

**A YEAR AND A DAY IN
THE EAST,
OR, WANDERINGS
OVER LAND AND SEA**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649170661

A year and a day in the East, or, Wanderings over land and sea by Mrs. Eliot Montauban

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MRS. ELIOT MONTAUBAN

**A YEAR AND A DAY IN
THE EAST,
OR, WANDERINGS
OVER LAND AND SEA**

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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YEAR AND A DAY

IN

THE EAST;

OR,

WANDERINGS OVER LAND AND SEA.

BY MRS. ELIOT MONTAUBAN.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,

FATERNOSTER-ROW.

1846.

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A

YEAR AND A DAY IN THE EAST.

CHAPTER I.

PARIS. — MARSEILLES. — MALTA.

IN 184-, we commenced our journey from Paris to Marseilles. The railroad passes through a fertile and cultivated country to Orleans. The driver of the malle-poste could hardly dole forth twenty minutes of precious time more reluctantly than the surly conductor of our Diligence, when we stopped the following morning to breakfast at Nevers, a dirty, dismal, ancient town, situated on the right bank of the Loire. The road crosses the river on quitting Nevers by a heavy bridge of twenty arches. At eight in the evening we reached Moulins: it is situated on the Allier, and apparently a busy, cheerful town.

B

The head-gear of the peasant women is very grotesque and indescribable in shape; something between a couple of Turkish slippers, fixed to each side of a round crown, and a canoe metamorphosed into a bonnet.

In Murray's Guide-book the Hotel d'Allier is described as "very good, and moderate." To this I can only answer, "*De gustibus non est disputandum.*" Moderate it is indeed, save in dirt and fleas, and it abounds in odours vile; the fare was indifferent, and attendance bad.

We performed our second night-journey in a small diligence, like a Paris coucou, or rather a sort of square box, in which five grown-up and goodly specimens of man and womankind were tightly packed, as far as Macon. Not having the mesmeric faculty of seeing with the eyes shut, I can give no account of the scenery till we approached the birth-place and summer residence of La Martine, the country surrounding which is flat and well cultivated.

At half-past 10 A.M. we started for Lyons; the steamer was small and dirty, bearing cargoes of merchandise. The passengers (with the exception of our distinguished selves) were very unprepossessing specimens of their respective nations. The scenery on the banks of the Saone is

not interesting, but improves in the neighbourhood of Lyons: the position of this city on the two great rivers Saone and Rhone is very striking; but all impressions in its favour are dispelled on entering the narrow dirty streets of the town. We passed one night in the Hotel du Midi, which has nothing but the situation to recommend it. For dirt, dust, and insects, mentionable and unmentionable, it is pre-eminent.

At four o'clock, on the 4th of August, we started for Avignon, by the steamer. The scenery on the Rhone is very interesting; it is a noble, bounding river, but its navigation is rendered difficult by the rapidity of the current and the shifting sand-banks. Here and there the ruins of an old baronial castle may be seen upon the heights; but "Old Father Rhine" maintains his superiority in many points.

The steamer passes the ancient towns of Vienne, Tournon, and Valence, where the suspension bridge is one of the handsomest on the Rhone. Pont St. Esprit, with twenty-six arches, is said to be the largest stone bridge in the world.

We had only a passing glimpse of Avignon, which we reached at four o'clock. The vast palace, with its gigantic towers and masses of solid masonry, has more the air of a feudal fortress

than a residence of His Sanctity the Pope. Of the wonders and beauties in and near Avignon, not having rested more than an hour there, the illustrious writer of these valuable pages has nothing to relate; but begs to recommend every traveller to the Hotel de l'Europe, as possessing all requisite comfort; it is remarkable for cleanliness, good order and arrangement, and excellent attendance; and the terms of "entertainment for man and beast" are very moderate.

We started for Marseilles in a machine fit to convey the doomed to Purgatory; a huge unwieldy diligence, with six wheels. The noise, the rattling, jolting, rumbling, shaking, whirling, and swaying we endured, no words can describe; manifold are the miseries of such a conveyance. At 7 A. M., on the 5th of August, we reached Marseilles, to the beginning of which celebrated town there seems no end. We were earnestly advised to take up our abode in the Hotel de Paradis; the fare, accommodation, and charges were moderate, and its vicinity to the Quay convenient.

The environs of Marseilles are particularly unattractive; high stone walls, arid rocks, and whirlwinds of dust in every direction. No verdure, not a blade of grass or a flower to refresh

the eye. The Prado is the most popular resort in the neighbourhood, having the peculiar recommendation of a few trees and a delightful sea breeze.

St. Pierre is approached by a narrow, rough road, with high walls of sun-burnt bricks on either side, and a fine view may be enjoyed from the Consul's chateau.

After a few days' rest, we quitted our celestial abode at Marscilles for a good cabin in the steamer.

There were about twenty passengers on board the fine vessel which conveyed us to Malta; a few French, and many English; among the latter, a young officer, who, at the advanced age of twenty-one, informed us "he had lived to be weary of every thing on earth; had not piety enough to turn his thoughts to heaven, and was utterly *blasé*." He had evidently acquired a considerable proficiency in the art of flirtation; and met with a kindred spirit in a handsome daughter of Eve, homeward bound to Malta; a ruthless destroyer of every *h* in her mother tongue, but gifted with good looks, which acted as a passport in her favour every where. There was one matronly dame on board, whose vulgarity was such as Bulwer terms "deep scarlet." A loving