

ture is at once put on board, the door is locked, the family quietly take their places on deck, sit down to lunch, while the schooner safely glides to the new home.

My time will not permit me to attempt any further description of this wonderful city; and it is well worthy of a most extended description, for we hear so little about Venice now that we forget the Venice of history: the Republic that carried its arms to the farthest corners of the earth: that twice took Constantinople, and that at one time was to the world what England is to-day!

Florence, the Bella Firenze of the Italians, is another city with many pretty spots about it; but to speak of it as the "Flower of Cities" and the "City of Flowers" is just a piece of wild exaggeration. The streets are narrow and not over clean, while the shops are fairly good and nothing more. The beautiful Arno, that poets have dreamt over until they have made it a golden stream, is a sluggish, muddy river that creeps lazily through the centre of the city for the special benefit of Florentine boys, who can wade through its waters, from side to side, with the greatest of ease.

But I think that Florence can boast of the finest collection of pictures in the world. The Uffizi and the Pitti palaces are on opposite sides of the Arno, but they are connected by a long, covered bridge, which here crosses the river; and the passage from one to the other is lined with rich pictures in tapestry. I don't pretend to be a judge of paintings, and it may be that other collections are more thought of, but no gallery of pictures pleased me as well as the collection found in the Pitti Palace. The pictures are well arranged, and the rooms are well adapted to bring out the richness of each picture. The ceilings are vaulted and richly frescoed; then in each room there are tables and cabinets richly inlaid with precious stones, and these in some way seem to set the pictures off.

Titian's portraits are master pieces of art. I know nothing of the men he painted; but when you stand before one of them you know it is the picture of a living man. There is nothing stiff, nothing forced about the picture. Its naturalness is what at once attracts attention. Raphael's portraits are also good, but somehow I can't take to his Madonnas. I had read somewhere that these do not at first strike the beholder as anything very extraordinary,—that you had to stand gazing at them by the hour, studying every line and each shade of colour; and that as you thus gazed, you found yourself rising into a new world of thought until you felt the charm of their marvellous power.

Well, I thought I would give that a fair trial, so I got me before a Madonna and child, that is considered one of Raphael's best. It didn't at first strike me as anything extraordinary. Indeed I thought Murillo's Madonna a very much finer work, but I was anxious to get into that higher sphere of thought, and be charmed into an ecstasy over the picture, so I took a chair and sat down, gazing and gazing, waiting for the inspiration to come. I am sure I gazed as conscientiously as ever man did, but the picture wouldn't grow a bit. On the contrary I discovered that the child's cheek was swollen as if he had the mumps, and its arms were altogether too fat for its hands. There was no use, I could not make an artist of myself by sitting before an artist's work. So I came to the very wise conclusion that the picture grows only upon those who are resolved it shall grow. In other words, it is the fashion to praise Raphael's Madonnas, therefore they are wonderful masterpieces. Now nobody knows what the Virgin looked like, and the only description of the child we have does not warrant us in painting a beautiful child. But if beauty is desired, then Murillo's Madonna and child are what artists should go into ecstasies over, and not Raphael's.

The journey from Florence to Rome is through uninteresting scenery, except where here and there towns and villages are perched on towering rocks that overhang the valley through which we pass. These rocks are pierced with openings which overlook the highway, and when tier upon tier of lights are shining from them at night they have the appearance of fortified dwellings, reminding one of the middle ages, when such fortifications were a necessity of existence.

About seven or eight miles from Rome the traveller sees before him what seems to be a beautifully shaped mountain rising from a level plain. It has a