

Literary.

A letter written by the Great Composer Mendelssohn, in Engelberg, August 23rd, 1831.

The accompanying letter may be of interest to those students who are at present reading Lohmeyer's pretty little story, Der Geissbub von Engelberg. In 1827, at the age of eighteen, Mendelssohn left the University of Berlin with great honors; he was a profound classical scholar; he excelled in gymnastics; he was an elegant rider, and like Lord Byron, he was a bold and accomplished swimmer. During the years 1830-31, he visited London, Weimar, Rome, Switzerland and Paris. The letter shows the buoyancy and poetry which possessed his heart.

Engelberg, August 23rd, 1831.

My heart is so full I must tell you about it. In this enchanting valley I have just taken up Schiller's "Wilhelm Tell," and read half of the first scene; there is surely no genius like that in Germany! Heavens knows why it is so, but I do think that no other nation could fully comprehend such an opening scene, far less be able to compose it. This is what I call a poem.

It is now more than four years since I read it. I mean presently to go over to the monastery, to work off my excitement on the organ.

Afternoon.

I have passed a most enjoyable morning, and I feel in the kind of mood which makes you long to recall such a man (Schiller) to life, in order to thank him, and inspiring an earnest desire, one day, to compose a work which shall impress others with similar feelings.

This is the nicest inn imaginable, clean, tidy, very small and rustic; an old white-haired innkeeper; a wooden house, situated in a meadow, a little apart from the road; and the people so kind and cordial, that I feel quite at home. My room has

windows on every side, commanding a view of the valley; the room is prettily panelled with wood; some colored texts and a crucifix are hanging on the walls; when I lie in bed I have the following view:— (Here follows a sketch of the monastery buildings.) I shall always consider this valley to be one of the loveliest in all Switzerland. I have not yet seen the gigantic mountains by which it is encompassed, as they have been all day shrouded in mist; but the beautiful meadows, the numerous brooks, the houses, the foot of the hills, so far as I can see them, are exquisitely lovely.

Now, good night; I must rise very early to-morrow; it is to be a grand fete to-day in the monastery, and a religious service, and I am to play the organ for them. The monks were listening this morn while I was extemporizing a little, and were so pleased, they invited me to play the people in and out at their festival to-morrow. The father organist gave me the subject on which I am to extemporize; it is better than any that would have occurred to an organist in Italy. I shall see to-morrow what I can make of it. When I came past the monastery last evening, the church was closed, and scarcely were the doors shut, when the monks began to sing nocturns fervently, in the dark church; they intoned the deep B, which vibrated splendidly, and could be heard far down the valley.

August 24th.

This has been another splendid day, the weather bright and enjoyable, and the bluest sky I have seen since I left Chamouni; it was a holiday in the village, and in all the mountains. After long continued fogs, and every kind of bad weather, once more to see from the window in the morning the clear range of mountains and their pinnacles, is indeed a grand spectacle. They are acknowledged to be finest after rain,

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