

The Trois Couronnes hotel is very popular with Americans.

1 Vevey

The little town of Vevey, in Switzerland, stands beside Lake Geneva. Many travelers come to visit the beautiful blue lake, and so its shore¹³ is crowded with¹⁴ hotels. There are many different kinds of hotel around the lake. There are new, grand hotels which are painted white. And there are also small *pensions*—simple, old hotels with just a few rooms. The grand hotels have lots of rooms with big windows, and flags fly on their roofs. The *pensions* are smaller, with fewer rooms. However, one of the hotels in Vevey is very different from the others because it is old but also very comfortable. This hotel is named the *Trois Couronnes*—the Three Crowns¹⁵.

The hotel is very popular with Americans. Many American travelers visit Vevey in summer and a lot of them stay at the *Trois Couronnes*. At this time, the town is full of fashionable¹⁶ young girls in beautiful dresses. At night in the hotel, you can hear the sounds of excited voices and lively music. The voices have American accents¹⁷ and an orchestra plays dance music. You can almost believe that you are in America! However, the *Trois Couronnes* is a European hotel. It has neatly-dressed¹⁸ German waiters. And in the garden you might meet a Russian princess, or the son of a Polish gentleman.

There is a wonderful view from the hotel. From its big windows, you can see the top of the Dent du Midi—a tall, snow-covered mountain. And you can also see the towers¹⁹ of the Château de Chillon, an old castle which stands beside the lake. All these things remind you that you are in Switzerland, not America.

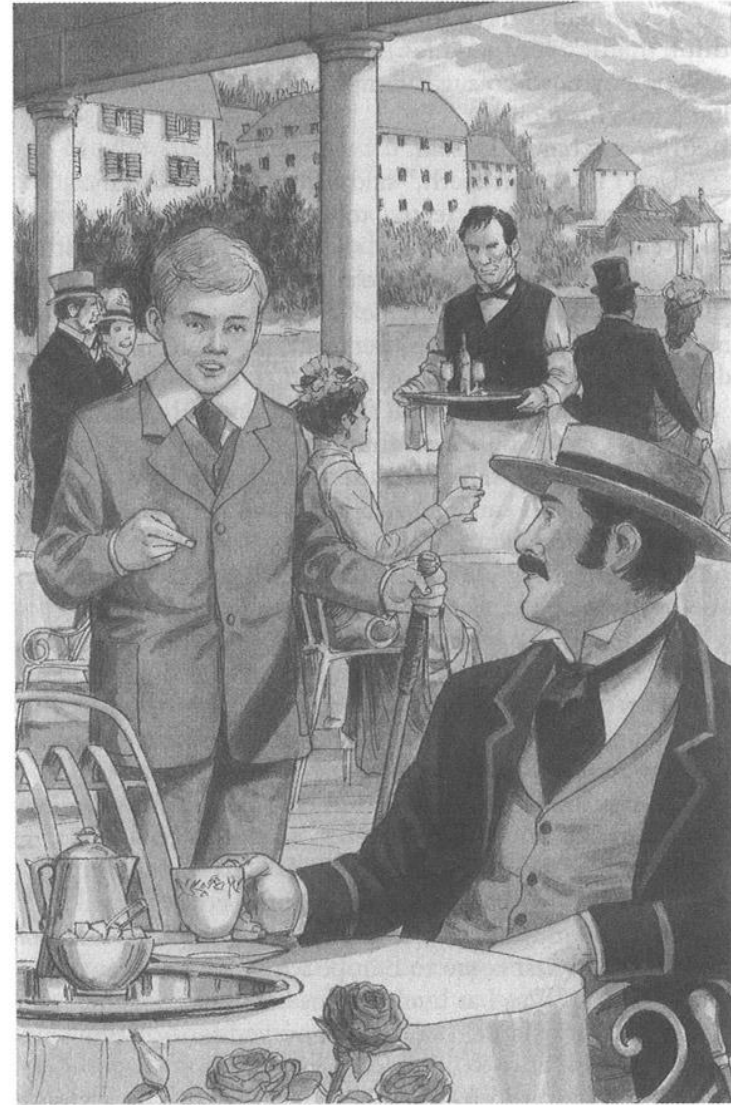
One beautiful morning in June, a young American gentleman sat in the garden of the Trois Couronnes. He was enjoying the view across the lake. His name was Frederick Winterbourne, and the day before, he had arrived in Vevey from his home in Geneva. Winterbourne had come to visit his aunt, who was staying in Vevey for the summer. Winterbourne was twenty-seven years old, and he had lived in Geneva for many years. He had plenty of money and did not have to work. Winterbourne's friends said that he spent his time studying. But they did not know what he was studying, or where! Other people said that Winterbourne was in love with an older, foreign lady, who lived in Geneva. They said that was why he stayed in the city.

A week earlier, Winterbourne's aunt—Mrs Costello—had come to the Trois Couronnes. She had asked her nephew to visit her there. But early this morning, she had sent Winterbourne a message. She was not well. She had a headache—she almost always had a headache—and she could not see him. So Winterbourne had walked around the town, and then he had eaten his breakfast at the hotel. He was now sitting in the garden of the hotel, drinking coffee.

Winterbourne had just finished his cup of coffee when a small boy came walking along the path. The boy was about nine or ten years old and had a pale face. He was wearing short trousers, with long, red, woolen stockings and he was carrying a long stick. As he walked, the boy pushed the stick at anything he saw—flowers, chairs, even the edges of the ladies' long dresses. When he came near to Winterbourne, the boy stopped. He looked at the coffee tray on the table in front of Winterbourne.

"May I have some sugar?" he asked. He spoke English with an American accent.

Winterbourne looked at the tray. There were several lumps²⁰ of sugar in a bowl.



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