

tively recently the beadle would save up all whippings due for this day, and beat the culprits at the Boundaries to make the charity boys always remember the limit of their parishes, and so save disputes; and I hear that some of the marks are in cupboards in warehouses and on staircases; and that in one case at least the front of a chapel is in one parish and the back is in another, and a small window is used close by the pulpit for the passing of the boundary beaters. The old custom is not kept up everywhere, and in many cases it only occurs every three years. "Ah, those were fine times," sighed a lady belonging to All Hallows Barking. "We and the Tower people used always to have a fight. Now we don't beat at all, and they only come out very seldom."

The papers say it is Miss Elizabeth Balch (writer of some good descriptions of castles in the English Illustrated Magazine) who has puzzled us over "An Author's Love." The notion of personating "L'Inconnue" was an excellent one, but it has not been well carried out. Miss Balch's hand is too heavy. Violet Fane would have been wise to attempt it: she is so full of life and originality and humour. "A woman without a laugh in her is the greatest bore in existence," says Mr. Brown to his nephew Robert in "Travels in London." Surely the real "Inconnue" (did she exist? or, like Mr. Toots, were Merimée's epistles not meant to be published?) must occasionally have been in a gay humour when she sat down to write? If the author received no better letters from his love than these I am at a loss to imagine why he took the trouble to keep up the acquaintance.

WALTER POWELL.

### MARY JANE AND I.

I WAS out last night in the orchard, a-talkin' to Mary Jane, Leanin' over the gate at sundown, when the gal happened up the lane.

She kind o' stopped short when she saw me—"Good evenin', marm," she said;  
While her cheeks took on a colour like the apple blossoms overhead.

Mary Jane's my next neighbour's daughter: she's powerful set on my Joe;

I haven't got much agin' her—she's a good enough gal as gals go,

But she can't make a shirt if you paid her, and her butter's none o' the best;

I'd been stiff, I own—never said so, but I think that she somehow guessed.

So she blushed and stammered a little when she found me there at the gate

'Stead o' Joe. I felt ugly, forgetting that every young thing seeks its mate.

She's on one side and I on t'other, with a river o' years between—

I was nine and forty last birthday, and Mary Jane is nineteen.

And we stood and looked at each other, and couldn't find much to say.

Joe's my youngest—the feelin's o' twenty years can't take second place in a day.

So the best I could do was—nothin' but keep tongue and temper still;

Till suddenly, out from the thicket, there started a whip-poor-will.

Sudden and loud and throbbin', and a lump riz up in my throat,

As it all came back in a minute how I'd heerd that self-same note

The night Rube kissed me and asked me, and I didn't tell him no—

Oh, my heart! how well I remember it all, though it's thirty year ago.

The long day of hard work and hard livin', and the evenin' when I could slip

To the turn of the road and get full pay in the touch of my Reuben's lip,

And the heavy scoldin' borne cheerful, because 'twas for Reuben's sake.

It's a lovely dream—oh, the pity that the daylight comes and we wake!

And afterwards, when together we fought for our daily bread

On the little rough farm on the hillside, in a home scarce more than a shed.

What did Reuben care for my sewin', if I never had set a stitch?

And we'd eaten dry bread for ever if we'd had to part to be rich.

It's all over—I'm widowed this ten year. The best farm in the county's my own;

And I wished I was back on ten acres as I leaned on that gate—alone.

It's all over—but still I've been happy, so maybe I shouldn't complain.

Then the thought shivered thro' me like lightnin'—ought I grudge it to Mary Jane?

Life comes pretty hard on most of us, and it's none too sweet at the best;

Ain't it rather a shame when our own is spoiled to wish the same by the rest?

My Joe is his father's born ditto—can the gal help her likes more than me?

She's nineteen, and a rosebud—Joe's twenty-one; what hinders the lad to see?

Can I keep the dew from fallin', or forbid the growth of the pine?

Just as soon as stop young folks from lovin' because I'm forty-nine!

Can I blame 'em for likin' the fresh sweet cup that only young folks can taste

When I'd give all I've got for that one June night with Reuben's arm round my waist?

So the whip-poor-will taught me my lesson, I choked down the jealous spite,

And I got my reward in a soft shy smile, for I kissed Mary Jane good night,

Though I swallowed a sob as I turned away when Joe came over the hill.

Well, it's hardly likely they'll ever know what they owe to that whip-poor-will.

ANNIE ROTHWELL.

Kingston, May 20, 1889.

### A DAY IN VENICE.

MY last letter was broken off somewhat abruptly in Venice. Though but a few hours by sail from Milan, the contrast between the two is striking. One is the home of a stirring, eager democracy; the other, even yet, shows unmistakable signs of aristocratic influence, not alone outwardly in its decaying palaces, but in a certain graceful, easy-going life and urbanity of manners. If a well-bred reserve and melancholy be the mark of high birth—and Goethe heartily believed it, the Venetian ladies are still noted throughout Italy for their *morbidessa*.

If you have only a day to spend in Venice, contrive to arrive by night and to leave by night, for then it is astir, and gas light enhances the charm. By leaving Milan about noon, you get in at the right time—and you're doubly fortunate if it is moonlight. The last three or four miles is over the enormous bridge supported by 222 arches, the water shining like a mirror on either side, and thousands of lights ahead. The scene at the station is of an altogether unique description. No cabs, no omnibuses or cracking of whips; the only noise, that of human voices and the splash of the oar. You are led to the hotel gondola, and take your seat in the cabin. In a few minutes the baggage is all on board, and you feel your bark gliding smoothly and noiselessly through the city. It seems like a dream, or a visit to the fairyland of boyhood. The four stalwart gondoliers in uniform shoot past a crowd of humbler vehicles—I cannot say one-horse concerns, but one-man gondolas; and marble palaces flit before you as in a vision, as you pass down (or up?) the grand canal, the main street of Venice, the Broadway of this "city of beavers"—to use Goethe's expression. We now glide under the famous *Rialto* bridge, that for centuries was the only one uniting the two portions of the city, and soon pass along the *rio* or small canal leading to the Italian Hotel to which we are going; for we want to see Italy and not a piece of England, France, or Germany, as we are apt to in many hotels. It is possible to travel over the principal routes in Italy, or the continent generally, have pale ale, ham and eggs, and beefsteaks all along, speak nothing but English or French, and see nothing of the country but the buildings.

The sleek, well-fed landlord was at the "sea-board entrance" of the hotel to welcome his guests and conduct them to the reception-rooms. A few minutes later we were seated in the hospitable dining-hall, with the steaming soup before us, that here regularly twice a day forms the second course, and a formidable *fiasco* of native wine at each elbow. *Apropos* of wine, which more than takes the place of our tea, I often think of the remark of an American friend I met in Milan: "It is very difficult to convince these people of the necessity of total abstinence." I suppose it is in a land where every hillside is covered with vines, and where many think that temperance is a higher, if sometimes more difficult, virtue than total abstinence. However this may be, after due attention to an elaborate bill of fare, we descended by the land entrance—to speak semi-nautically—to the narrow street below. A new sensation this—to walk along streets where there are no houses and no wheeled vehicles of any kind, nothing but foot-passengers. A few minutes' walk brought us to the great square of St. Mark—the rendezvous of pleasure, wit and fashion. Filled with people, ablaze with light, the moon divinely shining on the lagoon beyond, it is a sight once seen never to be forgotten. "Visit the *Piazzetta* by moonlight," says Gsell-Fels, "and the longing to return to Italy will never leave you after." Here it was, then, right in front of us, between us and the water; the Palace of the Doges on the one side, "rising on its slender pillars like an island out of the lagoons," and the Old Library in its luxuriant Renaissance style, on the other. To our left, as we stand bewildered and enchanted, rises St. Mark's, rich in oriental pomp and gold; and to our right stretches the immense quadrilateral, the scene of so much history, paved with trachyte and white marble, and closed on three sides by rows of public buildings in keeping with the surroundings. Before us, at the corner where this square and the *Piazzetta* meet, like a huge sentinel, stands the belfry or Campanile, that rises some

350 feet, and dates from 911. The ascent is by a winding inclined plane—no vulgar, narrow stair-case—and from the top a noble view is to be had, embracing the city in detail, and Padua, the Alps and the Istrian mountains in the distance. But this we reserved for the next morning, and shortly before midnight retired to dream of the ancient grandeur and fame of the Queen of the Adriatic.

Early next morning I was awakened by the splashing of oars under our window—not that it was loud or disagreeable, but unusual. I got up and watched the workmen passing to and fro to their work. This gondola was filled with bricks and mortar that three masons were taking to repair a chimney; that other belonged to a carpenter, as his saw, adze and other tools lying before him plainly showed. These had scarcely passed when a long slender gondola filled with milk cans came shooting along; that was evidently the milkman making his rounds. And all this with so little noise and bustle—the fisherman that shouted the names of his beauties was the noisiest of the lot. A good place this Venice must be for sensitive nerves! No steam-whistles, no railways, no street-cars, no omnibuses, no cabs; no inconsiderate coachmen to startle you at unbecoming hours, nothing but that musical, half-melancholy splash to warn you that some one is passing. The streets, again, are clean as the deck of an ocean steamer, and dust and mud are things unknown in this earthly paradise. There may be ills and drawbacks that I know not of, probably there are; but I shall leave to-night for Florence, and keep one illusion, if illusion it be, untouched by those ruthless iconoclasts—facts. At a time when so much of life is fading into the light of common day, I shall have spent one whole day in fairyland. For once in my life I shall have had roses without thorns, in spite of proverbs and the botanists; and I shall henceforth preserve one little spot on earth to which the imagination can return and fill out at pleasure the vision of happiness it has been my good fortune to have had a glimpse of.

I dress quickly and descend to see how it looks by daylight. It is nearly eight o'clock, and yet all the chairs in the dining-room are on the tables, half of them standing on their heads. Looks somewhat dissipated, certainly; but now I remember that the guide book says that in Venice they turn night into day. This is confirmed on the streets where the early risers are just beginning to stir. The square before St. Mark's is almost deserted yet—only a few workmen repairing the pavement and clerks taking down the shutters. But now is the time to have a good look at this Byzantine Church and the Doge's Palace alongside of it. How different from anything else in Italy! In it we see the blending of east and west—eastern luxuriance and pomp and western energy. And that graceful palace was once the centre and house of art and science when our forefathers were semi-barbarians. From this port went forth merchants and explorers to every sea; and when the world's shipping was still in its infancy, Venice had over 3,000 vessels manned by over 40,000 sailors. A few hundred yards behind the palace is the arsenal, which at one time employed 16,000 men, and which about the year 1300 Dante visited and used to describe one of the circles of *Malbolge*—

As in the Arsenal of the Venetians  
Boils in the winter the tenacious pitch  
To smear their unsound vessels o'er again,  
For sail they cannot; and instead thereof  
One makes his vessel new, and one recaulks  
The ribs of that which many a voyage has made;  
One hammers at the prow, one at the stern,  
This one makes oars, and that one cordage twists,  
Another mends the mainsail and the mizzen;  
Thus, etc., etc.

But the discovery of the Indies and the consequent change of commercial centres ruined Venice; though for a long time it sustained alone an unequal struggle, in the name of Christendom, against the Crescent. And although the golden book, the register of the old aristocracy, was solemnly burned as late as 1797, the Republic of St. Mark existed but in name for long years before that.

If there are few persons abroad yet, the pigeons are up and plenty of them. Every nook and cranny of the great Basilica is filled with them. These are the famous pigeons of St. Mark that are daily fed at the city's expense. Admiral Dandolo while besieging Candia in the 13th century was materially aided in his operations by carrier-pigeons. He sent the news of his success home by these same messengers, and since then their descendants have been pensioners of the State, fed at the public cost and lodged about St. Mark's. Talk of the ingratitude of Republics after that!

It was now getting late, so I returned to the hotel to have breakfast; that is to say, the customary coffee and rolls. After this we ascended the Campanile and had a view that well repaid us for our trouble. At our feet lay the city rising directly out of the water, built upon one hundred and twenty islets, and bound together by four hundred bridges—thirty thousand palaces side by side; and as they are no longer visible, let us forget the 25,000 paupers. The Grand Canal, like a huge S, divides the city into two unequal portions, united by the historical marble *Rialto* and two meaner bridges. Along the south of the city, some four or five hundred yards, lies the *Giudecca* or Jew's island, on which the sons of Israel were safe, but which at one time they dared not leave under pain of death. These three large islands are situated in a basin of water some eight miles long by three wide, and protected from the storms of the Adriatic by a long strip of land—the Lido. The water rises and falls with the tide about two feet, but is always calm and placid. If it were otherwise traffic in the canals would be impossible, and Venice would cease to be habitable.