

A REMINISCENCE OF SILESIA.

BY ALEXANDER OTT.

To the tourist the European continent presents not the grandeur of American landscape scenery, but panoramic views of unsurpassing loveliness.

As you wind your way along beautiful fringes of meadows, fields and parks, magnificent ruins of ancient castles perched sometimes like an eagle's nest on the tops of high, almost inaccessible rocks, meet your admiring gaze, while pretty moss and ivy-clad villas peep, as it were, furtively from between the sacred quiet of fine groves and hedges, or a rapid stream meanders gracefully through vales and woods.

But of all the States constituting the vast garden of Germany, none is less known to the foreigner than Silesia, a country which both on account of its historical reminiscences and beauty of scenery, claims more than a common interest with the scholar and artist. Embedded in the Silesian mountains are mineral springs which, for their salubrity and their many medicinal properties, may justly vie with the celebrated Spaas of Southern Germany. Thousands of invalids of different nations repair during the summer season to those romantic watering-places, to gain health and strength, and no true lover of nature's charms does ever regret to have passed a few weeks in the invigorating and lovely highlands of Prussia.

On leaving the capital of Silesia you see several rivulets winding themselves in beautiful meanderings through vast meadows that extend like carpets of varied colors, studded here and there with a graceful group of trees swarming with the living choristers of the air, while at the distant horizon ranges of mountains are gradually looming up, standing in bold relief with the azure waves of the clear sky. Macadamized roads adorned on both sides with fruit-trees are leading either to the neighboring highlands or to the woodland plains of Poland, while romantic foot-paths take you to neat, little villages, where plain but neat looking taverns or coffee-houses invite the tourist to rest and refreshment.

On fine evenings, hundreds of students, eager to escape for a little while the gloomy, monastic walls of their university, are occupying in groups of from fifteen to twenty those places of public resort, indulging with all the characteristic ardor and buoyancy of spirit of the sons of the Muses in the enjoyment of sylvan pleasures, or some of their favorite academical sports, making the air resound with merry laughter, the clinking of wine-glasses and their beautiful songs for which the German students are noted so much.

The often serio-comic intermezcos of the academical season show that even in a despotic country where the government tries to chill the life-blood of genial and healthy dispositions, youth is suffused with a warm glow of vitality, with a mental elasticity and a penchant for wit, hilarity and mischief, which frequently annoy much the police.

I shall never forget the many ludicrous mystifications which the authorities and citizens of university towns had to undergo, during my sojourn in that country. How often were the wicked students summoned to attend the senate chamber to answer to charges brought against them! Frequently, however, the offence was so comical, and the culprit with his bright blue eyes was looking so mischievous, that even the stern countenances of the senate relaxed into a smile, and the delinquent was acquitted with a solemn admonition.

I do not intend to enlarge on the interesting chapter of German students, but simply touch the subject as a characteristic feature of the life of the Teutonic nation, that with all the inconveniences of a tyrannic government has a green spot with a temple devoted to the effusions of general humor.

The good, old time of traveling in stage or mail coaches to the Silesian mountains, with all the interesting incidents which the promiscuous crowding of from five to ten passengers of both sexes, in so small a space as a jostling vehicle of the above description produces, is gone by.

I believe if the immortal Pickwick were still living, he would, during his perambulations on the European continent, shed tears that those venerable conveyances which often, with the speed of a Jewish funeral, forwarded their living freight, and thus afforded an ample opportunity for observation, should have been superseded by the profane snorting iron horse, that with all disrespect to romance carries the passengers with the greatest rapidity to their respective places of destination, without allowing any one time to act as a Lothario. Thus, instead of the cracking of whips and the rattling of carriages, the shrill whistle of the steam-pipe is heard in almost every direction. The first locomotive at full speed was looked upon by the German Catholics of Upper Silesia as the work of the Devil, and in order to protect themselves they made the sign of the cross, and for quite a time the ignorant, bigoted peasantry did not venture on board so dangerous a conveyance.

Passengers are now taken by rail in two hours to Friburg, a very pretty little town at the foot of the Silesian mountains, with about 5000 inhabitants, who are mostly linen-weavers. Thence you either walk or ride in a carriage up the splendid road leading to Fuerstenstein, a castle and hamlet belonging to Count Hochberg.

If it is true that internal impressions are suggested by external objects, so that the

sight of a lovely landscape becomes associated in the mind with ideas of beauty, harmony and happiness, the charming mountain panorama of Fuerstenstein will certainly never be forgotten by the tourist. And as if vying with nature's captivating loveliness, the noble proprietor of that stately domain has made improvements that would satisfy the most fastidious critic. The Count being himself more than an amateur in fine arts, has for many years been assiduously engaged in beautifying his residence and premises in a truly refined style. His wealth, hospitality and amiable disposition, so characteristic of a highly accomplished gentleman, draw every season a great many visitors to his domain, and even the king of Prussia and other crowned heads have paid frequent visits to that wealthy noble, so that his castle has often more the appearance of a hotel than of a private residence. Not like the miserly Voltaire, who, on being visited by a stranger, remarked, "Sir, you remind me much of Don Quixote; he took every tavern for a castle, while you take every castle for a tavern," Count Hochberg receives people of every rank within his premises, and has instructed his intendant to prevent only notorious loafers and vagabonds from visiting the castle and its environs.

I am writing these lines with a grateful remembrance of the kind hospitality I received while on a tour through the Silesian mountains, and whatever the weaknesses of mankind generally may be, there are some good, generous and noble-minded people in every place, parting with whom often causes a pang of the heart.

It was on a fine summer morning, that I with a few friends arrived at the tavern of the little hamlet of Fuerstenstein. A dreamy, soft haze, so peculiar to some portions of Germany, was spread over the scene like a magic veil, while a few fleecy clouds were sailing slowly through the azure canopy of the sunny sky. Nature seemed to hold stesita, and the sacred stillness was only interrupted by the humming of bees and crickets chirping in the velvet-like grass of the splendid lawn in front of the tavern.

The jocund, good-humored landlord conducted us to a neat, little room facing the western mountains, and in a few minutes we were discussing the merits of an excellent dinner of the famous Silesian trouts. Our repast being over, we followed a gravelled footpath leading up to the castle, and soon we reached the costly edifice, the mansion of Count Hochberg. A servant conducted us through a wide and lofty entrance-hall, which was adorned with marble statues, ornamental columns, graceful Roman vases of flowers and the insignia of the knighthood, to a large apartment which used to be the dressing-room of the brave champions of the feudal times, where the knights would don their gorgeous harness to win the meed of noble chivalry. The silken banners and streamers which, during the full bloom of chivalry had been displayed from the battlements, were still to be seen ranged alongside of the emblazoned shields with which the valiant knights entered the lists. In a corner was the statue of a knight armed cap-a-pie, with his helmet laced.

In another large apartment, which formerly served as a banqueting hall, we saw several machines like the the catapults and balista; war-instruments which were well-known to the Romans.

The whole castle, with its trees and battlements, its winding stair cases, its subterranean dungeons, its moat and drawbridge, called up many reminiscences of the knighthood; bringing the decayed forms of the past to life and clothing them with the freshness of the present. The Count's private apartments were in keeping with the rest of the castle, the noble host, with an almost romantic clinging to the feudal times, having the entire fitting up of his rooms in the style of the noble chivalry of old.

Thence we sallied out for a ramble through the so-called Ground, an almost perpendicular hollow, about 200 feet deep, 20 feet wide, and extending about a mile in length, to which you make your descent by means of steps hewn in rocks. It seemed as if the portals of Hades had closed themselves over us, while the lofty ridges of rocks rose towering above us like massive walls, ready to engulf us forever. A great variety of flowers and herbs cover the ground, while springs of crystal water encased by moss-grown rocks invite you to take a refreshing draught of the pure element. There are a great many legends connected with that footpath, such, for instance, that the evil one had caused to open that chasm in a fit of anger at some lost human prey, and the superstitious peasants solemnly assert to hear sometimes the rolling of thunder arise from out of that mysterious depth, others pretend to have seen strange fire blaze all at once at certain times at night. Without speculating on those popular rumors, the place is gloomy enough to excite the imagination of every one who sees it.

After a walk of a mile we ascended again by means of steps, and reached a plateau, from which the delighted eye rested on several small valleys, in which were nestling lovely villages and scattered farm-houses, the smoke of their chimneys curling up in long streaks towards the blue sky, while in the fields the profuse golden rod waved its bright spray, and on the green heights herds of cattle were grazing. At the distant horizon loomed up more grandly another range of mountains, their snow caps buried in the purple clouds. And while the landscape on all sides became delicate and lost in a luminous haze, the bril-

liant orb of the day that had been gradually descending, was now sinking down luxuriously into a couch of crimson clouds. Evening had set in. Suddenly the solemn sound of the chapel-bells was heard, the laborers stopt their work, and knelt down with uncovered heads and folded hands to say their Ave Maria as good Catholics. For a few moments all was hushed in sacred stillness, but suddenly the scene was lighted up with new life. The lowing cattle with their tinkling bells were slowly coming down the hill-sides, on the way to their comfortable stables, the laborers returned from their work, making the air resound with peals of merry laughter. And while rays of the setting sun were still lingering on the mountain tops, we retraced our steps through the coming darkness to the pleasant tavern of the hamlet. After supper quite a number of people assembled in the parlor to beguile the evening as usual with music, for the Germans in all their gatherings never forget to worship at Orpheus' shrine. Music is interwoven with the existence of the Teutonic race, and truly remarks Bettina von Arnim, "Music is the nurse of the soul; it murmurs in the ear, and the baby sleeps; the tones are the companions of his dreams, they are the world in which he lives. He has nothing; the baby, although cradled in his mother's arms, is alone in the spirit; but tones find entrance into this half-conscious soul, and nourish it as the earth nourishes the life of plants."

*Bettina von Arnim, one of the best living authors of the German Parnassus. Both as a conversationalist and writer, she is brilliant, intelligent, witty, and appreciative of everything good and noble.

DIALOGUE ON NEWSPAPERS.

"How does it happen, neighbor B., that your children have made so much greater progress in their learning and knowledge of the world than mine? They all attend the same school, and for aught I know, enjoy equal advantages."

"Do you take the newspapers, neighbor A.?" "No sir, I do not take them myself; but I now and then borrow one, just to read. Pray, sir, what have newspapers to do with the education of children?"

"Why, sir, they have a great deal to do with it, I assure you. I should as soon think of keeping my children from school, as to withhold from them a newspaper; it is a little school of itself. Being new every week, it attracts their attention, and they are sure to peruse it. Thus, while they are storing their minds with useful knowledge, they are at the same time acquiring the art of reading, &c. I have often been surprised that men of understanding should overlook the importance of a newspaper in a family."

"In truth, neighbor B., I frequently think I should like to take them, but I cannot well afford the expense."

"Can't afford the expense! What, let me ask, is the value of five or six dollars a year, in comparison with the pleasures and advantages to be derived from a well conducted newspaper? As poor as I am, I would not for fifty dollars a year deprive myself of the happiness I enjoy in reading and hearing my children read, and talk about what they have read in the papers. And then the reflection that they are growing up intelligent and useful members of society. Oh, don't mention the expense; pay it in advance every year and you will think no more of it.—[Printer's Letter.

THE FIRST AMERICAN PRINTER.

In strolling through the graveyard of Trinity Church, New York, my eye was arrested by a grave-stone on the north side of the church to the memory of William Bradford, who, it is mentioned, was born at Leicestershire, old England, in 1669, and came over to America in 1682, before the city of Philadelphia was laid out. "He was a printer to this Government," the inscription continues, "for upwards of fifty years, and died May 23, 1752, aged 92 years." This monument was much injured during the building of the present church edifice, and in another generation or two will entirely disappear. Yet the memorial of Bradford's resting place ought not thus to be obliterated. He first established a printing press in the vast region south of Boston. He came over with Penn, on the "Welcome," in 1682, and began his career at Philadelphia, in or near to which city he fixed his first printing office, as early at least, as 1686, and a paper mill on the Wissahickon, near Germantown; very soon afterward the first paper mill ever erected in the United States; and as appears by a printed prospectus yet preserved, he was the first person who proposed in America to print the Holy Bible. This was A. D. 1688, in Pennsylvania. He mingled largely and actively in the stirring events which agitated colonial life in that little province, and main-ained with success his printing press against the efforts of the proprietary government to break it down. He came to New York in 1692, at the invitation of Governor Fletcher, and was printer to the crown, as his epitaph records, for the space of half a century. In this office he amassed honestly great wealth, which he left to numerous descendants, who have been among the most distinguished families of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania—the Ogdens, the Van Courtlands, Creightons, Bondinots, and others of less public reputation but high private worth. The Hon. William Bradford, Attorney General under the Administration of Washington, was his great grandson.

FACTS AND FICTIONS.

—Though laughter is looked upon as the property of reason by philosophers, the excess of it has always been considered as the mark of folly.

—The negro law of Indiana is being enforced. Several negro families have been notified to leave the State, and are preparing to emigrate to Canada.

—A popular authoress says, in one of her domestic articles,—“We know by babies crying for the moon that heaven is nearer to them than to us.” Mothers, bear this in mind, and do not spank the little dears when they cry with such angelic longings.”

—The demand for seamen on the great lakes is so great that \$45 and \$50 per month is offered for them.

—Some people “cry peace, peace, while there is no peace.” Let us cry “war, war,” says the Louisville Journal, while there is war.

—There is a lady in New York, so ignorant of domestic work that she cannot knit her brows.

—God will make the most insensible sinner sensible either of his hand here, or of his wrath in hell.

—It is said that dying of homesickness is no figure of speech, but a reality of weekly occurrence in our army.

—Justice always makes mercy dumb, when sin has made the sinner deaf.

—A Thousand Indians died from small-pox in Vancouver's Island last winter. It is thought this disease will exterminate the race on the island.

—A clergyman in Indiana county, Pa; has departed from the communion table all who, in his opinion, are “disloyal.”

—Socrates said of his enemies, “They may kill me, but they cannot hurt me.” So afflictions may kill us, but they cannot hurt us; they may take away life, but they cannot take away God, Christ, the crown.

—A French paper relates that the count de * * a gentleman of 60 years, fell deeply in love with a young Miss just turned 17. He offered himself in this wise: “Mademoiselle I am old, you are young—will you do me the honor to become my widow.

—Sorrow comes soon enough without despondency; it does a man no good to carry around a lightning rod to attract trouble.

—The Richmond Examiner, as if hinting at the bombardment of northern cities, says New York will soon have something more important than false news and brokerage gambling to talk about.

—A saint should be like a seraph, beset all over with eyes and lights, that he may avoid Satan's snares, and stand fast in the hour of temptation.

—Mr Lincoln lately corrected a visitor in the use of the word “repulse,” in speaking of the attack of the iron-clads. “A check, sir—not a repulse.”

—The first thing a man takes in his life is milk—the last his bier.

—The immigration from Europe promises to be unusually great this spring. The low price of labor abroad, and the high price of it in the States, is the cause.

—“John” did you ever bet on a horse race? No, but I have seen my sister Bet on an old mare.”

—That was a smart boy who asked his father what kind of wood the Seneca County Board of Supervisors was made of.

—A firm faith is the best theology; a good life the best philosophy; a clear conscience the best law, honesty the best policy, and temperance the best physic.

—An old lady, who sells eggs in Cincinnati, has over her door: “New eggs laid every morning, by Betty Briggs.”

—If five dollars make a sovereign, how many make a president? Think twice before you answer.

AN EXCELLENT CUSTOM.—In Munich, Germany, all boys found in the streets asking alms are taken to an asylum established for that purpose. As soon as they enter the door, and before having been cleaned, or their dirty clothes removed, a portrait of each one is taken, representing him in the same form as when found begging. When the portrait is finished, he is cleaned and presented with a new suit of clothes. After going through a regular course of education appointed by the directors of the asylum they are put to learn a trade, at which they work until they have earned enough to liquidate all their expenses from the first day they entered the institution. When this is completed, they are dismissed from the institution to earn their own livelihood. At the same time the portrait taken when they first entered is presented to them, which they swear they will preserve as long as they live, in order that they may remember the misery from which they have been redeemed and the obligations which they are under to the institution for having saved them from misery, and giving them the means of feeding themselves for the future.