

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

The "Prater of Vienna"—Condition of Austria—Its Mineral Wealth—Linz and its Fortifications—Scenery on the Danube—Salzburg and the Salt Mines—A Novel Visit—A Splendid Lake.

SALZBURG, Aug. 3, 1867.

Some of our Country's people, traveling in Europe, seem to be blessed with a sort of microscopic vision which enables them oftentimes to behold wonders in European travel that others less highly favored, never see. The class of which I am speaking esteem it a privilege to annoy a fellow traveler by a very elaborate description of places or things which by chance he failed to see. Wishing to travel as comfortably as possible with such of my countrymen as I might fall in with, I have made it my business to see about all that is ordinarily considered worth seeing, and my experience is, that many of these wondrous objects dwindle when actually looked upon. I had sometimes heard it said that the "Prater," or great park of Vienna, was finer than the Central Park of New York, and therefore I was prepared in advance to see something very grand. The "Prater" is a large piece of land just outside the city, extending some four miles to the banks of the Danube. At the entrance there is a circular place or hub from which radiate five or six avenues, like the spokes of a wheel. One of these avenues, used as a fashionable drive, is a broad, splendid roadway, covered by umbrageous trees, and as straight as an arrow. At the end of it is a shooting box of the Emperor, around which carriages drive back again to the grand avenue. The park itself has the appearance of a very large field, destitute of engineering and ornaments, unless immense beer gardens, coffee houses, and sausage-cooking shops come under this head.

Everybody goes to the "Prater," of course, but chiefly to sip beer and coffee, eat Würste or sausages, and to listen to tolerably good bands of music that are employed to draw and entertain customers; and although I visited the "Prater" at the fashionable hour, I did not see the splendid equipages, coats of arms, fine liveries, belted Bohemian Jagers, Hungarian lacqueys, and all those things which I supposed to be common to this spot. With the exception of grand old trees, which time alone can perfect, the Central Park, of New York, is the finest in the world.

They have rather of an odd way of sprinkling the streets of Vienna. An immense hogshead is mounted upon four wheels, filled with water, and drawn by a pair of horses. To the rear end of the hogshead there is attached a leather hose provided with a common rose sprinkler. As the cart moves slowly along, a man, walking behind, shakes the sprinkler to the right and left by means of a cord attached to it. However, two men find employment at a job which, in any enterprising country, would only require one to perform it much better. In castles, palaces, fine monuments, and public buildings, vast collections of pictures, and such other things as interest the mere curiosity of travelers, and a gaping, listless multitude, Vienna is a splendid city; but so far as regards the practical arts and sciences, it is everywhere apparent that the Austrians are behind the age.

The Emperor is one of the Hapsburg House who date the commencement of their monarchial rule back six centuries to a Swiss—Rudolph Von Hapsburg. Governed by a sort of blinded religious zeal, they have never been able to win over to their system of government any one of the numerous nationalities that form a part of the Empire. The Government is understood to throw obstacles in the way of inventions, and seems never disposed to foster and encourage those elements which alone can elevate a nation and its people to true greatness. The misfortunes of last year have begun to open the eyes of the people to a realization of the fact that no nation can be truly prosperous when more than one-half of its able bodied inhabitants are soldiers, civil employes, or members of some monastic order, who have for centuries been eating into the vitals of the State, and bringing it nearly into bankruptcy and ruin. Some sovereigns seem to act as if nations were made expressly for them to govern, and the subjects a species of live stock to be transferred from one to the other as so much property.

Austria is really a fine country, and possesses capabilities of becoming one of the most prosperous. The Danube, perhaps the finest river in Europe, drains its rich valleys, and its branches extend far up to the Tyrolean Alps, which are stored with iron, lead, quicksilver, and other valuable minerals, besides an abundance of coal and salt. Nature has lavished her most bountiful treasures upon the dominions of Austria. Its people are kind hearted, hospitable, and patient, and all they seem to need is a government to assist them in the development of their resources, which seem to lie wasting for lack of enterprise.

Leaving Vienna, we followed the windings of the Danube up to the old city of Linz, which is said to be celebrated for the beauty of its women, the fine views in its vicinity, and for its new fortifications. We saw the views, which were certainly very fine; we also visited the fortifications, and looked sharp to see the beautiful women, but saw none, and were forced to the conclusion that some guide-book publishers had been paid to introduce this feature as one of the attractions of Linz, hoping thereby to induce bachelors, at least to stop and look after them.

The fortifications of Linz differ from any others I have yet seen. They were designed by the Archduke Maximilian, and constructed at his expense. Instead of a continuous wall, with bastions at intervals, there are a series of isolated stone forts, that look like the stone barns of the Shakers—some thirty or more—which encircle the town and are connected by a covered way, forming a circuit of about nine miles, the highest eminence, called Postlingberg, being surmounted by

five towers which form a citadel. These towers are all constructed with great engineering skill and are capable of holding a garrison of two hundred men. They are three stories high, the lower stories being used for storage, and powder magazines. A deep ditch surrounds every tower, so that only the upper story, or gun deck is exposed. In case of an assault, however, guns could be employed in each story, and so trained as to cover every approach. It yet remains to be seen how far this system of sunken towers is an improvement upon the ordinary method of fortifying towns, but it appears to me to combine great excellencies for the defence of these important inland towns, which are always liable to attack, whenever the balance of power requires to be readjusted—and owing to faulty construction, this balance seems always to require some tinkering.

From Linz the scenery of the Danube, many miles upward, is exceeding grand and impressive—quite equal to the Rhine, but tourists run after each other, and few, comparatively, ever think it worth while to get off the railway to make a trip on the Danube.

We spent three of our most delightful days at the old city of Salzburg, which is reputed to be the most beautiful spot in Germany. It would be difficult to find, in any mountainous district, a place that offers so many attractions to one who loves romantic drives through mountain passes and splendid scenery. The city itself is very curious, having old gateways, very narrow streets, dark passages, and old castles, one of which, founded upwards of eight hundred years ago, stands upon the summit of a rock that seems to spring from the ground, rising almost perpendicularly 420 feet above the river which rushes through the town with a tremendous velocity. During the turbulent period of the middle ages, this old rock-bound castle furnished a safe retreat for the tyrannical Archbishop who governed the country with a rod of iron. It makes one shudder to think of the awful transactions which have occurred in this castle. In one of its towers is shown the chamber of torture with the rack by which the victim was raised, and a stone weight of 150 lbs. attached to the feet; and the trap door in the floor leading to an awful dungeon below, through which the victim was hurled, and there cut to pieces. A secret under-ground stairway leads from a chamber of the palace down to the old cathedral in the city, and through which, in the sacred name of religion, Christian believers were carried to this chamber of terrible suffering and death.

The Tyrolean Alps stand immediately above Salzburg, one peak rising above the other, until they enter the region of eternal snows. It was a curious sight to me, for the first time, to look upon such a scene—the valleys below rich in the verdure of summer, while above, a few thousand feet, and nearer to the sun, the snows never melt away.

About ten miles above Salzburg, in a deep gorge of the mountains of Bavaria, are the famous salt mines, which have been worked upwards of two hundred years. Wishing to see these mines, a party was made up, and, after a carriage ride of nearly two hours up the valley of the Salza, which winds around between high mountain peaks, we reached the mines, and, without difficulty, obtained permission to enter. Ladies as well as gentlemen are permitted to enter the mines; but before doing so they must put on the breeches. The dress provided consists of trowsers, a coarse blouse, a brigand hat, and a leather apron, strapped about the waist to cover the seat. Ladies thus rigged looked comical in the extreme; but such is their praiseworthy curiosity, they cheerfully submit to the grotesque costume, and with lantern in hand, they join in the procession, and behind a trusty guide enter the main adit, which has the appearance of a receiving tomb. After traversing the adit for nearly half a mile, straight into the mountain, we ascended a flight of 450 stone steps, which brought us to a salt-water lake, forty feet deep, all beautifully lighted up. We were ferried across this gloomy Styx in a small boat, and then again entered the adit, and after a short walk we reached the pithole, where we discovered the value of our leather aprons. To enter this pit it was necessary to slide down upon two smooth bars, which resembled a ladder without rounds when placed up the sides of a building. With lantern in one hand and a leather gauntlet upon the other, to clasp a rope, the guide slides upon the bars, and the party follow his example; and thus, holding tightly upon the rope and riding pick-a-back, we went down two or three fearful descents until we reached the great salt cavern where the miners were at work. The ascent of the 450 steps, and the descent made upon the leather aprons, brought us again to one of the branch adits, on a level with the main adit, where the party were requested, without respect to sex, to get astride a car, upon which, by our own momentum, we made a rapid railway ride to the place of entrance, the whole tour occupying an hour. Within the mine there is an artificially prepared grotto or chapel, which, when lighted up, shows a most beautiful effect upon the salt crystals, which are arranged in fanciful forms. A stream of fresh water has been introduced into the mines, and the brine is carried in wooden pipes, long distances, where fuel can be obtained abundantly for its evaporation. These conduits are carried along the sides of precipices, through tunnels, or canals, cut in rocks, and over deep ravines, supported upon piles or props, in one instance, as I was informed, a distance of thirty miles. A short way above the mines is a lake called the Kings' Sea, which is most awfully grand. It lies between snow-capped mountains, which rise so precipitously above it that it is scarcely possible to gain a foothold. We were rowed through the lake in a small boat, three men and three women pulling at the oars; a pistol discharged from the boat reaches like a sharp peal of thunder. I have never before looked upon such scenery, but I am going on to Switzerland, where, I suppose, things are done on a grander scale.

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VARIOUS NOVELTIES IN THE EXPOSITION.

PARIS, August 6, 1867.

The second trial of mowers and reapers, which I mentioned in my account of the first was to be held, has after several postponements, at last taken place. The ground mowed was exactly the same as that appropriated two months ago, the grass having in the mean time grown to a sufficient height, but a less area was apportioned to each machine. Nearly or quite as many machines took part in the competition as on the previous occasion, and the results were equally favorable for American inventions. The area to be mowed by each machine was one acre. Wood's machine was again first in completing its work, but escaped only by an accident being robbed of its laurels by the Perry mower. The latter had cut all its plot except about thirty seconds work in its last swath when by some means or other it broke its cutter bar, causing a delay of ten minutes to replace it. Notwithstanding this accident it came in second only, the actual working time being but about twenty-six minutes, and the quality of work done first rate. This machine has received some modifications since the last trial, but perhaps owes some portion of its success to the skillful manner in which it was handled. Wood occupied thirty-three minutes in cutting his field, thus very well sustaining his previous position. McCormick's machine also did well, but Howard's was less fortunate than before, meeting with some serious mishaps and doing its work badly. On the whole, therefore, the relative standing of the best machines was not much changed by this trial, except in the increased efficiency of the Perry mower.

A characteristic American invention is that of separate teeth for circular saws, several forms of which are exhibited, made under Emerson's and Miller's patents. It would be difficult to conceive of an innovation of that class originating in England, though having once seen it they will be quick to appreciate its value. There appears to be no one to give any information in reference to these saws, though there are many who would be glad to hear about their practical operation.

The electric light on the top of the ugly frame work in the English portion of the grounds is now working well, giving a magnificent light. The electricity is derived from a pair of magneto-electric machines running at 400 revolutions per minute, and the apparatus is in motion for several hours during the day, and from 9 to 10 o'clock in the evening, competing at that time with the French oil light. One should properly be several miles away to judge correctly of their relative powers.

Some very fine Fresnel lenses are exhibited by Messrs. Chance, of Birmingham, makers to the Trinity board. They have received a prize medal, and astonished the public a short time since, in proving them, in a photometric trial, nearly ten per cent superior to the French lenses, which have long held the first rank. Their efficiency is attributed to excellence of workmanship, as the quality of the glass does not appear equal to the French, and is said not to be so good as that usually turned out by this firm, owing to some difficulties with their furnaces at the time this was made.

One of the most interesting portions of the Exposition is that of railway carriages, particularly in the French department. We have been accustomed to think our system of long cars with four-wheel swiveling bogies at each end, the best possible for ease of working and economy of repairs to the permanent way. But whatever it may have been in time past, I think it is evident that our railway companies are beginning to find that there has been a growth in the wrong direction, and while builders and patentees have labored to produce the most luxurious accommodation for the public—and let us give them all praise for having done so—they have lost sight of the requirements of the railway in increasing the weight beyond measure, so that our heavy sleeping cars have become almost as destructive of permanent way as locomotives. To reduce the weight per axle, they have in some cases resorted to the use of sixteen wheels, but as these bogies are themselves the heaviest part of the structure, this shift involves a considerable addition to the total weight. A study of the European carriages exhibited, gives reason to believe that after all the system in vogue here, of short vehicles resting on two single axles with no heavy truck frames, but simply a light wrought-iron jaw to receive the axle box, is the true one. Counting up the number of passengers which these carriages will contain and taking the weight of the structure, we find that the dead weight per person is decidedly less than with us. A new feature which has been introduced within the past year or two on some of the railways of France, viz., the addition of a second story to the carriages, for second and third class passengers, has still further reduced the proportion existing between dead and paying weight, and really makes our figures seem quite extravagant. The use of iron framing is another of the means by which the weight is reduced, and despite of all the objections, such as noise, rigidity, etc., that have been raised against the substitution of iron for wood in this case, the use of iron frames is becoming continually more extended and appears perfectly satisfactory. With a view of removing the jarring which has sometimes been complained of with this mode of construction, some of the carriage bodies exhibited are not placed directly on the frame girders, but are supported by cast-iron brackets bolted to the sides of the latter, and having disks of india rubber on their top surface, to act as a cushion and prevent the transmission of vibration from the wheels. This matter of light carriages is one that deserves careful attention from our railway men, for it is evident that the present system is far too expensive both in first cost and in maintenance. The height of the two-story carriages is not much greater, if any, than that of our "monitor" cars, and as the upper story is not carried quite the full width, the