

Among the more recent memories of this fair city is the fact that here Mrs. Browning, the greatest woman poet of all time, lived, and wrote, and died. I inquired at several book-stores and at the hotel for her house, but no one seemed to have ever heard of her. Mine host offered to look for her name in the directory.

I left with regret this lovely city, and took rail for Milan and the Italian Lakes—Como, Lugano and Maggiore. We delay not now at the capital of Lombardy, which has been recently described in these pages.

The Italian lakes, Como, Lugano and Maggiore, have challenged the admiration of poet and painter from the days of Virgil to the present time. Less sublime in their environments than those of Switzerland, they are far more beautiful. The surrounding foliage, also, is much richer; the orange and myrtle take the place of the spruce and the pine. The sky is of a sunnier blue, and the air of a balmy breath, and the water of a deeper and more transparent hue.

Lake Como is only an hour's ride from Milan, through a fertile and hilly country. *En route* we pass the ancient town of Monza, where is preserved the iron crown with which Constantine, Charlemagne, Charles V., and Napoleon, besides two score of Lombard kings, have been crowned. Como, which lies amid an amphitheatre of hills, was the birthplace of the elder and younger Pliny. The mountains rise in verdurous slopes, clothed to their summits with chestnuts and olives, to the height of 7,000 feet. At their base nestle the gay villas of the Milanese aristocracy, embowered amid lemon and myrtle groves. Lovely bays, continued into winding valleys, run up between the jutting capes and towering mountains. The richest effects of glowing light and creeping shadows, like the play of smiles on a lovely face, give expression to the landscape. Like a swift shuttle, the steamer darts across the narrow lake from village to village. The glowing sunlight, the warm tints of the frescoed villas, the snowy campaniles, and the gay costumes, mobile features, and animated gestures of the peasantry, give a wondrous life and colour to the scene.

On a high and jutting promontory is Bellagio, the culminating point of beauty on the lake. After dinner at the *Hotel Grande Bretagne*, whose windows command one of the loveliest views I ever beheld, I set forth with a companion for a sunset sail on fair Como. Softly crept the purple shadows over wave and shore. Gliding beneath the lofty cliffs, our boatman woke the echoes with his song. Snowy sails glided by like sheeted ghosts in the