

Hyères.

Nov. 21. 1865.

My dear Mamma

On Saturday I walked across the hills to the Plan du Pont a level green valley to the N. of the chain of hills; as the Guide books say like a piece of Normandy, green fields, maples, elms and a large river quite unlike any of the rest of the country about here. At the foot of the hills on the other side I could have fancied myself in Shropshire on a warm summers day. On the little

"Plan" were several flocks of sheep with their shepherds; some of the shepherds piping on a kind of flageolet, so as to make one think of "Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi"; only there were no beeches.

The sheep, goat and cow-bells here all sound very pleasant. I see the shepherds generally have something to represent a plaid thrown over their shoulders. On Sunday there were about 25 or 30 at morning service, but only five at ~~evening~~ afternoon service and Mr Brooks did not give us a sermon then.

They have a very nice little harmonium in the church, which is well played by Mr Gordon wife of a clergyman who spends each season here.

Yesterday it rained at midday and when I went out to walk in the afternoon it felt like a June day in Ireland, so soft and warm and the hills were all cloud-capped, making a pleasant change after the constant sunshine and clear weather. Yesterday I received yours of 16th-17th. Roberts remembers Capt. Blacker, who was stopping at this hotel, but he says he was not liked - a constant grumbler at everything. The "great unknown secrets" amuse me - as usual everyone tells everyone else! There are two bathing establishments on the shore near this, but no bathing now.

I counted 16 good sized vessels in the bay twice, but last time I saw none. They come chiefly for the salt, and there is a soda-manufacture on the Ile de Porquerolles. I often see vessels getting tugged from or towards Toulon and Marseilles. To day I walked across the hills to La Crau a village some four miles from this. I never saw a country like this - I have been here now ^{walk} nearly a month and generally 8 or 10 miles every afternoon and yet I have scarcely ever gone out without finding not merely some actually new country, but also new kinds and

new features of country, and the ranges of hills and mountains present different aspects from every different point. We have had great changes of visitors, the two Poles and family of four French left, then came another French family of four from Melun, really very nice people, and a gentleman and two ladies from Naples, but whether Greek or Italian I have not ascertained - the former I guess. He addressed Roberts to day in wonderful English for a foreigner, so much so that I continued the conversation to try and make him out, he said he had been at Trinity College Cambridge 30 years ago and had lived much in England and London and much liked the country. He seemed very familiar with "City" life, from which I guess him to be a Greek Merchant. Both these parties have however left the Hotel and gone into lodgings. For several days there has been a Greek merchant from Marseilles and his wife (newly married) stopping here, but they do not dine at the table d'hôte. To day the table was reduced to Roberts and myself and a Frenchman and his wife, but the latter only temporary visitors I think.

This evening an English family of four arrived but I have not seen them yet.

Last winter the Hotel was quite full and they used to have pleasant music and some times dancing in the public sitting room in the evenings. My French masters name is Payan - he was formerly professor of Logic in Paris University; he is a good hand at teaching but is not quite the kind of teacher I most want - i.e. someone to talk and ^{to} make me talk and chaff, ~~and~~ rather than to look after grammar and writing. He also teaches Italian. He comes for an hour five days a week, terms 40 francs a month.

22^d A letter of 19-20th just received from J.S.P. I have no immediate intention of leaving this place - it is too pleasant as yet, but hereafter change may be agreeable. Roberts and I lunched to day with new English arrivals, ^a Lady, Gentleman and (?) their daughter. All seemed to be very nice people of A 1 class. The lady is so charmed with the place and Hotel that she wants her husband to stay the season here, though they only came to see the place. Your affect. son
Francis E. Prendergast