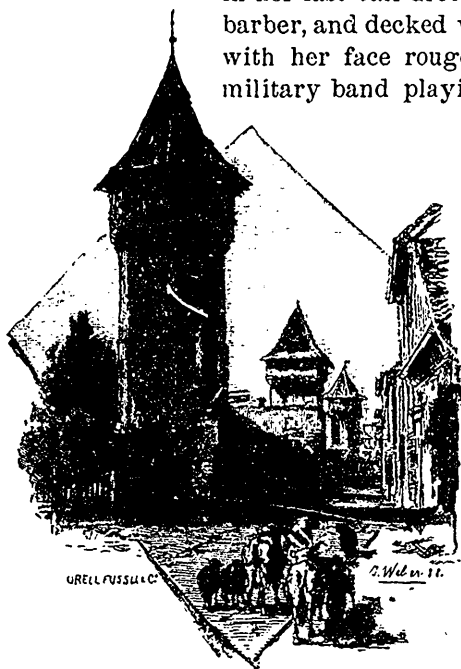


the epidemic of diphtheria, when as many as three children were buried in one coffin, when whole streets were depopulated, the inhabitants all dead: families of five or seven children swept away in one week—the poor mothers going out of their minds. It was like the last plague of Egypt, and the people called this scourge the *white pest*. Not one house was spared.*

It was after this terrible time that taking the dead through the streets in open coffins was put a stop to. Previously a funeral was a kind of public fête; on a funereal car covered with gilded angels, garlands, and ribbons, the dead maiden was carried forth

in her last ball dress, with hair dressed by the barber, and decked with flowers, and often even with her face rouged so as to look better! A military band playing Chopin's funeral march

followed the corpse. It was like looking on at a "Dance of Death" to see the head of the deceased rolling from one side to the other of the satin pillow, whilst the women shrieked, tore their hair, and smote upon their breasts. Now the loss of all this is made up for by the crowds assembling in the churches, where the dead lie in state, the people jostling each other in their struggles to look on the face of the corpse or to kiss its hand. In the country the dead are still buried in accordance



OLD TOWERS AND WALL, HERMANNSTADT, ROUMANIA.

with ancient rites; the obolus for Charon, the ferryman of the Styx, is placed in the mouth of the corpse, corn is put into the coffin, and the body is drenched with wine before it is lowered into the earth.

The people of Bucharest are very fond of flowers; there is not a window in the town without a few pots of geraniums, carnations, or mignonette. As soon as the first snow falls, nothing but

* Pathos is added to this account by the fact that the writer herself lost her only child, a lovely girl four years old, from diphtheria.