

try him, call for his glass of ale, drink it, pay for it, and go away as unceremoniously as yourself. The consequence of this easy familiarity is, that princes are everywhere popular, and the daily occurrence of their presence amongst the people prevents that absurd crush and stare at them which prevails in more luxurious and exclusive countries.

The same open and general enjoyment of scenery extends to all other estates and gardens. The country houses of the nobility and gentry are surrounded on all sides with public and private walks. They seldom have any fences about anything but their private gardens. The people go and walk everywhere, and never dream of trespassing, nor are ever told of such a thing. This is one of the great charms of this country. All woods, with the rare exception of a deer park, are thus entirely open and unfenced. You wander where you will, with the most perfect feeling of giving no offence. Here are no warning boards, no threats of steel-traps or spring-guns. A wisp of straw stuck on a pole, the usual sign in Germany of warning, in vintage time gives you notice that a private walk, which all the rest of the year is open, is then closed; or a wisp hung on the bough of a tree in the forest, tells you that the common people are not to cut boughs there, or that young trees are planted, and you are not to tread them down. Everywhere else, you go where you please through woods, valleys, meadows, gardens, or fields; and while property is sacred to the possessor, nature is, as it should be, unrestrictedly yours, and every man's.

In this blessed freedom, and with this simple and thorough line of nature and society, there is no country in the world where social and summer life are more enjoyed than in Germany. You are perpetually invited to join a party to a wood-stroll, to go to some lovely village in the hills or the forest, or to some old farm-house, where you get milk and coffee, and take bread with you perhaps; where you find a *Tanz-boden*, or shed, where the young people can have a dance; where the old sit, and look on, and smoke, and talk, and knit. Or to some old mill, where you have the same accommodations; or to some inn, on an eminence overlooking a splendid country, as that of the Rhine or Danube, and where on the terrace, the whole company will play at those simple games so much liked in Germany, as the black man, the blind cow, and others; where all, high and low, old and young, run and laugh, and are as merry as so many boys and girls.

This true love of nature is a delightful and peculiar trait of the German character—they travel, or rather circulate round, from a true love of the beautiful; not a picturesque point but is seized upon by them, and they thus nourish in themselves one of the purest and most enduring sources of happiness.

Closing the outer life of the German people with this sketch of their natural taste, Howitt proceeds more into detail. He gives us an able and interesting description of the wandering handicraftsmen, a class of people who excite so much interest among travellers in Germany; he begins with the origin of the institution, points out its benefits and its disadvantages; shows the strict surveillance kept upon the roaming *gesell*, which, by forcing them to attention to their duties, or in default thereof, banning them with

the curse of their craft, renders the knowledge and experience they gain of the highest use to them: it not only improves them in their own peculiar trade, and makes them fit to become master workmen—but the varied wanderings, the familiarity with danger, and the close intercourse with nature which such a life induces, developes the latent poetry which is in every man's heart: but which, among the working classes, often remains dormant, because the kind of education which brings it forward and informs it with life is denied to them. Howitt found this to be true, in his necessary intercourse with the tradesmen:

On the other hand, to the aspiring and deserving these years open up a new world of knowledge and of life; to those who have a feeling for nature and for art—and there are many amongst this class—a world of delight. Imagine a youth who has passed his apprentice years in some stupid little town, and under some severe master; amid circumstances and tempers which make a house worse than a prison, and of which the bitterness is only too sure to fall on the innocent apprentice—imagine with what delight he must look forward to the hour which shall set him free, and spread before him a new existence, and new realms and years of novelty, variety, more freedom, and, as he fondly hopes, more good. With what a sense of elastic life must he spring from the doorstead of his enervating oppressions, and stretch the wings of his spirit over that wide and hope-tinted space before him. It was this peculiar life which gave Goethe the idea of Wilhelm Meister in his "*Lehrjahre*," and his "*Wanderjahre*," and has furnished to many other German writers, topics and ideas that serve eminently to vary their works. And to those, even in these humble classes, who have souls which have faculties and feelings beyond the mere circle of what the Germans call their bread-scences—and to none has the beneficent Creator entirely denied such, any more than that he has denied to the dry heath, the common wayside, and the untrodden desert, beauty and the flowers which "blush unseen" there—what a period of enchantment and of rapidly expanding knowledge does this wander-schaft become! In the mountains and woods through which their routes lead them, by the noble rivers which flow through their country, they breathe, as they go from one station to another in the summer, a soul of poetry, and revel in the richest feelings of existence. What moments of deep entrancement, what dreams of fancy and beauty, do some of these humble wanderers enjoy, as you see them with their knapsacks slung on the flowery turf, and their elbows propped on their hands cushioned upon them, as they lie stretched on the green skirts of one of their beautiful woods; and by the swift waters of a meadow stream. To many a young wanderer, who, but for this ancient custom, would never have issued from his native town, as to Hans Sachs, such moments no doubt there are, worth a whole life of ordinary existence. Visions of the future come before him in the warmest colors of anticipated happiness; and sweetest recollections of woods and green meadows, and harvest scenes full of happy people, and mountain glens, and sunshine and bright waters, and feelings in musical sympathy with them all, cling to him thence to his latest days, making his native land as hallowed to him as his own hearth and existence.

If any one think this too poetical to be true, we can only advise him to enter the dwellings of such men as shoemakers, saddlers, or other such handicraft trades-