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MADAME VON DER HAUSEN.

FROM REMINISCENCES OF LUBECK.

At the beginning of the present century, she had been left a widow with an only son. About the time the French overran Germany, he had attained his nineteenth year. Heir of a noble fortune, it was thought advisable he should marry early, and he had been solemnly betrothed to a young and beautiful lady to whom he was fondly attached. In Germany the betrothal takes place a year before the marriage. The young couple spend as much as possible of the intervening time in each other's society. Six happy months had passed over the heads of these young lovers, when the war tocsin was sounded, and the men of Lubeck were called on to fight for their fatherland. As readily as the Highlanders of old obeyed the signal of the fiery cross, did the Lubeckers form themselves into a regiment. The ladies embroidered the regimental colours, and presented them to the gallant corps, who swore no enemy should ever gain possession of them; and Heinrich bade adieu to his Amelia with the mingled feelings of a despairing lover, and an ardent soldier burning to avenge his country's wrongs.

Every one is more or less familiar with the events of the German war. After the fatal defeat of Jena in 1806, Blücher, retreating with the wreck of the Prussian army, and hotly pursued by Bernadotte, Soult, and Murat, threw himself into Lubeck; in spite of the remonstrances of the senate and the citizens, and thereby involved it in his own ruin. Not more than a third of the original Lubeck regiment returned with Prince Blücher. Among the survivors was Heinrich, worn and wasted to a shadow with danger and toil.

Anxiety and suspense had wrought their usual effects on Madame Von der Hausen and Amelia. The lovers met; but under what different circumstances had they once anticipated a meeting! They met but to part for ever. The French had followed hard on the retreating Prussians. The battle commenced outside the walls. The town was stormed. The Prussians fought in the streets, but at last were compelled to evacuate the town, which was sacked and pillaged, and for three dreadful days given over to the tender mercies of a brutal soldiery. More than thirty years have passed since those fearful days, but even yet, no one speaks of them but to an intimate friend, and the voice on such occasions sinks to a low whisper of shame and horror.

In the streets of his native city, at the very door of the house where he had hoped to dwell with his young and lovely bride, Heinrich fell covered with wounds. The family had taken refuge in the cellars, but in a moment of agony Amelia had rushed up stairs, and, looking from a window, saw her lover fall. Her shrieks attracted the notice of the soldiery; they broke into the house: a few days after, she died a raving maniac in the arms of Madame Von der Hausen. For some time after this, Madame Von der Hausen was a prey to hopeless misery. One of her favourite haunts was the church called the Marienkirche, a brick building in the Gothic style, finished before the year 1144, and displaying much elegance in its architectural decorations. But what attracted her was a painting of the Dance of Death, attributed by some to Holbein, but in reality, executed several years before the birth of that great artist. Here she would remain for hours, apparently taking a gloomily pleasure in the various scenes depicted by the artist, where death seizes men in the midst of security and apparent happiness.

One day when about to leave this spot, she was addressed by an old Lutheran clergyman. "Madame Von der Hausen," he said, "this picture seems to attract much of your attention, and yet, methinks, there is a picture in one of the side-chapels of the Dom Kirche, which might be to you a source of more genuine satisfaction." Thus saying, he left her. She pondered on his words, and next day bent her steps to the cathedral in search of the picture.

The side-chapels contain the monuments of many of the patrician families of Lubeck, and the tombs of numerous bishops and canons are in the choir. The remains of the Dukes of Oldenburg repose in immense coffins of white marble. The mother of Madame Von der Hausen belonged to a branch of that princely family, and she lingered long beside their tombs, feeling as if the dead were more to her than the living. In a chapel behind the high altar is a very remarkable painting, bearing the date 1491. It is placed in a shrine. On the outside of the folding-doors, there is a picture of the Annunciation. Inside of them are figures of St. John the Baptist, St. Jerome, St. Blaize, and St. Philip, but the central and principal picture is a representation of the events of the Passion, depicted in twenty-three distinct groups. Towards

this picture Madame Von der Hausen directed her steps. Each individual countenance is a study in itself. She gazed on the face of Simon the Cyrenian, in which there was a moral beauty that rivetted her attention. She was next attracted by the wild grief of Mary Magdalene; her head thrown back, her beautiful hair hanging in disorder round her shoulders, and her hands extended forwards as she wrung them in despair. By and bye, her eye rested on another figure: it was the Virgin mother, seated at the foot of the cross. The calmness of her agony struck forcibly on the heart of the bereaved mother. The view of the principal figure completed the impression, and Madame Von der Hausen left the place in a very different frame of mind from that with which she had entered it. I will not dwell minutely on the change which she now experienced; it is sufficient to state the result. Her distress was exchanged for a state of complete tranquillity, and henceforward her time was chiefly occupied in visiting the afflicted, soothing the mourners, and relieving the distressed.

Objects were not wanting on whom to bestow her sympathies. For several years the French kept possession of the town, and their cruelty and rapacity caused much individual misery. Their very presence was torture to multitudes on whom they had brought disgrace and ruin. Towards the end of the Moscow campaign, they evacuated the town, amidst the curses, not loud but deep, of the oppressed inhabitants. The Russians came, and were hailed as friends; but, alas! they were found to be locusts, "for they ate up the residue that had escaped" of the former plagues. If they got a silver fork or spoon to eat with, it was immediately transferred to their pockets, and was no more seen! The filthiness of their habits exceeded all that can be imagined: more than one gentleman burned his house after they had left it, -hopeless of cleaning it by any other means. Years glided on, and Madame Von der Hausen continued her course of practical benevolence. Great part of her ample fortune still remained, having, by the help of a kind friend, been preserved from French exactions. She did, indeed, deserve all that nurse Martha had said in her praises. There is an old church in Lubeck, the interior of which is fitted up for a poor's house. There are two long double rows of cabins, very much like those sometimes seen on the deck of a steam-boat; on one side, the cabins are occupied by females, those on the other side of the church by males. Here Madame Von der Hausen was in the habit of taking me; and while listening to the melancholy history of many of the occupants, I learned to feel that others had drunk at least as deeply of the cup of sorrow as I had done, and that in many cases it had proved ultimately a blessing.

PALMER'S VILLAGE.

Of all the human burrows in and about England, there is not one comparable, in its way, to Palmer's Village, into which I followed my fair little guide, under an archway not more than four feet high, close to the mouth of which stood a steam engine of peculiar, and to me incomprehensible, construction—the engineer uttering at intervals a short and rapid guttural sound, which I then conceived to be a warning to passengers to avoid the engine, but which more matured experience has informed me is simply an announcement to the nobility, gentry, his friends, and the public, that his steaming apparatus contains "baked taters, a halfpenny a piece—all hot, all hot!"

For the information of the curious in such matters, who may be induced by my description to essay the wonders of Palmer's Village, I take the liberty to observe, that, at the further end of the tunnel, or archway, aforesaid, is a step, over which new comers are apt to break either their shins or noses, which accident is facetiously called by the villagers, paying your footing. When your footing is thus paid, by your footing being lost, you emerge into an alley or avenue, fifteen inches wide, or thereabouts, affording room for one person, and no more, to pass along, and fenced on either side with old barrel staves, broken iron hoops, and rotten paling of every variety of scantling. Within the fence, on either side this path—which, I should have observed, is neither paved, nor flagged, nor bituminized, but simply one aboriginal puddle from end to end—are arranged the gardens of the respective tenements, two or three palings being omitted from the line of palisade for the convenience of pigs and tenantry. No gardens, I am sure, from the hanging gardens of Babylon, to those of White Conduit House, can exhibit in the same space (two yards square each) the variety of ingenious devices that ornament the gardens of Palmer's Village. A bit of anything green is the only deficiency observable, but this is supplied by a curious artistical arrangement of puddle-holes, dung-heaps, cabbage stalks, brick bats, and broken bottles.

The tenements attached are like nothing on the face of the world but themselves—a sort of half-breed between hovel and wigwam, without the least trace of cottage running in the blood. There are two stories, with two windows to each, in the face of these extraordinary village edifices, the window containing, on an average, three old hats, one flannel petticoat, and two patched panes of glass, each; there was also to each house a doorway, and some had an apology for a door.

You are not to suppose that there exists only one avenue through Palmer's Village, or only one straggling street of the tenements above mentioned. There were as many avenues, lanes, holes, and bores, as there used to be in the catacombs; houses huddled upon one another, without regard to discipline or good order; in short, were I a magistrate, I should feel inclined to read the riot act, Palmer's Village being strictly within the spirit and meaning of that enactment: a neighbourhood tumultuously assembled!

The houses, individually, look as if they deserved to be fined five shillings every man jack of them, for being drunk. They had evidently been up all night, and wore an intoxicated and disorderly look, which no well-regulated and respectable tenement would disgrace himself by being seen in. Stooping under the rotten paling, I was at length received into one of the most tattered mansions, and, having picked my way up a worn-out stair to the two-pair back; a miserable place, wherein a counterpane of patch work, spread over a little straw upon the ground, a broken chair, a stool, three bars of nail rod stuck in the chimney by way of grate, with a bit of the same material to serve for poker, a frying-pan, a snit herring and a half, perforated through the optics, upon a nail, a tea-kettle, and a smoothing iron, made up the ostensible furniture of the apartment.—*London Mirror.*

ASCENT OF ETNA.

The sky was still bright overhead, but, notwithstanding the east was dappled with approaching day, the view towards the west gave us the prospect only of a dark abyss, in which the view was lost, a blackness palpable, over which the eye wandered in a kind of awe, as if gazing at something supernatural. Refreshed by our short rest, we once more toiled onward. The increasing roar of the volcano now sounded so close, that a feeling of some insecurity began to mingle itself with the excitement of the scene. Another struggle or two, and lo! in the midst of a terrific explosion that seemed to make the mountain reel, we reached the edge, and looked down through the gray mist of the sulphur smoke into the fearful Gehenna that glowed beneath our feet.

It was a spectacle well worth the climb. The crater was a huge irregular basin, its walls split and riven, and shattered by the convulsive throes of the subterranean fire, and at one spot cleft almost to the base, as if some Titanic mace had swept its way through the dark and rocky wall. Within this gulf the stifling clouds were rolling hither and thither, dimly seen between us and the central aperture below, from which, at intervals, a blinding light shot up, giving a ruddy glare to the smoke that rolled forth from it. From the side of the conical hill, of which this formed the summit, a small stream of lava was flowing towards the surrounding wall, giving forth a scorching glow from its fiery waves, that rolled over one another with a slow and lazy motion. At short intervals the bellying beneath our feet gave notice of a coming explosion, and the next instant, far up into the dark sky, as if but the sparks of a furnace, flew the huge blocks of rock, white at first, less brilliant when they reached the highest point of their flight, and falling back a deep red into the abyss from which they had emerged. At these moments the whole circumference of the crater was one blaze of light, contrasting strongly with the comparative darkness in which it remained during the intervals between the explosions, and turning one giddy with its glare, while the projected stones, as they rushed past us at no very great distance, increased the terror of the scene.

The day began to dawn, and straining our eyes towards the east, we could discern the outline of the coast called out into dark relief by the brightening sky reflected in the water. The morning, however, was dim and lowering, and, we began to fear, gave little promise of an extensive prospect. We descended the cone a short way, so as to be in some degree sheltered from the tempest that raged at the extreme summit, and waited for the development of the panorama which was to be unrolled beneath our feet.

Object after object became slowly visible—the sea between us and Italy—the coast of Calabria, dimly shadowed forth like a dark bank of clouds upon the horizon. Then began the scenery around the base of the mountain slowly to put on its daylight tints. There