

PLEASANT HOURS

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THE LAND OF TELL.

EDITED BY THE EDITOR.

ONE great charm of Switzerland is the stirring patriotic memories it recalls. The whole region is rife with legends of William Tell. On my way from Andermatt to Fluellen, on Lake Lucerne, I passed through the little village of Altdorf, where he is said to have shot the apple off his son's head. Critics try to make us believe that this never happened, because a similar story is told in the Hindoo mythology. But I am not going to give up my faith in Tell. I was shown the village in which he was born, and his statue, with a crossbow in his hand, erected on the very spot where he is said to have fired the arrow. A hundred and fifty paces distant is the fountain, on the place where his son is said to have stood with the apple on his head. After all this, how can I help believing the grand old story? I crossed the noisy Saachen, in which, when an old man, he was drowned while trying to save the life of a little child—a death worthy of his heroic fame.

At Fluellen, the grandeur of the Lake of the Four Forest Cantons—*Vierwaldstatter-See*—or, as it is also called, the Lake of Uri, burst upon the view. The mountains rise abruptly from the lake, from eight to ten thousand feet. I walked some miles along the Axenstrasse—a road hewed in the mountain side, high above the lake, and beneath tremendous overhanging cliffs of tortured strata, which in places are pierced by tunnels—and lingered for hours enchanted with the blended beauty and sublimity of the views. With quickened pulse of expectation, I descended the cliff to the site of the far-famed Tell's Chapel, shown at the left-hand side of pictures. But what was my disappointment to find not one stone left on another! That great modern destroyer of the romantic, a railway,



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was being constructed along the lake margin, and the time-honoured chapel, said to be five hundred years old, had been removed. A workman showed me the plans of a brand new one which was to be erected near the spot,

bond of the Swiss Confederacy; and further on the monument of Schiller, the bard of Tell. The lake lies like a huge St. Andrew's cross among the mountains, which rise abruptly from its deep, dark waves—

That sacred lake, withdrawn among the hills,
Its depth of waters flanked as with a wall,
Built by the giant race before the flood,
Each cliff and headland and green promontory
Graven with the records of the past;
Where not a cross or chapel but inspires
Holy delight, lifting our thoughts to God
From godlike men.

The whole region is a sanctuary of liberty. Memories of Sempach and Morgarten and Rutli; of Winkelried and Furst and Tell; of purest patriotism and heroic valour, forever hallow this lovely land.

I stopped at Vitznau to ascend the Righi, 5,906 feet above the sea. A railway leads from the picturesque village to the summit. The engine climbs up by means of a cog-wheel, which catches into teeth on the track. In one place it crosses a skeleton iron bridge. As we climb higher and higher, the view widens, till, as we round a shoulder of the mountain, there bursts upon the sight a wondrous panorama of mountain, lakes, and meadows, studded with chalets, villages and hamlets, and distant towns. As the sun went down, a yellow haze, like gold dust, filled the air and glorified the entire landscape. The view in fine weather sweeps a circle of 300 miles, and commands an unrivalled prospect of the whole Bernese Oberland. But just as we reached the summit, we plunged into a dense mist, and groped our way to a huge hotel which loomed vaguely through the fog.

Here, a mile high among the clouds, a hundred and sixty guests—English, French, German, Russian, and American, and of every grade of rank—sat down to a sumptuous *table d'hôte* in the highest hotel in Europe, and one