

THE  
PHILOSOPHICAL  
RESEARCH  
SOCIETY

Manly P. Hall, President and Founder

Dr. John W. Ervin, Vice President

CONTRIBUTORS' BULLETIN - December 1980

GRANDMOTHER'S GRAND TOUR

DEAR FRIENDS:



While researching the life of Elizabeth Anna Gordon, I came upon a little volume dedicated to women travelers of the late nineteenth century. While neither Lady Gordon nor my esteemed Grandmother was mentioned in the text, their absence detracted seriously from the value of the book. Grandmother's Grand Tour began when she boarded the good ship KAISER WILHELM DER GROSSE with her two daughters and headed into the high sea. Shortly after leaving port, they ran into heavy weather which grew a little heavier every time Grandmother went into the details. As the storm grew worse, many of the passengers were strapped to their berths, and water was running through the passageways between the cabins. Grandmother firmly declined to be seasick as unbecoming to a lady of her social status. She also refrained from discussing the condition of her daughters at this time.

One thing is certain--she never missed a meal. It was quite reasonable and proper that she should be seated at the captain's table, and she recalled that he was a gallant gentleman who wore his uniform with distinction. Many of the festivities usually associated with a voyage had to be canceled on account of weather, but Grandmother never missed a lifeboat drill. Like Mark Twain she had a deep appreciation of German culture. She disciplined herself and was most comfortable in a firmly disciplined society. She once observed: "A person feels so safe in Germany."

The first port of call was in England, and she followed the Baedeker with scrupulous care. Grandmother believed that everyone should do his duty and that it was her responsibility to visit the Scottish town of Paisley. Here she could pay her respects to the old Laird of Paisley to whom she was at least remotely related. It was a splendid occasion with tea and cookies and the elderly gentleman graciously chatted with the two young ladies. In the course of passing through, Grandmother also acquired a fine, old Paisley shawl with its appropriate Scottish shawl pin, and she wore these on state occasions for the rest of her life.



Back in London, it was not the British Museum, Buckingham Palace, or the House of Parliament that most deeply impressed Grandmother; it was Madame Tussaud's Wax Works. Madame Tussaud had inherited two wax museums from her uncle and finally settled in London where her collection became world famous. She was a wax sculptress of extraordinary skill, and her extensive display included likenesses of famous persons and groups representing outstanding historical incidents. Grandmother was especially impressed by the portrait figure of Queen Victoria in full regalia. It was said that the dress had been graciously donated by Her Majesty. Even at that time there were extraordinary likenesses of Benjamin Franklin, Lord Nelson, and Voltaire. When Grandmother entered the main doorway to the exhibit, she noticed one of the uniformed guards seated on a bench by the door, seemingly asleep and snoring softly. She spoke to him several times before she realized

that he was part of the exhibit. In a kind of basement below the main floor was "The Chamber of Horrors" devoted to crime and punishment. In one scene was revealed the martyrdom of the Christians under the Emperor Nero, while another was given over to the guillotining of French aristocrats during the reign of terror. Nearly forty years later I saw the same collection with many recent additions and found the group depicting the landing of Columbus to be outstanding.

The next stop was Berlin. Here Grandmother and her zwei schone tochter were guests in the home of a Mrs. Krauser, a lady who was well connected socially. Having established headquarters with Frau Krauser, Grandmother made short trips to various parts of Germany--exploring the foothills of the Alps and sailing leisurely up the Rhine. She liked to collect photographs of her wanderings. They were not of the kind generally found today but actual camera prints mounted on decorated cardboard. Most of these photographs are as good today as they were nearly a century ago. One of her most treasured souvenirs was a carved, wooden nutcracker. It consisted of a man's head with a movable lower jaw and was activated by two short handles. When the handles were pushed together, a nut placed in the mouth of the carving was quickly and efficiently cracked. The nutcracker itself was quite distinguished for the head was that of Prince Otto von Bismarck.

My Mother was a violinist and Frau Krauser brought her into contact with the musical life of Berlin. At that time Germany was paying homage to Joseph Joachim whose virtuosity gave him international recognition. Joachim has been described as a musician's musician; and most distinguished composers and performers, including Mendelssohn and Brahms, were among his personal friends. He founded in Berlin the Royal High School of Music which my mother attended. It was because of her association with the musical life of Germany that Grandmother and her daughters were presented at court. The Wagnerian operas were in high fashion and, while in Bavaria, Grandmother was able to attend several of these music dramas. By this time she was picking up a considerable German vocabulary which may not have been outstanding in Potsdam but was a great success when she got home.

Grandmother had a great love for tapestries and embroideries. While in Holland, she found three large tapestries to her liking. They were not especially rare or old, but the colors were soft and the scenes had a lyrical quality. They consisted of groups of peasants with their farm houses in the background. Some of the figures were dancing to a fiddler and others gathered around a festive board partaking of simple, wholesome food. As each tapestry was nearly ten feet square, Grandmother was faced with a transportation problem. To meet this she purchased a wicker trunk. It was sturdy, had good capacity, and a removable tray. The tapestries nearly filled it, but there was room for a few other items. In those days bed linen was decorated with hand-made lace; tablecloths and doilies were the wonderful products of long and patient labor. The daughters were entrusted with the arrangements of moving the trunk from one part of Europe to another, and in spite of its fragile appearance it arrived in excellent condition back in the United States. Whenever she traveled Grandmother used that trunk to the end of her lifetime.

Having absorbed German culture, Grandmother considered that the time had come to seek new worlds to conquer. She traveled southward through Bavaria and Wurttemberg, crossed the Lake of Constance and entered Switzerland. She was especially fond of Lucerne with its beautiful setting and historical overtones. There is a rock carving there called the Lion of Lucerne and she found a beautiful miniature carving of it which she tucked away safely in her wicker trunk. In those days local festivals were frequent and tourists were few. Travelers could mingle with the local population and actually participate in the colorful pageantries. Here also Grandmother came into direct contact with William Tell, the Swiss folk hero who shot an apple from his young son's head with a crossbow. With Grandmother resting serenely in the midst of the Swiss Alps, we bring this letter to a close. Her Grand Tour will be continued in due time.

Always most sincerely,

*Marly P. Hill*

More books recommended by Manly P. Hall in his booklet  
Great Books on Religion and Esoteric Philosophy.  
 All available in the PRS Gift Shop.

Carter, C. E. O.	The Zodiac and the Soul	\$ 7.50
Corelli, Marie	Ardath	\$ 3.50
Corelli, Marie	The Sorrows of Satan	\$ 3.50
Carroll, Lewis	Alice in Wonderland	\$ 2.95
Emerson, Ralph Waldo	Essays	\$ 4.95
Getty, Alice	The Gods of Northern Buddhism	\$39.50
Gibran, Kahlil	Jesus, The Son of Man	\$ 8.95
Gibran, Kahlil	The Prophet	\$ 5.95
Jung, C. G.	Modern Man in Search of a Soul	\$ 2.95
Kunz, George Frederick	The Curious Lore of Precious Stones	\$ 5.95
LePlongeon, Augustus	Sacred Mysteries among the Mayas & the Quiches	\$ 8.95
Levi, Eliphas	Transcendental Magic	\$ 7.95
Lloyd, John Uri	Etidorhpa	\$ 3.50
Okakura, Kakuzo	The Book of Tea	\$ 1.50
Plato (Thomas Taylor transl.)	The Cratylus, Phaedo, Parmenides, (r) Timaeus & Critias	\$25.00
Scott-Elliott, W.	The Story of Atlantis & the Lost Lemuria	\$ 9.95
Sinnett, A. P.	Esoteric Buddhism	\$ 4.95
Taylor, Thomas	The Eleusinian & Bacchic Mysteries	\$ 7.95
Veith, Ilza (translator)	The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine	\$ 4.95

If possible, visit our gift shop and drop into the Library to see our special exhibit of religious stamps. When ordering by mail please include \$ .75 shipping for the first book, \$ .25 for each additional book. Add 6% sales tax if you are a California resident.