

## The Saturday Gazette.

VOL. I.—No. 2.

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, MAY 7, 1887.

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## OUR QUEEN IN THE ALPS.

## MRS. SHERWOOD'S IMPRESSIONS OF THE QUEEN AND PRINCESS BEATRICE.

How the Royal Party Enjoyed the Famous Watering-Place—The Queen's Fondness for Picturesque Scenery and Romantic Excursions.

The Queen's present visit to Aix-les-Bains recalls to me the fact that I was in the next hotel to the royal party for twenty-two days in 1885, and that I could not but see how picturesque royalty is in a "shady place"—that is, poetically speaking, for Aix is anything but shady, and was, in April, 1885, especially hot and sunny. The Queen had come to Aix, it was said, because the Princess Beatrice retained a grateful memory of Cure and its picturesqueness. If this royal girl had been afflicted with the rheumatism like the rest of us, and, like the rest of us, had been helped at Aix-les-Bains, she was doubtless glad of this spring burst which unfolded the leaves in an hour, which covered the wild apple tree with a delicate pink-and-white veil, which set the nightingales a-singing and brought out on the meadows a coverlet of cowslips and primroses, yellow king cups like Dame's shower, and the pretty little purple grape hyacinth.

The Queen drives out every day, preceded by a funny little groom, who wildly waved to us to keep out of the way. Her carriages were all sent from London, and were marked with the royal arms. Generally the Princess sat beside her and Lady Ely or Lady Churchill in front of her, else all was like any lady taking an airing. Nothing could have been simpler than the life they led, the Queen and Princess. Plainly dressed, accompanied by two ladies and perhaps the gentlemen of the suite, the Queen went about the park at Marlioz, a mile from Aix, in a pony carriage; or walking and sketching (which she does very well), she relieved the cares of state.

There were, however, some picturesque excursions. One of these was a visit to the abbey of Hautecombe; that fine old gloomy monastery across the beautiful peacock blue of the Lake of Bourget, which is built so as to exclude every ray of sun from its austere cloisters, excepting for one hour of the day. Here dwell the white-robed Cistercians, whose rules are only less severe than those of La Trappe. They guard with their vigils and their prayers the tombs of the Princess of the House of Savoy. A steamboat had been chartered for Her Majesty and suit, and the hoary-headed old Prior came down and embarked on a six-oared pinnace to meet her. The monks were all dressed in their white woollen Capuchins, and wore robes and crosses at their waists. Among them was one monk of English birth, who had not seen his sovereign for thirty years. A good picture might be made of the scene by some St. George Hayter, or Sir Frederic Leighton, as the red flag of England floated over the little steamer, and the grand circle of the Dent du Chat, the green Revard, the distant Jura, and, below the range of the snow-white Dauphine Alps, all seem but a setting, some near, some remote, to this exquisite mysterious Lake of Bourget, with its shadows and sheen. "It was not the hand of man, but the hand of God which played with these masses," said Lamar-tine.

The Queen advanced to meet the Prior who was assisted up the side of the boat, and who did homage reverently. The Queen, with that beautiful courtesy which never deserts her, bent for his blessing. Then she landed, and preceded by the Prior walked up to the gloomy old Hautecombe, where she admired the view which commands the lake, and looked at the tombs of the Princes of the House of Savoy. It might have been Mary Queen of Scots at Holyrood.

Having inspected the collection of sculptures, paintings and frescoes, the royal visitors took lunch; what with the delicious trout of the lake, the famous Chartreuse cordial and the cooking for which Aix is famous, this need not have been a frugal repast. Probably in all her various journeys the Queen never assisted at a prettier picture or looked out on a scene of more perfect natural beauty. On Tuesday, the 14th of April, the Princess Beatrice arrived at the age of twenty-eight, and the loyal English Ely, Lady Churchill and the other ladies followed in other carriages.

The Queen has bought a plot of ground

blonde girl, with a "nez Watteau," or, as Tennyson says, "tip tilted like a flower," she was adorable with her fresh complexion, fine brown eyes and red lips. The person who carried her the flowers said that she was frightened and trembling said, "I thank you." In the evening a fete was arranged in her honor, which was a pretty bit of illumination. All about the Villa Motet, dependencies of the Hotel Europe, where the Queen is now, was lighted by colored lanterns; the choral unions of Chambery and Aix marched about singing "God Save the Queen;" fireworks burst from every wooded nook and corner, and a splendid arch with the royal arms and order of St. George and the Dragon in colored lights; the illuminated "Dieu et mon Droit" and the name of "Beatrice," shone from an arch. These varied lights falling on the mountains still all covered with snow presented a startling effect. Twenty-eight guns thundered forth their hot-finished greeting.

And Jura answered Jura her misty shroud Back to the answering Alps, which called to her aloud!

We all watched in vain for Prince Henry of Battenberg. We hoped to see a little bit of a royal courtship, but we were not so blessed. Whether Cupid in crown and sceptre is more interesting than when only in common clothes no one has decided. Now a settled, young married pair keep the thirtieth anniversary of the same 14th of April at Aix-les-Bains.

The Queen paid a visit to Annecy with her suite, under the guidance of Dr. Brachet. This enchanting old town is situated at the foot of Mt. Lemnoz and on the lake bearing its name, a lake as lovely as anything in Italy. This lake flows up through the town and is crossed by narrow bridges. There are stately houses in the Venetian style with balconies of medieval iron work. These are as they have been unchanged for centuries. Here lived Eugene Sue, Rousseau, Lamartine; but greater, better still, here lived St. Francois de Sales. No name was so honored as this apostle of the Alps. He lies buried in the beautiful medical hospital, having died in 1622. In such estimation was his memory held by the people that when the city was taken by the French in 1635 one of the articles of capitulation was that the body of Francois de Sales should never be removed.

The Queen made an expedition to the Chamibettes, a high mountain opposite to Hautecombe. One can drop a line from this sheer precipice down into the lake. The last stage up, the height is made by the lame and the lame with the assistance of a donkey or a chaise a porteur, but the Princess bounded over the stones like a chamois. She was so delighted with the view and the primitive hotel on top that she sent to the hotel-keeper her portrait and autograph, which is always shown to visitors.

I saw the royal party depart on a fine, warm day. The valley of Aix dominated by the high peak of the Nivolet, no whose summit stands a grand cross of silver, lay sweet and still and garden-like. There is no such perfection of fertility elsewhere. Snow lingered here and there on the distant mountain tops. Everywhere floated the Cross of St. George and the Lion of England. Soldiers in gaudy uniforms were marching through the streets. Clear were the streets which led to the station, and our carriage drove up by the further door. Down from the "Europe" came the lively groom wildly waving, and after him the coroneted carriage which bore the little woman who has held England's welfare in her small hands so wisely and well for fifty years. Sir Henry Ponsonby, her old and tried servant, who lives and breathes for the Queen, stood with his fine, gray head uncovered in the burning sunshine, to receive her as she proceeded alone with her really stately step over a scarlet carpet to the train. On this occasion the platform was strictly guarded, and none but invited guests were there to see Her Majesty depart. Some officious person offered a bouquet, but was quashed. Lady Ely covered her retreat gracefully. The Queen looked about for her favorite doctor and his wife, bade them farewell and thanked them for the courtesies so gracefully offered her.

Not until the train disappeared did Sir Henry Ponsonby resume his hat. The nearest opportunity that I had to see Her Majesty was at church. As she came out the congregation arose and stood waiting for her to pass. A short, stout figure, a face with the long upper lip and cold, blue eye of the Georges, straight bandeaux of gray hair, a rather flushed complexion, a most graceful walk and a sort of sweet, venerable, natural dignity and a power about her as of the mother of her people, a natural grace, improved to the highest point by long habits of courtly breeding—I thought she presented a very characteristic and interesting picture. She and the Princess were whirled off in a coroneted carriage to the Villa Motet, while Lady Ely, Lady Churchill and the other ladies followed in other carriages.

The Queen has bought a plot of ground

on some high land above Lake Burget, near a well-known house, owned by Lady Whalley, called "Le Maison de Diable." One-half of this house is a formidable tower of the middle ages, the other half a modern English mansion. As we were one day drinking our 5 o'clock tea on the piazza, looking over the vine-clad valley towards the snow mountains, I saw this stern tower cutting the sky, and I asked Lady Whalley for the origin of the name. "Oh," said she, "if the Devil had only never done anything worse than to build that old tower! It keeps the wind off us in winter, and is such a good place for our boxes! Will you ascend it?" And then I went with her up the winding stairs, through the heavy old stone architecture of the middle ages. In the days of the Robbys, Barons some old feudal lord had essayed to build this for defense, and his servants were, no doubt, dull and stupid.

"I will give my soul to the Devil if he finish this tower!" he imprudently exclaimed.

The next day he looked out of the window the tower was finished! He essayed to enter it, but fell head on the threshold. "Ye build, ye build, but ye enter not in!"

"Mais, ce qui caractérise le Diable," says the chronicler, "c'est qu'il est inaccessible a tous les bons sentiments."

Probably the Queen will be more patient, and will hire another architect. Her villa will go up more slowly, but here she will probably pass some years of her glorious autumn. And the English nobility will crowd to this healthy fortress, this cathedral of all nations. It is a curious place, Aix-les-Bains—all that can be offered by a lovely country, picturesque scenery, blue lake, snow mountain, mineral springs, a wealth of interest, botanical, historical, geological; musical entertainments, casino life, excellent hotels, a perfect climate—rather hot in summer—no mosquitoes, no flies, no noxious insects—these are all combined with the amusement of seeing famous people, either in the realms of literature, the drama or the fashionable world. The gambling is the only unhealthy influence.

The Casino des Fleurs boasts of one of the most splendid gambling-houses in the world. Baccarat is the game and it runs high. Crippled men and women, who spend the evening at the Grand Etablissement, are brought in to the gambling-table, in chairs and on crutches, by their nurses and play far into the night. The statistics of Aix show that the game of faro was invented here, and in that rather unreadable book, "Casanova," we hear mention made of actors, kings and gamblers, the dissolute nobles of the time of Louis XV., &c. Some wit said that "Aix is geographically placed between France and Italy, to counteract the good dishes of the one and the wines of the other." I wish I could induce a number of American capitalists to invest in a high plot of ground there and build a hotel and villas, such as we have at Tuxedo Park, up beyond the Establishment. The worst part of life at Aix now is, that one must live down in the town, where the air is close and enervating, to get away from the gambling and the heat, from the spot where—

"Blaise on high the brilliant gas lamps, round the table press the crowd,  
Rather unready here, and in that  
Watson talks too loud,  
"Messieurs, faites vos jeux," the muttering of the croupier to the crew.  
Pause, and muffled clink of louis, Messieurs Mesdames—rien n'va plus.  
Very like this, only more so, is the life they lead at Aix.  
German, English, actors, bishops, nobles, nouveaux riches, also offer stakes."

Such is the gay little watering-place where Victoria lingers before the season begins.

Mrs. JOHN SHERWOOD.

## Schools in Europe.

(Pall Mall Gazette.)

In Russia there are 32,000 schools having each an average of 36 scholars. This is one school for 2,300 inhabitants, at a cost of less than a halfpenny a head of the population. In Austria with 37,000,000 of inhabitants, there are 29,000 schools and 3,000,000 scholars. The average number at each school is 104 and the cost per inhabitant 9d. In Italy, for 28,000,000 inhabitants, there are 47,000 schools, one school for every 600 people, at a cost of 84d. per head. The average number of pupils at the schools is 40. In Spain there are 3,000,000 scholars, 29,000 schools, giving an average of 50 in each school and one school for every 600 inhabitants, as in Italy. The school bill comes to 1s. 2d. a head. The number of schools given for England is 58,000, which is one for every 600 inhabitants, with an average attendance of 52 per school, and a cost of 1s. 6d. a head. The Germans have a school for every 700, giving a total of 60,000 schools, with 100 pupils in each, and 6,000 scholars, being one for every 500, with 66 in each school. France would, therefore seem to have more schools than any other great European country. These schools cost the country 1s 2 1/2d. per inhabitant.

## ABOUT MRS. LANGTRY.

## THE BEAUTY'S HOME LIFE TOLD OF BY ONE WHO KNOWS.

"Patting" an Accompaniment for a Jig Her Love of Fun—A Peep at Some of Her Treasures.

(New York World.)

Mrs. Langtry's six-year-old niece Jeanne, with her hands full of new photographs of her aunt, was the first to greet me when I entered the house in Twenty-third street the other day. Between Mrs. Langtry and her little niece there is a closer bond than usually appears between mother and child. Even in her busiest days the two have their confidential times together. After Jeanne has had her tea and is in the nursery up runs Tantie to show her herself dressed for dinner. And after dinner before she leaves for the theatre, once more goes Tantie for a good night. She romps with her little and dances with her in a way that would win anybody's heart.

Mrs. Langtry came a running down the stairs, and after the usual greetings said: "Now for a jig, Jeanne." The piano was in the music-room, but that did not make the slightest difference. Tantie herself sat upon the arm of the sofa, clapping her hands and singing a song. One of the house gowns is of the new shade of rose de Province and is a simple garment, the only change from the pink being a leaf-green band at throat and wrists and a big green rosette at the belt and on the skirt. Another is a walking dress, likewise simplicity itself. The waist opens in the back and the front is covered with black and gold passementerie, starting from neck and shoulders and coming nearer and nearer together at the waist until it is like a bodice. The gown is of heliotrope cloth and very effectively draped with full pleated fronts gathered up on the hips like an apron-front. There was also a Pekin silk of olive and old-rose stripes, and many others.

A matinee that may very possibly be given during the next three or four weeks will be in French, and Sarah Bernhardt and Mrs. Langtry will play in it together. It will be swell, expensive and a grand time of triumph for both if it takes place. Mrs. Langtry, it will be remembered, made one of her greatest hits in playing in French in Paris. She speaks the language perfectly and the artistic friendship between Mme. Bernhardt and her is very strong. The French artiste was the very first to suggest to Mrs. Langtry that she should go on the stage at all, and she has always since taken great interest and pride in her protégée. Of course, it goes without saying that Bernhardt, who is known everywhere as a most unselfish woman, were her friends are concerned, would do everything in her power to make the combination a success. It will be decided within a few days whether it will be given or not.

FANNIE B. MERRILL.

## Fourteen Days Under Snow.

(Cour d'Alsace San.)

D. Porter, who arrived in Murray on Wednesday, gave a thrilling account of his experience in the snow. About four weeks ago he left the Mountain House, travelling in a northeasterly direction. On the fourth day out he shot an elk, but just about the time he succeeded in capturing the noble animal commenced snowing so hard he found it impossible to proceed. A shelter of some kind being absolutely necessary, he succeeded after much hard work in digging a cave in the snow, and luckily having with him a small hand axe, he managed to cut some wood and build a fire. For fourteen days he was compelled to remain the sole occupant of his snow-bound habitation, keeping up what he found necessary and subsisting on the elk that good fortune had supplied him with. Although no bread or other usual accompaniments were served with his meals, Mr. Porter says his daily collations of elk were very palatable.

## The Empress Eugenie Still Beautiful.

(Courriere del Mattino.)

Yesterday, April 11, the strascio (promenade during which all vehicles are prohibited) in Via Toledo (Naples) was rendered particularly interesting by the appearance of the Empress Eugenie, who passed through the street. The ex-sovereign bears the traces of great and delicate beauty, almost rendering her age a mystery.

Slender, erect, and with a superb figure, she is at once to be recognized as a grande dame. Her bright and vivacious eyes justify the old fascination and the episode of the diamonds in the forest of Compiegne. Her still rosy complexion is admirably preserved, and is perhaps owing to the mild climate which has renewed the ancient beauty in her cheeks; her hair, not yet white, still shows tints of pale gold. The Empress was, as always, in deep mourning, and wore a long crape veil. Although she carried a parasol in her left hand, her right held the well known ebony stick, on which, however, she did not lean.

"Yes, sir," remarked the veteran proudly, "I was in ten engagements—all Southern girls too."—(N. Y. Journal.)