

AUSTRIA.

BY PETER EVAN TURNBULL, ESQ., F.R.S.

This book describes a portion of an extensive tour made by Mr. Turnbull and his brother in the years '34, '35, and '36.

The travellers passed from Berlin to Dresden, and thence through that frontier country which passes by the name of Saxon Switzerland direct into Bohemia.

"...along a range of elevated ground chiefly covered with trees, we arrived at a road crossing our path at right angles in the midst of a dense forest. This road formed the boundary line: we passed it, and were in Bohemia. On a jutting stone by the way-side sat two wandering minstrels,—the one with a harp, the other with a flute: they used neither—but with rich sweet voices they greeted in beautiful melody our arrival in their native land."

Nothing could have been more characteristic. The Bohemians are passionately fond of music. It comes in with the clear and pure air of their spring, and goes out with the last breath of their warm and genial summer. It is only in the winter months that these rustic bands of wandering minstrels are ever silent.

No vexatious obstructions were offered at the entrance into the Imperial States. The passports were glanced at, and returned with a respectful bow; no trouble was given about the luggage; not a single impertinency was attempted, in the way either of question or notice, by police or fiscal officers. And this was the same everywhere.

The countenances of the people themselves in various parts of Germany were properly made matter of nice observation by our travellers. They found them gradually improve as they proceeded southward. They were better pleased at Dresden than at Berlin; much better at Teplitz and Carlsbad than at Dresden; and as they afterwards descended towards the Italian frontier, they found the Italian character more and more prevalent.

"In Bohemia it is decidedly superior to that which prevails in Saxony. There are fewer broad, flat, sandy-looking faces,—more of expression,—clearer complexion, finer eyes, and narrower and smaller features."

Carlsbad and other principal baths of Bohemia, Teplitz, Marienbad, and Franzbad, form the first objects of interest in the descriptions, and are placed with great vividness and distinctness before the reader. Houses of entertainment in these Austrian watering places seem to realize the very perfection of innocent and tranquil enjoyment.

"Thither may be seen the stately equipage of the feudal prince, and the humble cart-like omnibus with its load of traders, following each other in long and dusty procession, and each depositing its charge to enjoy in common the rural loveliness of nature. Rude tables are laid beneath the broad dark foliage of the elm, the chestnut, and the oak; no spirits may be supplied at these places of sober recreation; but the neat, bright-eyed damsel supplies the portion of coffee or tea, or possibly of light thin effervescing beer, alike to the prince and to the mechanic, the élegant of Berlin or Vienna, and the homely wife of the honest farmer. There they sit in tranquil, unenvying enjoyment, until the shades of evening warn them to return, when the greater number repair to their homes, take a light supper, and are in bed by ten o'clock."

At Teplitz Mr. Turnbull met the King of Prussia, and, recollecting the ease, simplicity, and extreme familiarity of William's habits in his own capital, was amazed to find him, in the Austrian dominions, a very pattern of straight-laced and ceremonious etiquette. This is amusingly described, and there is a mention of the great Humboldt in connection with it, very curious in itself, and very characteristic of Mr. Turnbull.

"He is as indefatigable in business as he is profound in research. Often, at Berlin, have I been at his door before eight in the morning, but he had already gone forth to the active duties of the day; and, after these were passed, I have seen him in the evening, with his gold-key to his button-hole, performing the offices of chamberlain in the ball-room with the readiness and ease of one who had never quitted the precincts of a court. To observe this distinguished man, who has filled Europe with his philosophic fame, standing bare-headed on the walk of Teplitz, beside the seat of the Princess of Leignitz, performing the smaller offices of the courtly attendant, watching her every motion, and running with hat in hand to overtake her, if perchance she might move forward some few steps unobserved,—may excite the smile, and possibly the derision of him who looks merely on the surface of events."

From Prague the travellers went on in the direction of Salzburg, taking Linz by the way, through Budweis and Freystadt. The latter place commences the province of Upper Austria, and the track to Linz, one of the most beautiful and Italian-like cities of

Germany, seems to embrace, with singular picturesqueness, a range of lofty granite hills, amid rich park-like scenery on either side, stretching down from their lofty summits into the Vale of the Danube.

"We were much reminded of some of the richest parts of England—swelling hills, covered with small enclosures, most of them verdant with grass or clover, and the divisions formed of the green hedges with a great luxuriance of trees. Rural cottages, too, were interspersed among them, decorated with trellises of rose and jasmín. We were reminded of the scenery between Taunton and Sidmouth, and of that which delights the eye from the hills of Malvern, but we agreed that both the one and the other must yield, in comparison, to the richness and beauty of the Austrian landscape."

The sudden change of climate and scenery between Linz and Salzburg is marked with good effect.

"As we proceeded, the mountains rose before us with increasing grandeur—the woods were all of pine—the air cold and sharp—the cottages constructed of dark wood, with windows few and deep and small, and rows of large stones along the high projecting shingle roofs, to preserve their position against the fury of the winds. All attested that we had quitted the climate of the Danube, and were at the threshold of the Austrian Highlands."

Everything noticeable in Salzburg is touched upon by Mr. Turnbull, but no very inviting account is given of the city itself, either in its present state or future prospects. The commercial traffic, though still not inconsiderable, is said to exhibit everywhere symptoms of decay. "The university is reduced to a lyceum of two faculties, medicine and jurisprudence:—the central mining establishment for this and the adjacent provinces has been removed into the Tyrol, so that in this capital of a most interesting country, it would, as I was informed, be nearly vain to enquire for a geologist;—and the population, less than twelve thousand, has of late been scarcely on the increase." But notwithstanding the dulness and gloom of this ancient city, the localities of its former splendour possess natural interest, and in its churches and monasteries, more particularly, our travellers found much to notice.

"In that of the Benedictines is the monument of Haydn—and a singular one it is. A mass of rough stone in relief represents a natural rock covered with moss;—it is strewed with loose leaves or books in marble, bearing the titles of the principle works of the composer;—behind these is seen on the rock a small oblong mausoleum, bearing a black slab with this simple inscription. 'Michael Haydn, nato die 14 Sept. 1737: vita functo die 10 Aug. 1806.' This monument has been severely criticised. To me it appeared in good taste and very pleasing. It is simply expressive; and the noblest epitaph which admiration could indite on the great composer, is found in the titles of the works which lie strewed about the rock."

Mr. Turnbull, after leaving Salzburg, descended the salt mines of Hallein, of which a very graphic account is given; passed on, through the southward chain of the Noric Alps, to the beautiful baths of Gastein; and saw, in the little neighbouring village of Bockstein, the working of an auriferous mountain.

"The gold is here found in veins of quartz permeating in various directions a mountain of gneiss, which rises shortly behind the village (Bockstein), to an extreme elevation of 9,800 English feet above the sea. It is worked in a series of horizontal galleries, the highest at an elevation of 8,600 feet, which communicates with one another by shafts, and some of which are of great antiquity. The quartz is severed by blasting, and broken into small pieces at the mine, whence it is conveyed by descending water tubes to Bockstein. Here it is reduced to powder, which is mixed largely with water. The mud thus produced is, by the machinery of water-mills, gently but constantly agitated on a series of planes, nearly horizontal, but slightly inclining downwards, the one to the other; by which action, the lighter part is successively carried forward, while the heavier articles, including the gold and the silver, subside at the bottom. This heavier portion, after repeated similar washings, is subjected to mercury, and the amalgamation conducted in the usual manner. This is the course adopted when the gold is in sufficient grainage to be capable of separation by mere pulverization; in other cases, when it is held in chemical combination, as it frequently is, with arsenic and sulphur, it is sent direct to the smelting-houses at Lend."

The next objects of interest with Mr. Turnbull were the natural beauties of the Salzkammergut, or "property of the old Salt Chamber," a region of mountain scenery situated in Upper Austria, remarkable for its production of salt. Slightly describing these, and detecting various fables told of them by Sir Humphry Davy, our travellers advanced into the province of Upper Syria, "a region of

mountain scenery unsurpassed in grandeur or beauty by any country," and containing, among many other remarkable places, the town of Admont and its noble and far-famed Abbey of Benedictines.

"Wheresoever I have visited Benedictine communities in the various countries of Europe, or even on the western side of the Atlantic, I have found them a body of well-educated, well-conducted gentlemen. They partake, of course, somewhat of the peculiar character of their respective nation, whatsoever it be."

From Admont the tourists passed into the vale of Enns, held to be the most beautiful in Europe.

"The hills in its immediate vicinity are of limestone; finely wooded in most parts, but exhibiting most of rugged rock projecting among the foliage; rising from five to ten thousand feet in height, and combining every picturesque variety of form—the wildly grand with the richly beautiful! But a peculiar feature of this splendid vale is the detachment of its mountain masses into separate groups and single hills; which thus present to the view an ever-varying succession of lateral openings and valleys and vistas, until at length the eye becomes, if possible, cloyed with admiration."

On looking back on the condition of the people and peasantry, in the provinces so traversed by Mr. Turnbull and his brother, whether by the vale of the Danube in Upper Austria, or among the Highland districts of Upper Styria, it is gratifying to observe that in the aggregate they may be said to have the means of existence—food, clothing, fuel—and even of reasonable comfort, always within their reach. The cases of privation that occur, seem to be mainly attributable to particular habits and over-indulgences.

The description of Vienna, and of Viennese society, are careful and elaborate, but Mr. Turnbull surrenders himself to a somewhat too implicit admiration of the "paternal system" of the Emperor.

"No beggars are seen: No appearance of poverty meets the eye. In Germany—and indeed this remark applies nationally to Germany at large more than it does to any other country—no one appears badly dressed. We learnt from master-tradesmen in every branch, that their work-people and apprentices expend very little in their food, and lodge generally three and four in a room, in order that they may be equal, in respectability of appearance, to their superiors. Tractable, sober, and industrious, they are ever willing to work.....no impartial observer will hesitate to admit of the Viennese, and of the inhabitants of the circumjacent provinces, that they are a most happy and enjoying people. Frugal, cheerful, and contented, they seek no alteration in their condition; they know little of their government, but its mild and paternal influences; and they dread change of any kind as fraught with evil. They see their princes mixing among them with the simplicity and kindness of private citizens; and they love them with an affection which they believe (and in my opinion justly believe) to be reciprocal. Their general tone of character forms them for tranquil enjoyment in themselves, and for promoting it in others: and of the lower classes, as well as the higher, I am bound to say that I have ever found them mild, kind and obliging."

Mr. Turnbull has some good remarks on the spirit of exclusiveness which is more or less common in all ranks of German society, and very properly laughs at

"...that egregious personal vanity, that greediness of hereditary or official distinction, which impels the wife of the lowest public functionary to assume a rank and a title from her husband's petty office;—where 'Mrs. Regimental-deputy-quarter-master' holds herself superior to 'Mrs. Imperial-and-royal-districtual-tobacco-stamp-controller,' and where 'Mrs. Princely-Schwarzenburgish-plantation-surveyor' declines to associate with 'Mrs. Prague-privileged-city-fish-market-tolls-deputy-collector.'"

but he might have done well to have carried the same laughing wisdom into a scrutiny of the Government institutions of Austria, relatively to the social position of the governed.

With all Mr. Turnbull's desire to speak favourably of the Emperor, we do not see that he makes out a much better case for him, than those less courteous travellers who have referred to him.

"As far as his powers extend it appears to be his desire to follow up the system and views of his deceased father. Like all the princes of his family, he is simple in his habits, unostentatious, frugal, and benevolent; his tastes are quiet and domestic. Up to the period of our quitting Vienna, he had held no public levee nor private festivities, save for members of his family; neither had any foreigner been presented to him since his accession, except such diplomatic agents as it was incumbent on him to receive to audience. His health, however, had much improved, and was still improving. I have seen him for a couple of hours on horseback reviewing his troops; and few days occurred, when the weather was fine, in which