

MY DEAR SISTER – It is now above two months since my last letter to you, which, if I recollect right, was written when we were on the point of setting off on a tour round the lake of Geneva. A melancholy letter arrived from you to Skinner at the same moment, and I have since that received one of a similar description from you myself.

I hope our correspondence for the future maybe of a more cheerful description. Your feelings upon these occasions must have been sorely wounded. Our good cousin was so universally revered that all will regret her loss, though none so acutely as you and a few others, who for a long period of years have lived upon so intimate a footing with her; but you could hardly esteem her more than I did.

But in the natural course of events, and considering the state of her health for some time back, it was always in prospect, and I confess I bear with less composure the loss of a little girl that I hardly knew, but to whom the world was opening. Though some folks will have it that it is but a sorry world, yet in looking forward, either for oneself or the young broods, one's thoughts are generally occupied with the fine weather, though conscious there must be storms and nipping frost occasionally. I shall say nothing to you of our tour round the lake of Geneva, as my wife has mentioned it in her dividend, but proceed to our further transactions. Soon after our return I urged Skinner to avail himself of the opportunity he had of seeing the country, and to make a tour into those more interesting parts, whither my family was too cumbersome to ramble; but Skinner wants exertion till urged by necessity, and then he has as much activity as most young men. The plan was too troublesome, and his principal objection was the want of society.

The objection was a natural one, but it suggested to me a plan for his improvement in the German language much more likely to produce a good effect in a short time than the one I had proposed for Zachary's consideration. As there was no time to ask his approbation I took all responsibility upon myself, and despatched Skinner in a week after our return from the lake of Geneva on a tour, on foot, through Switzerland and over the Alps into Italy, with a German for a travelling companion, who was to employ himself in instruction occasionally, but to converse altogether in German, Skinner defraying his travelling expenses.

I set off with them myself, and left Skinner the sixth day at Bern, from whence I returned home, and he turned off in the opposite direction. I have heard from him since, and he seems to enjoy his tour. His companion has also written to me, and gives a very favourable account of Skinner's progress and diligence. The journey that I made with him was across the Jura into the Principality, or now Canton, of Neufchatel, with the mild beauties of which I was highly pleased. The whole canton appears like a beautiful park, where the richest verdure is interspersed with a profusion in a succession of little valleys of all shapes and, dimensions. Neat, clean cottages are scattered all over the country, and one frequently meets with improvements in the making of fine new roads, and in the draining of morasses and valleys, which one would think could not be undertaken but by wealthy communities. Industry shows itself there in the most favourable point of view. It is not the industry of numbers collected together in a manufactory, and enriching no one but the employer, but it is exerted individually by every one in his own dwelling and for his own advantage. Whether in a political point of view it may bring as much wealth into the country or not I do not know, but morals do not suffer, and must I think gain if, as is said, idleness is the mother of vice. Luxury, however, is the stimulus of their industry, but it is the luxury of others. Watches, watchwork, and lace are the general employment, and keep both sexes busily at work.

The general effect is particularly pleasing to the eye in passing through the country; an universal neatness and an air of comfort appears in all their dwellings, and gives an additional grace to the beauty of the scenery. We pursued the course of the Doubs for several miles, which there separates the canton from France – it was a delightful walk. We afterwards passed through the valley of St. Imiers, a very pretty retired valley belonging now to Bern. At the end of this vale there is a singular perforation of the rock, apparently natural, through which the road runs – it existed in the time of the Romans. About a mile beyond this we put up for the night, and I had hardly seated myself in a comfortable parlour (the others had stopped to draw the Pierre Pertuis) before I was joined by a French officer – a Colonel of the Line, I think of the 18th – who passed the evening with us, and was very agreeable company. Besides many other engagements he had been in those of Talavera and Albuera, which made him doubly interesting.

The following day took us through scenery which I have not since seen surpassed in Switzerland, if equalled, – the vale of Munster or Moutiers, the one the German, the other the French name. Two interior ranges of the Jura are here split across from top to bottom, leaving just room for a rapid and noisy little river – the Birs – and the road, the

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high, impending rocks, sometimes perpendicular, sometimes falling back a little, and, wherever a projecting ledge gave leave, covered with wood. The capricious windings of this singular valley, continually leading out of one reach into another, kept us in a state of continued exclamations and surprise for five or six miles. We then came to the opening between the two chains of the Jura forming the valley, in which is the town of Moutiers; then comes the chasm through the second chain, resembling the former passage, and, I believe, four miles through. We did not penetrate through, but returned to Moutiers to dinner. This course we made in a carriage, the Colonel's servant being our driver.

After dinner we took to our legs, and made for the first and highest line of the Jura, intending to cross it that evening; but the ascent was more difficult and tedious than we expected, and when we arrived at the summit it was night. We made our way to a cottage, such as the Alpine herdsmen occupy during summer, which, on account of the beautiful prospect it enjoys, is much visited, and has a room with a fireplace, and another with a few beds. Here we passed the night in the hopes of being awake early in the morning to see the rising sun gild the everlasting snows of Mont Blanc and his brethren; but mists deprived us of this beautiful sight, and after waiting till eleven o'clock in hopes of seeing the mist clear away we were obliged to descend only half gratified. Nothing worth relating occurred during the remainder of my tour, during which, when bad weather made walking unpleasant, I had indulged with a carriage; and this too is Skinner's intention, so that he will not be over-fatigued with his tour.



ALICE CURRER BORN, 1768
DIED, SEPTEMBER 20, 1846,
AT BLYTHE, STURGEON LAKE, ONTARIO, CANADA

In about a fortnight after my return I took my whole family for another tour, intending to be absent till about the time of Miss Currer's arrival. Of this we thought we should always have sufficient notice to be ready to give her the meeting, but unfortunately the only letter which as yet we know to have miscarried was the one which conveyed the intelligence of her arrival in London, and the next one which announced her departure did not reach us till the day assigned for her arrival at Yverdon, for, contrary to the usual practice, upon this occasion the Voiturier does not pass through Paris, and arrives by Amiens three or four days earlier. We had, however, made provision for such a case, and my wife's friend, Miss Harriet Bourgeois, will not fail to exert herself to make the time till my wife's return pass smoothly. My wife and the children returned home as soon as they could, and I, who was desirous of seeing a little more of the country, turned off

in another direction with my knapsack on my back, intending to rejoin them in about ten days; but bad weather has thrown me beyond my time. I shall now, however, take to the diligence, and hope in three days more to be with them. Three days and nights of this tour have been passed on -the summit of a mountain, 4350 feet above the level of the surrounding country, but in vain-snow, rain, mist, storm, and biting frost, but no clear sky. About two hours of partial sunshine showed me the level ground of Switzerland, twelve or fifteen lakes, innumerable towns and villages, and partially, two or three at a time, the principal snow mountains. With one sight, however, I was gratified, which probably few travellers see-a beautiful double circular rainbow at about forty or fifty yards below me, and having my shadow in the rainbow, my head in the centre, which the bow surrounded like a glory. This beautiful sight continued for above an hour. I must postpone my account of this journey to another letter, and must conclude with my affectionate regards to all my kind friends and relations. My wife and children were well when I left them. - Adieu,

THO. LANGTON.