

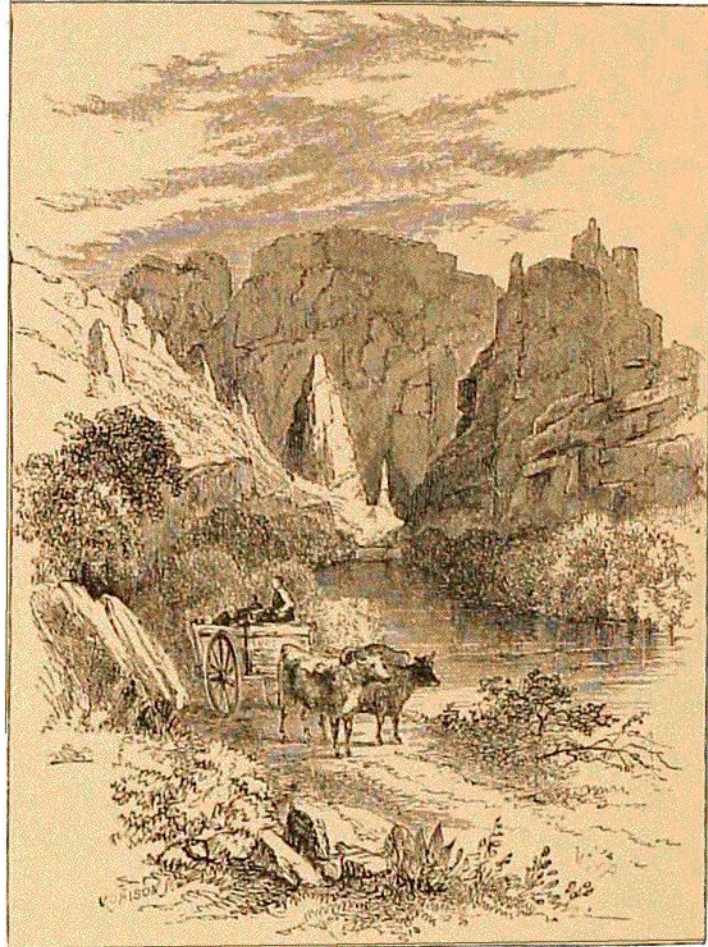
and delectable valley, named *Vaucluse*, in whose recesses rises the *Sorgue*, the most celebrated of fountains. Fascinated by the charms of this locality, I retired thither with my books. My narrative would be too long if I recounted all that I have done in this solitude, where I have passed a great number of years. I may give the reader an idea of it by saying, that of all the works which have issued from my pen there is not one but was there written, conceived, or commenced ; and these works are so numerous that at an advanced age they still occupy and fatigue me. . . .

"My retreat has inspired me with reflections on the solitary life and repose of cloisters, of which I have recorded my eulogium in two separate treatises. Finally, it is under these lonely shades that I have endeavoured to extinguish the devouring fire which consumed my youth. Thither I withdrew myself as into an inviolable asylum : imprudent ! the remedy aggravated my sufferings. Finding no one, in a solitude so profound, to arrest the progress of the disease, I suffered all the more keenly. And the fire of my heart bursting its bonds, I made these valleys resound with my melancholy cadences, which, according to indulgent readers, are not without a sweet melody of their own."

The effect, sometimes majestic, sometimes smiling and picturesque, of the fountain of *Vaucluse*, is explained by the alternations which take place in the irruption of the waters.

At the actual point of emergence an enormous rock rises in an unbroken mass, overhanging in a threatening manner the tourist's head. If the waters are low, the tourist sees at his feet a horrible precipice, only partially filled with water ; if they are high, he has before him a cascade dashing over a succession of ledges a formidable "sheet of silver," which breaks and shatters into spray with awful roar.

In the ordinary annual inundations, the water is divided by falls of unequal height among the crags and rocks, which are generally encrusted with a blackish-green moss ; the aspect of the cascade is then most richly diversified in form and colour. But after heavy rains, owing to the abundance of the water, it is a veritable river which issues from the cliff, like an immense mantle of sapphire fringed with silver foam.



(From a photograph by Baldus.)