W. H. DAVENPORT ADAMS

CELEBRATED WOMEN TRAVELLERS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

W. H. Davenport Adams

Celebrated Women Travellers of the Nineteenth Century

EAN 8596547245247

DigiCat, 2022
Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info

Table of Contents

WOMAN AS A TRAVELLER

Table of Contents

COUNTESS DORA D'ISTRIA.

Table of Contents

The Princess Helena Koltzoff-Massalsky, better known by her pseudonym of Dora d'Istria,[1] came of the family of the Ghikas, formerly princes of Wallachia, and was born at Bucharest, on the 22nd of January, 1829. Through the care and conscientiousness of her instructor, Mons. Papadopoulos, and her own remarkable capacity, she acquired a very complete and comprehensive education. When but eleven years old, she composed a charming little story, and before she had reached womanhood, undertook a translation of the Iliad. She showed no inclination for the frivolous amusements of a frivolous society. Her view of life and its responsibilities was a serious one, and she addressed all her energies to the work of self-improvement and self-culture. She read and re-read the literary masterpieces of England, France and Germany. As a linguist she earned special distinction.

"Her intellectual faculties," says her master, M. Papadopoulos, "expanded with so much rapidity, that the professors charged with her instruction could not keep any other pupil abreast of her in the same studies. Not only did she make a wholly unexpected and unhoped-for progress, but it became necessary for her teachers to employ with her a particular method: her genius could not submit to the restraint of ordinary rules."

She was still in the springtime and flush of youth, when she went on a tour to Germany, and visited several German courts, where she excited the same sentiments of admiration as in her own country; it was impossible to see her without being attracted by so much intellect, grace and amiability.

Travelling enlarged her horizon: she was able to survey, as from a watch-tower, the course of great political events, and she found herself mixing continually with the most celebrated savants and statesmen of the age. Her friendly relations with persons of very diverse opinions, while enabling her to compare and contrast a great variety of theories, did but strengthen in her "the idea and sentiment of liberty, which can alone conduct society to its true aim." Finally, from the Italian revolution of 1848, which awoke her warmest sympathies, she learned to understand the fatal consequences of despotic government, as well as the inevitable mistakes of freedom, when first unfettered and allowed to walk alone.

At the age of twenty she was married (February, 1849), and soon afterwards she set out for St. Petersburg, where she was recognised as the ornament of the higher society. In the midst of her numerous engagements, in the midst of the homage rendered to her wit and grace, she found time to collect a mass of valuable notes on the condition and inner life of the great Russian Empire, several provinces of which she knew from personal observation. From St. Petersburg to Moscow, from Odessa to Revel, her untiring activity carried her. Most social questions are at work under an apparent calm, and offer, therefore, subjects well worthy of careful study, especially to so grave and clear an intellect as that of Princess Dora d'Istria, who possessed, in the highest degree, the faculty of steady meditation amidst the movement and the world-stir that surrounded her. The world, charmed by her personal attractions, had no suspicion of the restlessness and activity of her inquiring mind.

Her departure to the South brought her inquiries and investigations to an end. She had suffered so much from the terrible winters of the great Northern capital, and her health was so seriously shaken, that her doctors presented to her the grave alternative of departure or death (1855).

The Princess Dora d'Istria, as we have hinted, was a fine linguist. She made herself mistress of nine languages. Her historical erudition was profound; her mind was continually in search of new knowledge. She seemed to have inherited from one of her illustrious friends, M. von Humboldt, that "fever of study," that insatiable ardour, which, if not genius, is closely akin to it.

The great Berlin philosopher and the young Wallachian writer lived for some time in an intellectual confraternity, which, no doubt, is to this day one of the most valuable souvenirs of the brilliant author of "La Vie Monastique dans l'Eglise Orientale." In reference to this subject, we take leave to quote a passage from the graceful pen of M. Charles Yriarte: —

"The scene lies at Sans-Souci, in one of the celebrated saloons where the great Frederick supped with Voltaire, d'Alembert and Maupertuis. 'Old Fritz' has been dead a hundred years; but the court of Prussia, under the rule of Frederick William, is still the asylum of *beaux esprits*. The time is the first and brilliant period of his reign, when the king gathers around him artists and men of science, and writes to Humboldt invitations to dinner in verse, which he seals with the great Seal of State, in order that the philosopher may have no excuse for absenting himself. A few years later, and, alas, artists and poets give place to soldiers!

"The whole of the royal family are collected at a summer fête, and with them the most famous names in art and science, and some strangers of distinction.

"The prince has recently received a consignment of ancient sculptures and works of art, and while the royal family

saunter among the groves of Charlottenhof, M. von Humboldt and the aged Rauch, the Prussian sculptor, examine them, and investigate their secrets. Rauch is a grand type of a man. This senior or *doyen* of the German artists, who died overwhelmed with glory and honours, had been a *valet de chambre* in the Princess Louisa's household. He had followed the princess to Rome, where, among the masterpieces of antiquity and of the Renaissance, she had divined the budding genius of him who was to carve in everlasting marble the monumental figure of the great Frederick.

"These two illustrious men are bending over a basso-relievo with a Greek inscription, when the king enters; he is accompanied by a gentleman, who has on either arm a fair young girl in the spring of her youth and beauty. The king invites M. von Humboldt to explain the inscription, and the gallant old man goes straight to one of the young girls, excusing himself for not attempting to translate it in the presence of one of the greatest Hellenists of the time.

"'Come, your Highness,' he says, 'make the oracle speak.'

"And the young princess reads off the inscription fluently, setting down M. von Humboldt's ignorance to the account of his politeness.

"The king compliments the handsome stranger, and Rauch, struck by her great beauty, inquires of his friend who may be this fair, sweet Muse, who gives to the marbles the tongue of eloquence, who, young and lovely as an antique Venus, seems already as wise and prudent as Minerva.

"You see that it is a pretty *tableau de genre*, worthy of the brush of Mentzel, the German painter, or of the French Meissonier. For background the canvas will have the picturesque Louis Quatorze interiors of Sans-Souci; in the foreground, the king and the great Humboldt, who inclines

towards the young girl; farther off, her sister leaning on their father's arm, and the aged Rauch, who closes up the scene and holds in his hand the bas-relief.

"That young girl, who has just given a proof of her erudition is Helena Ghika, now famous under the literary pseudonym of Dora d'Istria. The old man is the Prince Michael, her father, whose family, originally of Epirus, has for the last two centuries been established in the Danubian Principalities, and has supplied Wallachia with Hospodars. The other young lady is Helena's sister."

Dora d'Istria was one of those fine, quick intelligences which look upon the world—that is, upon humanity—as, in the poet's words, "The proper study of mankind."

"It has always seemed to me," she one day observed, "that women, in travelling, might complete the task of the most scientific travellers; for, as a fact, woman carries certain special aptitudes into literature. She perceives more quickly than man everything connected with national life and the manners of the people. A wide field, much too neglected, lies open, therefore, to her observation. But, in order that she may fitly explore it, she needs, what she too often fails to possess, a knowledge of languages and of history, as well as the capability of conforming herself to the different habitudes of nations, and the faculty of enduring great fatigues.

"Happily for myself, I was not deficient in linguistic knowledge. In my family the only language made use of was French. M. Papadopoulos at an early age taught me Greek, which in the East is as important as French in the West. The Germanic tongues terrified me at first, the peoples of Pelasgic origin having no taste for those idioms. But I was

industrious enough and patient enough to triumph over all such difficulties, and though the study of languages is far from being popular in the Latin countries, I did not cease to pursue it until the epoch of my marriage.

"M. Papadopoulos has often referred to my passionate love of history even in my early childhood. This passion has constantly developed. The more I have travelled, the more clearly I have perceived that one cannot know a people unless one knows thoroughly its antecedents; that is, if one be not fully acquainted with its annals and its chief writers. In studying a nation only in its contemporary manifestations, one is exposed to the error into which one would assuredly fall if one attempted to estimate the character of an individual after living only a few hours in his company.

"Besides, to understand nations thoroughly, it is necessary to examine, without any aristocratic prejudice, all the classes of which they are composed. In Switzerland, I lived among the mountains, that I might gain an exact idea of the Alpine life. In Greece, I traversed on horseback the solitudes of the Peloponnesus. In Italy, I have established relations with people of all faiths and conditions, and whenever the opportunity has occurred, have questioned with equal curiosity the merchant and the savant, the fisherman and the politician. When I appear to be resting myself, I am really making those patient investigations, indispensable to all who would conscientiously study a country."

After residing for some years in Russia, she felt the need of living thenceforward in a freer atmosphere, and betook herself to Switzerland. Her sojourn in that country—a kind of Promised Land for all those who in their own country have never enjoyed the realisation of their aspirations—was very

advantageous to her. She learned in Switzerland to love and appreciate liberty, as in Italy the fine arts, and in England industry.

The work of Dora d'Istria upon German Switzerland is less descriptive than philosophical. The plan she has adopted is open perhaps to criticism: such mixture of poetry and erudition may offend severer tastes; we grow indulgent, however, when we perceive that the writer preserves her individuality while passing from enthusiastic dithyrambs to the most abstract historical dissertations.

It is not, however, the woman of letters so much as the patient untiring female traveller whom we seek to introduce to our readers in these pages. We attempt therefore, no analysis of her works,[2] but proceed to speak of her mountaineering experiences: the most important is the ascent of the Mönch, a summit of the Jungfrau system—one of the lofty snow-clad peaks which enclose the ice-rivers of the Oberaar and the Unteraar. We shall allow Madame Dora d'Istria to conduct us in person through the difficulties of so arduous an enterprise.

"When I announced my project of scaling the highest summits of the Alps, the astonishment was general. Some imagined that it was a mere whim which would be fully satisfied by the noise it caused. Others exclaimed against a hardihood willing to encounter so many perils. None were inclined to regard my words as dictated by an intimate conviction. None could accustom themselves to the idea of so extraordinary a scheme. The excitement was redoubled at the departure of the different telegraphic despatches summoning from their village homes the guides spoken of as the most resolute in the district. One hope, however,

remained: that these guides themselves would dissuade me from my enterprise. Pierre was encouraged to dilate upon the dangers which I should incur among the glaciers. Through the telescope I was shown the precipices of the Jungfrau. All the manuals of travellers of Switzerland lay upon my tables. Everybody insisted on reading to me the most frightful passages—those most likely, as they thought, to unnerve me. But, on the contrary, these stirring stories did but sharpen my curiosity, did but quicken my impatience to set out. I ceased to think of anything but the snowy wildernesses which crown the lofty mountain summits.

"I summoned Pierre to my private apartment, and spoke to him with firmness, so as to strengthen his resolutions. My words reassured him. 'Whatever happens,' he said, 'do you take the responsibility?' 'Assuredly,' I answered; and I gave him my hand, engaging him at the same time to remain unmoved by any remonstrance, to encourage the guides on their arrival, before they could be exposed to any foreign influence. He promised, and his face brightened at the sight of my tranquil smile. He went away to superintend the preparations for the expedition, and arrange my masculine costume, which consisted of woollen pantaloons striped with black and white, of a closely buttoned coat descending to my knees, of a round felt hat like that of a mountaineer, and a pair of large strong boots. Oh, how slow the hours seemed to me! I dreaded so keenly any occurrence which might thwart my wishes, that I could scarcely listen to the questions put to me respecting the necessary arrangements. Everything wearied me, except the sight of the Jungfrau and of Pierre, who seemed to me a friend into whose hands I had entrusted my dearest hope.

"The first to arrive were the guides of Grindelwald. I uttered a cry of joy when Pierre Bohren appeared, a man of low stature but thickset limbs, and Jean Almer, who was tall and robust. Both were chamois hunters, renowned for their

intrepidity. They looked at me with curious attentiveness. They confessed, with the frank cordiality peculiar to these brave mountaineers, that their experience would be of no service in the expedition I was undertaking, as they had never attempted any one like it. They knew, however, the perils of the glaciers, for every day they risked their lives among them. But Bohren, who had ventured the farthest, had not passed beyond the grotto of the Eiger.

"Before coming to a definite decision, we waited the arrival of Hans Jaun of Meyringen, who had accompanied M. Agassiz in his ascent of the Jungfrau (in 1841). He arrived towards morning, and called upon me in company with Ulrich Lauerer, of Lauterbrunnen. The latter was as tall as Almer, but did not seem so ready. I learned afterwards that he was still suffering from a fall which he had but recently met with while hunting. Hans Jaun was the oldest of all and the least robust. His hair was growing grey, his eyelids were rimmed with a blood-coloured border. However, he presided over the gathering. I had closed the door, so that no one should disturb our solemn conference. The guides appeared meditative, and sought to read in my eyes if my firmness were real or assumed.

"It was decided that we should take with us four porters loaded with provisions, ladders, ropes, and pick-axes; that towards evening I should start for Interlachen with Pierre and Jaun, and that the other guides should await me at Grindelwald. Then we separated with the friendly greeting, 'Au revoir.'

"Scarcely had the sun dropped below the horizon, streaked with long bars of fire, when I took my solitary seat in an open carriage. Peter occupied the box. We traversed the walnut-tree avenues of Interlachen and its smiling gardens. We followed the banks of the pale Lütschina, which bounds through the midst of abrupt rocks. Clouds accumulated on

the sky. Soon we heard the distant roar of thunder. We passed into the presence of colossal mountains, whose rugged peaks rose like inaccessible fortresses. On turning round, I could see nothing in the direction of Interlachen but gloomy vaporous depths, impenetrable to the eye. Nearer and nearer drew the thunder, filling space with its sonorous voice. The wind whistled, the Lütschina rolled its groaning waters. The spectacle was sublime. Night gathered in all around, and the vicinity of Grindelwald I could make out only by the lights in the châlets scattered upon the hill.

"I had scarcely entered beneath the hospitable roof of the hotel of the Eagle, before the rain fell in torrents, like a waterspout. I elevated my soul to God. At this moment the thunder burst, the avalanches resounded among the mountains, and the echoes a thousand times repeated the noise of their fall.

"The stars were paling in the firmament when I opened my window. Mists clothed the horizon. The rushing wind soon tore them aside, and drove them into the gorges, whence descend, in the shape of a fan, the unformed masses of the lower glacier, soiled with a blackish dust.

"The storm of the preceding evening, those dense clouds which gave to the Alps a more formidable aspect than ever, the well-meant remonstrances of the herdsmen of the valley, all awakened in the heart of my guides a hesitation not difficult to understand on the part of men who feared the burden of a great responsibility. They made another effort to shake my resolution. They showed me a black tablet attached to the wall of the church which crowns the heights: —

AIMÉ MUNON, MIN. DU S. EV.
TOMBA DANS UN GOUFFRE
DE LA MER DE GLACE.

ICI REPOSE SON CORPS,
RETIRÉ DE L'ABÎME.

"I said to Pierre, after glancing at this pathetic inscription, 'The soul of this young man rests in peace in the bosom of the Everlasting. As for us, we shall soon return here to give thanks to God.'

"'Good!' replied Pierre; 'that is to say, nothing will make you draw back.'

"He rejoined his companions, and I went to shut myself up in my chamber.

"The deep solitude around me had in it something of solemnity. Before my eyes the Wetterhorn raised its scarped acclivities; to the right, the masses of the Eiger, to the left, the huge Scheideck and the Faulhorn. Those gloomy mountains which surrounded me, that tranquillity troubled only by the rash of the torrent in the valley and by an occasional avalanche, all this was truly majestic, and I felt as if transported into a world where all things were unlike what I had seen before. My mind had seldom enjoyed a calm so complete.

"I had not the patience to wait for morning. Before it appeared, I was on foot. I breakfasted in haste, and assumed my masculine dress, to which I found it difficult to grow accustomed. I was conscious of my awkwardness, and it embarrassed all my movements. I summoned Pierre, and asked him if I could by any means be conveyed as far as the valley. He sent, to my great satisfaction, for a sedan-chair. Meanwhile, I exercised myself by walking up and down my room, for I feared the guides would despair of me if they saw me stumble at every step. I was profoundly humiliated, and only weighty reasons prevented me from resuming my woman's dress. At last I bethought myself of an expedient. I made a parcel of my silk petticoat and my boots

(*brodequins*), and gave it to a porter, so that I might resort to them if I should be completely paralyzed by those accursed garments which I found so inconvenient.

"We had to wait until eight o'clock before taking our departure. The sun then made its appearance, and the mountains gradually threw off their canopy of mist. Having wrapped myself in a great plaid, I took my seat in the sedan-chair and started, accompanied by four guides, four porters, and a crowd of peasants, among whom was a Tyrolean. All sang merrily as they marched forth, but those who remained looked sadly after us. It was the 10th of June, 1855.

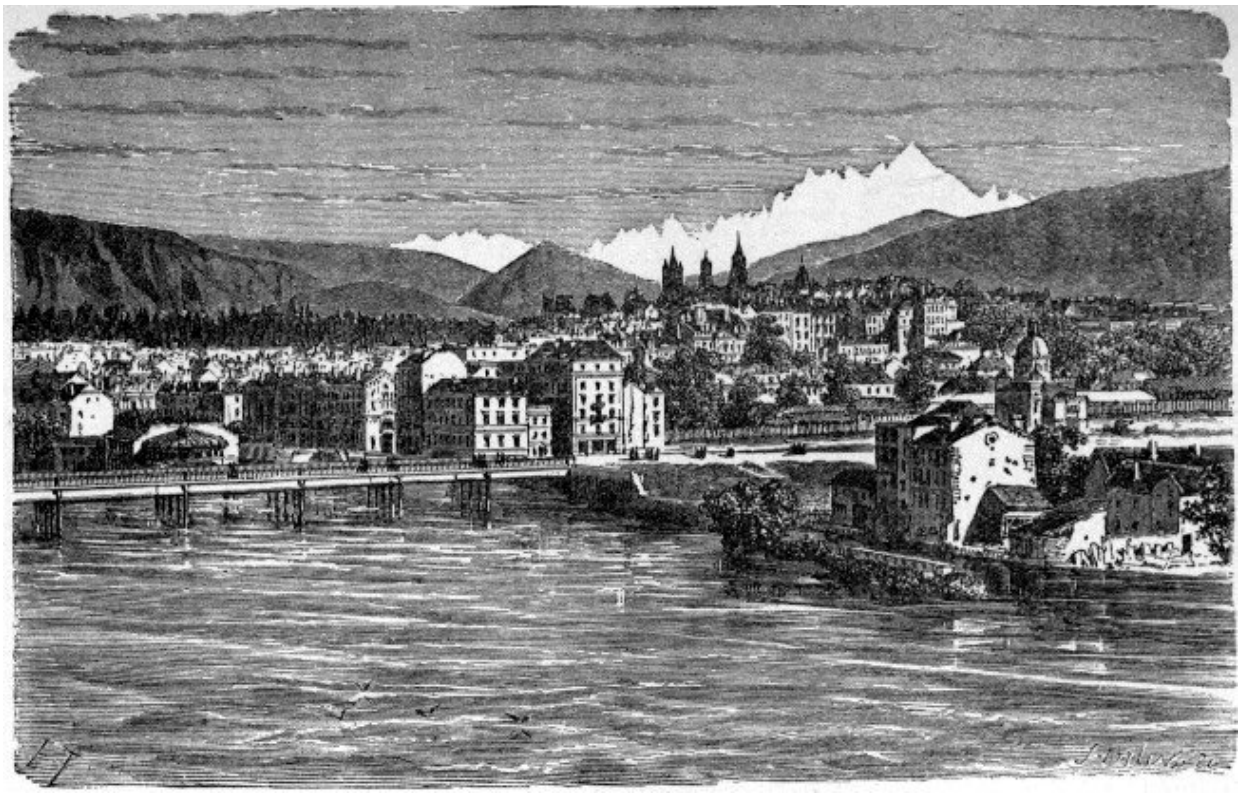
"We marched without any attempt at order, and the people of Grindelwald carried our baggage as a relief to our porters. The sun was burning. The peasants took leave of us as soon as we struck the path which creeps up the Mettenberg, skirting the 'sea of ice.' Only the Tyrolean, accompanied by his young guide, remained with us. He said that curiosity impelled him to follow us as long as he could, that he might form some idea of the way in which we were going to get out of the affair. He sang like the rest of the caravan, his strong voice rising above all.

"It was the first time I had seen the immense glacier popularly called 'La Mer de Glace.' Through the green curtains of the pinewoods, I gazed upon the masses rising from the gulf, the depths of which are azure-tinted, while the surface is covered with dirt and blocks of snow. The spectacle, however, did not impress me greatly, whether because I was absorbed in the thought of gaining the very summit of the Alps, or because my imagination felt some disappointment in finding the reality far beneath what it had figured.

"I descended from my sedan-chair when we arrived at an imprint in the marble rock known as 'Martinsdruck.' The

gigantic peaks of the Schreckhorn, the Eiger, the Kischhorn, rose around us, almost overwhelming us with their grandeur. To the right, the Mittelegi, a spur of the Eiger, elevated its bare and polished sides. Suddenly the songs ceased, and my travelling companions uttered those exclamations, familiar to Alpine populations, which re-echoed from rock to rock. They had caught sight of a hunter, gliding phantom-like along the steep ascent of the Mittelegi, like a swallow lost in space. But in vain they pursued him with cries and questions; he continued to move silently along the black rock.

"At length we descended upon the glacier. They had abandoned me to my own resources, probably to judge of my address. I was more at ease in my clothes, and with a sure step I advanced upon the snow, striding across the crevasses which separated the different strata of ice. By accident, rather than by reflection, I looked out for the spots of snow and there planted my feet. Later I learned that this is always the safest route, and never leads one into danger. The Tyrolean took leave of us, convinced at last that I should get out of the affair. As for the guides, they gave vent to their feelings in shouts of joy. They said that, in recognition of my self-reliance, they would entrust to me the direction of the enterprise. After crossing the Mer de Glace, we began to climb the steep slopes of the Ziegenberg.



GENEVA AND MONT BLANC.

"For a long time the songs, a thousand times repeated, continued to answer each other from side to side of the glacier. Then we could hear no longer the voice of men, nor the bell of the church of Grindelwald, whose melancholy notes the wind had hitherto wafted to us. We were in the bosom of an immense wilderness, face to face with Heaven and the wonders of Nature. We scaled precipitous blocks of stone, and left behind us the snowy summits. The march became more and more painful. We crawled on hands and feet, we glided like cats, leaped from one rock to another like squirrels. Frequently, a handful of moss or a clump of brushwood was our sole support, where we found no cracks or crevices. Drops of blood often tinted, like purple flowers, the verdure we crushed under foot. When this was wanting we contrived to balance ourselves on the rock by the help of our alpenstocks, having recourse as seldom as possible to one another's arms, for fear of dragging the whole company into the abyss. Hundreds of feet below us glittered the deep

crevasses of the glacier, in which the rays of the sun disported. The cold winds, blowing from the frozen heights, scarcely cooled our foreheads. We were streaming with perspiration, but our gaiety increased, instead of diminishing, with the dangers. When we came to a stretch of granite, our speed was doubled, and whoever first set foot upon it would announce the fact to the others. There we slipped but seldom, and by assisting one another, we could walk erect and more quickly. Bohren the younger, who was one of our porters and the youngest of the company, continued his merry song. In moments of peril his voice acquired a decided quaver, but he never paused in his march or in his cadences, and never fell back a step.

"The prospect, which embraced the whole valley, was magnificent. We could perceive the châlets of Grindelwald, like miniatures sprinkled over the greensward. My guides exclaimed, 'Ah, it is from the height of the heavens that we behold our wives!' And we continued our ascent, leaving beneath us the clouds floating everywhere like grey scarves. At eleven o'clock we halted on a promontory where we contrived to find room by sitting one behind the other.

"The fatigue and heat had exhausted us, and no one stirred, except the two Bohrens, who climbed a little higher in search of wood, so that we might light a fire, and prepare some refreshment. A crystalline spring, filtering through the marble and the brushwood, murmured close beside us. But all vigorous vegetation had disappeared. Nothing was to be seen but the grasses and mosses; the juniper, the wild thymes, which perfumed the air, and fields of purple rhododendron, the metallic leaves of which mingled with the black lichens. At intervals, a few stunted larches were outlined against the everlasting snows. The Bohrens arrived with some brushwood, and soon a fire crackled and sparkled cheerily, the water boiled, and, to my great satisfaction, rhododendron flowers and fragments of juniper were put into

it—my companions assuring me that this kind of tea was excellent and very wholesome.

"My thirst was keen, and I drank with avidity the odoriferous beverage, which seemed to me excellent.

"The guides had brought me a large posy of beautiful Alpine roses, and I made them into a wreath, which I twined around my hat.

"After an hour's halt, we resumed our march, and soon could see only the cold white snow around us, without the least sign of vegetation or life. The acclivity we were climbing was very steep, but having quitted the bare rocks, we no longer ran any risk of sliding. We endeavoured to quicken our steps, in order to reach, before nightfall, an immense cavern known only to two of our chamois hunters, who made use of it as a hiding-place when their unconquerable passion for heroic adventures tempted them to disregard the cantonal regulations. Joyous shouts broke forth when the yawning mouth of the grotto opened wide under thick layers of snow. Our songs recommenced, and, as night was coming on, we pressed forward rapidly. For some hours I had been unconscious of fatigue, and I could have marched for a considerably longer period without feeling any need of rest.

"But the guides were impatient to gain a shelter where we should not be exposed to the avalanches which rumbled in every direction.

"A mysterious twilight partly illumined the extensive cavern, its farthest recesses, however, remaining in deep shadow. We could hear rivulets trickling and drops of water falling with monotonous slowness. Never had I penetrated into a place of such savage beauty. In the middle of the cavern, opposite the entrance, was a great pillar of ice, resembling a cataract suddenly frozen. Beyond this marvellous block, glittering like crystal, spread a stream of delicious freshness.

When we had kindled a large fire with branches of juniper, accumulated by the hunter who most frequented the retreat, the ice shone with a myriad diamond tints; everything seemed to assume an extraordinary form and life. The fantastically carved walls of rock sparkled with capricious gleams. From the sides of black granite hung pendent icicles, sometimes slender and isolated, sometimes grouped in fanciful clusters. In the hollows, where damp and darkness for ever reign, climbed a bluish-grey moss, a melancholy and incomplete manifestation of life in the bosom of this death-like solitude. Within, the whole scene impressed the imagination strongly, while without, but close beside us, resounded, like thunder, the avalanches which scattered their ruins over our heads, or plunged headlong into fathomless gulfs.

"Some white heifer-skins were laid down under a block which formed a kind of recess at the farther end of the grotto. I wrapped myself in my coverings and shawls, for the cold increased in severity, but I was protected from it by the assiduous care of my good guides, who heaped upon me all their furs and cloaks. Then, seated around the fire, they prepared the coffee which was to serve us the whole night. None of them thought of sleeping, nor felt inclined to repress their natural but modest gaiety. If one complained that his limbs were stiff, the others immediately cried out that he was as delicate as a woman, and that we had no cause of complaint while sojourning in a palace grander than kings' palaces. They inscribed my name upon the roof near to the entrance.

"Two of the guides had sallied forth to clear a pathway and cut steps in the snow, for there would be some difficulty in getting out of the grotto. On their return they informed us that we might rely on a fine day—words which were welcomed with loud applause. After undergoing so much fatigue, it was natural we should desire a complete success. I

rejoiced to see so near me the immense glaciers and lofty peaks of the Alps, the image of which had often haunted my happiest dreams. Yet I felt somewhat uneasy at the symptoms of indisposition which would not be concealed. I experienced slight attacks of nausea, and a depression which I sought to conquer by rising abruptly and giving the signal of departure. I was forced to change my boots, for those I had worn the day before were in shreds.

"About three o'clock in the morning we took leave of the hospitable cavern, but it was not without difficulty we crossed the precipices which frowned before us, and for the first time had to employ our long ladder. We supported it against the side of a chasm, the opposite brink of which lay several hundred feet below. We descended backwards the close and narrow steps, strictly forbidden to cast a downward glance. Day advanced rapidly. The masses of snow which rose around us resembled so many mountains piled upon other mountains. We were in the heart of the vast solitudes of the Eiger, which seemed astonished by the echoes of our steps. We often made use of the ladder. By the third time I had recovered my liberty of action, and no longer descended backward, but contemplating with an undefinable charm the gaping gulfs which vanished in the obscure recesses of the glacier, bluer than the skies of the East.

"The troop soon divided into two sections. We wore blue glasses to protect our eyes from the dazzling brilliancy of the snow, which every moment became less compact. Almer had even covered his face with a green veil, but mine I found inconvenient, and resolutely exposed my skin to the burning rays of the sun, which were reflected from the glittering frozen surfaces, though the sun itself was hidden by clouds. The fissures in the glacier were few and very narrow, and we employed the ladder but once or twice in the immense plain of powdery snow which, towards eight o'clock, opened before us. It was then that our real sufferings began. The

heat was excessive; walking, slow and very difficult, for at each step we sank almost to our knees. Sometimes the foot could find no bottom, and when we withdrew it we found a yawning azure-tinted crevasse. The guides called such places *mines*, and feared them greatly. The air every instant grew more rarefied; my mouth was dry; I suffered from thirst, and to quench it swallowed morsels of snow and kirsch-wasser, the very odour of which became at last insupportable, though I was sometimes compelled to drink it by the imperative orders of the guides.

"It had taken us long to cross the region of springs and torrents; not so long to traverse that in which the fissures of the glacier were hidden under the snow; and now at last we trod the eternal and spotless shroud of the frozen desert. I breathed with difficulty, my weakness increased, so that it was with no small pleasure I arrived at the halting-place marked out by our foremost party. I threw myself, exhausted, but enchanted, on the bed of snow which had been prepared for me. Avalanches were frequent. Sometimes they rolled in immense blocks with a sullen roar; sometimes whirlwinds of snow fell upon us like showers of heavy hail. To our great alarm the mist rose on all sides so that we often lost sight of those of our party who were acting as pioneers. After leaving the plain of snow we ascended a steep and difficult incline. The guides had hardly strength enough to clear a path, so rude was the acclivity and so dense the snow.

"At length, about ten o'clock, we halted on a platform which stretched to the base of the Mönch, whose ridge or backbone rose before our eyes. Here a small grotto had been excavated in the ice in which I was bidden to rest myself, thoroughly well wrapped up. We were literally on the brink of a complete collapse, respiration failed us, and for some minutes I expectorated blood. However, I regretted neither my fatigues, nor the resolution which had carried me to this point. All that I feared was that I should not be able to go

farther. The very air which I endured so badly was an object of interest and study on account of its extraordinary purity. One of the guides, having brought from the grotto a few juniper branches, kindled a fire and melted some snow, which we drank with eagerness. I then remarked that they had collected in a group at some distance apart, and were conversing in a low tone and with anxious faces. The Jungfrau had been indicated as the goal of our enterprise, and their apprehensive glances were turned towards that mountain, which rose on our left, shrouded in dense fogs. I felt a vague fear that they wished to interpose some obstacle to the complete realization of my projects; and, in fact, they soon came to tell me that it would not be possible to climb the Jungfrau that day; that there was still a long march to be made before we could reach its base, which, by an optical illusion, seemed so near to us; and that from thence to the summit would be at least another three hours' climb.

"It seemed scarcely practicable to pass the night on the snow at so great an elevation, where the effort of breathing was a pain, and the icy cold threatened to freeze our aching limbs, and, besides, the guides were unanimous in predicting a violent storm in the evening. 'And then,' said they, 'what shall we do without shelter, without coverings, without fire, without any hot drink (for our supply of coffee was exhausted), in the midst of this ice?' I knew in my heart they were right, but I was keenly disappointed at failing to reach the goal when it seemed so near. As I could not make up my mind to adopt their opinion, Almer rose, and laying the ladder at my feet, said, with much energy, 'Adieu, I leave you, for my conscience as an honest man forbids me to lend a hand to a peril which I know to be inevitable.'

"I called him back, and rising in my turn, exclaimed: 'Will the difficulties be as great in the way of an ascent of the Mönch? There it is, only a few paces from us. It is free from mist, why

should we not reach its summit?' At these words the astonishment was general, and everybody turned towards the peak I had named. The snow upon it seemed quite solid, and I thought it would be impossible to find there anything more dangerous than we had already experienced. Their hesitation surprised me. 'Are you aware,' said they, 'that yonder mountain has never been ascended?' 'So much the better,' said I, 'we will baptize it!' And, forgetting in a moment my weariness, I started off with a firm step. Pierre Jaun and Pierre Bohren, seeing me so resolved, seized our flag, set out in advance, and never rested till they had planted it on the loftiest summit of the Mönch, before the rest of us could get up. The flag was of three colours, white, yellow, and blue, and bore the beloved name of 'Wallachia,' embroidered in large letters. As if Heaven favoured our wishes, while clouds rolled upon all the surrounding mountains, they left free and clear the peak of the Mönch.

"Though the acclivity was much steeper than that of the Eiger, we did not find the difficulties much greater. The snow was hard, and as we did not sink far into it, our march was less fatiguing. We held to one another so as to form a chain, and advanced zigzag, fired with impatience to reach the summit. All around us I saw deep beds of snow, but nowhere such blocks of ice as M. Deser found upon the crest of the Jungfrau. It is probable that, owing to the season, the Mönch was still buried under the accumulated snows of winter, and this circumstance greatly contributed to our success.

"The image of the Infinite presented itself to my mind in all its formidable grandeur. My heart, oppressed, felt its influence, as my gaze rested upon the Swiss plain half hidden in the mists of the surrounding mountains, which were bathed in golden vapours. I was filled with such a sense of God that my heart—so it seemed to me—was not large enough to contain it. I belonged wholly to Him. From that

moment my soul was lost in the thought of His incomprehensible power.

"But the time had come for our departure, and I must take leave of the mountain where I was so far from men! I embraced the flag, and at three o'clock we began our homeward march. With much toil and trouble we descended the declivities of the Mönch. We were obliged to lend each other more assistance than in ascending, and more than once we nearly fell into the abysses. But as soon as we regained the Eiger, we swept forward as rapidly as the avalanche which knows no obstacles, as the torrent which carves out its own channel, as the bird which on mighty pinions cleaves space. Seated on the snow, we allowed ourselves to slide easily down those steeps which we had so painfully climbed, even to the very brink of the precipices, which we had crossed on a ladder instead of bridge. We observed that the gulfs yawned wide which in the morning we had crossed upon the snow that covered them; for the aspect of these mountains changes with a truly extraordinary rapidity. Song and laughter soon broke forth again, provoked by our strange fashion of travelling. Great was our joy when we found ourselves once more in an atmosphere favourable to the life of vegetation, and all of us rushed headlong to the first brook, whose murmur sounded as sweet to us as the voice of a friend.

"But as soon as we reached the rocks free from snow, our troubles recommenced; difficulties reappeared, and were even more serious than those we had met with in our ascent. The peril was extreme; and but for the courageous Pierre Bohren, who carried me rather than supported me, I could never have descended the bare rocks that skirt the edge of the glacier. When we struck the Mer de Glace, we fell in with so many gaping fissures that we could cross them only by hazardous leaps and bounds. We had not reached the other side before we were met by our porters with the sedan-chair;

and we arrived singing and cheering at Grindelwald, where everybody eyed us with as much wonder as if we had risen from the dead. I asked for some citrons, which I devoured while changing my clothes. Though completely knocked up, I set out immediately for Interlachen, to reassure those who were awaiting me there. At the foot of the Grindelwald hill, I stopped at Pierre Bohren's châlet to pay a visit to his wife, who held in her arms an infant only a few days old. I embraced it and promised to be its godmother.

"About midway between Grindelwald and Interlachen, we were overtaken by a storm as violent as that which had heralded our departure.

"The guides, therefore, had made no mistake. We should have experienced this tempest among the loftiest summits of the Alps, if we had continued our excursion.

"When I rose next morning, my face was one great wound, and for a long time I endured the keenest sufferings. Not less fatigued than myself, the guides at length arrived singing, and brought me a superb diploma upon official paper."[3]

The princess afterwards travelled in Greece, where she received an enthusiastic welcome, and ovations were offered to her as to a sovereign. Everybody did homage to the bright and generous author of "La Nationalité Hellénique,"—the liberal and zealous advocate of the rights, the manners, the character, and the future of Greece. But of nationalities she was always the defender, and her wide sympathies embraced not only the Greeks, but the Albanians and the Slavs.

After having studied the antiquities of Athens, undertaken sundry scientific and archæological excursions into Attica,

and enjoyed a delightful intercourse at Athens with kindred spirits—such as Frederika Bremer—she traversed the nomarchies, or provinces, of the kingdom of Greece, with the view of obtaining an exact and comprehensive account of the moral and material condition of the rural population.

As M. Pommier remarks, this long excursion in a country which offers no facilities to travellers, and where one must always be on horseback, could not be accomplished without displaying a courage unexampled, an heroic perseverance, and a physical and moral strength equal to every trial. She had to undergo the strain of daily fatigue and the heat of a scorching sun; to fear neither barren rocks, nor precipices, nor dangerous pathways, nor brigands. In spite of the counsels of prudence and of a timorous affection, the intrepid traveller would not omit any portion of her itinerary; she traversed successively into Bœotia, Phocis, Ætolia, and the Peloponnesus. When the mountaineers of Laconia saw her passing on horseback through the savage gorges, they cried out in their enthusiasm, "Here is a Spartan woman!" And they invited her to put herself at their head and lead them to Constantinople.

From Greece she went into Italy, in 1861, and took up her residence, where she has ever since remained, at Florence. Garibaldi has saluted as his sister this ardent champion of the rights of nationalities, who, to this day, has continued her philanthropic exertions. In 1867, she published "La Nazionalità Albanese secondo i Canti popolari;" in 1869, "Discours sur Marco Polo;" in 1870, "Venise en 1867;" in 1871–1873, "Gli Albanesi in Rumenia," a history of the princely family of the Ghikas from the 17th century; in 1871, a couple of novels, "Eleanora de Hallingen," and "Ghizlaine;" in 1877, "La Poésie des Ottomans;" and in 1878, "The Condition of Women among the Southern Slavs."

The princess, besides plunging into historical labours, sedulously cultivates the Fine Arts, and is moreover a first-rate pistol-shot. A true Albanian, she loves arms, and handles them skilfully.

It cannot be denied, that she deserves her splendid reputation. Any one of her works, says a French critic, would make a man famous; and they are unquestionably marked by all the characteristics of an independent and observant mind. But it is her life that best justifies her renown—her life with its purity, its enthusiasm, its zeal for the oppressed, its intense love of knowledge, its vivid sympathies and broad charities, and its constant striving after truth and freedom, and the highest beauty.