

Travel Notes

(FROM HELEN'S DIARY.)

Wiesbaden, Feb. 10, '14.

My anticipations of a change of abode came true only too quickly. Aunt Julia had a few extra twinges in her knee and decided in the twinkling of an eye that the only place for her was Wiesbaden. There, she thought, she would find succor from rheumatic sorrow. So, off to Wiesbaden we were hustled. But I do think she might have waited one more day, when she knew we were all going to the masquerade ball at the Deutsches Theater that night. But that's Aunt Julia! Once she gets an idea in her head, you can't do a thing with her. So I just had to swallow my disappointment and pitch in and pack three trunks, and instead of having a gay time at the ball as I had expected, I found myself dumped in this water-soaked, fog-blanketed health resort.

We are at the Palace Hotel, a perfectly gorgeous place, but in spite of its grandeur it seems to me exactly like a big hospital. Nearly all the guests are more or less crippled, and hobble along the halls with canes or crutches or are wheeled in invalid chairs. It is fearfully depressing after the gay life of Munich.

And the fog!!! I haven't been able to catch a glimpse of the buildings across the street since we came. Looking out of the window is about as exciting as trying to see through frosted glass. And as for the sun parlor—it is as dismal as a cavern.

Baedecker says that Wiesbaden lies in a basin surrounded by beautiful orchards and vineyards. It may be true, but it's hard to believe. My private opinion is that it lies in a basin full of fog. I don't think there's anything in Wiesbaden but cripples and fog, and boiling water. There's so much hot water underground that the steam comes up through the gratings in the street.

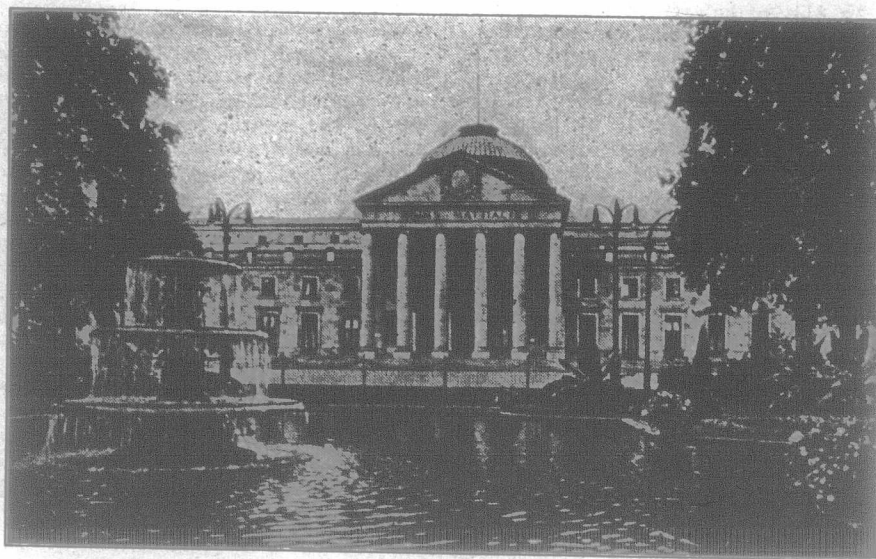
The Palace Hotel is just across the street from the Kochbrunner where the invalids go to drink the mineral water. Aunt Julia wanted to be near the spring so she could skip over in the morning and get her before-breakfast drink. But I think "skip" is too rapid and rhythmic a word to express her progress across the street. It is really a sort of adagio hobble. If there is such a verb in German as "to hobble," Aunt Julia's morning trip to the Kochbrunner would be expressed in that language somewhat in this style: "Every morning early, Aunt Julia is over the street after the Kochbrunner to drink been gehobbled." No wonder foreigners get muddle-headed trying to express themselves in this awful language. Every word seems to be put in the place where it will cause the most trouble to students, and some of the verbs are broken into bits and strewn all along the sentence. I quite agree with Mark Twain about German. He said it would take a clever person thirty years to learn it.

It has fallen to my lot to be Aunt Julia's morning escort to the Kochbrunner. The first time I went I nearly expired from suppressed laughter—it was such a droll sight. The spring is enclosed in a glass pavilion, and a long, glass-enclosed promenade leads up to it. At certain hours of the day, beginning as early as 6 a. m., the pavilion is open to visitors. All the regular drinkers have their own mugs, to the handles of which are attached numbered celluloid tags. These mugs are kept behind the counter, and handed out when called for. Nothing sounds more like swearing than to hear a big, fat German, with a deep, bass voice, call out his number to the waitress. For instance: "Sechzehn-

hundert-acht-und-zwanzig—it just fairly hisses all the way through.

Never shall I forget that first morning visit. It was cold and dark and foggy. The pavilion was filled with gloomy-looking men and women drinking out of glass mugs. Most of them were either lame, or fat, and some of them were both. There was such a sad funereal air about everything that the drink-line looked to me like a procession of mourners going up to take a last look at the remains.

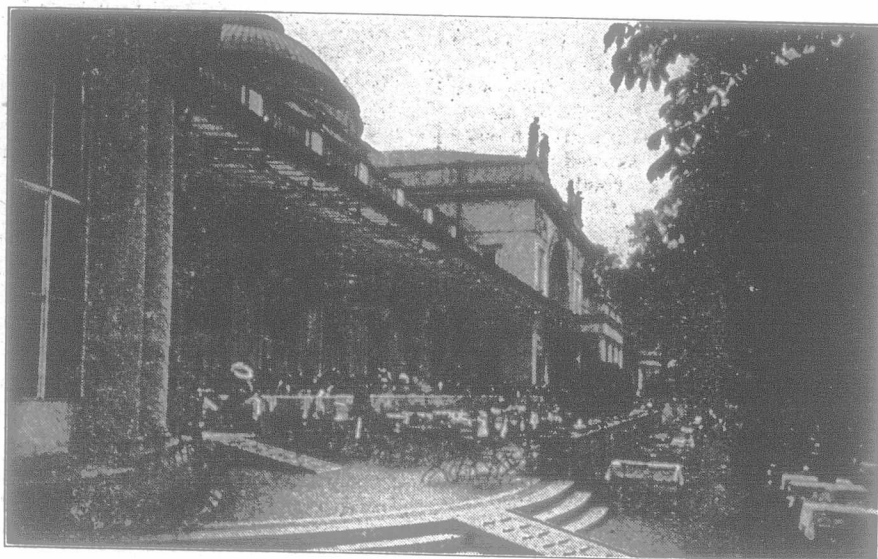
I have heard it said that Germany is the most rheumatic country on earth, but that as a compensation a kind and benevolent Providence has plentifully supplied the country with curative mineral springs. This may be all imagination, but a look at the map would seem to give it credence. Deutschland is fairly peppered with "bads," and that word always means a mineral spring of some kind. The waters of Carlsbad are especially good for the liver; Bad Nauheim for heart troubles; Bad Ems for throat



Front View of the Kurhaus, Wiesbaden.

The Kochbrunner water is supposed to cure rheumatism and reduce obesity—so the fat and the lame flock here by thousands. Over two hundred thousand people visit Wiesbaden annually for the cure. The output of the Kochbrunner is five thousand gallons an hour, and it never stops spouting day or night, winter or summer. It is used now almost exclusively for drinking, and the water from the other twenty-three mineral springs is used in the bathing establishments. But they do not depend on

and lung affections; Wiesbaden for rheumatism and obesity, etc. Then there is Baden-Baden; Marienbad; Wildbad; Bad Kissingen; Bad Homburg; Bad Harzburg; Bad Essen, and so on, by the hundred. I wonder if there is any "bad" any place that will cure baldness and produce a luxuriant growth of youthful-colored hair. I feel sure there must be one tucked away in some remote corner of this country. When it is discovered, there will be a grand stampede of the thin-haired and the bald-headed in that direc-



Back View of the Kurhaus, the Terrace Restaurant.

natural cures in Wiesbaden by any means. The town is a perfect hive of doctors—mostly specialists. To read the list of resident M.D.'s is enough to make the most cheerful person a deep, dark blue. You feel as if you must have something the matter with you. Of course, there are a great many famous physicians and surgeons here whose fame is so widespread that people from all parts of the world come here for treatment. There seems to be a special sanatorium for almost every ailment known, magnificent buildings they are, too—fine enough to be palaces.

tion, and somebody's pockets will be filled with gold.

After we had been here about ten days, Aunt Julia and the weather had both improved so much that we left the hotel and came up to this charming pension. It is located on one of the hills, and from our private balcony there is a delightful view. I have quite changed my opinion about Wiesbaden since we came up here. Those frightfully foggy days we had at first must have been winter's expiring kick, for when they vanished,

spring came in, and we had a succession of bright, balmy days. I have actually seen those orchards and vineyards mentioned by the all-knowing Baedeker, but they are still wearing the gray garb of winter.

If I had only stayed in Wiesbaden one week, I should have emphatically asserted that it was the most horrible hole on earth, but after three weeks' residence I can truthfully say it is a very beautiful and interesting city. The Stranger's Quarter is especially fine, architecturally, consisting chiefly of magnificent hotels, large, attractive pensions, and millionairish-looking private residences.

Wiesbaden resembles Rome in one respect; it is built on hills, but whereas Rome is credited with seven, Wiesbaden has so many you can't count them. Beyond the city hills are more hills, and beyond them rise the mountains, sometimes seeming to be quite near, and at other times hazy and indistinct.

The streets in the old part of the town are narrow and crooked, but in the modern part there are made wide and beautiful avenues. Wilhelm strasse, the main street, named, of course, after the Kaiser, is not only broad and straight, but also level; it combines commerce and pleasure, being bordered on one side with alluring shops, and on the other side by Kurhaus Park, and a wide promenade shaded by magnificent old trees. At certain hours of the day—at noon and late in the afternoon—when the visitors are all out for an airing, Wilhelm strasse is a cosmopolitan crush; the lame and the fat, the fashionable and the unfashionable, the visitors and the townspeople, all rub elbows on the wide pavement, and the jargon of tongues is like unto that of the Tower of Babel.

In the vicinity of the Kurhaus there are many ornamental benches for the benefit of exhausted pedestrians, and on warm, sunny days, every seat is occupied. It goes without saying that the benches are unusually strong; nothing frail could hold up the elephantine heavyweights that come here to take the cure. To see a row of them basking in the sun is suggestive of a comic Sunday supplement. A bench that seats eight average-sized Americans is barely large enough for two elderly, fat-upholstered German couples. Some of them, I'm sure, have not seen their feet for a long time—except, perhaps, in a looking-glass, and their feet are not small, either;—I think they could be truthfully catalogued as large objects.

With the exception of a few streets, walking in Wiesbaden is full of ups and downs. The streets on the hills are like multiplied letter S's. Uncle Ned says they are so erratic they make him think of a scared hen running around a backyard. If you happen to absentmindedly stray off a street that is long enough to have a perspective, you are apt to walk around in a circle, or get lost in a network of unknown paths. Uncle Ned went out for a little ramble one morning by himself, and much to his surprise found himself on the top of the Neroberg (a high hill overlooking the town). He had no idea he was anywhere near it until he was confronted by the Observation Tower. When he came home he remarked in an off-hand way:

"I've been up on the Neroberg. Fine view there. Can see the Rhine and the country beyond."

But he didn't go for a walk the next day. He said he had important letters to write, but I think he was stiff in the legs and wouldn't own up.

The motto of every German health resort seems to be: "Keep the patients either busy or amused." So in every resort there is a Kurhaus for the entertainment and convenience of visitors. The Kurhaus in Wiesbaden is a very