

CHAPTER LXVI.

Some Reminiscences of Foreign Travel.

BY MRS. C. H. SPURGEON.

The everlasting hills, "buildings of God, not made with hands," transcend the noblest works of men, not only in their natural majesty, but in their power to stir the finest feelings of our manhood. One hour alone on some flowery steep, with the snow-clad summits all around, the glacier below, and the world of care far away, is better than a century of the gaieties of fashion, or the pomp of state; this we have seen, and do testify.—C. H. S.

Some people never smile. Dear souls! They pull the blinds down on Sunday. They are sorry that the flowers are so beautiful, and think that they ought to have been whitewashed; they almost believe that, if the garden beds were of a little more sombre colour, it would be an improvement. I have known some persons, whom I very greatly respect, talk in this fashion. One good brother, whose shoe-latchet I am not worthy to unloose, said, on one occasion, that when he went up the Rhine, he shut his eyes, and never looked at the rocks, or the old castles, or the flowing river, he was so taken up with higher things! But, to me, nature is a looking-glass, in which I see the face of God. I delight to gaze abroad, and—

"Look through nature up to nature's God."

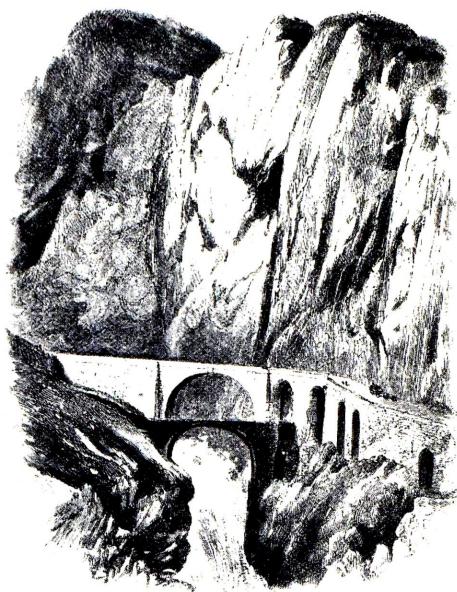
Yet that was all unholiness to him. I do not understand that kind of thing; I have no sympathy with those who look upon this material world as though it were a very wicked place, and as if there were here no trace whatever of the Divine hand, no proofs of the Divine wisdom, and no manifestations of the Divine care. I think we may delight ourselves in the works of God, and find much pleasure therein, and be really brought nearer to God Himself by considering His wondrous works.—C. H. S.



IN "the fifties and sixties," travelling was not so universally indulged in as it is now, and comparatively few tourists crossed our path as we journeyed over mountain, river, or valley. We took our pleasures easily, though not sadly. We did not rush through the Mont Cenis tunnel in a train, or climb the Rigi by the help of an aerial railway, for such triumphs of engineering skill were not then in existence. Those were the days of *diligences* and carriages, of mule-riding or the use of one's own legs; and I believe that, for true enjoyment and lasting impressions of magnificent scenery, either of these modes of progression is to be desired above the present-day fashion of being everywhere whisked along in a train! I have crossed most of the great Alpine passes, and am thankful to retain an indelible remembrance of their sublime and solemn grandeur, because I preferred to toil up the well-made roads whenever it was possible, and stand silently amidst the stupendous heights and depths.

One ten minutes of time, on the St. Gothard Pass, will never be forgotten. I

had walked alone, in advance of the carriage,—my beloved and Mr. Passmore being too comfortably idle to leave their seats,—and, at a turn of the road, I came in sight of the grandest part of the route, the Devil's Bridge.



THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE, ST. GOTHARD PASS.

Not a living creature was visible ; the mighty masses of granite rock towered on each side of me, with the deep and savage gorge between, where the Reuss foamed and boiled, and there in the near distance were the old and the new bridges spanning the awful chasm. I had so often seen pictures of the spot, that I recognized it at once ; but the reality overcame me with awe. I leaned against the side of the rocky pathway, and gave way for a moment to a feeling of utter terror and loneliness. What if the carriage should never appear round that bend of the road ? What if I were really *alone* in that sublime but desolate place ? Then a sudden reaction took place, and I felt so safe, so near to the very heart of God in the midst of His marvellous works, that, to this day, I cherish the realization I there had of the certainty of His presence, and the glory of His power. *

Twice we visited Venice together, and all the dreamy delights of our sojourn

there return with their old fascination, by an effort of the will, or a glance at the pages of Mr. Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*.



THE HOTEL IN VENICE WHERE WE STAYED.

The glory of "the Queen of the Adriatic" was even then beginning to fade away, but enough remained to win our ardent admiration, and fix its pathetic beauty on our hearts. We were spared the sight of much of that poverty and decay which has overtaken the glorious city in the present day, and "the Bride of the Sea" is enshrined in my memory as a creation of exceeding loveliness, glowing with the prismatic hues of a gorgeous sunset, and enwrapped in a veil of



THE GRAND CANAL, VENICE.

golden mist, just as I last saw her when returning from a trip to the Island of Liddo, on whose shores we had spent a most enjoyable day.

The mention of this island suggests to me a memory of dear Mr. Spurgeon's aptness of illustration, and fertility of thought. He was accustomed to make the most unlikely material reveal to him some hidden meaning, or yield up a latent lesson; yet, it seems to me, he rarely *forced* a metaphor, but quite naturally drew from all inanimate things a gentle whisper of the greatness, and goodness, and graciousness of God. It was so in the instance I am about to relate. As we loitered on this sandy isle, which serves as a breakwater between Venice and the sea, we were entranced by the charming sound of the city's bells, as their music floated across the lagoons, and mingled with the gentle wash of the wavelets as they lapped the shining strand. We thought, as we listened, that the melody was almost celestial; but when we returned, and found ourselves in the very centre of the tumultuous clanging, we altered our opinion, for the sweet sounds were changed to a terrible clash, and the ravishing music had become a maddening din. Each bell seemed to have its own discordant note, while harmony in the whole company of noisemakers was out of the question. It was distance which had lent enchantment to the sound. Afterwards, Mr. Spurgeon wrote :—"The words of poets and eloquent writers may, as a whole, and heard from afar, sound charmingly enough; but how few of them bear a near and minute investigation! Their belfry rings passably, but one would soon weary of each separate bell. It is never so with the Divine words of Jesus. You hear them ringing from afar, and they are sweetness itself. When, as a sinner, you roamed like a traveller at midnight lost on the wilds, how tenderly did they call you home! And now you have reached the house of mercy, you can sit and listen to each distinct note of love's perfect peal, and wonderingly feel that even angelic harps cannot excel it."

There was a most interesting voyage to Hamburg and Heligoland (which Mr. Spurgeon described in detail in the *Sword and Trowel* for 1867), and a memorable visit to Geneva, where we saw the good Merle D'Aubigné in his own home, and my beloved preached in the cathedral, standing in Calvin's pulpit, robed in the black Genevan gown (see Vol. II., page 372). Oh, there was at least one wife who was proud of her husband that day!

In after years, during the long lonely months occasioned by my ill-health, memories of our tours were always fresh and fragrant, and one of the compensations of my sickness was to go over again in thought all the difficulties, and dangers, and delights we had met with in our travels; and this pleasure would be doubled when my husband could spend a little time by my couch, and the talk turned to

these sunny days, and we together recalled our most amusing adventures, and laughed heartily at the blunders and mistakes we either made or mastered. Ah ! there were some strange tales to tell ; I think I could fill a volume with the memories of those delightful journeys.

The first incident which occurs to my mind, at this moment, was sufficiently embarrassing when it happened, but it furnished us with material for much amusement afterward. We were crossing the Col di Val Dobbia, from Varallo to Gressonay. We reached the summit without any serious mishap, and rested for a while at the little hospice which affords shelter to travellers all the year round. When we left this friendly refuge, our troubles commenced. The path descends precipitously, traversing a snow-field ; on our left was a steep slope, and under our feet the path was all loose stones, which made the walking difficult and dangerous, *to us*. We had not gone very far before a baggage-mule lost its footing, and glissaded down the slope,—to its certain death, we thought ; but, just before reaching the awful precipice, something caused its body to swerve,—just as a “bowl” will turn when a “bias” has been given to it,—and it stopped on the very edge of the chasm. It was recovered by the men, and brought safely back again ; but the accident so alarmed and disconcerted us all that dear Mr. Spurgeon sat down in the snow, and refused to stir a step ! “Would he not go back to the hospice on the summit ?” we asked. No ; he would stay where he was ! “Would he not try to descend, with a friend on either side of him ?” No ; he protested that *he couldn't move !* We coaxed, and pleaded, to no purpose ; so we sat down with him in the snow, and tried to realize our position. We were more than 8,000 feet above the level of the sea, on the sharp ridge of a mountain, with only just sufficient time to get down to Gressonay before nightfall. It was a very perplexing situation, and we looked at one another, and then at our well-nigh fainting leader, with dismay. It was such a novel experience, too, for he always enjoyed the mountain passes, and never knew any fear. At last, we did get him to make the effort to start, and we reached Gressonay in safety, though with painful toil to him. I have since thought that the awful night at the Surrey Music Hall was responsible for this strange condition of mind into which he was thrown, and that the delicate organism of his wonderful brain had then sustained so much pressure in some part of it, that any sudden fright, such as the swift descent of the mule down the mountain, would have the power, for a moment or two, to disturb its balance. However this might be, no evil effects ensued, and we made it rather a matter of merriment than of misgiving.

It was in this same valley of Gressonay, some few days after our uncomfortable

entry into it, that a singular and unique testimony to the beauty of Christian character, as seen in dear Mr. Spurgeon, and his travelling companions, was spontaneously offered from a very unexpected quarter. We had found a comfortable resting-place in an hotel at the foot of the Col, and having quite recovered from our late fatigue, we made an excursion, one lovely morning, up the valley, *en route* to the Lys Glacier, guided by our host, M. Delapierre, and his son Ferdinand. We were in the highest possible spirits, delighted with the safe and easy going on a well-paved mule-path, and enjoying to the full the glorious scenery and the fine, bracing air of this valley, 4,530 feet above the sea. My husband, Mr. Passmore, and Mr. Morgan, were riding on in front; and, if I remember rightly, Mr. Spurgeon began to praise God for all the loveliness with which we were surrounded, and called upon us to join him in thanksgiving. This we did, and M. Delapierre, who was leading my mule, regarded his guests with wonder, and turning to me, said, "Mais, Madame, ces Messieurs ne sont pas des hommes, ce sont des anges!" ("But, Madam, these gentlemen are not men, they are angels!") I asked what made him think so, and he waxed eloquent in praise of their gentle and gracious conduct, so different, he said, from the behaviour of all the other travellers he had seen. They had not done or said anything particularly heavenly, but their consistent and Christian spirit had shone out so clearly and brightly, during their stay at the hotel, that this man could not refrain from speaking of the impression it had made upon him. I believe he was perfectly honest in his surprise and admiration, for we were waited upon by him and his son with as much consideration and reverence as if we had truly been celestial visitants in the guise of humanity. We left the place with great reluctance and regret on both sides, promising ourselves to return some day for a prolonged sojourn; but, though this desire was never fulfilled, the hotel at St. Jean de Gressonay was ever after the symbol to us of all that was most delightful and enjoyable in foreign travel.

As I write, the striking of a cuckoo clock reminds me of its faithful service during almost the whole period of our married life, for we bought it at Schaffhausen on our first trip to Switzerland, and it has sung out the hours ever since! I do not know that "Westwood" contains a more cherished relic of the blessed days that are past than this pretty cuckoo clock, and it certainly bears testimony to somebody's good workmanship forty years ago.

Mr. Spurgeon was a most observant traveller, deeply interested in all he saw, and keenly appreciative of Nature in all her moods and humours. He had, too, a great gift for turning to account everything that would help to illustrate or interpret the message which he, as an ambassador for God, had to deliver to sinful men. His

capacity for storing incidents and experiences was marvellous; we used jokingly to tell him that he had shelves in his head, where he laid up all these things, assorted and labelled, and ready for use on the first opportunity! And we were not far wrong; "there's many a true word spoken in jest." It was an education to accompany him in any of his wanderings, and a perfect delight to listen to his conversation, whether grave or gay.

Then, wherever we might be, the sweet devoutness of his spirit was always manifest, and the light of his love to his Saviour shone with a steady radiance. It was never put out of sight, or hidden under the bushel of "inconvenient circumstances." We had family prayer, whether we lodged in some rough inn on the mountains, or in the luxurious rooms of a palatial hotel in a city; and the blessed "abiding in Christ," of which many of us say, "It is high, I cannot attain unto it," was to him the natural atmosphere of his soul;—he lived and breathed in the presence of God.

In some future chapters, I hope to let him tell, in his own sweet words, by his letters home, how his heart was stirred, and his spirit refreshed, and his mind invigorated through foreign travel. But, in the meantime, I must return to my theme, and keep as close as I can to the period about which I am trying to write,—the early days of our married life. I am apt—I hope I may be pardoned,—to make little digressive journeys into the side paths and meadows of memory, tempted by the many forget-me-nots which grow there; but I find that this habit does not facilitate progress along the straight road of history.

One of the loveliest pictures which I keep laid away in my heart is furnished by the remembrance of the beautiful lake of Orta, and what we saw and heard upon its placid waters, when we were loitering among the Alps of Piedmont and Savoy. We were on our way to Varallo, to see the extraordinary Sacro Monte there, and were crossing the lake to Pella, in an open boat, when we became aware that we had, unwittingly, chosen a *festa* day for our journey, and should, in consequence, be indulged by the sight of a remarkably attractive spectacle. Between Orta and Pella, the rocky eminence of the Isola di San Giulio rises sheer out of the deep blue lake. On it is built a large church, and a village nestles under the shadow of its walls. Purely white the church and the houses are, (or were,) and they gleamed in the morning sunshine, and were reflected in the shimmering water in a way which enhanced the singular charm of their position. All around the shores of the lake, quaint hamlets clustered, looking their loveliest, with a background of mountains, and a rearguard of noble trees, while the lake lay like a looking-glass of molten silver in the forefront. This was very delightful; but, as we gazed on the exquisite scene, it developed in interest and grace, for we perceived that, from each

of the villages which dotted the shore, large boats, covered with white awnings, and filled with people, were coming across the lake, and all converging to the church on the rock.

Mr. Spurgeon asked our boatman to lay aside his oars, that we might take time to enjoy the full beauty of the picturesque display. Slowly the boats with their living freight came along, and presently we caught the melody of tuneful voices, rising and falling in measured cadence of holy song. Then we understood that the occupants of the boats were going to worship, and on their way were chanting hymns of praise to God. Such "music across the waters" not only fell upon listening ears, but dropped tenderly into loving hearts, and the effect of the whole scene was indescribably solemn and beautiful.

So deep an impression did it make on me that, even at this distance of time, I have but to lean back in my chair, and close my eyes, and see it all over again, as on that long-ago day, so faithfully does the film of memory reproduce the image of those lovely objects, and reveal them to my inner consciousness. Plainly I see the sapphire lake, the unclouded sky, the surrounding Alps, the vivid green of the wooded shores, the white church on the rock sparkling in the clear, pure atmosphere. I watch the procession of boats with their graceful canopies, I hear the sweet chanting of the people, as they draw nearer and nearer to their sanctuary,—I can enjoy all this over again;—but not without many a heartache can I recall the enraptured look on my husband's face, as the meaning and pathos of this sweet picture moved his soul, and touched his tenderest sympathy. The people, poor, ignorant, and priest-ridden, were assembling to render homage to God; and, though their ritual was unscriptural and unspiritual, they knew no other, and his heart went out to them in compassionate love and longing. Suppose some among them were ready to "seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him;" there was no one to lead them straight to the Saviour! Think how this soul-winner must have yearned to preach to them the gospel of a free and full salvation! No wonder the hot tears silently chased each other down his cheeks, as he realized their exceeding need, and his own powerlessness to reach and teach them. How tenderly he would have told them of Jesus, the "one Mediator between God and men," and how earnestly would he have besought them to come to the living Christ who alone "taketh away the sin of the world"! The sight of *priests* always stirred his righteous anger; but for the poor misled people, he felt the utmost pity and kindness.

After this incident, we arrived safely at Varallo for the Sabbath; and, as usual, spent a quiet and restful day. Dear Mr. Spurgeon went alone to the Sacro Monte;

and, as he once, when preaching, recalled his impressions of the singular place, I insert them here :—

“One Sabbath-day, I was staying in an Italian town on the other side of the Alps. Of course, the whole population was Romish. Two or three of us, being Protestants, therefore held a little service for the worship of God in the simple manner which is our wont. After this, I went out for a walk. The weather being hot and sultry, I sought the outskirts of the town, to get to as quiet and cool a spot as possible. Presently, I came to an archway at the foot of a hill, where there was an announcement that any person who would climb the hill, with proper intentions, should receive the pardon of his sins and five days' indulgence. I thought I might, as well as anybody else, have five days' indulgence ; and if it were of any advantage, have it laid by in store.”

“I cannot tell you all I saw as I went, first one way and then another, up that hill. Suffice it to say that there was a series of little chapels, through the windows of which you might look, as one in his boyish days looked through a peep-show. The whole history of our Lord's life, and the circumstances surrounding His passion and death, were here on view ; the groups of figures being modelled in terra-cotta, painted and clothed. The forty-six chapels, which thus tell the story of man's redemption, are dotted all over the hill,—often half-hidden by the beautiful trees which surround them. In the one where Christ's agony in Gethsemane is represented, the figure is as large as life, with the drops of bloody sweat falling to the ground, the three disciples a stone's-throw off, and the rest of the apostles outside the garden wall. Every feature looked as real as if one had been standing upon the actual spot. I scrutinized each group narrowly, and carefully read the Latin text which served as an index, till I reached a part of the hill, where I saw a garden, just like many we have in England, and as I pushed open the door, I faced these words, ‘Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre.’ Walking down a path, I came to a sepulchre ; so I stooped down, and looked in, as John had done centuries before me. There, instead of seeing a semblance of the corpse of Christ, I read in gilded letters these words,—of course, in the Latin tongue,—‘He is not here : for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.’

“Passing on, I came to a structure where our Lord's ascension was represented. On the summit of the hill was a large church, into which I entered. No one was there, yet the place had for me a marvellous interest. High up in the ceiling there swung a roughly-hewn figure of the Lord Jesus Christ, and round it were statues of the prophets, all with their fingers pointing up to Him. There was Isaiah, with a scroll in his left hand, on which was written, ‘He is despised and rejected of men ; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.’ Further on stood Jeremiah, and on

his scroll was written, 'Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto Me.' All round the church I read, in great letters that were large enough to be seen, though they were painted on the top of the ceiling, 'Moses and all the prophets spoke and wrote concerning Him.' It was a remarkable sight, one which I shall never forget ; it did my heart good to see all these witnesses doing homage to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of men."

There comes to me, also, a bright and pleasant memory of a short sojourn on the Bel Alp, from whence several interesting excursions can be made. We walked up the mountain by a bridle-path from Brieg, and found a most comfortable resting-place in the excellent hotel there provided for travellers. The view was sublime and startling ; we seemed to be in the midst of a vast amphitheatre of Alpine peaks and glaciers, and from the plateau before the inn door we could see many of the notable snow-clad giants, "whose sunbright summits mingle with the sky !" Here, Mr. Passmore and I had a fit of Alpine fever, and were consumed by a desire to climb one of the lesser Alps ; but we could not prevail on my dear husband to accompany us on our venturesome journey. We decided to try the Sparrenhorn (9,889 ft.), as being comparatively easy of ascent, and therefore suited to the unaccustomed feet of timid climbers. A guide was engaged, and we set off, one fine morning, in the highest spirits, leaving dear Mr. Spurgeon sitting complacently outside the door of the hotel with a book to divert his mind, and a telescope wherewith to watch our progress. We accomplished our task, not without difficulty, and what looked to us like danger ; but we gained the summit, and from thence gazed on so sublime a panorama of snow-mountains, and great ice-rivers, that the scene can never be forgotten while life lasts. A great awe overcame us, and we trembled with emotion,—marvelling that such atoms, as we felt ourselves to be, were loved and cared for by the Creator of these colossal witnesses to His power and majesty. Then the call came to descend, and we turned earthward, losing much of our humility, I fear, as we regained the level. Very tired, but very proud of our performance, we reached the hotel ; but when we related our adventures, and enlarged upon the perils of the way, we found the chief of the party quite as gratified with himself for having had the wisdom to remain in safety below ! When, on leaving the inn, my dear husband inscribed his name in the visitors' book, he added these words, "Ascended the Sparrenhorn *by deputy* !"

After a few days of great enjoyment in this place, we decided to go on further to the Eggischhorn. To carry out this plan, we had to descend to the Great Aletsch Glacier, traversing its frozen waves, and crossing its huge moraines,—those wonderful accumulations of *débris* and dirt, which always disfigure the *surface* of the

glacier, but are never allowed to sink into its spotless substance, or soil the underlying crystal by a shadow of impurity.



THE GREAT ALETSCHE GLACIER.

Half-way between the Bel Alp and the hotel built on the slope of the Eggischhorn, we reached a mountain tarn, and sat down to rest a while by its cool waters. We were very hungry as well as tired, and seeing a peasant without any visible occupation but the ungraceful one of staring at our needy selves, we persuaded him to descend the mountain to a chalet he knew of, and bring us some bread and milk. It was a Marah experience to us when, on his return with a basket which looked as if it might contain good things, he offered us milk too sour to drink, and bread black as a coal, too hard to bite, and quite as bitter as the curdled milk! What did we do? Why, we longed the more eagerly to arrive at the hotel toward which we were travelling! We resumed our journey, and made no more halts till we reached the hospitable table where our hunger was abundantly satisfied. Dear Mr. Spurgeon afterwards commented thus on the incident:—"In like manner, our disappointments on the road to Heaven whet our appetites for the Better Country, and quicken the pace of our pilgrimage to the Celestial City."

While we were sojourning on the Eggischhorn, Mr. Passmore and I made a pilgrimage to the Marjelen See,—a remarkable lake, fed and surrounded by glaciers.



THE MARJELEN SEE.

Its shores were strewn with huge blocks of ice, other mighty masses were floating on its calm cold surface like miniature icebergs ; but the most magical effect was produced by the cliffs on one side,—pure, clear walls of ice rising sheer out of the dark waters to a height of fifty feet ! It was an Arctic wonderland, a most unearthly vision ; and a very small amount of imagination would have transformed those cliffs into the Ice King's palace, and peopled the whole region with snow sprites and frost fairies. I was very sorry my beloved did not see the strange sight, for he would have found treasures of illustration where I could only see a unique exhibition of Alpine marvels. It was considered a very easy walk of two hours to this surprising lake, yet it took us a much longer time than that to reach it, for we were but poor mountaineers, and thought it a long and difficult way ; so, as the day was dying soon after we reached our goal, we had to hasten back, and my weary feet were quickened by the desire I had to share the joy of the journey with my husband. We had, however, a very humiliating experience at the end. Footsore and exhausted, we came in sight of our resting-place. Mr. Spurgeon, Mr. Morgan, and other visitors

were grouped round the door watching for our return, and we hoped to conceal our extreme fatigue, and appear to be coming back with flying colours ; but, alas for us ! there was a short and sharp descent to the plateau on which the hotel was built, and, essaying to run down it, first one, and then the other, slipped and fell prostrate almost at the feet of the amazed spectators ! What sorry and crestfallen creatures we must have looked for about a minute and a-half when we were helped to our feet ! But when it was found that no bones were broken, everybody had a hearty laugh, and my dear husband found no end of amusement in recalling the incident for many a day afterwards.



THE STAUBBACH AND VALLEY OF LAUTERBRUNNEN. (*See next page.*)

There came a day, however, when my beloved fully shared in all the delights of Alpine travel. We had a memorable journey across the Wengern Alp, when he seemed to bring all his previously-gathered strength into use, and to exercise all the powers of mind and body which he possessed. He walked without weariness, and at such a pace that we could scarcely keep up with him ; never before or since did I see him so active and full of physical energy. He descended the Little Scheideck with the utmost ease and pleasure, using his alpenstock as a vaulting-pole, singing or talking all the way, and delighting us by his stores of knowledge, and his keen

appreciation of the wonders by which we were surrounded. Higher up the mountain, we had sat for a while to watch the ice-avalanches, which were to be seen quite plainly, across an intervening valley, falling every now and then from the great snow-ridges of a mountain opposite to us. They looked, from that distance, like harmless cascades of snow, but their true character was revealed by the thunderous noise of their fall. The sight greatly impressed him, and lifted his spirit Heavenward, and both mind and body answered to the holy influence in a remarkable fashion. He shall tell, in his own words, something of his inner experience at that ever-to-be-remembered time :—

"The day in which I saw most of Creation's grandeur was spent upon the Wengern Alp. My heart was near her God, and all around was majestic ; the dread mountains, like pyramids of ice ; the clouds, like fleecy wool. I saw the avalanche, and heard the thunder of its fall ; I marked the dashing waterfalls leaping into the vale of Lauterbrunnen beneath our feet ; but my heart felt that Creation was too scant a mirror to image all her God,—His face was more terrible than the storm, His robes more pure than the virgin snow, His voice far louder than the thunder, His love far higher than the everlasting hills. I took out my pocket-book, and wrote these lines :—

"Yet in all these, how great soe'er they be,
We see not Him. The glass is all too dense
And dark, or else our earthborn eyes too dim.

"Yon Alps, that lift their heads above the clouds,
And hold familiar converse with the stars,
Are dust, at which the balance trembleth not,
Compared with His Divine immensity.
The snow-crown'd summits fail to set Him forth,
Who dwelleth in eternity, and bears,
Alone, the Name of High and Lofty One.
Depths unfathom'd are too shallow to express
The wisdom and the knowledge of the Lord.
The mirror of the creatures has no space
To bear the image of the Infinite.
'Tis true, the Lord hath fairly writ His Name,
And set His seal upon Creation's brow ;
But, as the skilful potter much excels
The vessel which he fashions on the wheel,
E'en so, but in proportion greater far,
Jehovah's self transcends His noblest works.
Earth's ponderous wheels would break, her axles snap,
If freighted with the load of Deity.
Space is too narrow for the Eternal's rest,
And time too short a footstool for His throne.
E'en avalanche and thunder lack a voice
To utter the full volume of His praise.
How then can I declare Him? Where are words
With which my glowing tongue may speak His Name?
Silent I bow, and humbly I adore."

On another occasion, Mr. Spurgeon thus recorded for future use his thoughts

when admiring some remarkable rainbows which typified to him those described by the apostle John in the Book of the Revelation :—

“ Looking from the little wooden bridge which passes over the brow of the beautiful waterfall of Handeck, on the Grimsel, one will, at a certain hour of a bright day, be surprised to see a rainbow making an entire circle, surrounding the fall like a coronet of gems, or a ring set with all the brilliants of the jeweller. Every hue is there,—

“ ‘ In fair proportion, running from the red
To where the violet fades into the sky.’ ”

We saw two such bows, one within the other, and we fancied that we discovered traces of a third. We had looked upon such a sight but once before, and were greatly delighted with ‘ that arch of light, born of the spray, and coloured by the sun.’ It was a fair vision to gaze upon, and reminded us of the mystic rainbow, which the seer of Patmos beheld, which was ‘ round about the throne,’ for it strikes us that it was seen by John *as a complete circle*, of which we perceive but the half on earth. The upper arc of manifest glory we rejoice to behold ; but the lower arch of the eternal purpose, upon which the visible display of grace is founded, is reserved for our contemplation in another world.

“ When we read, in the first verse of the tenth chapter of Revelation, ‘ I saw another mighty angel come down from Heaven, clothed with a cloud : and a rainbow was upon his head,’ it greatly assists the imagination to conceive of a many-coloured circlet, rather than a semicircle. We lingered long watching the flashing crystal, dashed and broken upon a hundred craggy rocks, and tossed into the air in sheets of foam, to fall in wreaths of spray ; we should not have tired if we could have tarried for hours to admire the harmonious hues of that wheel within a wheel,—

“ ‘ Of colours changing from the splendid rose,
To the pale violet’s dejected hue ;’—

but we were on a journey, and were summoned to advance.”

One more retrospect may well conclude these mere outline sketches from the tablets of memory. We were travelling in Italy, and when driving along the roads, in a certain part of the country, were continually pained by the sight of the superstitious aids to devotion supplied by the Roman Catholic Church to her votaries. Here, was a tiny chapel to the Virgin ;—there, a shrine for an idolatrous image ;—in many cases, a niche with a crucifix and a lamp burning before it, where prayers might be purchased for the souls supposed to be enduring purgatorial fires. Generally, there were accessories of the coarsest and rudest kind, which we could not look on without repulsion ; they all seemed such a dreadful mockery of “ our most holy faith ” that we tried not to see them as we passed along. But, one day, we came to

a place where was a huge cross by the side of the highway, and on it hung a life-sized, fearful representation of the Beloved of our soul, who poured out His precious blood for our redemption. No harrowing detail of the mighty Sacrifice of Love was omitted, no item of agony forgotten ;—I dare not describe the awful sight, it horrified and shocked us, and we turned aside from the revolting spectacle, but not until Mr. Spurgeon had noticed the superscription,—

SPES UNICA,—

in large letters over the bowed head of the figure on “the shameful cross.” He caught eagerly at the light thus gleaming through the darkness. “Here,” he said, “is truth emblazoned on an idol! Yes, truly, Jesus, our once crucified, but now exalted Lord, is the sole and *only hope* of man. O blessed Christ, Thou art ‘Spes Unica’ to our soul! We have found a diamond in the mire of superstition; does it sparkle any the less?” So we went on our way, sorrowful, yet praising God for the preciousness of those two words; and, soon, one might have heard us softly singing, as we drove along,—

“Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee