

# How Mr. Greville conquered the St. Gothard [continued]

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L'un des éléments les plus caractéristiques de la vie intellectuelle et spirituelle, du "climat moral" de la Suisse, est un large et noble esprit de tolérance. Seuls, huit siècles de démocratie authentique pouvaient engendrer un tel phénomène et permettre à cette fleur si rare du support mutuel, de s'épanouir sur un terrain favorable.

La Suisse a toujours été, non seulement la charrnière de l'Europe et le foyer d'une liberté de bon aloi, mais encore la terre d'asile des proscrits. Elle continue à l'être et, si l'on voulait rappeler seulement le nom de tous ceux qui vinrent y chercher un abri contre de cruels persécuteurs, il faudrait une longue étude.

Pour ne s'en tenir qu'au seul XIXe siècle, à cette époque si féconde en bouleversements sociaux et politiques, on voit la Confédération rivaliser avec la Grande-Bretagne dans cet empressement à faire accueil aux patriotes et aux penseurs exilés. A tous, sans acception de personnes, sans préférence pour les races ou les doctrines, le même traitement est réservé, le même souci de panser les blessures et d'apaiser d'amères douleurs, est également manifesté.

L'empereur Napoléon III, au faite de la puissance arbitre de l'Europe et du destin des peuples, n'avait jamais oublié ses années de jeunesse, passées auprès de sa mère, la reine Hortense, au château d'Arenenberg en Thurgovie et les cours d'artillerie qu'il avait suivis à l'école de Thoune.

Au lendemain des mouvements insurrectionnels de Pologne, en 1830, le grand poète Adam Mickiewicz — il était en vérité Lithuanien, mais on ne distinguait pas en ce temps-là — fit un long séjour en Suisse avant de se fixer à Paris où il devait occuper une chaire au Collège de France. C'est à cette occasion que le poète vaudois Jean-Jacques Porchat adressait à l'illustre exilé et à des compagnons, une ode célèbre: *Ils viennent, les voilà, salut aux Polonais,*

*De leurs pieds tout gonflés, essayons la poussière.*  
Un autre Polonais, patriote et proscrit, était venu, avant Mickiewicz, chercher un asile en terre d'Helvétie, c'était le général Kosciuszko, le dictateur éphémère de 1794, fait prisonnier par les Russes et rendu à la liberté mais exilé par le tsar Paul Ier.

Il est d'autres patriotes pour qui la Suisse fut maternelle au siècle dernier. Ce sont les Italiens. La Confédération est mêlée de très à l'histoire du Risorgimento et l'on ne voit guère de "libéraux" transalpins qui, traqués par les

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gouvernements réactionnaires restaurés dans la péninsule par les traités de 1815, n'aient passé ou séjourné en territoire helvétique. Pellegrino Rossi, qui devait mourir assassiné en 1848 à Rome où Pie IX — encore libéral — l'avait nommé premier ministre, fut professeur à Genève; Gioberti traversa la Suisse pour se rendre à Paris; Garibaldi, au lendemain du désastre de Novare, vint se réfugier à Lugano d'où il regagna l'Italie par Genève et la France; plus tard il devait revenir triomphalement à Genève pour assister au congrès de la paix de 1867 et c'est de là qu'il partit pour organiser l'expédition contre Rome qui devait s'achever par la tragédie de Mentana. Mais celui des proscrits italiens qui séjourna le plus longtemps en Suisse, à Lugano, à Lausanne, à Genève, ailleurs encore, fut Giuseppe Mazzini.

Dès 1833, le grand Génois se rendait de Marseille à Genève pour organiser cette "expédition de Savoie," confiée à la direction du général Ramorino et qui, partie de Rolle s'acheva par un lamentable fiasco, dès la frontière franchie à Saint-Julien. Quelques pressions qui fussent faites par les gouvernements étrangers, sur le Conseil fédéral, Mazzini ne fut pas expulsé; il s'éprit de la Suisse, du panorama de ses Alpes et finit par les aimer "comme on aime sa mère."

Pendant trois ans, il y prolonge son séjour, vivant à Lausanne, à Berne, à Soleure, à Bienne, à Greuchen et même chez un pasteur protestant de Langnau. Années de noires tristesses, d'embarras financiers, de tourments physiques même, que seule apaisait la douceur de vivre sur un sol libre et fier. Mazzini s'intéressait à la vie politi-

que du pays dont il était l'hôte et fondateur de la "Jeune Italie" il voulut créer une société analogue "La Jeune Suisse," dont l'organe bi-hebdomadaire et portant le même titre, paraissait en français et en allemand.

Mazzini avait conçu un programme assez singulier qui comportait l'agrégation à la Confédération de la Savoie et du Tyrol, avec cette particularité qu'une fédération de républiques eût remplacé la division en cantons et que l'autorité fédérale eût représenté le peuple tout entier et non les Etats confédérés. La Constitution suisse de 1848 porte le reflet de ces idées et le célèbre homme d'Etat vaudois Druey fut des amis enthousiastes de Mazzini.

En 1849, au lendemain de la prise de Rome par les troupes du général Oudinot et de la chute de l'éphémère république romaine, nous retrouvons Mazzini, fugitif, sur les bords du Léman. Une nuit de novembre, accompagné de deux amis, il quitte Genève à pied, gagne Nyon en devisant de Byron et Mickiewicz; de là parvient à Lausanne en voiture d'où il part pour l'Angleterre qui fut, après l'Italie, sa véritable patrie d'élection.

Ces quelques souvenirs illustrent assez l'antique et noble tradition qui fait de la Suisse une terre d'asile.

Revue Suisse.

### PERSONAL.

The many friends of Mr. G. Wuthrich, Manager of the Oerlikon Ltd., will hear with regret that his father, Mr. G. Wuthrich died in Berne at the age of 79 years.

### HOW MR. GREVILLE CONQUERED THE ST. GOTHARD.

(CONTINUED).

A long talk ensued, and then Imboden had a brain-wave. "Why not dismantle the carriage and carry it over this nasty bit?" No sooner said than done. The mules were sent on in front, then each man shouldered his bit till they reached a more practicable path. Mr. Greville beamed with delight as his carriage took shape again, and proudly remounted his throne. His victory had banished his fears.

"You silly ass may thank our forefathers for this tunnel," shouted Zurluh to the guide, "if we had had to cross on the old boards suspended outside, it would have been all up with this ridiculous trip of his."

By a stroke of luck they met no convoy of mules coming from the Italian side. They could not have passed. The carriage was sometimes wider than the path! Late in the afternoon, before the glory of the summer's day was spent, the partly looked down into the valley of Urseren, and the rest of the drive to Hospenthal was child's play. Here they passed the night. Mr. Greville was in high spirits over his experiences, while the guides discussed with the villagers the events of the day and what was likely to happen on the morrow.

The morning of July 25th, 1775, dawned brilliantly, as though the sun shared in the sport as he beamed brightly on all the preparations going on before the inn. The animals were muzzled lest they should start browsing at the wrong moment, and heavy wooden saddles were fastened on their backs. They waited patiently to be loaded and appeared to appreciate the silver bells and gay feathers with which their harness was decorated. Only the mule in the shafts was restless not being used to such work.

When all was ready, Mr. Greville came out and took his seat. But if he thought things would go as pleasantly as the day before, he was grievously mistaken. The road begins to rise just after passing the ruined castle, and while the mules went steadily on to the tinkling of their bells, it proved a difficult job to keep the carriage right side up on the narrow flinty path. Yet it was not that which drew the Englishman from his seat. Collecting minerals was his passion; and when he noticed something sparkling among the stones heaped beside the road, he jumped out and poked about among the rocks filling the mule-bags with stones that were not crystals at all but quite worthless, as the guides assured him in vain.

However, they were accustomed to the caprices of strangers in this respect, so with a shake of their heads, they left him to his own devices, and were fully occupied with the carriage which they had to take to pieces several times at dangerous spots.

All of a sudden, the Englishman disappeared, and it was only after careful search and much shouting that they were able to make him out, far off the path, and hanging on to the side of a rock, whither he had wandered in the enthusiasm of his search. They got him back safely but with much difficulty, and not without damage to his hands and clothes. But the pleasure of having obtained such a rich mineralogical booty was ample compensation for him, and he did not allow himself to be easily disconcerted. Soon, he even enlisted the sympathy of his companions, and when they were not all busy with the carriage, some of them helped him with his collection of stones, and found him many fine specimens. To tell the truth, they selected the heaviest, for the more weighty the loads, the more there would be on the bill to pay when they got to Airolo. Even in those days, the people of Uri had good heads for business.

It was late in the afternoon before the caravan reached the hospice, and the monks welcomed it with an astonishment easy to understand. They said there was another traveller there, a naturalist from Geneva who had already spent several days scouring the mountains in search of minerals. Greville waited impatiently for the return of this rival stone-hunter, and meanwhile spread out his own collection to show him.

The advent of the stranger was soon announced, for the sharp eyes of the mule drivers had seen him on the side of the Fibbiastock as he was gliding down a snowy slope, but it was some little time before he reached the hospice. He was an elegant, clean-cut young man, who introduced himself to Charles Greville by the name of Horace Bénédicte de Saussure. Both were delighted at this unexpected meeting and by the prospect of a scientific conversation amidst such rough surroundings.

With a kindly smile, de Saussure admired the piled up heaps which his rival showed him, and jokingly advised him to send for another mule, as a still richer harvest awaited him on the descent to Airolo! He also had made a collection during his stay in these mountains, but with little regard to the size or weight of his specimens. The few choice pieces he was able to display made the Englishman's mouth water. The fact was that the really precious minerals were not to be found near the path, and Greville allowed himself to be persuaded to jettison part of his cargo, to the

despair of the men of Uri, and to accept in exchange a fine collection of crystals, tremolites, and grenades which the monks of the hospice gave him.

Greville went about the world under the title of dilettante who took delight in fine specimens, but had no idea whatever of the creative and formative agencies of nature. Nevertheless both men were delighted with their evening, which provided real interest for Greville and a pleasant distraction for de Saussure who was going to spend several more days in those parts.

Next morning, de Saussure was already on his way to the neighbouring heights before Greville's caravan was ready to start. He had very kindly told the Englishman of certain places where he might make interesting finds, and Greville hastened to take advantage of the information. He had as much time as he wished for his search, for the troubles and difficulties with the carriage were endless and kept the guides hard at work for several hours. In spite of the lightness of the vehicle, it was no small matter to get it through the gorge of the Tremola. They had to take it to pieces over and over again, especially in the lower part of the gorge, where they met columns of loaded mules coming up from Airolo, whose drivers gave free play to their irony. The men of Uri would have preferred to carry the vehicle all the way, but the Englishman insisted on its being reassembled wherever possible, for he would not otherwise be able to say with a clear conscience that he had won his wager! The loss of time that this occasioned was of no more consequence to him than the extra wages which he would have to pay on the same account.

When at last, towards evening, he entered Airolo, gloating with natural pride over the surprise of the inhabitants, he rewarded the four men of Uri handsomely, and they therefore had no difficulty in finding additional hands to help them on the way to Bellinzona. There still remained many difficulties to overcome before they reached the first chestnuts at Faido, and the first vineyards at Giornico. But when on the following day he reached the little town with its ring of castles, he was able with complete justification, to write to England and say that he was the first tourist to cross the highest mountains of Europe in a carriage.

Of the thousands of travellers who to-day cross the St. Gothard in a few hours in the luxurious postal motor coaches along a magnificent road, how many turn their thoughts to the eccentric Mr. Greville, who nevertheless must take his place among the pioneers of modern tourism? From A Century of Swiss Alpine Postal Coaches.