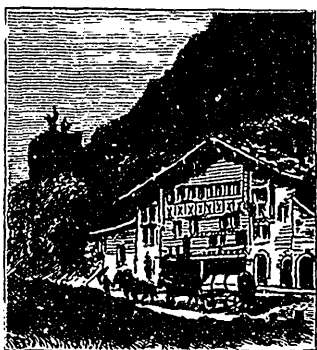


Huge fallen rocks bestrew the valley, as though the Titans had here piled Pelion on Ossa, striving to storm the skies. Instead of the sombre evergreen pines on every side is the dense and rich foliage of the chestnut and mulberry, and farther on the silvery-gray of the olive and the tender green of the vine, and the glistening leaves of the myrtle, and fig, and orange. Bellinzona is thoroughly Italian in appearance as in name, dominated by grim castles perched on neighbouring heights, once a place of much strategic importance and holding the key to the St. Gotthard valley. The railway climbs along the mountain-side and gives a fine view as we advance of the far-spreading plain below, and after a couple more tunnels there bursts upon the view one of the loveliest of the Italian lakes—Lugano—like a sapphire amid a setting of emerald. Less sublime in their environment than those

of Switzerland, these lakes 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 balmier breath, and the water of a deeper and more transparent hue.



WAYSIDE INN, SILENEN.

We are soon at lunch at our hotel—once the monastery of St. Mary of the Angels—and very fine comfortable quarters those old monks had, with large cool corridors, lofty

rooms, and a lovely garden. In the old chapel are some very quaint frescoes by Luino. A stroll through the arcades of the town where nut-brown women sold all manner of wares, and where the airs were by no means those of Araby the blest, greatly interested, especially the lady tourists. A fine statue of Tell reminded us that we were still in Switzerland.

In mid-afternoon we took a steamer for Porlezza, over the placid waters laving the vine-clad hills, crowned on their apparently inaccessible heights with churches, each with its square campanile. It is apparently a point of religion to make access to the churches as difficult as possible, that there may be the more merit in attendance at the sacred functions. Elegant villas, gaily frescoed, arcaded and embowered amid terraced gardens, gave a rare charm to the scene. The handsome Italian custom's officer in the steamer, brilliant with gold lace and epaulettes, quite won the hearts of the ladies by declining to inspect their luggage, which was piled up on the deck for that purpose. If he could