New tourist pavilion in montreux

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"THE PRISONER OF CHILLON"

On 27th/28th June, the "Hôtel d'Angleterre" at Lausanne-Ouchy celebrated an anniversary which is of interest to anybody who likes Byron's literature.

As a matter of fact, during those two days, a hundred years ago, Byron wrote the famous "Prisoner of Chillon".

Lord Byron coming from Bruxelles arrived on the shores of Léman in May 1816 by way of the Jaman Valley. The countryside appeared "as beautiful as a dream". His companion was the faithful Hobhouse, a school chum, who was later Lord Broughton.

Byron was only 28 years old at that time, but his life had been rough. He had known physical pain and moral suffering. His parents were separated. The mother was a vain and capricious woman who was subject to violent fits of anger. His childhood was as unhappy as his health was defective. Victim of infantile paralysis, he was lame and the various forms of treatment which were attempted as cures were veritable tortures.

And here he was in the country of Vaud. He stopped several days with Mr. Dufour at Clarens. It is interesting to note that he slept in the room where Vinet died. Although he was later installed near Geneva at the villa Diodati, he returned to the region many times. A Madame Paully with whom he loved to chat, said of him:

"He had beautiful manners, and his name was so well known in the world. But he was indeed an original character. A sort of madman who walked all night in his room".

According to his fantasy, he would suddenly go rowing in a rented boat on the lake which fascinated him.

In "Impressions of Travel", Alexander Dumas, the father of the "Three Musketeers", describes the arrival of the boat at Chillon:

"It bore a pale man with a piercing look, enveloped in a great coat dragging on the ground and hiding a slight limp. Having asked to see the prison of Bonivard at the Castle of Chillon he remained there a few moments. We then saw the pillar to which the martyr had been chained and underneath a name: Byron".

A boatman called Maurice said:

"The man feared nothing. By preference he chose the most terrible weather to sail and often spent hours in treacherous depths. The more the lake was disturbed, the more he was pleased. He sailed alongside of him a box of pistols in the little boat. Why? We don't know. Then he would remain silent and pensive looking at the water. Suddenly, coming out of the meditation he would seize a notebook always with him and start to write very rapidly".

Maurice took him to Chillon. He stayed three hours in Bonivard's prison.

Shortly afterwards, on the 27th of June, his boat put in at Ouchy. Byron went ashore and climbed the road leading to St. François along with his friend Hobhouse. The two of them visited the house where Gibbon lived, La Grotte. They saw the garden where the English historian loved to sit and work. Did they make a tour of the church? It is most likely. But the weather was becoming so poor that the two travellers decided not to board the ship. The two of them stayed at the Hotel Anchor at Ouchy, which is now called "Hôtel d'Angleterre"; perhaps because Byron spent two nights there. Perhaps this was the incident which created the decisive impulse. In any case, suddenlly the great poem, which Byron had been carrying in his head since his visit to Chillon, burst forth. Again the poet strode through his room all night long in scanning his verses. By dawn he had written the celebrated "Prisoner of Chillon".

Thus it is in Lausanne that the melancholy fiction was born, that Byron created this prisoner which is not Bonivard, but "the prisoner".

Byron, Hobhouse and Maurice went aboard again. If the poet did not come back to Lausanne, which is quite possible, he nevertheless saw the characteristic silhouette.

In September of the same year, Byron again went through the Jaman Valley where a bull tried to jump into the carriage occupied by him and a friend. Further along, he purchased a dog, awfully ugly and without a tail. He called him "Moutz".

On 5th October, he went along the shores of *Léman* for the last time on his way to Italy through the Simplon, but his passage will for ever be commemorated on the tablet which is on the front wall of the "Hôtel d'Angleterre".

(*Vaud Office du Tourisme.*)

NEW TOURIST PAVILION IN MONTREUX

The Tourist Office of this famous lakeside city recently took possession of its new Tourist Pavilion. Located in the centre of town, well-marked by large signs on the main street, the new facility is equipped with the latest technical refinements and is designed to serve the needs of information-hungry tourists day and night. There is a car counter, at which motorists may receive information on road conditions and other matters without leaving their vehicles. Hotel reservations may be made and tickets purchased to special events in the city. Pedestrian visitors enter the reception room through an automatic door and are greeted and served at five counters by attractive young women in native costume. To help travellers after normal business hours, the pavilion features a new telephone arrangement, *via* which tourists may contact fifty hotels, restaurants, banks and travel agencies in Montreux and vicinity, free of charge. This helpful tourist aid, unique in the country, has already rendered valuable service and been warmly welcomed by visitors.

[S.N.T.O.]

THE WINE ROUTE OF VAUD

Upon the initiative by the Vaudois Winegrowers' Association, 1st July saw the inauguration of the "Wine Route of Vaud" which, starting at Nyon, links the wine-growing localities of the "Côte" such as Mont-sur-Rolle, Aubonne, Morges with the vineyards of "Lavaux" to the east of Lausanne with such well-known villages as Grandvaux, Riez, Epesses, Chexbres, Rivaz, St-Saphorin, etc. As a matter of fact, this newest attraction for tourists and wine-lovers follows the examples given by France and Germany where the wine routes on both sides of the Rhine have become extremely popular. The novel road system in the Canton of Vaud is well marked and enables the visitor to see the quaint winegrowers' villages without being troubled by highway traffic. This new facility will no doubt benefit the "Côte" and "Lavaux" but also the more northern vineyards between Corcelettes, Champagne, Bonvillars and Onnens.

[S.N.T.O.]