any interest was Uncle Tom's Cabin, and she was earnestly desiring to see me. So I went. I found Mrs. De Wette in a charming saloon, looking out upon the botanic gardens. A very beautiful picture of a young lady hung on the wall. "That was my poor Clara," said Mrs. De Wette, "but she is so altered now!"

After a while Clara came in, and I was charmed at a glance--a most lovely creature, in deep mourning, with beautiful manners; so much interested for the poor slaves! so full of feeling, inquiring so anxiously what she could do for them!

"Do ministers ever hold slaves?" she said.

"0, yes; many."

"0! But how can they be Christians?"

"They reason in this way," said I; "they say, 'These people are not fit to take care of themselves; therefore we must hold them, and educate them, till they are fit to be free.'"

"I wish," said she, looking very pretty and fierce, "that they might all be sold themselves, and see how they would like it."

Her husband, who speaks only French, now asked what we were talking about, and she repeated the conversation.

"I would shoot every one of them," said he, with a significant movement.

"Now, see," said Mrs. De Wette, "Clara would sell them, and her husband would shoot them; for my part, I would rather convert them." We all laughed at this sally.

"Ah," said Clara, "the last thing my little darling looked at was the pictures in Uncle Tom; when she came to the death of Eva, she said, 'Now I am weary, I will go to sleep;' and so closed her eyes, and never opened them more."

Clara said she had met the Key in Turin and Milan. The Cabin is made a school reading book in Sardinia, for those who wish to learn English, with explanatory notes in Italian. The feeling here on the continent for the slave is no less earnest than in England and Scotland. I have received most beautiful and feeling letters from many Christians of Switzerland, which I will show you.

I am grieved to say, that there are American propagandists of slavery here, who seem to feel it incumbent on them to recognize this hideous excrescence as a national peculiarity, and to consider any reflection upon it, on the part of the liberty-loving Swiss, as an insult to the American nation. The sophisms by which slaveholding has been justified from the Bible have left their slimy track even here. Alas! is it thus

America fulfils her high destiny? Must she send missionaries abroad to preach despotism?

Walking the other evening with M. Fazy, who is, of course, French in education, we talked of our English literature. He. had Hamlet in French--just think of it. One never feels the national difference so much as in thinking of Shakspeare in French! Madame de Stael says of translation, that music written for one instrument cannot be played upon another. I asked if he had read Milton.

"Yes."

"And how did you like him?"

"0," with a kind of shiver, "he is so cold!"

Now, I felt that the delicate probe of the French mind had dissected out a shade of feeling of which I had often been conscious. There is a coldness about all the luscious exuberance of Milton, like the wind that blows from, the glaciers across these flowery valleys. How serene his angels in their adamantine virtue! yet what sinning, suffering soul could find sympathy in them? The utter want of sympathy for the fallen angels, in the whole celestial circle, is shocking. Satan is the only one who weeps.

"For millions of spirits for his fault amerced,

And from eternal splendors flung."

God does not care, nor his angels. Ah, quite otherwise is God revealed in Him who wept over Jerusalem, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

I went with Mrs. Fazy the other night to call on Mrs. C.'s friend, Pastor C. They were so affectionate, so full of beautiful kindness! The French language sounds sweetly as a language of affection and sympathy: with all its tart vivacity, it has a richness in the gentler world of feeling. Then, in the evening, I was with a little circle of friends at the house of the sister of Merle d'Aubigne, and they prayed and sang together. It was beautiful. The hymn was one on the following of Jesus, similar to that German one of old Godfrey Arnold, which is your favorite. These Christians speak with deep sorrow of our slavery; it grieves, it distresses them, for the American church has been to them a beloved object. They have leaned towards it as a vine inclines towards a vigorous elm. To them it looks incomprehensible that such a thing could gain strength in a free Christian republic.

I feel really sorry that I have had to withdraw so much from proffered kindness here, and to seem unwilling to meet feeling; but so it has been. Yet, to me, apparently so cold, many of these kind Genevese have shown most considerate attention. Fruit and flowers have been sent in anonymously; and one gentleman offered to place his garden at my disposal for walks, adding that, if I wished to be entirely private,

neither he nor his family would walk there. This, I thought, was too much kindness.

One social custom here is new to me. The husband, by marriage, takes the wife's name. Thus M. Fazy, our host, is known as M. Fazy Meyer--Meyer being his wife's name--a thing which at first perplexed me. I was often much puzzled about names, owing to this circumstance.

From the conversation I hear I should think that democracy was not entirely absolute in Switzerland. I hear much about patrician families, particularly at Berne, and these are said to be quite exclusive; yet that the old Swiss fire still burns in Switzerland, I see many indications.

The other day I visited Beautte's celebrated watch and jewelry store, and saw all the process of making watches, from the time the case is cut from a sheet of gold, on through the enamelling, engraving, and finishing. Enamel is metallic paint, burned on in a furnace. Many women are employed in painting the designs. The workmen looked intelligent and thoughtful, like men who can both think and do. Some glimpses showed their sympathy with republicanism--as one should see fire through a closed door.

I have had full reason to observe that difference between Protestant and Catholic cantons on which Horace Greeley commented while here. They are as different as our slave and free states, and in the same

ways. Geneva seems like New England--the country around is well cultivated, and speaks of thrift. But, still, I find no land, however beautiful, that can compare with home--Andover Hill, with its arched elms, its blue distance pointing with spires, its Merrimac crowned with labor palaces, and, above all, an old stone house, brown and queer, &c. Good by.

JOURNAL--(CONTINUED.)

Thursday, July 14. Spent a social evening at Mrs. La V.'s, on the lake shore. Mont Blanc invisible. We met M. Merle d'Aubigne, brother of our hostess, and a few other friends. Returned home, and listened to a serenade to H. from a glee club of fifty performers, of the working men of Geneva. The songs were mostly in French, and the burden of one of them seemed to be in words like these:--

"Travaillons, travaillez,
Pour la liberte!"

Friday, July 15. Mrs. C. and her two daughters are here from Paris. They intend to come to Madame Fazy till we leave.

Saturday, July 16. Our whole company resorted to the lake, and spent

the forenoon on its tranquil waters. If this life seem idle, we remember that there must be valleys between mountains; and as, in those vales, tired mountaineers love to rest, so we, by the silver shore of summer Leman, while away the quiet hours, in this interval, between great mountain epochs Chamouni and Oberland.

Monday, July 18. Weather suspicious. Stowed ourselves and our baggage into our voiture, and bade adieu to our friends and to Geneva.
Ah, how regretfully! From the market-place we carried away a basket of cherries and fruit, as a consolation. Dined at Lausanne, and visited the cathedral and picture gallery, where was an exquisite Eva.
Slept at Meudon.

Tuesday, July 19. Rode through Payerne to Freyburg. Stopped at the Zahringer Hof--most romantic of inns. Our gentlemanly host ushered us forth upon a terrace overhanging the deep gorge of the Saärine, spanned, to the right and left of us, by two immense suspension bridges, one of which seemed to spring from the hotel itself. Ruins of ancient walls and watch towers lined the precipice.

After dinner we visited the cathedral to hear the celebrated organ. The organist performed a piece descriptive of a storm. We resigned ourselves to the illusion. Low, mysterious wailings, swelling, dying away in the distance, seeming at first exceedingly remote, drew gradually near. Fitful sighings and sobbings rose, as of gusts of wind; then low, smothered roarings. Anon came flashes of lightning,

rattling hail, and driving rain, succeeded by bursts of storm, and howlings of a hurricane--fierce, furious, frightful. I felt myself lost in a snow storm in winter, on the pass of Great St. Bernard.

One note there was of strange, terrible clangor--bleak, dark, yet of a lurid fire--that seemed to prolong itself through all the uproar, like a note of doom, cutting its way to the heart as the call of the last archangel. Yes, I felt myself alone, lost in a boundless desert, beyond the abodes of man; and this was a call of terror-stern, savage, gloomy--the call as of fixed fate and absolute despair.

Then the storm died away, in faint and far-off murmurs; and we broke, as it were, from the trance, to find ourselves, not lost, but here among the living. We then drove quietly to Berne.

Wednesday, July 20. Examined, not the lions, but the bears of Berne. It is indeed a city of bears, as its name imports. There are bears on its gates, bears on its fountains, bears in its parks and gardens, bears every where. But, though Berne rejoices in a fountain adorned with an image of Saturn eating children, nevertheless, the old city--quaint, quiet, and queer--looks as if, bear-like, it had been hybernating good-naturedly for a century, and were just about to wake up.

Engaged a voiture, and drove to Thun. Dined, and drove by the shore of the lake to Interlachen, arriving just after a brilliant

sunset.

Thursday, July 21. S. and G. remained at the Belvedere. W., II., and I took a guide and voiture for Lauterbrunn. Here we visited Byron's apocalyptic horse-tail waterfall, the Staubbach. This waterfall is very sublime, all except the water and the fall. Whoever has been "under the sheet" at Niagara will not be particularly impressed here. This picture is sufficiently accurate, with the exception of the cottage. People here do not build cottages under waterfalls.

Here we crossed the Wengern Alps to Grindelwald. The Jungfrau is right over against us--her glaciers purer, tenderer, more dazzlingly beautiful, if possible, than those of Mont Blanc. Slept at Grindelwald.