

a great stretch of Lake Como, loveliest of lakes, with its far-winding and villa-studded shores, at our feet Menaggio, Bellagio, Bellano, and many other places of pleasant sojourn.

After dinner a number of the party went out for a sail on the lake. Softly crept the purple shadows over wave and shore. Gliding beneath the lofty cliffs, the boatman woke the echoes with his song. Snowy sails glided by like sheeted ghosts in the deepening darkness. As the Benediction rang from the village campaniles—one after another taking up the strain—now near, now far, the liquid notes floated over the waves like the music of the spheres. Listening in silence, with suspended oar, to the solemn voices calling through the darkness—

“We heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,
The manifold soft chimes
That fills the haunted chambers of the night,
Like some old poet’s rhymes.”

Next day we made a boat excursion to the famous Villa Carlotta, at Cadenabbia. Landing at stately marble steps, we were led through lofty *suites* of rooms filled with costly art treasures. For Thorwaldsen’s *bas reliefs* of the triumphs of Alexander alone, was paid the sum of nearly 375,000 francs. Then we wandered through the terraced garden, studded with fragrant magnolias and other rare trees and plants, and commanding exquisite views over the lakes. Yet all this splendour cannot give happiness, for its owner, a bereaved widower, seldom enjoys it, its associations being chiefly of sadness and sorrow. Our sturdy rowers soon took us across to Bellagio, where the ladies found remarkable attractions in the woven silk portières of richest colours and designs, a local manufacture of much repute.

The afternoon sail down the lake was like a dream of beauty. 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, gives 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. At length we reach Como, the birth-place of the elder and younger Pliny, and take train for Milan.