

Hotel de Londres.
San Remo

Feb. 6th 1866.

My dear Mamma

On Monday (yesterday) morning Dawson and I left Cannes by the 8 o'clock train for Nice, having had our two portmanteaus forwarded on to Genoa by the Messageries Imperiales. We left the train at Nice about 9 and in passing through the town met Sir Vere de Vere who is still stopping there. It is a long pull up out of Nice by the road to Turin 2100 feet above the sea; there are some old Roman remains up there but except for its fine situation it would be a horrid place; just below on a little peninsula we saw Monaco and far away on the horizon, but still very clear, Corsica with its line of rugged hills looking like a piece of a saw.

We got some lunch ^{at} a strange little village a little off the high road called Roquebrune and reached Mentone about three. We put up at the Hotel de Londres and then went out to see the place; it is a pretty little nook hemmed in by rocky precipitous mountains and it seems as if no wind could penetrate to it; it is the most peculiarly sheltered

place I have seen on this coast; there are
two bays, east and west, with the town on
the dividing promontory. English of course
is heard in all directions and indeed there
are many English notices up over the
shops; in all these hotels they are quite ac-
cused at English and will scarce by talk
French at all; even at the post office
at Mentone they spoke English. I got your
two letters and the book there all right.
As we were wandering about I met
Mr and Mrs Squire who asked me to come
and see them in the evening, which I did.
They are at the Hotel de la Mediterranee
but none of them are as well as they were
at Hyeres. I spent an hour with them
and heard a good deal of coast news
and talk. They had been stopping at the
Hotel des Anglais ^{at Nice} (English Limited Co.)
and said one great objection to it was
the number of fast and noisy people
at it this season. Mr Squire said some
of the young ladies were playing billiards
in the billiard room till half past eleven
at night! This he said he thought rather

"stiff." There are six or seven hotels in each bay at Mentone; at our one we had a table d'hôte of 15 or 16 people, all English & 4 of them clergymen. There are two English churches at Mentone.

This morning we left at ten and about a mile out of the town passed the gorge forming the frontier between France and Italy across which there is a bridge; on the French side the Douaniers had got hold of an organ grinder and were making him give them some music. On the bridge is a stone with "France" on one side and "Italia" on the other.

On the Italian side a little way on was a douanier playing with his drawn sword but looking very peaceful; at the regular custom house a little further on they did not stop us either for examination of knapsacks or passports. The latter are abolished. At the very first spring I stopped at in Italy ~~was~~ the maiden hair fern was growing and I saw it everywhere along the road to day. Corsica was very clear

too and we could see the great patches of snow on the mountain sides, one of the peaks is 9000 feet high. The general appearance of the country seems soon to alter after crossing the frontier, people barefoot houses looking "rack rent" and dirty; the road worse kept an children begging, priests in their long black dresses and three cornered hats plentiful everywhere. Many travellers in carriages passed us going both ways. Lemon trees take the place of orange trees on here. At Ventimiglia, the first Italian town, there is a barracks and I counted six companies in the town. Next after Ventimiglia comes ~~Bordighera~~ Bordighera where we lunched. The number of palms there and all along after that is very wonderful. They are making the railway all along the coast and have most of the tunnels made, but only for single line and the work looks very badly done. They seem very slow at it; only a few men working lazily here and there. The road is dusty and bad.

being mended with unbroken pebbles off the shore; it always follows the sea but rises and falls a good deal.

We got in here about 4 and sallied out to see the town, it is a place of 10,000 inhabitants and is a very curious town, built on the slope of a hill and with houses arched, often closed over the streets. It is very Italian looking and so are the people. The olives and lemons seem to grow in great profusion and I like the look of the place generally; it looks a very large place and is well studded with fine churches.

There are three large hotels here; at this one we had a large table d'hôte, all English except one German. The saloon seems nice and well used and the house decidedly first class. The country up to the back is very picturesque, the mountains running up to 4000 feet and being well covered with olives a good way up.

The weather is fine and warm, the only unpleasantness being the layers of dust

on the road. We are making a six day walk of it from Nice to Genoa it being 127 miles (last nine, rail) so that is only about 20 miles ^a day. Yesterday we walked 18 and to day 17 miles.

I have got my old German sack and Duross a knapsack he bought at Cannes for this tour. It is his first ~~trap~~ knapsack tour. Mr Greene was to leave yesterday afternoon and was going through to Paris. A day and a night. I saw them all at the Bellevue ~~at~~ on Sunday evening and advised them to think of returning via lake of Geneva which none of them have seen and I believe is considered the correct way for invalids to return, spending a short time at Vevey, Lausanne or Montreux.

Your affectionate son

Francis E. Prendergast