

TRAVELS
FROM
HAMBURG,
THROUGH
WESTPHALIA, HOLLAND,
AND THE
NETHERLANDS,
TO
P A R I S.

BY
THOMAS HOLCROFT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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G.S.

CHAPTER IV.

MY FAMILY INTRODUCED TO THE ACQUAINTANCE OF THE READER—
BOISTEROUS BUT MERRY COMPANIONS—A NIGHT AND A DAY IN
TRAVELLING ELEVEN GERMAN MILES, IN A GERMAN DILIGENCE—
ARRIVAL: AN INVITATION TO THE KING OF ENGLAND—THE PLEA-
SURES OF REPOSE AND A GOOD INN.

I AM ambitious of travelling in good company: or, to speak without a figure, of fixing the attention of the reader of good sense, and good taste. Now, in order that we may go on pleasantly together, our feelings must sympathize: which they cannot do, unless we have various common points of contact.

I do not admire that shivering sensibility which shrinks from and repines at every touch of rude necessity. What age of the world ever more forcibly taught how necessary it is, for the poor wanderer, to steel himself to times and seasons? But, though we endure, let us know that we endure! The knowledge is wholesome; and, to the wounded spirit, the recollection is a balm. The truth is, I wish to bring the reader acquainted with those over whom every social and every affectionate tie had placed me, as a guardian.

Here then is my Louisa, with an infant yet unseen, but not two months longer so to remain; and another on her knee: a sweet boy, five quarters old, whom neither her burthen, nor fatigue, nor intreaty, could long induce her to commit even to a father's care: not because she had fears, but, because she had affections.

On one side of her was my daughter, our faithful Fanny; as gentle as she was courageous; and on the other myself. We occupied one of the wooden benches of the waggon: it was hard, and exposed to every inclemency. The public vehicles, on this road, are all in the same state: unless you bring one, a covered carriage is not to be had. Ours was the middle seat; and behind us, and before us, were gentlemen and ladies, old and young. These gentlemen and ladies, well wrapped up in woollens and provided with snaps,* laughed and ranted like a hundred hop-pickers; and, whenever their talkative jocularities ceased, broke forth into a general chorus of "*Ach, du lieber Augustin, Augustin, Augustin.*"†

Their mirth was not refined; but it tended to exhilarate: at least it excited attention; and gave a sort of employment to the mind. How should we have been pestered, heaven help us, if, instead of these hale companions, we had had my lady's woman, and my lord's valet!

I do not however emulate that excess of philanthropy, which pretends to find every thing good, and admirable. One man will tell me, I have not seen the world, because I am not a member of his club; and another, because I never danced at the assembly to which he is a subscriber. To each of these, the club and the assembly are the *world*. For my own part, I have been so hustled, and tossed, and driven about, that the worlds on which I have been thrown are too various for memory to retain. Even the world of a *fahrende post* is far from being always the same: and to you, my gentle companions, it was totally a new world.

It was the beginning of May, and about seven o'clock in the

* Spiritous liquors.

† The chorus to a popular song.

evening,

evening, when we set off. From Harburg to Bremen, at which city we intended to halt a few days, is only eleven miles.

“ Oh! Then you were to be at your journey's end by nine that very evening.”

Ah, my dear madam, they were German miles; and the road, the postillion, and the *Stuhl-wagen* were each of them German.

We travelled all night, and all day, through a country so flat that no object was hidden; yet nothing could be seen, except cold and green nakedness; and arrived, with great difficulty, between nine and ten the next evening. I do not think these eleven German miles could measure less than seventy English: still however it appears strange that persons, who travel in a flying diligence, should be six or seven and twenty hours in going seventy miles. It is the fact. Had we gone two months earlier, it would have been much worse: we should not have slept in Bremen the second night.

Louisa bore the journey with cheerfulness; wearied enough, 'tis true; but the shaking was little, compared to that which she had afterward to endure.

Do not imagine that every where, as in England, you are driven to your inn door, step out, and immediately seat yourself by a pleasant fire; with a bell at your hand, and a ready waiter: who is clean, attentive, and expeditious, in hopes that he may excite your generosity. Fires, bells, and waiters, of this description, are seldom to be found in a German inn: and, further, we had the inn itself to seek.

On this occasion, it happened that we were fortunate. Bremen, like other German cities, has its post-house; where the passengers alight, and the heavy rude machine is unloaded. Obligated to watch and see that our effects were safe, as we were standing, surrounded

surrounded by the confusion of passengers, porters, and the loads they were tossing about in the dark, we were accosted by a boy; who asked, in good English, "if we would suffer him to show us to an inn?"

'Ay, my good fellow; most willingly.'

"Then please, sir, to follow me."

'Who are you; and where do you live?'

"My father keeps the *König von England*, over the bridge."

'Indeed! He keeps the King of England? And is he an Englishman?'

"Yes, sir; he was born in Dublin."

'Ah, ha!' The answer was in character.

"His name is Lane; and you will find beds, and fire, and supper, such as you will like."

'You are a very obliging boy; and bring very good news. Do you, Louisa and Fanny, follow him; and I will join you, as soon as I can.'

The spirits, when exhausted, have scarcely the force to be impatient: but they must be diligently watched, that they do not become pettish. I had waited full three quarters of an hour; and yet the porters could not, or would not, attend to me. Every thing was safe: I might go, if I pleased. I could get no other answer. The boy had returned, and assured me whatever I left would be brought to our inn, before we had eaten our supper. To find the rational quantity of confidence is sometimes a difficult calculation: however, I once more repeat, that a very moderate share of caution is generally sufficient, among the Germans.

The boy had not deceived us: the house was not absolutely English; it was in Bremen, and the landlord was a good natured Hibernian; but there was civility, a parlour fire, tolerable wine,
and

and an excellent supper. There are travellers who wander among eternal flowers; there are others that never step but upon thorns: I have never yet arrived at paradise, or purgatory, However, I do not know better how to describe the evening's enjoyment, after the day's fatigue, than by that common figure of speech, a heaven upon earth!



The Polier, Merita at Amsterdam.

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CHAPTER V.

A WALK IN BREMEN—ASPECT OF THE CITY AND ITS INHABITANTS—THE PRUSSIANS AGAIN, AND THE FEELINGS OF THE PEOPLE—ROLAND, THE GIANT—THE EMBLEMATIC PILGRIM—A REMARKABLE VAULT UNDER THE CATHEDRAL, AND ITS MUMMIES—AN ENGLISH COUNTESS—THE NECESSITY OF INVESTIGATION—PAINTINGS, POPULAR TALES, AND INDECORUM.

WE were pleased, as we walked the next morning and examined the city. Speaking with some small licence, or rather with some few exceptions, the streets are cleaner, wider, and more airy, the houses better built, and the whole better planned, than Hamburg; or, in my opinion, than Lubeck. I reserve a more detailed account of these Hanse towns to another occasion; a few sketches of Bremen excepted, which may rather aid than harm any future design.

The Prussians were here, likewise; and we had left the Danes at Hamburg. Both places were greatly annoyed: trade was impeded; and, from the poorest citizen to the proudest burgo-master, every man felt himself humbled.

Bremen occupies nearly as much ground as Hamburg: but its population, wealth, and commerce, are far inferior. The check, which commercial intercourse had received, together with the quiet streets, black veils, and sober countenances of the matrons, formed a contrast; which, though not absolutely gloomy, had a temporary kind of mournfulness.

The common people, indeed, were in the habit of being cheerful;

ful; they were well clothed, well paid, and well fed: but they hung their heads, if any one spoke of the Pruffians. Not that we heard of any excess committed by these troops: the sense that, if they should commit excess, there was no power that could effectually bid them cry hold was quite sufficient. People spoke much in praise of the commander; and it is neglect in me to have forgotten his name.

Who was this fabulous giant, Roland? Here he is, again, in the market place. I have met with him, that is with his effigies, in many parts of Germany. Before, I generally found him cut in wood: and so he had here formerly been: but some mischievous rogues, vile marauders, intending to destroy this supposed champion of the liberties of Bremen, had the cruelty to burn him; and the good citizens reproduced him in stone. At present, they admire his beauty: as you may read, in the lucubrations of the learned Professor, *Christian Nikolaus Roller*.*

Perhaps you have never read or heard of this Professor? Germany can afford an army of Professors, of whom no man has ever heard or read, beyond the precincts of each district, where they individually reside.

With respect to the beautiful proportions of this hewn stone figure, I can only say, that those who regard it as so admirable have either not seen or not considered the Apollo Belvedere.

In every branch of the fine arts, there are happy yet obvious thoughts: which, when once conceived, every man who meets with them is surpris'd they were not his own. In the city of Bremen, there are many public pumps: fountains would have been a finer word; but I am not writing romance. Various of them have quaint sculptured figures; with little meaning and less

* *Versuch einer Geschichte der Kaiserlichen und Reichsfreyen-Stadt Bremen.* 1799.

taste : one however was the very reverse. The pump was plain, and unadorned ; except that a pilgrim stood on its top, with his scrip and staff.

Lions and mermaids, spouting water, are ridiculous : river gods with their urns, however classical, are little better. When the poet describes them, indeed, the charms of his diction sweetly steal away our understanding : but, when they become marble, they take a substance and a form, that invite or rather oblige us to inquire into their reality. The thirsty pilgrim, coming to the pure spring and assuaging the most importunate of all our appetites, is no caprice of the fancy. It teaches luxury to recollect the inestimable value of water ; and the weary wanderer to feel how truly happy is he, by whom pure water may be had. The thought, though pastoral and simple, is allied to the sublime : and the painter, or the sculptor, who shall feel it in all its beauty, will everlastingly renounce allegory.

Travellers have formed a kind of routine, and have established something like a trading society : not for the curiosities they have to sell ; but for those they have to describe. From the time I became a member of this body, I have made it a duty to hunt through many a hole and corner, into which it is not probable I should otherwise have ever set foot.

Of this number, in Bremen, is a vault, under the *dom kirche* (cathedral), called the *bley-keller* (lead vault), so named from lead, which covered the roof ; and, being melted by lightning, fell into this place. Since that period, it has continued so remarkably free from moisture, that certain dead bodies, which have been deposited there, have become a kind of mummies.

One of them is the remains of an English Countess, of whose real name I could get no authentic information, and whose hair I was told was as perfect as on the day that she died. This asser-
tion

tion was made as well by the natives as by some Englishmen ; who affirmed they had examined and could testify the fact. They could not intend to deceive me, for they knew I was going to the place ; and yet their information was false. So apt are men to repeat what they hear, to credit the marvellous, and to suppose that a slight glance is an accurate inquiry. The hair had almost disappeared ; and the body, instead of being in the state they described, was shrunk, and resembled dirty parchment : but so tough as not easily, I suppose, to be torn asunder ; for the man, who showed the vault, tossed it over and back again without the least apprehension that he should injure his future revenue.

I was likewise told that various dead animals, and particularly birds, were perfectly preserved : so that the feathers of the latter did not fall off. This was equally incorrect ; the birds were in a very ragged and decayed state.

The changes however that take place, in this vault, are remarkably slow ; and different from those that usually happen to the dead.

I left the *bley-keller* ; and we went into the church : where, according to my learned Professor Roller's history of Bremen, which I had just bought ; we were to see a masterly picture of the day of judgment. The chief thing that I noticed was the known costume of the Lutheran devil ; a blue jacket. I had seen too many instances of similarity, between the superstitions of the Catholic and Lutheran religion, to be surprised at finding here a copy of the miraculous handkerchief.

The English boy, Mr. Lane's son, attended us. He was well acquainted with and sincerely believed all the strange stories, which are current among the populace of Bremen. He had shown us a haunted house ; which a daring English Colonel had ventured to inhabit ; but, said the boy, he was soon glad to get away.

He pointed to a stone, in the church, on which a poor saint had been martyred; as we ourselves might prove: for, if we rubbed a stick upon it, we should certainly smell his burned remains.

Passing through the cloister, he pointed to a door, which no key will open; and which people dare not break down. The reason was a very forcible one. In this place troops of devils used formerly to play at dutch-pins; and made so hideous an uproar, that the priests were obliged to assemble in a body, to quell and barricado them up in a vault, the door of which, since this awful ceremony, no man has ventured to force.

I have no where seen churches kept either with the same cleanliness or decorum as in England: in this, noisy children were playing at hide and seek; and dirt and dilapidation were in every corner. Neither the architecture of this church, nor any work of art it contained, that I saw, were of sufficient excellence to deserve notice. Rude figures, quaint conceits, and ridiculous bigotry, are far from being scarce.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TOWN HALL, WITH SPECIMENS OF THE TASTE THAT STILL PREVAILS IN THESE COUNTRIES—THE PUBLIC WINE CELLAR, AND THE DECLINE OF DRUNKENNESS—THE EXCHANGE. REMARKABLE COFFEE-HOUSE—A SKETCH OF THE MUSEUM OF BREMEN—THIRST OF THE GERMANS AFTER KNOWLEDGE—REMARKS ON MANNERS; A GERMAN PETIT-MAITRE—REMAINS OF ANCIENT USAGES.

THE *rath-haus*, or town-hall, has been the admiration of the inhabitants; and, with the greatest number of them, so it remains: except that men forget to admire what they daily see. It is of the mixed architecture, loaded with ornaments, flattering to the vulgar eye, and must have cost enormous sums, and great labour. The shops, in the lower part, made us remember Exeter Change; and the effect was animated, and pleasant.

Over this is a large chamber, open to every body, where we found several vile paintings: the judgment of Solomon, with the portraits of Noah, David, and Jehosaphat, Cato, Cæsar, and Cicero: each labelled, and with long citations. The painter was a prudent man; and had the rare quality of being conscious of his own ignorance in his art.

As companions to these pagans, patriarchs, and prophets, were the portraits of a whale and a sword-fish: the memories of which the wise burghers of Bremen have been desirous to immortalize: because they were caught in, or at the mouth of, their river. Every thing that happens to ourselves is extraordinary.

Round the benches, on which the burghers occasionally sit when
assembled,

assembled, are the effigies of another heterogeneous mixture, of ancient philosophers, saints, poets, fathers of the church, evangelists, and angels; dressed like monks and cardinals, as corpulent as cooks; all preaching morality, in rhimes of *platt Deutch* and gothic characters. Among the grotesque ornaments, of this chamber, were two pictures in a better style. Though far from excellent, they were much degraded, by the company they were in.

To what trains of thought, on times, manners, and the strange vicissitudes of the human mind, does the contemplation of such objects lead!

Under this *rath-haus* is the public wine cellar: a luxury which, I believe, no city of Germany is without: and of which each is ambitious of possessing the best. I imagine the vice of drunkenness is every where on the decline. I have never found it a custom, abroad, for men to sit and excite each other, by every motive of vanity, ridicule, and even force, to murder at once both mind and body, by this detestable practice. In Germany, as in France, the general excess is that of eating. In all these public cellars, they have wine of so great an age that it is said, and I suppose truly, half-a-guinea for a glass of it would not pay interest of money. That of Lubeck is reported to be the best.

By the side of the *rath-haus* is the *börse*, or exchange; a more modern and neat building.

Opposite to this is a coffee-house; remarkable for the numerous figures, of no contemptible style and taste, in basso-relievo, on its walls. This is a species of luxury that has long been practised by the Germans; as I have witnessed in several of their towns; particularly at Brunswick, where I met with two houses faced with very ancient grotesque carvings, so curious as highly to deserve notice.

The next day, we easily obtained admission to the Museum: an
institution

institution not unworthy the notice, in some respects, of the most learned naturalist. I speak from report, and a slight survey: for I have no pretensions to this kind of knowledge: but I was told that few cabinets contain a more perfect collection of serpents, snakes, and the reptiles of those races; and what I saw appeared to justify the assertion.

It is a recent establishment, formed by private individuals, each of whom is desirous of contributing the rarity that he is fortunate enough to procure; and, as donations are seldom refused, or too strictly examined, trifling things are necessarily admitted; and a more scientific arrangement can only be the work of time.

The Germans deserve high praise, as well for their public as their private efforts to obtain and promote knowledge. In rude houses, where no man would have expected the least relick of science, and which not only taste but common convenience seemed to have forsworn, I have met with men, as I travelled, who abounded in knowledge; and who spoke even of the fine arts so as to prove, though they had not seen, they had read.

To this love of literature the Museum at Bremen is indebted, for its origin. When Lavater's expensive work on physiognomy appeared, three of the inhabitants, exceedingly desirous to read it, proposed to each other to purchase it in common, and peruse it in turn. This suggested the convenience of buying other books; and at last of clubbing their small libraries, hiring a common room, and having each a key. Pipes and tobacco could not be forgotten: ice to a Neapolitan is not a more pressing want. Here they came, read, smoked, and meditated; whenever they had leisure. From this small beginning, the society grew; and the spirit with which it has been maintained, the generosity of its members, the ardour of their zeal, and their thirst of inquiry, have
been

been rewarded by the pleasures which knowledge affords, and the applause of the surrounding cities.

One of its oldest members, Mr. Tityens, very politely introduced us; and the librarian with no less civility exhibited, and explained, the curiosities deposited in this Museum: consisting, beside what has been mentioned, of various classes of natural history, a library, and several useful mechanical models. It is happy for man, when the pursuit of knowledge becomes his recreation.

The manners of the people seemed to be orderly, sober, and unaffected: not refined; for refinement is here an exotic, which requires the utmost care of cultivation; but honest, and sincere. A German male servant enters a lady's bed-room, without the least ceremony; and, if a stranger, not accustomed to such boorish freedom, take offence, the servant cannot understand the reason of this supposed ridiculous delicacy.

A German *petit-maitre* is one of the most ludicrous of the tribe. Of this we met with a specimen at Bremen. The son of a rich merchant, who had travelled, occasionally dined at the table of our host; to whom the money of himself, and his friends, could not but be welcome. He had all the self-sufficient conceit of the French coxcomb, as painted by *Boiffy*, in *Le Français à Londres*: but with so utter an insensibility that, instead of being laughable, it was disgusting. He handled—the simile, though not refined, is so literally true that I cannot spare it—he handled the servant maids, who came within his reach, as a butcher in Smithfield market does cattle. It was the custom of the country, and gave them no offence. To the mistresses, if they were young, or handsome, he offered snuff in his gold-box, displayed his watch and his diamond ring, like a true trader carefully recounting how much they cost, and would honour them, if they pleased, by giving them

them a ride in his *fuhl-wagen*. The petit-maitre is a character not fit for a German : to complete him, his father should be a petit-maitre, and his mother a coquet ; and, to the honor of German good sense be it said, a family or race of petit-maitres is here a rarity.

The travelled man, who gave himself these airs, and who affected a most profound knowledge of the code of politeness, dipped his potatoes in the dish, at dinner, and skimmed the top of the rice pudding with his knife : which mode of feeding was common to himself, and his companions.

It was truly comic to hear a young Englishman, who was at table, comment upon German rudeness. He was himself as ill-bred, and nearly as ignorant, a John Bull as ever left his country, to laugh at other countries ; all of which he nevertheless treated with the most sovereign contempt.

As an instance of the antique simplicity, which still endeavours to retain its existence in Bremen, the people on a Sunday breakfast at six in the morning, and dine at ten. On other days, eleven is the workman's dinner hour.