

HUNTINGDON JOURNAL.

"ONE COUNTRY, ONE CONSTITUTION, ONE DESTINY."

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THE GARLAND.



"With sweetest flowers enrich'd
From various gardens cull'd with care."

THE GRAVES OF THE SIGNERS.

BY MISS A. M. F. BUCHANAN.

Where lie our country's glorious dead?
In graves that know no rite, nor name,
Whence every passing wind should spread
The story to that country's shame?
Where, all unchecked, the rank weed shoots
Its noxious fibres through their clay,
And where, in safety, loathsome brutes
Across it drag their mangled prey?
Where human pride and hope and love
Ne'er meet their rugged clods above?

Not midst the dear homes of the land,
E'en as their own hearts, unforgot!
The North's stern yeoman lifts his hand,
Proud, from his plough, to point the spot,
And the wild school-boy he has nursed,
Besides them rests his tired knee,
And tells their names and deeds, the first
That he has known of history;
While the warm wish looks through his eye
Like them to live and thus to lie!

Not where the South's bright plumag'd birds
And bright hued flowers, sing and wave!
There haughty men of burning words
In reverence seek each quiet grave;
And there, if lightly have been spent
Their own rich gifts of God and earth,
Up from the dust a voice is sent,
That startles them to aims of worth;
Their high sculed women pause to pray,
"My those we love prove such as they!"

They lie, where in their glory's time,
They saved their sires' gray heads from harm;
In fruitful fields, throughout our clime,
Won from the dark woods by their arm;
Where first their children saw the light,
And where, when pressed by ill & wrong,
As unto elders dowered with might,
E'en yet their children's children throng,
And feel what well may nerve their powers
"Why should we sink?—their blood is ours!"

And ye would break their holy sleep,
And bear them to some labor'd pile,
Where Mammon grudges them to weep,
Ambition could to drop its guile;
Where the poor peasant ne'er could go,
To bless them for their god-like part,
And catch a spirit, still to grow,
And raise his soul, and swell his heart,
Where fashion's flighty slaves would turn
From them, unto their blazoned urn!

Go solemnly and seek their shrines,
And think, while o'er each honored breast
Pure blows the breeze, the sun beams shines
How sweet, how lovely is such rest;
See that their memory around,
Stamps freedom on each form and face;
Hear that, in danger's hour, each mound
Would be a legion's rallying-place;
If ye have hearts, there list their tones,
And dare to touch those hallowed bones!

*Suggested by the question—"Do we not owe it to the memory of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, to collect their remains, and place them in a National Monument?"

EPIGRAM.

"Dear Harry," quoth his sister Sue,
"You are by far too prone
To hint at mates in others eyes,
While beams are in your own."
"Sweet sister, hold the youth replies—
"Where'er you see in mine
Is but reflected from your eyes—
Therefore those beams are thine."

Select Tale.

THE MAIDSCHENSTEIN.

A Tradition of the Saxon Swiss.

CHAPTER I.

There are few districts in Europe—might, perhaps, have said in the whole world—which more deserve, in every point of view, the imaginative traveller's regard, than the region to which a distinguished German writer, still alive, has given the name of the Saxon Switzerland. In expressing myself thus, I do not refer, at least exclusively, to the peculiar nature of the scenery which is there to be found. That, to be sure, is remarkable enough—so remarkable, indeed, as to have in parallel in any other country which it has been my good fortune to visit. But even scenery, if it stand alone, seldom makes a very deep or a very lasting impression on the mind of one who has beheld it. Such, at least, are my own feelings in reference to this point. What were the Tyrol itself, did not its bold and snow clad mountains associate themselves with the memory of a thousand noble deeds?—the last and not the least touching of which throws a halo around the name of the peasant Hofer. What were the Rhine, had it not been to a high minded people, in all ages, their "own imperial river"? What were our own rugged hills of Scotland and Wales, could we forget that the feet of the gallant and free have trodden them from age to age? And finally, who would linger in fancy near the deep glens and precipitous crags of the Saxon Swiss had the eye alone taken an interest in them when they were actually present to it. It is not, therefore, because its pine forests wave deep and broad and its rocks rise sheer, and bald, and abrupt, towards heaven—because its passes are dark and narrow, its corn-fields rich, and its river, the lordly Elbe, dark, and turbulent, and rapid,—these are not the circumstances that force me to speak of Saxon Switzerland as of a land, which, once visited, can never be forgotten. Rich as Germany is in traditionary lore, there is probably no portion of it which more abounds with the tales of other days than this little corner. As I am going to repeat one of these tales, the nature of which renders some knowledge of the whereabouts essential to a right understanding of facts, it will be necessary to attempt, what has never yet, as far as I know, been attempted successfully,—I mean the conveying by words, to the mind of the reader, something like a distinct notion of a spot of earth which he has not visited, and it may be, never shall visit.

In the very heart of Saxon Switzerland there is a glen, through which the Kirschtseh pours its tiny waters—a tortuous, narrow yet perfectly level pass—hemmed in on either hand by bold hills, all of them covered from their bases to their brows with pine trees. At the bottom of this glen lies the town of Schandau, occupying a tongue of land that juts forward into the Elbe. Not far from its summit, and perhaps ten or twelve English miles distant, stands a romantic village, of which I have forgotten the name. These are the extreme points; for at or near the village, the glen imperceptibly blends with the more open country, while the river effectually closes it in at the base. Between them, again, the arrangements of nature have been very little interfered with, except that three mills—the least offensive to the eye of taste of all pieces of mechanism—are erected along the stream; each of them, too, at a point of which, tall he has seen the rest, the traveller is apt to exclaim that nothing could surpass it in beauty. Moreover, the Kirschtseh is spanned here and there by rustic bridges—mere planks, or lanes of planks, thrown across this channel; while the meadows which sweep down to his banks, whether broad or narrow, are all trimmed and dressed, and kept in the nicest order. In every other respect, however, the valley of the Kirschtseh offers to the eye of the wanderer, in the nineteenth century, precisely the same features which it offered to those of the wanderer in the fifteenth. For the everlasting hills are bold and unbending as they were at the beginning; and busy as man's hand may have been from age to age in felling, in clearing, and transporting timber to a distance, the woods wave as wide, and their foliage is as dense and dark as if no interference with their sovereignty has ever been attempted.

Here then, in part, lies the scene of my story; which must, however, be occasionally shifted, so as to carry the reader back into the recesses of the forests that sweep away to the eastward of the glen. How shall I describe these? Imagine, if you can, the uppermost of the three mills—a humble yet neat structure—with its little garden in front of the miller's dwelling, and the stream chafing and roaring from its place of confinement on one of its

flanks. Behind is a small meadow, to which succeeds a wooded hill, completely interposing itself between your curiosity, and all that may lie beyond: for the hill in question is but a portion of one of those rocky walls which leave to the wayfarer no wider range of view than is afforded by some sweep of the vale—at the best exceedingly narrow—and the space that intervenes between earth and heaven. You will observe, however, nearly opposite to a wicker gate opens from the garden fence, the commencement of a foot-path protruding itself, as it were, from the forest. Advance towards it, for it will lead you to the point with which I am endeavoring, I fear vainly, to make you familiar. Now then, go on. The woods are closed darkly round you. Their shade is so dense that the sun's rays cannot reach you from above. The depth is so great that you strain your eyeballs in vain, yet see no object that is distant from you a space of fifteen yards. Your road, moreover, leads continually upwards—now shooting ahead a little space, now twisting and turning as some rock or precipice intervenes, barring or threatening to bar your further progress. There! you have won the hill top at last—so gaze abroad. What see you? A huge cliff, an enormous mass of rock, standing out of this mountain plain, as if the hand of man had reared it, and lifting its gray head far above the giant pines that cluster, though loosely and gracefully, above its base. Forward still, I pray you! for that rock we must win ere the scene shall open out its terrific beauties to our ken. Look again! The rock is hollowed from beneath. You are gazing, not upon a solid mass, but on a mighty bridge, a bridge of a single arch—or, if the simile like you better, on the gate of a prodigious fortress; beneath the portals of which it seems as if he must needs pass who would penetrate into the forest ravine which it covers. Yet is he deceived who adopts this notion. There is an abyss between you and the rock, passable by a narrow mound. Cross that and you stand upon a platform, arched over head, and abundantly capacious; but admitting of no further progress—for you are at the mid-height of the Kirschtseh; and beneath you are seen at a ghastly distance, the highest tops of the pines, which commencing at the bottom of the ravine, climb up as it were to salute, but fail to reach you. That, however, is nothing. Around you on every side are objects, which you must be strangely constituted, indeed, if you can gaze upon, even in the bright sunshine of a summer's day, without a feeling of awe. Rocks, are piled upon rocks, in the most extraordinary confusion. Sweeping forests are there—solitary cliffs uplifting their bald heads; and all begirt by an amphitheatre of hills, so rude, so wild, so unlike what you can have beheld in other quarters, that there requires some exercise of reason to repel the belief that chaos was not a thing of yesterday, and yourself a denizen of a new and unfamiliar world. It is charged, upon the German, in this our fair land of England, that their imaginations are by far too irregular—that their fancy runs forever into extravagance. No man will repeat the accusation who has once stood where you and I, gentle reader, are supposed to stand at this moment; for I defy the most cold-blooded to look over that wild scene without admitting that, if the spirit of evil has ever been allowed to play his pranks among men, this is precisely the place where he would set up his rest, and whither his votaries would come to seek his counsel or avert his anger.

Here, then, I would gladly pause if I could, for I well know from experience how wearisome the descriptions of mere scenery are; but I cannot. There are yet two more objects to which it is absolutely necessary that the reader's attention should be drawn; and he must bear while I state what they are, in terms as brief and as simple as I can find.

We have been standing on the platform of the Kirschtseh, covered over-head by its natural arch, and gazing down upon one of the wildest scenes that ever opened out its rugged bosom to the eyes of the stranger. Deep, deep it lies beneath us; yet it is not absolutely a basin. Nearly in the centre of that mighty amphitheatre there stands another lonely rock, a huge mass of grey sand-stone, broad and solid, with here and there a rift in its face—feathered at its base, like the Kirschtseh itself, with graceful pines, but at its summit lifted high above the reach of the pines' topmost branches. I know not to what it may be likened. Some ruined tower would be the aptest simile, had the Titans ever built such a strong hold and time defaced it; but to compare it to a fabric reared by ordinary mortals were to wrong its proportions. Still some faint idea of the sort of thing may be formed, if the reader will call to mind the mightiest and most colossal ruin which he has ever beheld; more especially if it shall chance to have stood in the heart of a forest, intersected here and there by broad vistas, or glades car-

peted, one and all with the richest sward. Moreover, let him bear in mind that this huge cliff stands alone in its glory. There are no hills, no perceptible rises and falls in the ground, within the distance of three English miles from it. It is the centre of a mighty circle, of which precipices of the most awful kind form the circumference; while the radii that go off from it are openings in the forest, too irregular and too capacious to be the work of any other architect than nature.

Here, then, is one of the two objects described of which I have spoken. Now for the second, to place which in a distinct point of view is not, I feel at the outset, a task so easy of accomplishment. Once more, then, I pray the reader to look down from his giddy height, and to observe a narrow path, which, springing off from the Kirschtseh, is soon lost amid the pine woods beyond. Its course is, however, so straight, that you will take it up again without fail where it crosses the several glades, provided you carry your eye forward in a direct line from the point where it may have first eluded you, till finally it disappears altogether, just here the precipitous boundary commences. He who follows that path will find that it leads through a tangled forest, with brake and bower, and rock and ravine, perpetually intervening, till, over the far-off ridge, it joins a broader way, formed for the purpose of facilitating the transport of fuel from the mountain to the river's edge. For the present, it is right that I conduct my stranger by this wagon track, pointing out to him, as we pass, the more intricate path, by following which he would arrive at the summit of the Probitz Thur.—Well, then, we push on, the road sinking by degrees into a ravine, till we emerge from the shadow of the woods, to behold upon our left a rock, not less remarkable than that of the Kirschtseh, arched like it in the centre, though with a wider span, and standing out in bold relief from a wall of cliffs, similar in their general character—I had well nigh said in all their features—to those which constitute the amphitheatre we have left behind. That rock is the Probitz Thur, and it deserves more than a passing scrutiny. Nevertheless, we shall pass it by, in order that we may take up the course of a stream, which with a rapid current flows down the glen, and keeps our road on its right bank. It is a fine pass, likewise; and widening as we descend, carries us to the village of Henschschreiben—a settlement in every respect rural. A small church, the rude figure of the patron saint, a bridge of a single arch spanning the river, a row of cottages stretching away to the bank of the Elbe—these with four or five mills, where corn is ground and wood sawed, compose the second of those spots to which in the course of my narrative it will be necessary to make reference; but of which I am perfectly aware that no fitting idea could be formed; till the reader shall have acquired information through the medium of his own senses. So much for description, at the best, how inadequate to supply the place of actual observation—more especially when, as in the present instance, the scenes to be dealt with chance to be of a nature too stern, albeit surpassing beautiful, even for the pencil to portray.

It was towards the close of a summer's day, at that eventful period in German history when the spark struck by Luther and Melancthon was beginning to light up the horizon of the whole religious world, that there arrived, on the left bank of the Elbe, immediately opposite the town of Schandau, a solitary foot traveller. The age of the stranger might comprise any given number of years between nineteen and three and twenty. His countenance was pale and thin, yet withal singularly beautiful. A lofty forehead, smooth and white as marble, agreed well in its character with the dark and deep set blue eye that lay beneath it. A profusion of brown hair, breaking loose from the rim of his bonnet, hung over his shoulders, and waved with every breeze that blew. A pair of silken mustaches shading his upper lip, gave a tone of firmness to a mouth, which thoughtful and grave as it doubtless was, might have otherwise misrepresented a disposition not naturally prone to sadness. Slight he was, and spare in his make, scarce reaching to the middle height, or, at all events not passing beyond it—a defect which a trifling stoop, the consequence it might be of much study had no tendency to ameliorate. Yet when he lifted himself up, which he occasionally did, as often as some object, either near at hand or far away, caught his attention, the perfect symmetry of his form became immediately perceptible. With respect, again, to his dress, it was of that picturesque and fanciful description which, down to a recent date, was wont to distinguish the class of society to which he belonged. A cloak of dark serge, suspended by a cord from his neck, reached midway towards his knee. His vest and hose were composed of similar materials, only the latter was tied up with

pink points, and slashed with pink silk; while stockings and shoes, both of them black, gave an air of gravity to his whole bearing, such as was then the fashion for the scholars at German universities to assume. Of arms, as well as for defence as offence, he was entirely destitute; indeed, his only weapon was a staff, such as pedestrians use to aid their movements; and his baggage, a small wallet, or valise, which he bore in his left hand by a strap, and with which at pleasure he could suspend it at his back.

When the stranger reached the point on the river's edge at which it has been my privilege to introduce him to the reader's acquaintance, the sun was sending his rays obliquely from behind the hill of Kirschtseh; which, while they shed a mellow lustre over the peaks of Lilienstern, and caused the Grosse Winterberg, and the sweep of the river beneath to lie in burnished gold, left nearer and humble objects altogether in the shade. It might be either this circumstance, or the gathering in the south of a bank of dark clouds, which caused the youth to exhibit symptoms of impatience. Or possibly his own thoughts troubled him; for way worn as the duststake of his apparel proved him to be, he would not sit down to rest. On the contrary, as each shout failed to extort an answer from the opposite shore, and the ferry boat still delayed to make its appearance, he paced backwards and forwards, now muttering in a low tone words of a mysterious import, now loudly accusing the ferryman of inattention, and complaining of his own fate.

"Was there ever being so unfortunate; was there ever interruption to the communications of a great country so injudicious? Why did I not follow the other road? I was longer to be sure; but then no ferryway in my path, and what mattered a mile or two in such an extremity? Is the old man deaf entirely, or dead, or drunk? Holla, there, good Jacob! Bring thy boat over, for the love of Heaven, or I shall go mad." But shouts and remonstrances were alike unavailing. The ferryman either heard not, or paid no attention, and the young wayfarer continued to fret and traverse his narrow beat to no purpose.

Nearly an hour had been thus expended and the last rays of the sun were withdrawn entirely from the valley of the Elbe when the student discovered for the first time, very much to his own surprise, that he was not alone. Upon a stone, more than half screened by a projecting rock, and removed a few paces from the path at the water's edge, there crouched, rather than sat, the figure of a human being, so completely enveloped from top to toe in the folds of a dark brown cloak that neither limb nor feature, the eyes only excepted, were visible. Earnestly, however, and keenly, were those fixed upon the young man; inasmuch that, when a sudden turn to the left brought his own unexpectedly in collision with them, he became conscious throughout his entire frame of a shock like that of electricity. But our student, albeit of a delicate frame was no coward. He recovered himself in a moment, and feeling half disposed to resent what he conceived to be the impertinent curiosity of the gaze, he made a stride towards the gazer, and thus addressed him:—

"Methinks, friend, it were but good manners to make thy presence known, even if thy civility did not tend thus far as to assist a neighbor in distress. The addition of thy voice to mine might have provided a reply from the opposite shore; & thine own conscience would have told thee that such employment were at least as Christian as that of a spy and an eaves-dropper."

"Franz Brockhaus," replied the intruder, in a mild clear tone, "I am neither a spy nor an eavesdropper."

"Father Ambrose?" exclaimed Franz, starting at the sound of the voice, "is it thou? Why art thou here? What seekest thou?"
"I seek thee, my son," replied the stranger, as he rose from his seat; and throwing back the mantle, displayed both a form and a face which, once seen, can never be forgotten. Tall he was—far surpassing the common height of man; thin too, and meagre, as if worn down by abstinence and intense thought. A keen, dark eye shot from beneath brows, which their extreme tenuity, rather than the arrangements of nature, had rendered sharp and protruding. His cheeks were hollow his nose aquiline, his complexion of the hue of parchment, and his beard, which reached down to his chest, was like the few locks that hung about his temples, white as silver. His voice, as I have already stated, had about it, likewise, its own peculiar character. It was low, yet clear as a bell; while his annunciation, distinct, deliberate, and singularly correct gave indications of a mind well trained in the school of self control, and braced up for the display, in case of need, of any con-

ceivable degree of moral courage. Such a man, the most careless must have seen, was ready to play the martyr's part at a moment's notice. There might be no fire in his nature, fierceness, no hardihood to contrive, no impetuous valour to carry through, some perilous enterprise as an aggressor. But patience and the power to endure, indomitable resolution and unwavering adherence to principle: these characteristics were all set forth in every line of the old man's countenance, not less than in every intonation of his voice.

"I came to seek thee, my son," said he grasping the outstretched and which Franz hastened respectfully to offer, "to turn thee aside from the way in which thou goest, and to preserve thy precious life for higher and holier purposes. This is not a time to marry or give in marriage, nor yet to trouble men's minds, with cares that be long to earth, when the Lord's harvest is every where ripe for the sickle, and laborers are every where wanting. Quit then, this vain pursuit, relinquish this child's bauble, and gird on thine armour to fight the battle which the saints and martyrs fought in the olden time, and the true of heart are preparing to fight again. Franz Brockhaus, go not to the dwelling of Gaspar Housman; thy appearance there can serve no good purpose. Thou art more than suspected of having cast in thy lot with the faithful, and the old man's anger is greatly kindled against thee. Yes, and why shouldst thou seek to interfere with his arrangements touching his daughter? There can be no fellowship between light and darkness, neither may the believer be yoked together with the unbeliever. Break thee loose, my son, from thy bondage, and follow where those are even now leading of whom the world is indeed not worthy, but whose names shall endure forever."

"But to-morrow is the day fixed for the marriage," answered Franz mournfully, "and to her the connection is as hateful as it is to me; ay, and her mother, too, abhors it. Oh, Father Ambrose, suffer me to go in mine own way this one time, and, let the consequence be what they may, I am thine and God's servant ever after!"

"Knowest thou not, Franz," answered the old man sternly, "where it is written 'He that putteth his hand to the plough & looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven.' Was he accepted who desired only that he might go and bid his friends farewell?"

The old man took the letter. Twilight was gathering fast around them, yet his vision, at the age of threescore and fifteen appeared to be as acute as ever it was; for he held it up towards the western sky, and read aloud, without faltering:—

"Oh, father!" cried the young man bitterly, "thou knowest not, thou never couldst have known, the agony for a heart like mine. Contented I am to relinquish all the endearments of social life, even if it were permitted that Louise should be my partner in them. But to see her the wife of another, and him, too, so unworthy of the prize; no, father, come what may, I cannot witness that spectacle and live. Suffer me, then, to go in my own way this once, and I am thine and God's servant ever after."

"What my heart may have known, and endured, and overcome," answered Father Ambrose gravely, "is known only to itself and its Maker. That it is now freed from the dross of earthly passions is his work, not mine. But for thee, Franz, believe me that, though I may seem to deal harshly by thee, I feel as a parent for a child—ay, far more deeply. Thou shalt not go in thine own way even this once, for the Lord hath need for thee. Thy life must not be perilled for any of the unbelieving."
"She is no unbeliever!" exclaimed the student, eagerly: "Father, Louise is one of us."
"What sayest thou?" cried the old man, in a tone which blended together the sentiments of surprise, anxiety, and something like disbelief. "Louise Housman one of us? Why didst thou not inform me of this long ago? Or dost thou deceive me, my son? Or art thou thyself deceived? Nay, nay, Franz, thou errest greatly in deviating from the narrow path. Can the thorn bring forth the grape, or the fig spring from the thistle? Can the child of the prosecutor turn again with those whom her father persecuteth? Nay, nay, this cannot be."