

# LETTERE VERBANESI

## *Switzerland & Northern Italy*

*A traveling description*

*from*

*Shawl-Straps.*

*A Second Series of Aunt Jo's Scrap Bag.*

*(pages 175-214 of the 1895 London Edition)<sup>1</sup>*

*by Louise May Alcott*

## SWITZERLAND

“My children, listen to the words of wisdom ere it is too late”, began Lavinia, as the three sat about in dressing-gowns after a busy day in Geneva.

“We listen, go on, Granny”, replied the irreverent girls.

“If we stay here a week longer, we are ruined. Firstly, this Metropole is an expensive hotel; also noisy and full of fashionable people, whom I hate. Secondly, the allurements of the jewellers” shops are too much for us, and we had better flee before we spend all our money. Thirdly, if war does break out along the Rhine, as rumour now predicts, Geneva will be crammed with people whose plans, like ours, are upset; therefore we had better skip across the lake, and secure a comfortable place for

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the Gutenberg Project ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org))

ourselves at Vevey or Montreaux, for we shall probably have to winter there.”

“Hear, hear! we will do it, and if Italy doesn’t get over her revolution in time for us to go to Rome, we must content ourselves with some nook in this refuge for all wanderers on the face of the continent”, said Amanda.

“But I like Geneva so much. It’s such fun to watch the splendid waiters file in at dinner, looking like young gentlemen ready for a ball; the house is so gay, and the shops!—never did I dream of such richness before. Do stay another week and buy a few more things”, prayed Matilda, who spent most of her time gloating over the jewelry, and tempting her sister to buy all manner of useless gauds.

“No: we will go to-morrow. I know of several good *pensions* at Vevey, so we are sure of getting in somewhere. Pack at once, and let us flee”, returned Lavinia, who, having bought a watch, a ring, and a locket, felt that it was time to go.

And go they did, settling for a month at Bex, a little town up the valley of the Rhone, remarkable for its heat, its dirt, its lovely scenery, and the remarkable perfection to which its inhabitants had brought the *goître*, nearly every one being blessed with an unsightly bunch upon the neck, which they decorated with ribbons and proudly displayed to the disgusted traveller.

Here in the rambling old Hôtel des Bains, with its balconies, gardens, and little rooms, the wanderers reposed for a time. A Polish countess, with her lover, daughter, and governess, conferred distinction upon the house. An old Hungarian count, who laboured under the delusion that he descended in a direct line from Zenobia, also adorned the scene. An artist with two pretty

boys, named Alfred Constable Landseer Reynolds and Allston West Cuyt Vandyke, afforded Matilda much satisfaction.

English mammas with prim daughters of thirty or so still tied to their apron-strings were to be found, of course, for they are everywhere; also wandering French folk raving about the war one minute and tearing their hair over bad coffee the next.

Amanda read newspapers and talked politics with the old count; while Lavinia, with a paper bag of apricots under one arm and a volume of Disraeli's novels under the other, spent her shining hours wandering from balcony to garden, enjoying the heat, which gave her a short respite from her woes.

While here Matilda, in company with a kindred soul, made the ascent of Mount St. Bernard with the pleasing accompaniments of wind, rain, thunder, and lightning. But the irrepressible Americans went on in spite of warnings from more prudent travellers who stopped half-way. With one mule and a guide for escort, the two enthusiasts waded swollen streams with ice-cold water up to their knees, climbed slippery roads, faced what seemed a whirlwind at that height, and, undaunted by the uproar of the elements, pressed on to the Hospice, to the great admiration of Moritz, the guide, who told them he had seldom taken men up in such a storm, never ladies.

At the Hospice the dripping lasses found a hospitable welcome from the handsome monk who does the honours there. Being provided with dry garments, and having much fun over the tall Matilda draped in skirts of many colours in the attempt to get any long enough, they were fed and warmed by the engaging monk, who entertained them as they sat about a roaring fire while the storm raged without, with thrilling tales of the travellers they had saved, the wild adventures they had

known in the dreadful winter time, and the gifts bestowed upon them by grateful travellers or generous guests.

The Prince of Wales had sent them a piano, and many fine pictures ornamented the walls from famous persons. An old English lady who spends her summers up there seemed much amused at the prank of the girls, and evidently wondered what their guardians were about.

A merry and memorable evening; and when, on going to their cells, they found the beds nicely warmed, Matilda exclaimed, "This is the most delightful of the romantic and the comfortable I ever saw. Alps and warming-pans taken 'jintly' are delicious!"

At five next morning they were wakened by the chanting of the invisible brotherhood, and went down to the chapel for mass. On going out for a clamber on the rocks, seven or eight great dogs came baying and leaping about them, licking their hands and smelling their garments to see if they were hurt. Looking into their bright, benevolent eyes, one could well believe the wonderful tales told of their courage and sagacity. Though so powerful and large they were gentle as kittens, and the dog-loving girls were proud to receive and return the caresses of these four-footed heroes.

Leaving a grateful *souvenir* in the box intended to receive whatever guests choose to leave, the girls descended in the morning sunshine, finding it a very different experience from the ascent. All was clear and calm now,—beautiful and grand; and only pausing at M. to send back a fine engraving to the comely priest, who had made a deep impression on their romantic hearts, the *enfants* returned to their anxious friends, mildewed, ruffled, and weary, but full of enthusiastic delight over their successful ascent of St. Bernard.

War broke out, and Alexandre, the all-accomplished head-waiter, dropped his napkin, shouldered his gun, and marched away, leaving the Hôtel des Bains desolate. Being pretty thoroughly baked, and very weary of the little town, our trio departed to Vevey, and settled down in the best *pension* that ever received the weary traveller.

Standing in its own pretty grounds, and looking out upon the lake, Pension Paradis deserves its name. Clean and cosy within, a good table, a kindly hostess, and the jolliest old host ever seen! what more could the human heart desire?

Vevey was swarming with refugees. Don Carlos, or the Duke de Madrid, as he was called, was there with his Duchess and court, plotting heaven knows what up at his villa, with the grave, shabby men who haunted the town.

Queen Isabella reigned at one hotel, and Spanish grandees pervaded the place. There were several at Pension Paradis, and no one guessed what great creatures they were till a *fête* day arrived, and the grim, gray men blossomed out into counts, marquises, and generals covered with orders, stars, and crosses splendid to behold.

One particularly silent, shabby little man with a shaven head and fine black eyes, who was never seen to smile, became an object of interest on that occasion by appearing in a gorgeous uniform with a great gilt grasshopper hanging down his back from a broad green ribbon. Who was he? What did the grasshopper mean? Where did he go to in a fine carriage, and what was he plotting with the other Carlists, who dodged in and out of his room at all hours?

No one ever knew, and all the artful questions put to the young

Spaniard, who played croquet with the girls, were unavailing. Nothing was discovered, except that little Mirandola had a title, and might be sent back to Spain any day to lose his life or liberty in some rash plot, which circumstance made the black-eyed boy doubly interesting to the free-born Americans. Lavinia bewailed his hard lot, Amanda taught him whist and told his fortune, and Matilda put him in her sketch-book done in the blackest India-ink. It is also to be recorded that the doomed little Don was never seen to laugh but once, and that was when the girls taught him the classical game of Muggins. The name struck him; he went about saying it to himself, and on the first occasion of his being "mugginsed", he was so tickled that he indulged in a hearty boy's laugh; but immediately recovered himself, and never smiled again, as if in penance for so forgetting his dignity.

A bashful Russian, who wore remarkably fine broadcloth and had perfect manners, was likewise received into the good graces of the ladies, who taught him English, called him "the Baron" in private, and covered him with confusion in public by making him talk at table.

But the most amusing of all the family was Madame A., a handsome widow from Lyons, with two ugly children and a stout old mamma, who wore orange stockings and a curious edifice of black lace encircled with large purple asters. The widow had married an Italian artist, who was mortally jealous of his wife, whose blonde beauty attracted much attention at Rome. In some quarrel with a model the husband was stabbed, and the handsome widow left in peace.

A tall, fair lady, with a profile like Marie Antoinette; she dressed in white with violet ribbons, and wore much ancient jewelry. A loud-voiced, energetic woman, who bewailed the sack of her house at Lyons, scolded her children, and cursed

the Germans with equal volubility and spirit. When silent she was the picture of a patrician beauty; but, alas! her voice destroyed the charm, and her manners—great heavens, what things that woman did! Picking her pearly teeth with a hair-pin, and knocking her darlings into their chairs with one sweep of her elbow when they annoyed her at table, were the least of the horrors she perpetrated.

But she talked well, devoted herself to her family, and took misfortune bravely; so much may be pardoned her.

Her infants were only remarkable for their ugliness and curious costumes. The little girl usually wore soiled silk gowns, and had her hair tied up with bits of twine. The boy appeared in a suit of yellow calico spotted with black, looking very much like a canary bird who had fallen into an inkstand. On festival occasions he wore white cloth raiment, with red ribbons stuck here and there, and high red boots.

But, on the whole, the old mamma was the queerest of the set; for she spent most of her time lumbering up and down stairs, which amusement kept the orange hose constantly before the public. When not disporting herself in this way, she dozed in the *salon*, or consumed much food at table with a devotion that caused her to suck her fingers, on every one of which shone an antique ring of price. Her head-gear was a perpetual puzzle to the observing Lavinia, who could never discover whether it was a cap, a bonnet, or a natural production, for it was never off. Madame walked out in it, wore it all day, and very likely slept in it. At least Lavinia firmly believed so, and often beguiled the watches of the night, imagining the old soul placidly slumbering with the perennial asters encircling her aged brow like a halo.

One other party there was who much amused the rest of the

household. An American lady with a sickly daughter, who would have been pretty but for her affectation and sentimentality. The girl was engaged to a fierce, dissipated little Russian, who presented her with a big bouquet every morning, followed her about all day like a dog, and glared wrathfully at any man who cast an eye upon the languishing damsel in white muslin and flowing curls “bedropt with pearls”, as a romantic lady expressed it.

It was evident that the Russian without any vowels in his name was going to marry Mademoiselle for her money, and the weak Mamma was full of satisfaction at the prospect. To others it seemed a doubtful bargain, and much pity was felt for the feeble girl doomed to go to Russia with a husband who had “tyrant” written in every line of his bad, *blasé* little face and figure. French polish could not hide the brute, nor any quantity of flowers conceal the chain by which he was leading his new serf away to bondage in St. Petersburg.

Into the midst of this select society came a countryman of our three,—a jocund youth fresh from Algiers, with relics, adventures, and tales that utterly eclipsed the “Arabian Nights.” Festive times followed, for the “Peri” (the pet name of aforesaid youth) gave them the fruits of his long wanderings, sung whole operas heard in Paris, danced ballets seen in Berlin, recounted perils among the Moors, served up gossip from the four corners of the globe, and conversed with each member of the household in his or her own language.

A cheerful comrade was the “Peri”, and a great addition to the party, who now spent most of their time sitting about the town, eating grapes, and listening to the pranks of this sprightly M.D., who seemed to be studying his profession by wandering over Europe with a guitar *à la troubadour*.



Sounding the lungs of a veiled princess in Morocco was the least of his adventures, and the treasures he had collected supplied Lavinia with materials for unlimited romances: cuff-buttons made from bits of marble picked up among the ruins of Carthage; diamond crescents and ear-rings bought in Toledo, so antique and splendid that relic-loving Amanda raved about them; photographs of the *belles* of Constantinople, Moorish coins and pipes, bits of curious Indian embroidery; and, best of all, the power of telling how each thing was found in so graphic a manner that Eastern bazaars, ruins, and palaces seemed to rise before the listeners as in the time of the magic story-tellers. But all too soon he packed his knapsack, and promising to bring each of his friends the nose or ear of one of the shattered saints from the great cathedral at Strasbourg, the "Peri" vanished from Paradis, and left them all lamenting.

The little flurry in Italy ending peacefully, our travellers after much discussion resolved to cross the Alps and spend the winter in Rome, if possible. So with tragic farewells from those they left behind them, who, hoping to keep them longer, predicted all manner of misfortunes, the three strong-minded ladies rumbled away in the *coupé* of a diligence to Brieg.

A lovely day's journey up the valley of the Rhone, and a short night's rest in the queer little town at the foot of the mountains.

Before light the next morning they were called, and, after a hurried breakfast in a stony hall, went shivering out into the darkness, and, stumbling through the narrow street, came to the starting-point. Lanterns were dancing about the square, two great diligences loomed up before them, horses were tramping, men shouting, and eager travellers scrambling for places. In the dimly lighted office, people were clamouring for tickets, scolding at the delay, or grimly biding their time in corners, with one eye

asleep, and the other sharply watching the conductor.

“Isn’t it romantic?” cried Matilda, wide awake, and in a twitter of excitement.

“It is frightfully cold; and I don’t see how we are going, for both those caravans are brimful”, croaked Lavinia, chafing her purple nose, and wishing it had occurred to her to buy a muff before going to sunny Italy.

“I have got through tickets, and some one is bound to see us over these snow-banks, so “trust in Providence and the other man,” and we shall come out right, I assure you”, replied the energetic Amanda, who had conferred with a spectral being in the darkness, and blindly put her faith in him.

Away lumbered one diligence after the other, the first drawn by seven horses, the second by five, while the carrier’s little cart with one brought up the rear. But still three muffled ladies sat upon a cool stone in the dark square, waiting for the spectre to keep his promise.

He did like a man; for suddenly the doors of an old stable flew open, and out rattled a comfortable carriage with a pair of stout little horses jingling their bells, and a brisk driver, whose voice was pleasant, as he touched his hat and invited the ladies to enter, assuring them that they would soon overtake and pass the heavy diligences before them.

“Never again will I doubt you, my Amanda”, cried the Raven, packing herself into the dowager’s corner with a grateful heart.

“I hope the top of this carriage opens, for I *must* see *everything*”, cried Matilda, prancing about on the front seat in a chaos of wraps, books, bottles, and lunch-baskets.

“Of course it does, and when there is anything to see we will see it. It is dark and cold now, so we”d better all go to sleep again.”

With which sage remark, Amanda burrowed into her cloaks and slumbered. But not the other two. Matilda stuck her head out of one window, uttering little cries of wonder and delight at all she saw; while Livy watched the solemn stars pale one by one as the sky brightened, and felt as if she were climbing up, out of a dark valley of weariness and pain, into a new world full of grand repose.

Slowly winding higher and higher through the damp pine forest, softly stirring in the morning wind, they saw the sky warm from its cold gray to a rosy glow, making ready for the sun to rise as they never saw it rise before.

“Full many a glorious morning have I seen,  
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye”,

but never more wonderfully than on that day. Long after the distant peaks flamed in the ruddy light, they rode in shadow; but turning suddenly round a corner, the sun came dazzling through a great gorge, startling them with the splendour it brought.

Down went the carriage-top, and standing bolt upright, three pairs of eager eyes drank in the grandeur and the beauty that makes the crossing of the Simplon an experience to live for ever in the memory. Peak after peak of the Bernese Oberland rose behind them, silver white against a wonderful blue sky. Before them Monte Rosa, touched with the morning red, and all around great glaciers glittering in the sunshine, awful gorges with torrents thundering from the heights above, relics of landslides and avalanches still visible in uprooted trees, boulders tumbled here and there, and ruins of shepherds” huts in solitary nooks where sheep now feed.

The road crept in and out, over frail bridges, spanning chasms that made one dizzy to look into, through tunnels of solid rock, or galleries with windows over which poured waterfalls from the treacherous glaciers above. This road is a miracle in itself, for all nature seems to protest against it, and the elements never tire of trying to destroy it. Only a Napoleon would have had the audacity to dream of such a path, and it is truly a royal road into a lovely land.

Passing the diligences the little carriage went rapidly on, and soon the three were almost alone. Out leaped Lavinia and Matilda, and walked along the level way that curved round a great gorge.

“Go on and let me be. It is all so magnificent it almost takes my breath away. I must just sit a minute, like a passive bucket, and let it pour into me”, said Lavinia, in a solemn tone.

Mat understood; for her own heart and soul were full, and with a silent kiss of sympathy, walked on, leaving her sister to enjoy that early mass in a grander cathedral than any built with hands.

In spite of the sunshine it was very cold, and when the three met again their noses looked like the eldest Miss Pecksniff’s, “as if Aurora had nipped and tweaked it with her rosy fingers.” Subsiding into their places with pale, excited faces, they went silently on for a long time, with no sound but the chime of the bells on the horses who were covered with a light hoar-frost. Wrapped up to their eyes, like Egyptian women, sat Livy and Amanda; while Matilda, having tried to sketch Monte Rosa, and given it up, made a capital caricature of them as they ate cold chicken, and drank wine, in a primitive manner, out of the bottle.

It was a sudden descent from the sublime to the ridiculous;

but the feeble human mind cannot bear too much glory at once, and is saved by the claims of the prosaic body, that will get tired and hungry even atop of the everlasting hills. So the enthusiasts picked their chicken bones, sipped their wine, and felt less exhausted and hysterical. A good laugh over the carrier's little boy, who sniffed the banquet afar off, and came running to offer a handful of pale Alpine flowers, with wistful glances at the lunch, did them more good still: for the little chap caught and bolted the morsels they gave him with such dexterous rapidity, it was as good as juggling.

Refuges and the Hospice came in sight one after the other, and while waiting to change horses one had time to wonder how the people living there managed to be such a stolid, dirty, thriftless-looking set. Mountaineers should be intelligent, active, and hardy; but these men were a most ungainly crew, and Lavinia's theories got a sad blow.

A bad dinner at Simplon would have been an affliction at any other time; but with the Valley of Gondo for dessert, no one cared for other food. Following the wild stream that had worn its way between the immense cliffs, they drove rapidly down towards Italy, feeling that this was a fit gateway to the promised land.

At Iselle, on the frontier, they enacted a little farce for the benefit of the custom-house officers. Lavinia and Amanda had old passports, and had been told they would be needed. Mat had none, so she was ordered to try the *rôle* of maid. Before they arrived, she took out her ear-rings, tied up her curls under a dingy veil, put on a waterproof, and tried to assume the demure air of an Abigail.

When they alighted, she was left to guard the wraps in the carriage while the others went with the luggage, expecting to

have much trouble; for all manner of hindrances had been predicted owing to the unsettled state of the country. Nothing could be simpler, however; no passports were demanded, a very careless search of luggage, and it was all over. So Matilda threw off her disguise, and ascended the diligence in her own character, for here, alas! they left the cozy little carriage with the affable driver and the jingling bells.

Only two places could be found in the crowded diligences, and great was the fuss till Amanda was invited up aloft by a friendly gentleman who had a perch behind, large enough for two. There they discussed theology and politics to their hearts' content, and at parting the worthy man cut his book in two, and gave Amanda half that she might refresh herself with a portion of some delightfully dry work on Druidical Remains, Protoplasm, or the state of the church before the flood.

The force of contrast makes the charm of this entry into Italy; for, after the grandeur of the Alps and the gloomy wildness of Gondo, the smiling scene is doubly lovely as one drives down to Domo d'Ossola. Weariness, hunger, and sleep were quite forgotten; and when our travellers came to Lago Maggiore, glimmering in the moonlight, they could only sigh for happiness, and look and look and look.

"Victory has perched upon our banners so far, I am sure, for never was a trip more delightful. It is not every stranger who is fortunate enough to see sunrise, noonday, sunset, and moonlight in crossing the Alps", said Matilda, as she fell into her bed quite exhausted by the excitement of the day.

"I feel a richer, better woman for it, and don't believe I shall ever see anything more satisfactory if I stay in Italy ten years", responded Lavinia, wrapping the red army-blanket

“Like a martial cloak around her.”

“Wait till the spell of Rome is upon you, and then see what you will feel, my Granny” predicted Amanda, who *had* felt the spell, and had not yet escaped from it.

“Don’t believe it will suit me half so well”, persisted Livy, who would prefer nature to art, much to Amanda’s disgust.

“We shall see”, observed Amanda, with the exasperating mildness of superior knowledge.

“We shall!” and Livy tied her cap in a hard knot as if to settle the matter.

## ITALY

Sleep as deep, dreamless, and refreshing as if the beneficent spirit of Carlo Borromeo still haunted the enchanted lake, prepared the three for a day of calm delights. The morning was spent floating over the lake in a luxuriously cushioned boat with a gay awning and a picturesque rower, to visit Isola Bella. Everyone knows what a little Paradise has been made to blossom on that rock; so raptures over the flowers, the marbles, the panniers of lovely fruit, and the dirty, pretty children who offered them, are unnecessary.

In the afternoon, having despatched the luggage to Florence, our travellers sailed away to Luini,<sup>1</sup> catching last glimpses of Monte Rosa, and enjoying the glories of an Italian sunset on an Italian lake. At Luini the girls caused much excitement by insisting on sitting up with the driver instead of sharing the *coupé* with their decorous duenna. “We *must* see the lovely views and

1 Luino

the moonlight”, said Amanda, and up she went.

“To sit aloft with a brigandish driver dressed in a scarlet and black uniform, with a curly horn slung over his shoulder, and to go tearing up hill and down with four frisky horses, is irresistible”, and up skipped Matilda.

“You will both catch your death of cold, if you don’t break your necks, so it will be well to have some one to nurse or bury you”, and Lavinia, finding commands and entreaties vain, entered the *coupé* with mournful dignity.

With a toot of the horn, and cheers from the crowd, which the girls gracefully acknowledged, away rumbled the diligence, with at least two very happy occupants. How lovely it was! First, the soft twilight wrapping everything in mysterious shadow, and then the slow uprising of a glorious full moon, touching the commonest object with its magical light. Cries of rapture from the girls atop were answered by exclamations from Livy, hanging half out of the *coupé* regardless of night air, or raps on the head from overhanging boughs, as they went climbing up woody hills, or dashing down steep roads that wound so sharply round corners, it was a wonder the airy passengers did not fly off at every lurch. Rattling into quiet little towns with a grand “tootle-te-too” of the horn was an especial delight, and to see the people gather so quickly that they seemed to spring from the ground. A moment’s chatter, a drink for the horses, a soft “Felice notte”, another toot, and away thundered the diligence for miles more of moonlight, summer air, and the ecstasy of rapid motion.

What that dear, brown driver with the red vest, the bobtailed, buttony coat, and the big yellow tassels dancing from his hat brim, thought of those two American damsels we shall never know. But it may be imagined that, after his first bewilderment,



he enjoyed himself; for Amanda aired her Italian and asked many questions. Matilda invited him to perform national airs on all occasions, and both admired him as openly as if he had been a pretty child.

Lavinia always cherished a dark suspicion that she narrowly escaped destruction on that eventful night; for, judging from the frequent melody, and the speed of the horses, she was sure that either Amanda tooted and Matilda drove, or that both so bewildered the brigand that he lost his head. However, it was all so delightful that even Granny felt the charm, and was sure that if they did upset in some romantic spot, a Doctor Antonio would spring up as quickly as a mushroom, and mend their bones, marry one of her giddy charges, and end the affair in the most appropriate manner.

Nothing happened, fortunately, and by nine o'clock they were safely at Lugano, and, tearing themselves from the dear brigand, were taken possession of by a shadowy being, who fed them in a marble hall with statues ten feet high glaring at them as they ate, then led them to a bower which had pale green doors, a red carpet, blue walls, and yellow bed covers,—all so gay it was like sleeping in a rainbow.

As if another lovely lake under the windows, and moonlight *ad libitum*, was not enough, they had music also. Lavinia scorned the idea of sleep, and went prowling about the rooms, hanging over the balconies, and doing the romantic in a style that was a disgrace to her years. She it was who made the superb discovery that the music they heard came from across the way, and that by opening a closet window they could look into a theatre and see the stage.

All rushed at once and beheld an opera in full blast, heartily

enjoying the unusual advantages of their position; for not only could they hear the warblers, but see them when the curtain was down. What a thing it was to see Donna Anna do up her black hair, Don Giovanni dance a jig, and stately Ottavio imbibe refreshment out of a black bottle, and the ghostly Commander prance like a Punchinello as they got him into position.

The others soon succumbed to sleep; but, till long after midnight, old Livy wandered like a ghost from the front balcony, with the lovely lake, to the closet window and its dramatic joys, feeling that no moment of that memorable night should be lost, for what other traveller could boast that she ever went to the opera wrapped in a yellow bedquilt?

On the morrow a few pictures of Luini before breakfast, and then more sailing over lakes, and more driving in festive diligences to Menaggio, where a boat like a market waggon without wheels bore them genteelly to Cadenabbia, and a week of repose on the banks of Lago Como.

Their palace did not "lift its marble walls to eternal summer" by any means; for it rained much, and was so cold that some took to their beds for warmth, stone floors looking like castile-soap not being just the thing for rheumatism. Hand-organs, dancing-bears, two hotels, one villa, no road but the lake, and an insinuating boatman with one eye who lay in wait among the willows, and popped out to grab a passenger when anyone ventured forth, are all that remains in the memory regarding Cadenabbia.

A few extracts from Lavinia's note-book may be found useful at this point, both as a speedy way of getting our travellers to Rome, and for the bold criticisms on famous places and pictures which they contain:

«Milan.—Cathedral like a big wedding-cake. “Last Supper” in the barracks—did not “thrill;” tried to, but couldn’t, as the picture is so dim it can hardly be seen. Ambrosian Library.—Lock of L. Borgia’s hair; tea-coloured and coarse. Don’t believe in it a bit. Jolly old books, but couldn’t touch ‘em. Fine window to Dante. Saw cathedral illuminated; very theatrical, and much howling of people over the deputies from Rome. Don’t know why they illuminated or why they howled; didn’t ask. Men here handsome, but rude. Women wear veils and no bonnets,—fat and ugly. Gloves very good.—Arch of Peace.—More peace and less arch would be better for Italy».

«Raphael’s Marriage of the Virgin.—Stiff and stupid. Can’t like Raphael. Dear, pious, simple, old Fra Angelico suits me better».

«To the Public Garden with A.; saw a black ostrich with long pink legs, who pranced and looked so like an opera dancer that we sat on the fence and shrieked with laughter.

«Pavia.—To the Certosa to see the old Carthusian Convent founded in 1396; cloisters, gardens, and twenty-four little dwellings, with chapel, bedroom, parlour, and yard for each monk, who is never to speak, and comes out but once a week. A nice way for lazy men to spend their lives when there is so much work to be done for the Lord and his poor! Wanted to shake them all round, though they did look well in their gowns and cowls gliding about the dim cloisters and church. Perhaps they are kept for that purpose».