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Sir F. Treves, Bart.,  
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Lausanne, le 15 septembre 2008

Sir,

### **Impressions of Lausanne**

Lausanne, the capital of the Canton of Vaud, is the smaller of the two cities of the Lake. It stands on a green slope which glides, in leisurely fashion, from the wood which crowns its summit to the beach at its foot. The town is far up on this slope, being about a mile and a quarter above the port of Ouchy.

Seen from the Lake, it is so discursive a city that no one could venture to define its outlines. Its houses are scattered in all directions, among trees and lawns, gardens and green fields. It is as if a drop of stone- coloured paint, falling from a height, had been spattered over a green cloth. It seems to be composed entirely of suburbs. If Chislehurst were given a cathedral and transferred to a lake-side it might pass muster for Lausanne, since there is nothing to suggest that this city of Vaud is so serious as it is or that it possesses 67,000 inhabitants.

Lausanne when seen from a distance and Lausanne when viewed from within are two towns which are totally unlike. A more deceptive place does not exist. From afar Lausanne seems to occupy a hill-side as smooth as a cushion. There is nothing to suggest that it contains streets, much less railway stations, tramlines and shops. When, on the other hand, the place is entered it is found to be as irregular and tumbled a town as could be imagined, a place built in detachments without a plan, a labyrinth of streets, of green terraces and gardens, of slums and many-arched bridges all joined up with a *central square* which is neither square nor central. To this very disorder the town owes much of its attraction, for the agreeable medley is due to the fact that Lausanne is located, not on an even slope, but on three abrupt hills separated by deep valleys. Were it not that these valleys are crossed by a series of bridges, life in Lausanne would consist in climbing up hill and in walking down again. Moreover, Alfred de Bougy, writing in 1846, says that owing to the hills and the villainous paving, Lausanne was, in his day, practically inaccessible to carriages.<sup>1</sup>

The hills are round and are disposed in a triangle, like the balls of a pawnbroker's sign. They are the Cité, the Bourg and St. Laurent. On the Cité, or predominant hill, are the castle and the cathedral. This mound is, and always has been, the high place of the town and the stronghold of its government. The Bourg was possessed by the nobles, by the merchants and by the great inns. St. Laurent was a suburb occupied by a church and certain defence works. The poorer folk lived in the gutters between the hills. In one of these flowed the Flon and in the other the Louve. Their channels met

<sup>1</sup> "Le Tour du Léman," par A. de Bougy, Paris, 1846.

at the Grand Pont ; but, within the actual compass of the town, both streams have now disappeared from view.

From ancient prints<sup>2</sup> it can be seen that old Lausanne was a very romantic looking town. Its three hills were crowned with castle and spire, with turrets and high- soaring roofs; while around it ran a zigzag wall pierced by gates and surmounted by many towers. The dwellings that made up the mass of the city were of dark wood with lofty gables. They huddled in the valleys like a drift of autumn leaves in a gully. Of the fortifications, no trace remains with the exception of one tower, the Tour de l'Ale, which stands near the Place du Chauderon on the St. Laurent hill. It is a high round tower of the days of the musketeers, which finds itself now very inappropriately placed in a modest street of private houses.

Yours Faithfully,

Dr. C. Featherstonehaugh  
CEO

Dr. A. Beauchamp  
CIO

cc: All Smiths in London  
    Mademoiselle S. Curchod  
encl: Tourist guide to Switzerland.  
    Plan of Cully.

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<sup>2</sup>"Itinera Alpina," par J. J. Scheuchzeri, Ludg. Bat., 1723. Tome ii.