ELECTRICITY.

A SERMON

By Rev. ROWLAND B. HOWARD.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

BOSTON:
J. E. FARWELL & CO., Printers,
45 Pearl Street.
1891.

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Bless the Lord, O my soul. Who maketh His angels spirits; His ministers a flame of fire.—Ps. civ: 4. (Paraphrased in Heb. i: 7) *Who maketh the winds His messengers; the lightnings, His servants.*

It seems to me a fact, and an impressive one, that modern discoveries, instead of detracting from, increase the significance of, the Bible symbolism. Every new revelation of the beautiful or useful properties of light, for instance, adds something significant to the meaning of our Lord's declaration, "I am the light of the world," and to Paul's praise of the Philippians, "Among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

Every new method of cultivating, harvesting, grinding or cooking wheat, multiplying its nutritive power, leads us to see something more in the words, "I am the bread of life."

The newly travelled arid plains of our great West, or the recently explored ones of Central Africa, are calculated to impress the thirsty traveller or drought-cursed farmer—as the limitless salt seas do the shipwrecked sailor—with the desperate human need which can alone be met by the "water of life."

The multiplication of diseases which, in our intenser modern life, assume more and more the form of mental malady, called in the Scriptures "Lunacy," or demoniacal possession, or some variety of paralysis, emphasizes that need of a great Physician which only the sick can appreciate.

What is called sometimes providential care, or at other times angelic guardianship, made necessary by frequent jeopardy to life, is not, indeed, required to protect men in our age so much as formerly from the incursions of wild beasts or the assaults of savages, but never was it more necessary; for, besides the ancient demons of war, pestilence and famine, not yet exterminated, men have made a thousand useful inventions, in each of which there lies concealed some terrific threat to life or limb.

The great English patron of balloons, a member of Parliament, perished recently in one of his favorite aerial chariots. An American who patented a war balloon was drowned several years ago in the English channel. Wagner, the original inventor of a car that rendered night railroad trains endurable, was crushed in one of his own wheeled palaces. The motive power of steam is rivalled by its dangerous explosive energy. The finest steamships go down in mid-ocean, or, impelled by their engines, drive swiftly and fatally, on some calm and foggy day, upon each other or on undiscoverable rocky shores. Never did man, in all his pride of mastery over nature, have more need of One "stronger than a strong man" to control her newly found and dangerous forces.

One of the latest developed, and perhaps the most wonderful, of these forces is electricity. So mysterious were its properties regarded in former years that the quack appropriated them to further his schemes of making money out of our bodies. Spiritists have used its poorly understood manifestations to enforce their theories. Pseudo-scientists have appealed to it as a natural power so pervasive and potent as to leave hardly any place, for superstition even, to ask for a God.

But as by knowledge astrology came to be astronomy; alchemy, chemistry; and mythology, theology, so electricity is emerging from the region of mystery to that of fact, and, as usual, the facts are more wonderful than the conjectures and imaginings. They are stranger than fiction, as, indeed, are all real things, when one comes to actually and thoroughly know them.

Let us turn to the Bible. No one has evidence that the sacred writers had any knowledge of electrical phenomena except as the swift, fierce and death-dealing lightning. The profound mystery and immeasurable potency of that terrific agent could not well have been exaggerated. It flashed amid the smoke of Creation's forges; added its lurid fury to the black clouds of the Deluge; scorched and seared the doomed cities of the plain.

That was probably electric fire which, as a glittering chariot of Jehovah, moved—a luminous cloud by day, and a fiery pillar by night—at the front or the rear of the marching millions of Israel; which mingled its flashing revelations with the muttering thunders of Sinai; which

possibly gilded the shining face of the great Moses, or descended in answer to the cry of Elisha at Carmel, to burn God's sacrifice and lick up the water in the trenches around his altar.

Most likely it was an electric ball that shone like a star along the path that the Magi were to tread toward Bethlehem and stood above *the* cradle of all time. The same agent probably rested as lambent flame, crowning with fiery baptism the very heads, as well as warming and purifying the hearts, of the eleven trembling, praying disciples at Pentecost. It seems to have shone around Saul of Tarsus, brighter than the sun at noon-day—to have prostrated his form and blinded his eyes.

Our Lord found no image so fit as lightning with which to set forth the fall of Satan from heaven, which He saw, or with which to liken His own future coming. The suddenness, the unexpectedness, the terribleness of His second advent to the wicked; its luring brightness and welcome quickness to the righteous—he pictures by lightning (Matt. xxiv: 27). In the same lurid light St. John at Patmos saw things unutterable. On three occasions, the revelator saw the play of the lightning, while he heard the deep voice of the thunder in those mysterious scenes which shadow forth the destiny of the Church and the world, the greatness and magnificence of which the best commentator can, as yet, but imagine.

It is also coming to be believed that this earth condemned to be burned will, like a wicked soul, owe its final destruction to forces slumbering within its own

bosom. It does not seem unlikely that, among these, that imponderable substance which is so omnipresent as to render this planet a huge magnet, and which is every day covering its surface with wires as dense as cobwebs in an unused chamber, may play an important part. No one has bored down to and discovered the imagined central fires of our planet. Every one has observed or felt that impalpable force that needs only a sympathetic touch on the surface to leap into flame. That which was the first light of creation may thus become the final heat of destruction and purification. The thief-like suddenness of the judgment which gives no previous warning is like the lightning (2 Pet. iii: 10). The "great noise" of the convulsed heavens is like thunder. No heat is more fervent or "dissolving" than that of electricity. Having consumed the dross and purified the gold, it may be the one great natural force that will usher in the new heavens and the new earth—where righteousness alone is possible.

What the nature of that light ineffable is in which Jehovah is said to dwell, we may not know; but the face of the angel from heaven that rolled away the stone from the sepulchre of the Son of God, we are told, "was as lightning." The white and glistening garments of Jesus, that manifested rather than concealed the glory of His essential being—revealing God—on the holy mount, may have been illumined by the same gentle flame that glistens in the air of our darkest nights. Surely the city of God, the new Jerusalem, will need no light of a candle, or of

the sun, or of the moon, or of the stars, if only the glory of God enlightens her gates of pearl and streets of gold, as our poor city streets, earthly dwellings, and ocean steamers are even now illumined.

The moderns delve among the ancient secrets of nature for purposes of *ambition*, *gain* or *use*, and bring out things new and old from her treasure-house, so long locked and sealed. In this way, as I remarked at the beginning, the ancient symbols and facts of God's Word are so illustrated as unexpectedly to put on a new beauty and yield added significance.

It has proved with electricity as with other occult and latent forces discovered and developed in modern times: the awe and terror with which they were once regarded are diminished. We have to learn by experience, however, that not mystery alone is dreadful; that things which have come to be in common places and uses have not lost the hidings of their power because they are out in the light of day.

Since the discoveries of Franklin, Morse, Farmer, Edison and their compeers, the world has come to look upon electricity as it does upon steam; since Watt and Fulton, as more and more a servant of man.

It has come down from the region of the demigod. That which, when first discovered, through ignorance and credulity ministered to superstition; to which some traced all force; which was to others the universal panacea for disease, if not the very essence and substance of the unknown thing called *life;* that which was almost deified,

and was certainly idolized, is coming every day to be regarded and measured in light as so many lamps, or in force as so much horse power! What, then? Ought this emergence from the region of fable into that of fact to diminish our reverential regard? Are we so constituted that we stand in awe of the unreal, the conjectural, the ghostly alone? He who is the infinite Fact of all facts can never belittle Himself by revelations. It is hazardous, we are told, to the veneration in which earthly kings and queens are held to open their every-day life to their people as has Queen Victoria in her Highland Diary. But to God, the reality of power is, we suppose, even more marvellous than the imagination and purpose of it. Even to us the silent revolution of that immense wheel of the Corliss engine, with its miles of bands and its acres of machinery at the United States World's Fair in 1876, was a million times more surprising than any mythologic tale of Vulcan forging thunderbolts.

Indeed, the facts and personages of our daily life have in them certain wonderful things which could never have been imagined.

One reason why Wordsworth is a greater poet than Scott is that he looked deeper into commonplace people, and observed things of which he perceives and depicts the soul. The microscopic eye of the poet detects something as lovely and wonderful in barefoot boys and orphan girls—in an infant, a cuckoo, a linnet, or a daisy, as Scott sung in his plumed and armed knights and impossible ladies.

Is it simply because we grow older that most of us can

truly say: "The honest, plain man of my acquaintance is to me a worthier object of profound study than any idyllic hero. The movements and passions of daily life fascinate more than the operatic stage. The God of revelation, providence, incarnation, redemption and judgment, comes nearer and nearer to me every day as the God of creation, development, order and law." Science magnifies religion. Its fresh lights shine on great mysteries, not so much to destroy illusions as to demonstrate facts. In the presence of those facts, which are the portents and prophets of others yet undreamed of by human philosophy, one sits awed to silence, reverence and worship. Created powers simply magnify their creator. Only one who is an atheist at heart can worship the creature more than the Creator.

"Electricity! just emerging from the darkness of the unknown! I welcome thee, handmaid of the Lord! In thy light I see the light!"

It greatly soothes and comforts me that I see thee moving behind scenes depicted in the Bible, as the lights of a stage move in the rear of the worn or torn places of an old curtain. It makes real the conjectural and magnifies the partial to behold that curtain rent in twain like the veil of the temple.

I sat the other night in a banquet hall where many distracting voices could not keep my eyes from gazing reflectingly at the globes of fire overhead, whose radiance was as the daylight. Again I stood at evening in the electric light on a city street. No hurrying feet or boisterous tongues could hinder me from silently singing—

singing just a little, I trust, as did the morning stars amid the audible shouts of the joyful sons of God:

> "Hail, holy light! Offspring of heaven, first-born,
> Or of the eternal, co-eternal beam!
> May I express thee unblamed? Since God is light
> And never but in unapproached light
> Dwelt from eternity — dwelt then in thee,
> Bright effluence of bright essence increate,
> Before the heavens thou wert, and at the voice
> Of God, as with a mantle didst invest
> The rising world of waters, dark and deep,
> Won from the void and formless infinite."

Out of the dimness of Stygian Agnosticism my soul seemed to fly toward the great white throne, and to Him who sits upon it, in whom there is no darkness at all. "The night winds are to me thine angelic messengers, O God! and the controlled, concentrated lightning Thy servant."

This the lesson of our *text*, if I mistake not, is one lesson of our *times*. We are to perceive not only the mastery of man over nature, but the supreme lordship of Christ, "by whom are all things and through whom are all things; by whom also the worlds were made."

The undevout scientist pauses in wonder and admiration before his discoveries and goes no further. He makes idols of the immeasurable forces, the inexpressible beauty with which his patient search has been rewarded. The worldling calling himself "the practical man," seeing the immense gain and use suggested, joins in applause. The hero-worshipper lauds his Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall,

or his Watt, Newton, Kepler, Franklin and Edison, to whose persistent thought and untiring experiment God has revealed His secrets. Neither gets beyond creation to the Creator, neither climbs to that place of real dignity and lofty elevation occupied by him who, when little was known of their potency, saw in the stormy winds the fulfilment of God's commands, in the driving clouds, Jehovah's swift chariots, and in the forked lightning a flying angel, an obedient spirit—a messenger of mercy or an executor of wrath, infinite and divine.

I am not surprised that *Edison*, a life long student of electricity, abominates materialism. He has lately written, "To me it seems that every atom is possessed of a certain amount of primitive intelligence. Look at the thousand ways in which atoms of hydrogen combine with those of other elements. Do you mean to say they do this without intelligence?"

The reverent and grateful heart of a Christian to-day, whether he be a discoverer of scientific truth, or an applier of scientific principles—*i. e.* an *inventor*—or whether he be, like most of us, a mere student or observer of these marvellous revelations unfolding in our time and before our eyes, will cry: "Bless the Lord, O my soul! and forget not all His benefits! Bless the Lord, O my soul! who maketh the winds His messengers, and even the lightnings His servants!"

In the sublime description of God's almightiness, which I have quoted from the 104th Psalm, and which is rewritten in the first chapter of Hebrews, nothing has seemed

to me more impressive than that the lightnings were called the *servants* of Divine Majesty; for that is evidently the meaning of the phrase, "He maketh flaming fire His minister." Poetical as are the images, going to a height and couched in a language which no uninspired thought has reached, to my mind there are in these words both a seeing and a foretelling which have the real elements of prophecy, and which are among the convincing evidences of inspiration. This is confirmed by other texts. Job thinks and speaks of God as "making a way for the lightning" (xxviii: 26) and as "directing its course under the whole heaven, even to the ends of the earth" (xxxvii: 3), and sending forth the lightnings on their errands, which on their return, stand like retainers in God's presence, and say, "Here are we." Holding ourselves resolutely to this position of faith in God—which the writers of the Bible, to be sure, had not some of *our* temptations to abandon—the process of discovery and invention which our immediate age has witnessed should minister profoundly to our devout gratitude.

What may not this newly found servant of Jehovah, whose gigantic strength has only begun to develop, do for Him and for mankind?

We have seen how some of its elements of power have been foreshadowed in God's Word. Others, unknown to previous ages, when found, fall into the paths which, if they only indicated by surface marks, are still the channels of its progress—a progress evidently yet in its infancy.

To girdle the earth and undergird the sea with wires whose sole use is to transmit thought, and thus facilitate and multiply brain-power; to be the vehicle of messages of love and news of salvation; to so lighten great cities as to make it seem that the shadow of the sun had gone back by miracle as at the healing of Hezekiah (2 Kings xx: 11); to supply the force by which locomotives and all kinds of machinery may be run; to generate light and heat for the myriad purposes to which the mightiest of all forces are devoted—these are already among its achievements. As a remedial agent in sickness its efficacy has already begun to be demonstrated.

I am constrained to believe with Godet that the first created light was electrical. How much of that which afterward blazed in the sun and supplied the planets with heat that makes life possible on them is of this nature, no one can yet tell. Then as to the other stellar worlds: on winter nights who has not turned his gaze in rapt wonder toward that river of light on whose uneven banks the most distant stars sit as silent watchmen? Or gazing northward and upward, has not conjectured the divine meaning and purpose of those marching hosts of armed warriors, whose flashing ensigns and glittering onsets alarmed the ancients as portents of war, or threats of a burning world? These are Jehovah's electric cohorts.

If, as the Bible asserts, the earth is at the end to be purified by fire, surely electrical flames are not unlikely to be, as we have seen, the chosen instrument. Everywhere present when not artificially or arbitrarily excluded

—if the Creator needs a ubiquitous and mighty servant, He has it in this imponderable and amazing agent.

1. It confirms my faith in the essential truth and the real inspiration of the Scriptures, that their writers should have kept from falling into the many absurdities such as made up the imperfect science of their times. It also, I think, deserves a second mention, that into the Scripture symbols so easily and beautifully fit the latest discovered facts. It was well then that our Bible was Oriental; that its imagery is as broad and expansive as Eastern poetry, so that its lofty language has proved adequate to express the ideas of the most recent ages of progress and development.

2. I will be pardoned for reiterating. What a call for devout thanksgiving is found in the fact that what were for ages believed to be only terrible, destructive and punitive forces are found on investigation so fully and richly fraught with sweet and soothing beauty, with constructive—I had almost said *creative*—energy, as also immeasurable resources of comfort, blessing and beneficence. Bless the Lord, O my soul!

3. Electricity is only a *servant* in the household where you and I may be *sons*. Only in the light of such a thought can we in any way answer the question, "*When I consider the heavens, what is man?*"

That lightning is a servant, subject to the command, and limited by the authority of God, tends to disarm fear and we see its amazing power for good and evil daily developing before our eyes. Were it one of those "powers

of the air" of which Satan is the prince, to be hurled by him against all that is pure, sweet, lovely and righteous, its presence would be a constant threat and terror. *Man* may not be able to make it *his* servant at all times—it may break his limbs, burn his body, put an end to his very life; and this, almost entirely, because of his partial ignorance of its properties—but God knew it in its essence and its potency, in its actuality and its possibility; from the beginning He holds the lightnings in His hands. God's forces are servants, but his children are sons!

The *son* is above the *servant*. A soul is a sovereign. Spirit is above electricity, mightier and more enduring. The soul originates, engenders thought; the lightning only transmits it.

God *said*, "Let there be light: and there was light." But coming very near to the clod of which He had made something more beautiful and sweeter than a harp—more lovely and graceful than any other creature, he breathed into man, and he became a living soul. Henceforth all beasts are man's appointed servants; all forces of nature wait upon his investigation and use. By *sin* he lost his natural sovereignty. In Christ he became an heir of His Father's wealth—a joint inheritor of *all* things.

O my brother, what dignity, what possibility, what responsibility! Am I, are you, a *son of God?*

Letters from Abroad

Rev. ROWLAND B. HOWARD.

LETTERS FROM ABROAD

. . . WRITTEN BY . . .

Rev. Rowland B. Howard.

Published as a Gift to his Family Friends
. . . by . . .

HELEN GRAVES HOWARD.

FARMINGTON, MAINE:
PRESS OF KNOWLTON & McLEARY CO.
1902.

THE ATLANTIC.

IT is never the same. Color, form of waves, amount of foam, nature of surface, all change every hour. It is healthful, generates no malaria, is only accountable for one kind of sickness. All others originate on land or on board fever-poisoned ships.

It dulls the imagination and sensibilities. Few great men have developed greatness on the sea except in the line of courage and fortitude. Nothing brilliant in science, poetry or literature owes its existence to a life on ship-board.

On the other hand, the sight of the sea has inspired song after song and baffled the curiosity of men. Its depths have been sounded and its secrets unfolded only by patient scholarship and as patient experiment. The clouds are never the same, nor are the moon and stars above the sea as above the land. A rainbow that spanned the heavens the other evening seemed a little grander for having both ends in the ocean. All colors of the prism are reflected in brilliant and broken forms from the spray that plays around the ship at evening time.

How strange the restless flight of the unlighting birds that follow our wake. They are certainly beautiful, and I am not

surprised that the sailors believe them the homes of disembodied spirits.

The sea calls out by association the poetry itself has inspired. Its measurelessness is our best type of infinity. The faith of Columbus grows sublimer to me as I sail across the Atlantic. The heroism of the Pilgrims appears in a new light. If our voyage is so wearisome and remarkable, what must theirs have been in their frail sailing vessels, the former with no evidence of land anywhere.

The ocean is a great food producer. I haven't seen fish on this trip, but I know that millions of people in millions of years can never exhaust the millions of fish whose birthplace and home are beneath our feet.

The rainstorms of the land rise from the ocean. The salubrity of climate is owing to its pure breezes.

A WEEK IN PARIS.

OUR week in Paris has seemed briefer than any other of our trip. Indeed it was clipped at both ends. It took from Monday to Tuesday morning to reach Paris from Geneva, and one must leave early on Saturday to arrive in London before the Sabbath.

Tuesday morning we strolled along the streets, boulevards, parks and into the shops, using our eyes, and experimenting with our "French." Our hotel *(Hotel de Lille et Albion, Rue St. Honore)* was admirably kept, and centrally located. Towards evening we took an inexpensive drive in pleasant carriages to the places of principal historic interest. Passing over the Champ Elysees, one of the finest drives in Europe, we halted long enough at the *Arc de Triomphe* to climb the numerous but easy steps of its long staircase in order to get the best view of the finest city picture in the world.

This celebrated arch, erected to commemorate the victories of the first Napoleon, is the point from which the newly constructed and grand boulevards of Paris radiate. These broad and shaded avenues diverge like the sticks of an open fan. The methodical and mathematical genius of the French appears in the formal plan of the city. All of the famous localities and

remarkable buildings are easily located by the eye with the help of an English-speaking guide, who remains upon the arch to aid strangers.

We then drove along the fashionable *Boulevard des Italians* to the two ancient gates of the old city, *St. Denis and St. Martin;* past the tower that commemorates the fall of the Bastile, and in sight of the *Hotel de Ville* burned by the Commune, but now covered with the scaffolding in the process of restoration. It has not been fully decided whether to restore the ruined Tuilleries or not. The old palace filled one end of the quadrangle of which the immense palace of the Louvre occupies three sides with gardens and fountains enclosed. It is likely the ruined walls will be removed and the space left vacant. If this is done there will be an unobstructed view of the garden of the Louvre from the *Arc de Triomphe* four miles away.

AN EVENING IN VENICE.

COULD I convey to our readers a tithe of the pleasure which a few days' sojourn in this "City of the sea" has given me, I would write with a free pen and a thankful heart. Others have so often described the principal objects of interest to a traveler that I make no attempt to follow them. Graceful and graphic pens are not wanting. Byron, Cooper, Mark Twain and Howells have made the painting, architecture, and the peculiar life one sees at Venice familiar to all readers. But each of us sees and enjoys for himself.

A forenoon in the Doges' palace and prison, a "nooning" at St. Mark's Cathedral, an afternoon among the six hundred pictures of the Academy of Fine Arts, with Ruskin for a guide and commentator upon the works of Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese and Bellini, are worth a long voyage, a long waiting, or anything else that costs ease, time or money. But our evening was so peculiarly Venetian, so unlike anything in America, that I venture to ask all who read this to join in imagination our company of twenty-five. From eight to nine we strolled along Saint Mark's Place, around which are the grandest buildings, the most brilliant shops, and every pleasant evening, a crowd seeming to comprise nearly all, citizens or strangers, who are in

the city. We sit down and chat in hearing of a fine band of music and enjoy the balmy air and ever-changing mass of promenaders. At 9.30 our evening entertainment commences. By the forecast of our good genius, Dr. L. C. Loomis, of Washington, D. C., a band of sixteen gondoliers who had been in his employ when here each season for a number of years, were quietly assembled and embarked. Their gondola is lighted by three harp-shaped Chinese lanterns. They had glided out into the bay a little way before our party were fairly embarked in three gondolas each with two gondoliers. As we shot out from the pier under the brilliant gas-lights that line its edge and had just raised our eyes to admire the moon, which, towards the close of its first quarter, shone with quiet and familiar radiance over the domes, towers and spires at our left, the band of gondoliers broke into their first song. It was quite unexpected to most of us, and as each gondola was illumined by successive Bengal lights, covering the bright, youthful faces and gay dresses that prevailed, with changeful light, all at once the Venice of poetry, romance and song burst upon us. It had been a July day, but the breeze of evening was cooled as it came across the Adriatic. Not a ripple stirred the waters of the Grand Canal save those caused by the sharp prows and dipping oars of gondolas. As the glittering light from the boats died away, the slowly declining moon renewed her mild sway which was not sufficiently brilliant to hide *Ursa Major*, "that glorious constellation of the North," so familiar to us in our childhood's home. But oh, the unequaled harmony of those sweet and strong Italian voices so full of pathos

and passion! Song after song with full choruses floated out on the air which seemed fairly alive with melody. The walls of the old palaces that line this ancient avenue of Venice were successively sombre and brilliant in the changing light. Gondolas in great numbers flew by like dark birds that nearly touched us with their wings. Others hovered around the fairylike music and kept time with beating oars to the voices of the unwearied singers.

In Lucerne we attended a concert given upon the celebrated organ of the Cathedral. There, as on a similar occasion not long since in the Cincinnati Music Hall, the close imitation of human voices in an imagined choir seemed to me the most sweet and touching passage. Both were poor approaches and imitations of that immeasurable depth and sweetness of sympathy of which nothing but the voice is capable. When single it surpasses every other instrument in that supreme quality by which not only the fancy and the imagination, but the heart, is moved. But when sweet voices are combined and unaccompanied, as in the Jubilee Singers who once sung over the grave of Lincoln at Springfield, Ill., in my presence, "Let my people go,"—or in these Italian boatmen giving utterance to a higher style of national music, the legacy of a thousand years of tuneful culture, the effect is, to me, simply indescribable. It was not art except as art is the expression of nature. The parts were well sustained in perhaps a dozen songs. There was not one break in the harmony that I could detect. There were no written words or notes before the singers. They sung, as Spurgeon preached to us in London, in that simple, tender, hearty way that never fails to secure response.

We sailed and sang, and sang and sailed—if gliding by means of silent oars can be called "sailing"—a mile and a half between the echoing walls of the old palaces till we came under the famous *Rialto*. Grouping our gondolas together near the foot of the noble arch on one side we noticed the singers hovering at the opposite edge of the broad canal and underneath the same grand old bridge which, for centuries, has witnessed processions sad or gay, and heard songs plaintive or triumphant. When again the voices of the band broke the silence, the effect was marvelous. The reverberation, with no returning echo to mar its simplicity, gave firmness and dignity as well as power to the musical and manly tones. The moon was rapidly disappearing and the stars were glowing with new brilliancy as we reluctantly turned our faces towards our hotel. We glided homeward with the swift incoming tide and after ascending the steps of the quay we stood upon the shore and listened to the parting song.

The singing was unlike and unequaled by that of any concert that I ever have heard. To be sure the "scenery," circumstances and associations all combined to increase the effect. No night could have been more perfect. To me the charm of novelty was added to that of recollection. The music that floated around us like a halo of sound seemed to harmonize so completely with the evening of a day spent amid palaces, dungeons, churches and galleries rich in historic lore and richer in the atmosphere which the genius of poetry and painting has thrown around them. The melting away of the glowing sunlight, so sternly unfriendly to the crumbling "Stones of Venice," into

gentle moonlit night; the strange and beautiful metamorphosis by which the sturdy Latin has become the liquid Italian; the unquestioning tyranny of the old Doges succeeded by the mild reign of a constitutional king; the mighty prowess of ancient Venice in Eastern wars has changed to these "piping times of peace." The whole day with its evening close was like an anthem in whose measures sublime or sweet, the years were singing their historic song.

My first thought was, "Oh, that I could take this picture out of its setting and transfer it to America for the delectation of my countrymen!" But I reflected, it will not bear it. These men could not so sing their songs in a strange land. Our rivers that wash cities are too swift. Our lakes too subject to rough winds; our people are too busy. Only in the indolent air of Italy and on the watery streets of Venice, with gliding gondolas and singing boatmen; only beneath the sky of Italy and among a restful, pleasure-loving people, can one enjoy such an evening. I may add that no contrast could well be more striking than the singers and their song. Coarse-featured, bronzed faces, rough hands and working dresses were revealed when the lights flashed too fully on the musical gondoliers. Nothing in Venice will bear too close and critical examination. It is a good place in which to stop thinking and enjoy.

AMONG THE ALPS.

"ANYTHING but a description of scenery!" so said an editor to a proposed correspondent. But what else can one think, feel or write about in this most wonderful place on the globe! There are loftier mountains in Asia and America; there are as beautiful little lakes elsewhere; but nowhere has human ingenuity and energy made it so possible for those unable to take dangerous and exhaustive journeys, to enjoy at the same time nature both in her wildest grandeur and her most entrancing beauty.

Five noble roads hard as adamant, and walled with stone, and winding like the threads of an auger, make it possible to climb these Alpine summits and descend into sunny Italy. The St. Gothard, St. Bernard, Little St. Bernard, Simplon and Mont Cenis passes are thus traversed. Mont Cenis is also pierced by a railroad tunnel eight miles in length, the passage of which is by no means unpleasant, except for the absence of scenery. The St. Gothard tunnel, above which we drove by the carriage road, is to be completed in 1880. It is longer than Mont Cenis, and more difficult of construction. M. Favre of Geneva, the contractor who has prosecuted the work for seven years by contract with the company, died suddenly in the

tunnel, some say by the hands of his Italian laborers, the day before we were there. His pecuniary reward for early completion was to be ten thousand francs per day to May 1, 1880. The reward seemed secure. His fame was assured, but, like Moses, he died in sight of his promised land. We saw the special steamer that bore his body across Lake Lucerne to his desolate home and grieving family at Geneva. The tunnel will be finished, and eastern Switzerland will become the great highway to Italy.

I know of no greater work in modern or ancient times; old Roman roads, walls and aqueducts not excepted. But a single tunnel belonging to pre-historic times has ever been found in Switzerland, and that was but few rods in length, and would hardly admit the passage of a man. It was forty feet above the new road tunnel near *Le Chatelard* on the road from Geneva to Chamounix, and can still be seen. One can see Switzerland best outside tunnels and railway cars, traveling in carriages, horseback, on foot or sailing across her beautiful land-locked and mountain-walled lakes. Still the most impressive and inspiring view which we obtained of any snow-mountain was that long look at the Jungfrau from the railway car window on our way from Basel to Berne. It might have owed somewhat of its grand impression to the fact that it was the first, and that we were towards the close of a hot, weary day, rising to the rarer and cooler air of the mountains, after a long, dusty ride from Heidelberg. It was about six P. M. There were no clouds. The golden light was reflected in richest hues from the sides and summit of the colossal pyramid,

which so towered in massive grandeur above its fellows, that one was at first at loss to know whether it belonged to earth or sky—to this world or to Heaven. The Jura range stretched its lofty, wooded ridge to our right and apparently near, but really far off, and like a vision of eternal things except for its solid and grand proportions, rose that glorious range of the Bernese Alps, among which the grand Monch, the Eiger and the Jungfrau were most conspicuous. We approached these mountains on other sides and looked at them from hotel windows as at Interlaken, from wayside resting-places, the tops of carriages and decks of steamers, but from no point did their native majesty, their absolute sublimity so impress us. Mt. Blanc at Chamounix is too near, and too crowded by other mountains.

The fact that you can at will ride out to a glacier and cross it with only a spice of danger, and that you are so near a mountain which in height, in snowy grandeur, in terrible chasms and flowing glaciers is the king of the Alps, is what gives Chamounix its peculiar charm. Our drive of seventy miles from Annecy over the fertile plains of Savoy and through the rich Swiss valleys, and then up the noble road with its ever varying and always beautiful prospect into an atmosphere constantly growing rarer and cooler till the great mountain overhung our heads, will never be forgotten.

The stories of wild adventure, awful jeopardy, and alas of terrible catastrophes—the multitude of strangers from every land at the excellent hotels, the precious stones and carved wood of the Alps exposed for sale in the little shops—the

manly faced and formed fellows who were seen as guides, our own ludicrous figures as for the first time in life many of us found ourselves mounted on mules for a morning ride to the *Mer de Glace;* then our delightful drive down the mountain to Geneva, encircled by fields and floods, and decked on that gala day of the Swiss republic like a bride for her husband; these things which I can only mention, occupied three rare and delightful days. The walks were not the least enjoyable of our experiences. They offer new views. They fill your hands and plant-albums with Alpine flowers. They afford you the choice of solitude or a change in social converse. In other lands such things may be possible, in Switzerland they are inevitable.

MELROSE ABBEY AND SIR WALTER SCOTT.

I AM within the shadow of this storied and monumental Abbey, not more than ten feet intervening between the window of my room and its scarred wall of red sandstone. I have just come up from the yard where, obeying Sir Walter's awkward rhyme, I saw the moonbeams playing over the ruined arches and among the dark ivy, and the stars twinkling through the glassless windows. We came into Scotland at Carlisle at one o'clock P. M., to-day, and were here by half-past three. The lowlands are less rich than the green fields of England, but the same May-like freshness covers hill and moor. The heathery ridges are treeless and rather dark and desolate, but the flocks of white sheep, the herds of black cattle, the cottages so low and poor, the hawthorn and the daisy tell us it is the land of Burns. We rode down the Tweed, five miles to a light foot-suspension bridge that crosses its swollen waters nearly opposite Dryburgh. Scott's grave seems crowded a little, but the nook is pleasant and the aisle of the ruined Abbey is in harmony with the taste and life of the poet-novelist. The green wooded hill where he was born is in plain sight. Dryburgh, like Kenilworth and Melrose, is a melancholy, picturesque ruin. They do not compare with Heidelberg Castle in grandeur,

nor do these Eildon Hills look so noble as the Alps and the Apennines. The scenery is more American, as are the atmosphere and the homely ways of the people. It is one of the neatest of little hotels. We have had the girls of our company sing all the Scotch songs they knew. One is still at it in the drawing-room (next to this). There was a windy storm from eight to nine o'clock to-night that reminded me of the night Burns was born; but how good the moon and stars were to come out amid fleecy clouds and light up the old Abbey and promise us a pleasant day to-morrow at Abbotsford. Sir Walter is everywhere, in relics, pictures, statues, monuments and traditions. I have been reading a borrowed copy of the "Lay" and must run over the "Lady of the Lake" before we go to Loch Lomond. We spent the Sabbath at Edinboro.

The beautiful sunlight makes the drops of water resemble crystal on tree and leaf this morning (Aug. 29th). I look out of my window between the Abbey and the hotel across the tombstones of the ancient cemetery to the deep wood beyond. The sheep are now quietly munching the grass over the graves. Dominie Sampson's and Mr. Perdue's (Scott's forester), are among the noticeable graves. After a bountiful and excellent breakfast we entered the Abbey gate and I kept by myself awhile and with Black's guide followed the plan. The interior of Melrose impressed me as far more picturesque and suggestive than any ruin I have seen. Sir Walter's spirit seemed more here than around his grave at Dryburgh. His observant eye and graphic pen have caught and recorded many things that it delights us to recognize, and to appreciate with him. Over the heart of

Bruce and the tomb of Michael Scott I felt less enthusiasm than in Sir Walter's favorite seat, and in the architecture and ornamentation of the edifice. It is evidently the work of Italians, and the whole seems an exotic in Scotland of to-day, or indeed of any day. As for the country, its homliness makes it seem like home. Views in Leeds, Farmington and Strong are very like these, if you subtract from the latter the Abbeys, the stone and plaster and thatched cottages, the mansions of the gentry, and that which imaginative genius has put among them. I mean that nature disrobed, is in Maine quite like these lowlands of Scotland. The little cheap photographs which I bought in the sacristy are perfect representations of what seemed to me the best interior and best exterior views. The ivy leaf is from Abbotsford, and the daisy from the Melrose cloisters. The ground of the Abbey is a thickly grown sward, and daisies are abundant. At ten we drove over to Abbotsford. It is hidden from every point and you drop upon it unexpectedly. From the opposite bank of the Tweed, to which it fronts, the view is that of the engravings. The gardens are well kept. The proprietor married Lockhart's granddaughter, Sir Walter's great granddaughter, and she looks well in her portrait. He took the Scott name with his wife, (Col. Maxwell Scott). The study, with the chair, the desk, the bronze cast of Scott's dead face, the pipes and canes ("sticks"), the door into his bed-chamber from the library balcony so that he could run down, sit up, go to bed, write, etc., when the impulse was on him without suggesting questions to his family,

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descending path with flowers. I love his very decayed and autumnal productions, not because his genius is in them, but I loved him earlier, and loyalty bids me love him always.

Good-bye, Sir Walter.

Letters from Abroad

Rev. ROWLAND B. HOWARD.

LETTERS FROM ABROAD

. . . WRITTEN BY . . .

Rev. Rowland B. Howard.

Published as a Gift to his Family Friends
. . . by . . .

HELEN GRAVES HOWARD.

FARMINGTON, MAINE:
PRESS OF KNOWLTON & McLEARY CO.
1902.

THE ATLANTIC.

IT is never the same. Color, form of waves, amount of foam, nature of surface, all change every hour. It is healthful, generates no malaria, is only accountable for one kind of sickness. All others originate on land or on board fever-poisoned ships.

It dulls the imagination and sensibilities. Few great men have developed greatness on the sea except in the line of courage and fortitude. Nothing brilliant in science, poetry or literature owes its existence to a life on ship-board.

On the other hand, the sight of the sea has inspired song after song and baffled the curiosity of men. Its depths have been sounded and its secrets unfolded only by patient scholarship and as patient experiment. The clouds are never the same, nor are the moon and stars above the sea as above the land. A rainbow that spanned the heavens the other evening seemed a little grander for having both ends in the ocean. All colors of the prism are reflected in brilliant and broken forms from the spray that plays around the ship at evening time.

How strange the restless flight of the unlighting birds that follow our wake. They are certainly beautiful, and I am not

surprised that the sailors believe them the homes of disembodied spirits.

The sea calls out by association the poetry itself has inspired. Its measurelessness is our best type of infinity. The faith of Columbus grows sublimer to me as I sail across the Atlantic. The heroism of the Pilgrims appears in a new light. If our voyage is so wearisome and remarkable, what must theirs have been in their frail sailing vessels, the former with no evidence of land anywhere.

The ocean is a great food producer. I haven't seen fish on this trip, but I know that millions of people in millions of years can never exhaust the millions of fish whose birthplace and home are beneath our feet.

The rainstorms of the land rise from the ocean. The salubrity of climate is owing to its pure breezes.

A WEEK IN PARIS.

OUR week in Paris has seemed briefer than any other of our trip. Indeed it was clipped at both ends. It took from Monday to Tuesday morning to reach Paris from Geneva, and one must leave early on Saturday to arrive in London before the Sabbath.

Tuesday morning we strolled along the streets, boulevards, parks and into the shops, using our eyes, and experimenting with our "French." Our hotel *(Hotel de Lille et Albion, Rue St. Honore)* was admirably kept, and centrally located. Towards evening we took an inexpensive drive in pleasant carriages to the places of principal historic interest. Passing over the Champ Elysees, one of the finest drives in Europe, we halted long enough at the *Arc de Triomphe* to climb the numerous but easy steps of its long staircase in order to get the best view of the finest city picture in the world.

This celebrated arch, erected to commemorate the victories of the first Napoleon, is the point from which the newly constructed and grand boulevards of Paris radiate. These broad and shaded avenues diverge like the sticks of an open fan. The methodical and mathematical genius of the French appears in the formal plan of the city. All of the famous localities and

remarkable buildings are easily located by the eye with the help of an English-speaking guide, who remains upon the arch to aid strangers.

We then drove along the fashionable *Boulevard des Italians* to the two ancient gates of the old city, *St. Denis and St. Martin;* past the tower that commemorates the fall of the Bastile, and in sight of the *Hotel de Ville* burned by the Commune, but now covered with the scaffolding in the process of restoration. It has not been fully decided whether to restore the ruined Tuilleries or not. The old palace filled one end of the quadrangle of which the immense palace of the Louvre occupies three sides with gardens and fountains enclosed. It is likely the ruined walls will be removed and the space left vacant. If this is done there will be an unobstructed view of the garden of the Louvre from the *Arc de Triomphe* four miles away.

AN EVENING IN VENICE.

COULD I convey to our readers a tithe of the pleasure which a few days' sojourn in this "City of the sea" has given me, I would write with a free pen and a thankful heart. Others have so often described the principal objects of interest to a traveler that I make no attempt to follow them. Graceful and graphic pens are not wanting. Byron, Cooper, Mark Twain and Howells have made the painting, architecture, and the peculiar life one sees at Venice familiar to all readers. But each of us sees and enjoys for himself.

A forenoon in the Doges' palace and prison, a "nooning" at St. Mark's Cathedral, an afternoon among the six hundred pictures of the Academy of Fine Arts, with Ruskin for a guide and commentator upon the works of Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese and Bellini, are worth a long voyage, a long waiting, or anything else that costs ease, time or money. But our evening was so peculiarly Venetian, so unlike anything in America, that I venture to ask all who read this to join in imagination our company of twenty-five. From eight to nine we strolled along Saint Mark's Place, around which are the grandest buildings, the most brilliant shops, and every pleasant evening, a crowd seeming to comprise nearly all, citizens or strangers, who are in

the city. We sit down and chat in hearing of a fine band of music and enjoy the balmy air and ever-changing mass of promenaders. At 9.30 our evening entertainment commences. By the forecast of our good genius, Dr. L. C. Loomis, of Washington, D. C., a band of sixteen gondoliers who had been in his employ when here each season for a number of years, were quietly assembled and embarked. Their gondola is lighted by three harp-shaped Chinese lanterns. They had glided out into the bay a little way before our party were fairly embarked in three gondolas each with two gondoliers. As we shot out from the pier under the brilliant gas-lights that line its edge and had just raised our eyes to admire the moon, which, towards the close of its first quarter, shone with quiet and familiar radiance over the domes, towers and spires at our left, the band of gondoliers broke into their first song. It was quite unexpected to most of us, and as each gondola was illumined by successive Bengal lights, covering the bright, youthful faces and gay dresses that prevailed, with changeful light, all at once the Venice of poetry, romance and song burst upon us. It had been a July day, but the breeze of evening was cooled as it came across the Adriatic. Not a ripple stirred the waters of the Grand Canal save those caused by the sharp prows and dipping oars of gondolas. As the glittering light from the boats died away, the slowly declining moon renewed her mild sway which was not sufficiently brilliant to hide *Ursa Major*, "that glorious constellation of the North," so familiar to us in our childhood's home. But oh, the unequaled harmony of those sweet and strong Italian voices so full of pathos

and passion! Song after song with full choruses floated out on the air which seemed fairly alive with melody. The walls of the old palaces that line this ancient avenue of Venice were successively sombre and brilliant in the changing light. Gondolas in great numbers flew by like dark birds that nearly touched us with their wings. Others hovered around the fairylike music and kept time with beating oars to the voices of the unwearied singers.

In Lucerne we attended a concert given upon the celebrated organ of the Cathedral. There, as on a similar occasion not long since in the Cincinnati Music Hall, the close imitation of human voices in an imagined choir seemed to me the most sweet and touching passage. Both were poor approaches and imitations of that immeasurable depth and sweetness of sympathy of which nothing but the voice is capable. When single it surpasses every other instrument in that supreme quality by which not only the fancy and the imagination, but the heart, is moved. But when sweet voices are combined and unaccompanied, as in the Jubilee Singers who once sung over the grave of Lincoln at Springfield, Ill., in my presence, "Let my people go,"—or in these Italian boatmen giving utterance to a higher style of national music, the legacy of a thousand years of tuneful culture, the effect is, to me, simply indescribable. It was not art except as art is the expression of nature. The parts were well sustained in perhaps a dozen songs. There was not one break in the harmony that I could detect. There were no written words or notes before the singers. They sung, as Spurgeon preached to us in London, in that simple, tender, hearty way that never fails to secure response.

We sailed and sang, and sang and sailed—if gliding by means of silent oars can be called "sailing"—a mile and a half between the echoing walls of the old palaces till we came under the famous *Rialto*. Grouping our gondolas together near the foot of the noble arch on one side we noticed the singers hovering at the opposite edge of the broad canal and underneath the same grand old bridge which, for centuries, has witnessed processions sad or gay, and heard songs plaintive or triumphant. When again the voices of the band broke the silence, the effect was marvelous. The reverberation, with no returning echo to mar its simplicity, gave firmness and dignity as well as power to the musical and manly tones. The moon was rapidly disappearing and the stars were glowing with new brilliancy as we reluctantly turned our faces towards our hotel. We glided homeward with the swift incoming tide and after ascending the steps of the quay we stood upon the shore and listened to the parting song.

The singing was unlike and unequaled by that of any concert that I ever have heard. To be sure the "scenery," circumstances and associations all combined to increase the effect. No night could have been more perfect. To me the charm of novelty was added to that of recollection. The music that floated around us like a halo of sound seemed to harmonize so completely with the evening of a day spent amid palaces, dungeons, churches and galleries rich in historic lore and richer in the atmosphere which the genius of poetry and painting has thrown around them. The melting away of the glowing sunlight, so sternly unfriendly to the crumbling "Stones of Venice," into

gentle moonlit night; the strange and beautiful metamorphosis by which the sturdy Latin has become the liquid Italian; the unquestioning tyranny of the old Doges succeeded by the mild reign of a constitutional king; the mighty prowess of ancient Venice in Eastern wars has changed to these "piping times of peace." The whole day with its evening close was like an anthem in whose measures sublime or sweet, the years were singing their historic song.

My first thought was, "Oh, that I could take this picture out of its setting and transfer it to America for the delectation of my countrymen!" But I reflected, it will not bear it. These men could not so sing their songs in a strange land. Our rivers that wash cities are too swift. Our lakes too subject to rough winds; our people are too busy. Only in the indolent air of Italy and on the watery streets of Venice, with gliding gondolas and singing boatmen; only beneath the sky of Italy and among a restful, pleasure-loving people, can one enjoy such an evening. I may add that no contrast could well be more striking than the singers and their song. Coarse-featured, bronzed faces, rough hands and working dresses were revealed when the lights flashed too fully on the musical gondoliers. Nothing in Venice will bear too close and critical examination. It is a good place in which to stop thinking and enjoy.

AMONG THE ALPS.

"ANYTHING but a description of scenery!" so said an editor to a proposed correspondent. But what else can one think, feel or write about in this most wonderful place on the globe! There are loftier mountains in Asia and America; there are as beautiful little lakes elsewhere; but nowhere has human ingenuity and energy made it so possible for those unable to take dangerous and exhaustive journeys, to enjoy at the same time nature both in her wildest grandeur and her most entrancing beauty.

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