

LETTER XLII.

COLOGNE, 10 o'clock, Hotel Bellevue.

DEAR:--

The great old city is before me, looming up across the Rhine, which lies spread out like a molten looking glass, all quivering and wavering, reflecting the thousand lights of the city. We have been on the Rhine all day, gliding among its picture-like scenes. But, alas I had a headache; the boat was crowded; one and all smoked tobacco; and in vain, under such circumstances, do we see that nature is fair. It is not enough to open one's eyes on scenes; one must be able to be en rapport with them. Just so in the spiritual world, we sometimes see great truths,--see that God is beautiful, glorious, and surpassingly lovely; but at other times we feel both nature and God, and O, how different seeing and feeling! To say the truth, I have been quite homesick to-day, and leaning my head on the rails, pondered an immediate flight, a giving up of all engagements on the continent and in England, an immediate rush homeward. Does it not seem absurd, that, when within a few days' journey of what has been the long-desired dream of my heart, I should feel so--that I should actually feel that I had rather take some more of our pleasant walks about Andover, than to see all that Europe has to offer?

This morning we went to the Cologne Cathedral. In the exterior of both this and Strasbourg I was disappointed; but in the interior, who could be? There is a majesty about those up-springing arches--those columns so light, so lofty--it makes one feel as if rising like a cloud. Then the innumerable complications and endless perspectives, arch above arch and arch within arch, all lighted up and colored by the painted glass, and all this filled with the waves of the chant and the organ, rising and falling like the noise of the sea; it was one of the few overpowering things that do not satisfy, because they transport you at once beyond the restless anxiety to be satisfied, and leave you no time to ask the cold question, Am I pleased?

Ah, surely, I said to myself, as I walked with a kind of exultation among those lofty arches, and saw the clouds of incense ascending, the kneeling priests, and heard the pathetic yet grand voices of the chant--surely, there is some part in man that calls for such a service, for such visible images of grandeur and beauty. The wealth spent on these churches is a sublime and beautiful protest against materialism--against that use of money which merely brings supply to the coarse animal wants of life, and which makes of God's house only a bare pen, in which a man sits to be instructed in his duties.

Yet a moment after I had the other side of the question brought forcibly to my mind. In an obscure corner was a coarse wooden shrine, painted red, in which was a doll dressed up in spangles and tinsel, to represent the Virgin, and hung round with little waxen effigies of

arms, hands, feet, and legs, to represent, I suppose, some favor which had been accorded to these members of her several votaries through her intercessions. Before this shrine several poor people were kneeling, with clasped hands and bowed heads, praying with an earnestness which was sorrowful to see. "They have taken away their Lord, and they know not where they have laid him." Such is the end of this superb idolatry in the illiterate and the poor.

Yet if we could, would we efface from the world such cathedrals as Strasbourg and Cologne? I discussed the question of outward pomp and ritual with myself while I was walking deliberately round a stone balustrade on the roof of the church, and looking out through the flying buttresses, upon the broad sweep of the Rhine, and the queer, old-times houses and spires of the city. I thought of the splendors of the Hebrew ritual and temple, instituted by God himself. I questioned where was the text in the gospel that forbade such a ritual, provided it were felt to be desirable; and then I thought of the ignorance and stupid idolatry of those countries where this ritual is found in greatest splendor, and asked whether these are the necessary concomitants of such churches and such forms, or whether they do not result from other causes. The Hebrew ritual, in a far more sensuous age, had its sculptured cherubim, its pictorial and artistic wealth of representation, its gorgeous priestly vestments, its incense, and its chants; and they never became, so far as we know, the objects of idolatrous veneration.

But I love to go back over and over the scenes of that cathedral; to look up those arches that seem to me, in their buoyant lightness, to have not been made with hands, but to have shot up like an enchantment--to have risen like an aspiration, an impersonation of the upward sweep of the soul, in its loftiest moods of divine communion. There were about five minutes of feeling, worth all the discomforts of getting here; and it is only for some such short time that we can enjoy--then our prison door closes.

There are four painted glass windows, given by the King of Bavaria. I have got for H. the photograph of two of them, representing the birth and death of Christ. They are gorgeous paintings by the first masters. The windows round the choir were painted in a style that reminded me of our forests in autumn.

Well, after our sublimities came a farce. We went to St. Ursula's church, to see the bones of the eleven thousand virgins, who, the chronicle says, were slain here because they would not break their vows of chastity. I was much amused. As we entered the church, C. remarked impressively, "It is evident that these virgins have no connection with cologne water!" The fact was lamentably apparent. Doleful looking figures of virgins, painted in all the colors of the rainbow, were looking down upon us from all quarters; and in front, in a glass frame, was a bill of fare, in French, of the relics which could be served up to order. C. read the list aloud, and then we

proceeded to a small side room to see the exhibition. The upper portion of the walls was covered with small bones, strung on wires and arranged in a kind of fanciful arabesque, much as shell boxes are made; and the lower part was taken up with busts in silver and gold gilding, representing still the interminable eleven thousand. A sort of cupboard door half opened showed the shelves all full of skulls, adorned with little satin caps, coronets, and tinsel jewelry; which skulls, we were informed, were the original head-pieces of the same redoubtable females.

At the other end of the room was a raised stage, where the most holy relics of all were being displayed, under the devout eye of a priest in a long, black robe. C. and I went upon the stage to be instructed. S., whom the aforesaid lack of cologne water in the establishment had rendered peculiarly unpropitious, stood at a majestic distance; but C., assuming an air of profound faith, stood up to be initiated.

"That," says the priest, in a plaintive voice, pitched to the exact point between lamentation and veneration, "is the ring of St. Ursula."

"Indeed," says C., "her ring!"

"Yes," says the priest, "it was found in her tomb."

"It was found in her tomb--only think!" says C., turning gravely to me. I had to look another way, while the priest proceeded to

introduce, by name, four remarkably yellow skulls, with tastefully trimmed red caps on, as those of St. Ursula and sundry of her most intimate friends. S. looked gloriously indignant, and C. increasingly solemn.

"Dere," said the priest, opening an ivory box, in which was about a quart of teeth of different sizes, "dere is de teeth of the eleven thousand."

"Indeed," echoes C., "their teeth!"

S., at this, waxed magnificent, and, as a novel writer would say, swept from the apartment. I turned round, shaking with laughter, while the priest went on.

"Dere is a rib of St. ----."

"Ah, his rib; indeed!"

"And dere is de arrow as pierced the heart of St. Ursula."

"H.," says C., "here is the arrow that killed St. Ursula." (The wicked scamp knew I was laughing!)

"Dere is the net that was on her hair."

"This is what she wore on her hair, then," says C., eyeing the rag with severe and melancholy gravity.

"And here is some of the blood of the martyr Stephen," says the priest, holding a glass case with some mud in it.

In the same way he showed two thorns from the crown of Christ, and a piece of the Virgin's petticoat.

"And here is the waterpot of stone, in which our Lord made the wine at the marriage in Cana."

"Indeed," said C., examining it with great interest; "where are the rest of them?"

"The rest?" says the priest.

"Yes; I think there were six of them; where are they?"

The priest only went over the old story. "This came from Rome, and the piece broken out of the side is at Rome yet."

It is to be confessed that I felt in my heart, through this disgusting recital, some of S.'s indignation; and I could not help agreeing with her that the odor of sanctity, as generally developed in the vicinity, was any thing but agreeable. I did long to look that man once steadily

in the eyes, to see if he was such a fool as he pretended; but the ridiculousness of the whole scene overcame me so that I could not look up, and I marched out in silence. The whole church is equally full of virgins. The altar piece is a vast picture of the slaughter, not badly painted. Through various glass openings you perceive that the walls are full of the bones and skulls. Did the worship of Egypt ever sink lower in horrible and loathsome idolatry? I had heard of such things; but it is one thing to hear of them, and another to see them by the light of this nineteenth century, in a city whose streets look much like the streets of any other, and where men and women appear much as they do any where else. Here we saw, in one morning, the splendor and the rottenness of the Romish system. From those majestic arches, that triumphant chant, there is but a step down to the worship of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

We went also into the Jesuits' church. The effect, to my eye, was that of a profusion of tawdry, dirty ornament; only the railing of the choir, which was a splendid piece of carving, out from a single block of Carrara marble.

The guide book prescribes, I think, no less than half a dozen churches in Cologne as a dose for the faithful; but we were satisfied with these three, and went back to our hotel. As a general thing I would not recommend more than three churches on an empty stomach.

The outer wall of Cologne is a very fine specimen of fortification, (I



am quoting my guide book,) and we got a perfect view of it in crossing the bridge of boats to return to our hotel. Why they have a bridge of boats here I cannot say; perhaps on account of the width and swiftness of the river.

Having heard so much of the dirt and vile smells of Cologne, I was surprised that our drive took us through streets no way differing from those of most other cities, and, except in the vicinity of the eleven thousand virgins, smelling no worse. Still, there may be vile, ill-smelling streets; but so there are in Edinburgh, London, and New York.

From Cologne we went, at four o'clock, to Dusseldorf, a little town, celebrated for the head quarters of the Dusseldorf school of painting. I cannot imagine why they chose this town for a school of the fine arts, as it is altogether an indifferent, uninteresting place. It is about an hour's ride from Cologne. We arrived there in time to go into the exhibition of the works of the artists, which is open all summer. I don't know how good a specimen it is, but I thought it rather indifferent. There were some few paintings that interested me, but nothing equal to those. I have seen in the Dusseldorf gallery at home. Whittridge lives there, but, unfortunately, was gone for eight days.

Our hotel was pleasant--opening on a walk shaded by double rows of trees. We ordered a nice little tea in our room, and waxed quite merry over it.

This morning we started at seven, and here we are to-night in Leipsic--as uninteresting a country as I have seen yet. Moreover, we had passed beyond the limits of our Rhine guide book, and as yet had no other, and so did not know any thing about the few objects of interest which presented themselves. The railroads, of course, persist in their invariable habit of running you up against a dead wall, so that you see nothing where you stop.

The city of Magdeburg is the only interesting object I have seen. I had a fair view of its cathedral, which I think, though not so imposing, yet as picturesque and beautiful as any I remember to have seen; and its old wall, too. We changed cars here, going through the wall into the city, and I saw just enough to make me wish to see more; and now to-night we are in Leipsic.

Morning. We are going out now, and I must mail this letter. To-morrow we spend at Halle.

JOURNAL--(CONTINUED.)

Friday, August 5. Dusseldorf to Leipsic, three hundred and seventy-three miles. A very level and apparently fertile country. If

well governed it ought to increase vastly in riches.

Saturday, August 6. Called at the counting house of M. Tauchnitz, the celebrated publisher. An hour after, accompanied by Mrs. T., he came with two open carriages, and took us to see the city and environs. We visited the battle ground, and saw the spot where Napoleon stood during the engagement; a slight elevation, commanding an immense plain in every direction, with the spires of the city rising in the distance. After seeing various sights of interest, we returned to our hotel, where our kind friends took their leave. In the afternoon M. Tauchnitz sent H. a package of his entertaining English publications, to read in the cars, also a Murray for Germany. H. and I then took the cars for Halle, where we hoped to spend the Sabbath and meet with Dr. Tholuck. Travellers sometimes visit Chamouni without seeing Mont Blanc, who remains enveloped in clouds during their stay. So with us. In an hour we were in rooms at the Kron Prince. We sent a note to the professor; the waiter returned, saying that Dr. Tholuck was at Kissengen. Our theological Mont Blanc was hid in mist. Blank enough looked we!

"H., is there no other professor we want to see?"

"I believe not."

Pensively she read one of the Tauchnitz Library. Plaintively my Amati sighed condolence.

"H." said I, "perhaps we might reach Dresden to-night."

"Do you think so? Is it possible? Is there a train?"

"We can soon ascertain."

"How amazed they would look!"

We summoned the maître d'hotel, ordered tea, paid, packed, raced, ran, and hurried, presto, prestissimo, into a car half choked with voyagers, changed lines at Leipsic, and shot off to Dresden. By deep midnight we were thundering over the great stone Pont d'Elbe, to the Hotel de Saxe, where, by one o'clock, we were lost in dreams.

In the morning the question was, how to find our party.

"Waiter, bring me a directory."

"There is no directory, sir."

"No directory? Then how shall we contrive to find our friends?"

"Monsieur has friends residing in Dresden?"

"No, no! our party that came last night from Leipsic."

"At what hotel do they stop?"

"That is precisely what I wish to find out."

"Will monsieur allow me to give their description to the police?"

(O, ho, thought I; that is your directory, is it? Wonder if that is the reason you have none printed.) "Non, merci," said I, and set off on foot to visit the principal hotels. I knew they would go by Murray or Bradshaw, and lo, sure enough they were at the Hotel Bellevue, just sitting down to breakfast. S. started as if she had seen a ghost.

"Why, where did you come from? What has happened? Where is H.? We thought you were in Halle!"

Explanations followed. H. was speedily transferred to their hotel, where they had bespoken rooms for us; and we sallied forth to the court church to hear the music of high mass.

This music is celebrated throughout Germany. It is, therefore, undoubtedly superior. The organ is noble, the opera company royal. But more perfect than all combined are the echoes of the church, which (though the guide book does not mention it) nullify every effect.

Monday, 8. Visited the walks and gardens on the banks of the Elbe. The sky was clear, the weather glorious, and all nature full of joy. We almost think this Elbe another Seine; these Bruhlsche gardens and terraces, these majestic old bridges, and cleft city, another Paris! Here, too, is that out-of-doors life, life in gardens, we admire so much. Breakfast in the public gardens; hundreds of little groups sipping their coffee! Dinner, tea, and supper in the gardens, with music of birds and bands!

Visited the Picture Gallery. If one were to chance upon an altar in this German Athens inscribed to the "unknown god," he might be tempted to suggest that that deity's name is Decency.

The human form is indeed divine, as M. Belloc insists, and rightly, sacredly drawn, cannot offend the purest eye. All nature is symbolic. The universe itself is a complex symbol of spiritual ideas. So in the structure and relation of the human body, some of the highest spiritual ideas, the divinest mysteries of pure worship, are designedly shadowed forth.

If, then, the painter rightly and sacredly conceives the divine meaning, and creates upon the canvas, or in marble, forms of exalted ideal loveliness, we cannot murmur even if, like Adam and Eve in Eden, "they are naked, and are not ashamed."

And yet even sacred things love mystery, and holiest emotions claim reserve. Nature herself seems to tell us that the more sacred some works of art might be, the less they should be unveiled. There are flowers that will wither in the sun The passion of love, when developed according to the divine order, is, even in its physical relations, so holy that it cannot retain its delicacy under the sultry blaze of profane publicity.

But it is far otherwise with paintings where the animus is not sacred, nor the meaning spiritual. No excellences of coloring, no marvels of foreshortening, no miracles of mechanism can consecrate the salacious images of mythologic abomination.

The cheek that can forget to blush at the Venus and Cupid by Titian, at Leda and her Swan, at Jupiter and Io, and others of equally evil intent, ought never to pretend to blush at any thing. Such pictures are a disgrace to the artists that painted, to the age that tolerates, and to the gallery that contains them. They are fit for a bagnio rather than a public exhibition.

Evening. Dresden is the home of Madame Jenny Lind Goldschmidt. H. sent her card. This evening Mr. G. called to express regret that she was unable to see any one, on account of her recent confinement. He kindly offered us the use of his carriage and assistance in sightseeing. H. discussed with him the catalogues of the gallery of paintings. As to music, we learn, with regret, that it is out of season for concerts,

oratorios, or any thing worth hearing.

Wednesday, August 10. Dresden to Berlin. Drove to Charlottenburg, and saw the monument of Queen Louisa.

Thursday, 11. Visited the Picture Gallery, and various stores and shops.

Saturday, August 13. Berlin to Wittenberg, two hours' ride. Examined the Schloss-Kirche, where Luther is buried, passing on our way through the public square containing his monument.

At nine in the evening took cars for Erfurt. That night ride, with the moon and one star hanging beautifully over the horizon, was pleasant. There is a wild and thrilling excitement in thus plunging through the mysterious night in a land utterly unknown. Reached Erfurt at two in the morning.

Monday, August 15. Erfurt to Eisenach by eight. Drove to the Wartburg.