

1 leave for Martigny until 4. So we walked back along the shore of the lake 1 ½ miles to the
2 castle and explored it thoroughly. Here the savage old dukes, in past times, had an opportunity
3 to give full vent to their malignity on the heads of their captive rivals. Saw the dungeons and
4 the pillar where Bonivard walked round and round until he wore a path in the rocky floor. Here
5 a pillar of wood, used occasionally as a stake for Autode-fe [?] performances. Marks of the fire
6 still remain on the pillar. From another prison room up stairs we saw a well with sharp knives
7 worked in the walls to make mince meat of their victims as they passed down some 80 feet and
8 the remains shot out into the lake. After satisfying our curiosity, we retraced our steps to the
9 station at Villeneuve and were soon on our way to Martigny where we arrived in good order at
10 7 p.m. Put up at a comfortable hotel. Made arrangements for an early start in the morning to
11 cross the Fete-Noir pass to Chamounix [currently spelled Chamonix].

12 Sept. 17th. Loaded into a char, a sort of light mountain carriage drawn by 3 mules. Up we went
13 over a good road winding and twisting to take advantage of the easiest grades of the beautiful
14 valley. On either side the mountains pierce the clouds, or would, if there had been any, but we
15 had a cloudless day. Milk, butter & cheese are the principal produces of this part of the world,
16 and every spot, if not over a rod square, among the rocks where grass can be made to grow,
17 why it grows, and is attended to with great care. On a large pasture we noticed some 200
18 cows, each one with a large dinner bell strapped to its neck, and no two of them sounding alike.
19 Talk of chimes, we heard them. It was quite amusing. Very! Looking back down the valley, we
20 could see Martigny and many miles beyond up the valley of the Rhone. Surpassingly grand and
21 beautiful. We arrived at the summit of the pass at 10 o'clock and prepared for our descent.
22 Two of the mules were taken from the front and hitched behind the carriage to hold back, one
23 being left in front to guide the carriage, one of the hind wheels being locked. On we went
24 down a fearfully steep road with an ugly looking precipice or declivity on one side. About noon
25 arrived at the town of Tete-Noir consisting of four or five chalets stuck in the crevices of the
26 rocks. Here we stopped 2 hours for dinner and to rest our mules. Again on our way down a
27 magnificent valley, the Giants of the alps on either side and Mont Blanc in front blocking up the
28 end of the valley. Drawing near the Charmony [Charmonix] valley, the road became so very
29 steep that we all got out of the carriage and proceeded on foot to the base of the hill. Here the
30 valley we have been descending all the afternoon empties itself into the Grand Chamony, and it
31 makes a grand entrée. Looking north we have a view of the Col de Balme which is another
32 route from Martigny to this place. Four immense glaciers are in sight. We load into our
33 carriage, pass the foot of the Mer de Glace and arrive at our hotel, The Imperial in Chamonix in
34 good time for supper.

35 Sept. 18th. After a good deal of argument, I was persuaded against my better judgement to
36 make an excursion across the Mer de Glace. Of course I am glad I went, but I wouldn't do it
37 again if you'd give me the biggest mountain in Switzerland. Now I know what the guide books
38 plainly insinuate, that it is the most fearfully dangerous trip this side of the river Styx, but I will
39 try to describe the journey and will "nothing extenuate, or set down aught in malice." Soon
40 after breakfast mounted on mules with two experienced guides and a muleteer. We started