

No deposits of copper, lead or silver have awakened the eager search so general in the Rocky Mountains. Yet in the Rauris valley and in some other parts of the Tyrol, there were extensive mines five hundred years ago. Herr Rojacher, the son of a peasant in the Rauris district, determined some years ago to again work the long abandoned mines, and for this purpose went to Colorado and Utah to learn the most modern systems of mining. Returning to his native land in 1884 he purchased a tract of country on the "Sonnblick" mountain including that portion of the Rauris valley where were situated the ancient gold mines. Since then he has transformed the quiet, secluded valley into a thriving center of industrial life, to see which people come from far and wide. He has introduced the telephone, an electric mountain railway, and illuminated the mines and town of Kolmsaigrun and indeed a great part of the Rauris valley with electric light, for which the motive power is taken from the waterfalls in the neighborhood.

Herr Rojacher is a self-made man, of undaunted energy, and has wisely determined to spend a portion of his fortune in the interests of science. Three years ago he established the Sonnblick Observatory, which is the highest meteorological station in Europe, and with exception of the station on Pikes Peak the highest in the world. The height of the Sonnblick Observatory is ten thousand one hundred and sixty-eight feet above the level of the sea, and Peter Lechner is the solitary occupant who inhabits this veritable "castle in the air." A telephone connects the observatory with the Rauris valley twelve miles distant, and four thousand feet above. Three times a day, at seven o'clock in the morning, two in the afternoon and nine in the evening Lechner can communicate with the world of mankind, for then it is that he makes his reports to the Academy of Science at Vienna.

Here, during the winter months, Lechner is a veritable "Cloud king." No human being in Europe has at this time so lofty a residence. The stillness around him is supreme. About him the neighboring mountains rear their giant forms, in awful grandeur. Last winter Dr. Joseph Pernter spent the month of February with him. The scientific results of Dr. Pernter's visit have been published and the general public have learned through him what winter life on the Sonnblick means, and how Lechner passes his time after the last tourist in the late autumn has taken his farewell. When the clouds are rifted he can see the distant habitations of men; and on clear nights he can see the electric lights in Rauris. For the rest, however, he is left alone with his scientific instruments, the sky, the stars, the clouds, and the winds, as lonely as any real hermit ever was.

Last summer the young Empress, Augusta Victoria of Germany, paid this "lofty scientist" a visit, and

she was so well pleased with him that she has determined if possible to send him a present and some companions during Christmas week. By the aid of noble St. Bernard dogs, who will carry the burdens, the hardy mountaineers of the Tyrol will make their way to carry cheer and goodwill to the "Hermit of the Sonnblick."

By the way, is it not remarkable that the three Emperresses of Germany should be such remarkable women. At one time the report went abroad that the young Empress was simply a typical German *hausfrau*, with no idea beyond the nursery and the kitchen. The public is awakening to the fact that though she has no especial talent for painting or music, she is nevertheless a cultivated lady and one who knows how to patronize worthy genius. She has a fair, gentle face, a fresh, healthy complexion, blue eyes, smooth hair gathered in a knot on the top of her head, and an expression so kindly and benevolent that few ever meet her glance and go away saying she is not handsome.

Of the Empress Victoria, the Princess Royal of England, the world already knows her intellectual superiority. At the time of her marriage she undoubtedly loved her husband with the fond love of a girl in her teens; for the upright and honorable young prince is esteemed and loved by both the German and English nations. In more mature years the secret of her influence over Frederick I. was the motherly nursing and tender care she lavished upon him; the intelligent soothing of his fears and lulling of his ambition, till he recognized his own fireside as a temple more sacred than the grandeur of a palace and the glory of a throne, and she stifled before him the impatient cry which had risen so often to her lips that others had caught the sound, "Oh, to be Empress only an hour!"

The aged ex-Empress Augusta is also a remarkable woman. Forty years ago she was one of the most beautiful women in Europe. In the diplomacy of court ceremonies and royal receptions she had, perhaps, no equal. Who can tell how much the success of the Hohenzollern dynasty has depended on her tact and diplomacy? It was she who gave the insult to the French minister which was the immediate cause of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870.

A very significant incident took place at a fancy fair for a charitable purpose in Berlin, in December, 1887. Among the articles was a portrait of a proud and at one time beautiful woman, signed "Augusta, Empress and Queen," the second was a small but beautifully painted Italian landscape signed in the artist's own hand "Victoria;" the third was a present of six pairs of tiny knitted socks with no name signed. They were the contributions of the three Emperresses of Germany.

During the past week the news has been flashed along the wires and ten thousand voices have repeated in saddened tones "Robert Browning is dead." And yet to those who

were personally acquainted with him the news was scarcely a surprise. He was born at Camberwell, London, in 1812, and was therefore a little more than seventy-seven years of age. For some time his health had been failing and he had gone to Venice hoping to regain it.

Mr. Browning was married to Elizabeth Barrett in 1846. Mr. Barrett Browning, the well-known painter, was their only child. The Dean of Westminster has granted the privilege of placing the mortal remains of the illustrious poet in the great national mausoleum of Westminster Abbey. Rarely are the stones in the pavement of the abbey now removed to admit the relics of mortality. When we look on the genius, the character, and the career of Robert Browning, there can scarcely be two opinions concerning his right to repose among the greatest of Britain's dead. Italy indeed would gladly have claimed his ashes. As it was the Venetian *barca*, or funeral gondola, that bore him out of the city was covered with *immortelles*. Italy remembers him not only as a giant among men of letters, but likewise as the fast friend of Italian unity and independence. His heart and mind were in accord with that of his wife, and there was no more passionate pleader for the cause of Italian liberty, no poetess more vehement in denunciation of the wrongs of Italians, no songstress whose voice rose in clearer, brighter notes of exultation when Italy threw off the Austrian yoke, than Elizabeth Barrett Browning. She did not live to see the final consummation of Italian liberty, to see the last Austrian gunboat sail out of the port of Venice or the Italian legions pouring through the Porta Pia to hail their elected king in the Capitol of Rome; but she did live long enough to sing the song of "Mirlam" and hail the dawn of freedom in the triumphs of Magenta and Solferino. The Italians have not forgotten these things. They know how love for their country, which both he and she had glorified in enduring song, drew him again and again to the sunny land where he had spent the happiest years of his life. How many of Britain's poets died in Italy! In the English cemetery near the pyramid of Calus Lestus lie the ashes of Shelley and John Keats, whose names will endure as long as English poetry is prized and tuneful melody loved. Mrs. Barrett Browning slept at Florence, and her husband might have rested there also had not England claimed her illustrious dead. His corpse is therefore to be borne across the sea, to be laid in the great shrine of Edward the Confessor, where kings and princes, nobles and generals, philosophers and poets are gathered in the austere quality of the grave.

The continuous agitation of the Irish question is, to say the least, affording an opportunity to view Irish character in entirely different conditions. Behind Ireland, fierce and mutinous, is Ireland poetic, passionate and fanciful. Below the noise and froth of political jargon, lie the still waters of Ireland's bal-