

Dresden Station

By

Jerome K. Jerome

Dresden Station

CHAPTER I

We were on our way to Prague, and were waiting in the great hall of the Dresden Station until such time as the power that be should permit us on to the platform. George, who had wandered to the bookstall, returned to us with a wild look in his eyes. He said:

“I’ve seen it.”

I said, “Seen what?”

He was too excited to answer intelligently. He said

“It’s here. It’s coming this way, both of them. If you wait, you’ll see it for yourselves. I’m not joking; it’s the real thing.”

As is usual about this period, some paragraphs, more or less serious, had been appearing in the papers concerning the sea serpent, and I thought for the moment he must be referring to this. A moment’s reflection, however, told me that here, in the middle of Europe, three hundred miles from the coast, such a thing was impossible. Before I could question him further, he seized me by the arm.

“Look!” he said; “now am I exaggerating?”

I turned my head and saw what, I suppose, few living Englishmen have ever seen before the travelling Britisher according to the Continental idea, accompanied by his daughter. They were coming towards us in the flesh and blood, unless we were dreaming, alive and concrete the English “Milor” and the English “Mees,” as for generations they have been portrayed in the Continental comic press and upon the Continental stage. They were perfect in every detail. The man was tall and thin, with sandy hair, a huge nose, and long Dundreary whiskers. Over a pepper and salt suit he wore a light overcoat, reaching almost to his heels. His white helmet was ornamented with a green veil; a pair of opera glasses hung at his side, and in his lavender-gloved hand he carried an alpenstock a little taller than himself. His daughter was long and angular. Her dress I cannot describe: my grandfather, poor gentleman, might have been able to do so; it would have been more familiar to him. I can only say that it appeared to me unnecessarily short, exhibiting a pair of ankles if I may be permitted to refer to such points that, from an artistic point of view, called rather for concealment. Her hat made me think of Mrs. Hemans; but why I cannot explain. She wore sidespring boots “prunella,” I believe, used to be the trade name mittens, and pincenez. She also

carried an alpenstock (there is not a mountain within a hundred miles of Dresden) and a black bag strapped to her waist. Her teeth stuck out like a rabbit's, and her figure was that of a bolster on stilts.

Harris rushed for his camera, and of course could not find it; he never can when he wants it. Whenever we see Harris scuttling up and down like a lost dog, shouting, "Where's my camera? What the dickens have I done with my camera? Don't either of you remember where I put my camera?" then we know that for the first time that day he has come across something worth photographing. Later on, he remembered it was in his bag; that is where it would be on an occasion like this.

They were not content with appearance; they acted the thing to the letter. They walked gaping round them at every step. The gentleman had an open Baedeker in his hand, and the lady carried a phrase book. They talked French that nobody could understand, and German that they could not translate themselves! The man poked at officials with his alpenstock to attract their attention, and the lady, her eye catching sight of an advertisement of somebody's cocoa, said "Shocking!" and turned the other way.

Really, there was some excuse for her. One notices, even in England, the home of the proprieties, that the lady who drinks cocoa appears, according to the poster, to require very little else in this world; a yard or so of art muslin at the most. On the Continent she dispenses, so far as one can judge, with every other necessity of life. Not only is cocoa food and drink to her, it should be clothes also, according to the idea of the cocoa manufacturer. But this by the way.

Of course, they immediately became the centre of attraction. By being able to render them some slight assistance, I gained the advantage of five minutes' conversation with them. They were very affable. The gentleman told me his name was Jones, and that he came from Manchester, but he did not seem to know what part of Manchester, or where Manchester was. I asked him where he was going to, but he evidently did not know. He said it depended. I asked him if he did not find an alpenstock a clumsy thing to walk about with through a crowded town; he admitted that occasionally it did get in the way. I asked him if he did not find a veil interfere with his view of things; he explained that you only wore it when the flies became troublesome. I enquired of the lady if she did not find the wind blow cold; she said she had noticed it, especially at the corners. I did not ask these questions one after another as I have here put them down; I mixed them up with general conversation, and we parted on good terms.

I have pondered much upon the apparition, and have come to a definite opinion. A man I met later at Frankfort, and to whom I described the pair, said he had seen them himself in Paris, three weeks after the termination of the Fashoda incident; while a

traveller for some English steel works whom we met in Strassburg remembered having seen them in Berlin during the excitement caused by the Transvaal question. My conclusion is that they were actors out of work, hired to do this thing in the interest of international peace. The French Foreign Office, wishful to allay the anger of the Parisian mob clamouring for war with England, secured this admirable couple and sent them round the town. You cannot be amused at a thing, and at the same time want to kill it. The French nation saw the English citizen and citizeness no caricature, but the living reality and their indignation exploded in laughter. The success of the stratagem prompted them later on to offer their services to the German Government, with the beneficial results that we all know.

Our own Government might learn the lesson. It might be as well to keep near Downing Street a few small, fat Frenchmen, to be sent round the country when occasion called for it, shrugging their shoulders and eating frog sandwiches; or a file of untidy, lankhaired Germans might be retained, to walk about, smoking long pipes, saying "So." The public would laugh and exclaim, "War with such? It would be too absurd." Failing the Government, I recommend the scheme to the Peace Society.

Our visit to Prague we were compelled to lengthen somewhat. Prague is one of the most interesting towns in Europe. Its stones are saturated with history and romance; its every suburb must have been a battlefield. It is the town that conceived the Reformation and hatched the Thirty Years' War. But half Prague's troubles, one imagines, might have been saved to it, had it possessed windows less large and temptingly convenient. The first of these mighty catastrophes it set rolling by throwing the seven Catholic councillors from the windows of its Rathhaus on to the pikes of the Hussites below. Later, it gave the signal for the second by again throwing the Imperial councillors from the windows of the old Burg in the Hradschin Prague's second "Fenstersturz." Since, other fateful questions have been decided in Prague, one assumes from their having been concluded without violence that such must have been discussed in cellars. The window, as an argument, one feels, would always have proved too strong a temptation to any trueborn Prager.

In the Teynkirche stands the wormeaten pulpit from which preached John Huss. One may hear from the selfsame desk today the voice of a Papist priest, while in far off Constance a rude block of stone, half ivy hidden, marks the spot where Huss and Jerome died burning at the stake. History is fond of her little ironies. In this same Teynkirche lies buried Tycho Brahe, the astronomer, who made the common mistake of thinking the earth, with its eleven hundred creeds and one humanity, the centre of the universe; but who otherwise observed the stars clearly.

Through Prague's dirty, palacebordered alleys must have pressed often in hot haste blind Ziska and openminded Wallenstein they have dubbed him "The Hero" in Prague; and the town is honestly proud of having owned him for citizen. In his gloomy palace in the WaldsteinPlatz they show as a sacred spot the cabinet where he prayed, and seem to have persuaded themselves he really had a soul. Its steep, winding ways must have been choked a dozen times, now by Sigismund's flying legions, followed by fierce killing Tarborites, and now by pale Protestants pursued by the victorious Catholics of Maximilian. Now Saxons, now Bavarians, and now French; now the saints of Gustavus Adolphus, and now the steel fighting machines of Frederick the Great, have thundered at its gates and fought upon its bridges.

The Jews have always been an important feature of Prague. Occasionally they have assisted the Christians in their favourite occupation of slaughtering one another, and the great flag suspended from the vaulting of the Altneuschule testifies to the courage with which they helped Catholic Ferdinand to resist the Protestant Swedes. The Prague Ghetto was one of the first to be established in Europe, and in the tiny synagogue, still standing, the Jew of Prague has worshipped for eight hundred years, his women folk devoutly listening, without, at the ear holes provided for them in the massive walls. A Jewish cemetery adjacent, "Bethchajim, or the House of Life," seems as though it were bursting with its dead. Within its narrow acre it was the law of centuries that here or nowhere must the bones of Israel rest. So the worn and broken tombstones lie piled in close confusion, as though tossed and tumbled by the struggling host beneath.

The Ghetto walls have long been levelled, but the living Jews of Prague still cling to their foetid lanes, though these are being rapidly replaced by fine new streets that promise to eventually transform this quarter into the handsomest part of the town.

At Dresden they advised us not to talk German in Prague. For years racial animosity between the German minority and the Czech majority has raged throughout Bohemia, and to be mistaken for a German in certain streets of Prague is inconvenient to a man whose staying powers in a race are not what once they were. However, we did talk German in certain streets in Prague; it was a case of talking German or nothing. The Czech dialect is said to be of great antiquity and of highly scientific cultivation. Its alphabet contains fortytwo letters, suggestive to a stranger of Chinese. It is not a language to be picked up in a hurry. We decided that on the whole there would be less risk to our constitution in keeping to German, and as a matter of fact no harm came to us. The explanation I can only surmise. The Prager is an exceedingly acute person; some subtle falsity of accent, some slight grammatical inaccuracy, may have crept into our German, revealing to him the fact that, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, we were no trueborn Deutscher. I do not assert this; I put it forward as a possibility.

To avoid unnecessary danger, however, we did our sightseeing with the aid of a guide. No guide I have ever come across is perfect. This one had two distinct failings. His English was decidedly weak. Indeed, it was not English at all. I do not know what you would call it. It was not altogether his fault; he had learnt English from a Scotch lady. I understand Scotch fairly well to keep abreast of modern English literature this is necessary, but to understand broad Scotch talked with a Slavonic accent, occasionally relieved by German modifications, taxes the intelligence. For the first hour it was difficult to rid one's self of the conviction that the man was choking. Every moment we expected him to die on our hands. In the course of the morning we grew accustomed to him, and rid ourselves of the instinct to throw him on his back every time he opened his mouth, and tear his clothes from him. Later, we came to understand a part of what he said, and this led to the discovery of his second failing.

It would seem he had lately invented a hairrestorer, which he had persuaded a local chemist to take up and advertise. Half his time he had been pointing out to us, not the beauties of Prague, but the benefits likely to accrue to the human race from the use of this concoction; and the conventional agreement with which, under the impression he was waxing eloquent concerning views and architecture, we had met his enthusiasm he had attributed to sympathetic interest in this wretched wash of his.

The result was that now there was no keeping him away from the subject. Ruined palaces and crumbling churches he dismissed with curt reference as mere frivolities, encouraging a morbid taste for the decadent. His duty, as he saw it, was not to lead us to dwell upon the ravages of time, but rather to direct our attention to the means of repairing them. What had we to do with brokenheaded heroes, or baldheaded saints? Our interest should be surely in the living world; in the maidens with their flowing tresses, or the flowing tresses they might have, by judicious use of "Kophkeo," in the young men with their fierce moustaches as pictured on the label.

Unconsciously, in his own mind, he had divided the world into two sections. The Past ("Before Use"), a sickly, disagreeable looking, uninteresting world. The Future ("After Use") a fat, jolly, God-bless every body sort of world; and this unfitted him as a guide to scenes of mediaeval history.

He sent us each a bottle of the stuff to our hotel. It appeared that in the early part of our converse with him we had, unwittingly, clamoured for it. Personally, I can neither praise it nor condemn it. A long series of disappointments has disheartened me; added to which a permanent atmosphere of paraffin, however faint, is apt to cause remark, especially in the case of a married man. Now, I never try even the sample.

I gave my bottle to George. He asked for it to send to a man he knew in Leeds. I learnt later that Harris had given him his bottle also, to send to the same man.

A suggestion of onions has clung to this tour since we left Prague. George has noticed it himself. He attributes it to the prevalence of garlic in European cooking.

It was in Prague that Harris and I did a kind and friendly thing to George. We had noticed for some time past that George was getting too fond of Pilsener beer. This German beer is an insidious drink, especially in hot weather; but it does not do to imbibe too freely of it. It does not get into your head, but after a time it spoils your waist. I always say to myself on entering Germany:

“Now, I will drink no German beer. The white wine of the country, with a little sodawater; perhaps occasionally a glass of Ems or potash. But beer, neveror, at all events, hardly ever.”

It is a good and useful resolution, which I recommend to all travellers. I only wish I could keep to it myself. George, although I urged him, refused to bind himself by any such hard and fast limit. He said that in moderation German beer was good.

“One glass in the morning,” said George, “one in the evening, or even two. That will do no harm to anyone.”

Maybe he was right. It was his halfdozen glasses that troubled Harris and myself.

“We ought to do something to stop it,” said Harris; “it is becoming serious.”

“It’s hereditary, so he has explained to me,” I answered. “It seems his family have always been thirsty.”

“There is Apollinaris water,” replied Harris, “which, I believe, with a little lemon squeezed into it, is practically harmless. What I am thinking about is his figure. He will lose all his natural elegance.”

We talked the matter over, and, Providence aiding us, we fixed upon a plan. For the ornamentation of the town a new statue had just been cast. I forget of whom it was a statue. I only remember that in the essentials it was the usual sort of street statue, representing the usual sort of gentleman, with the usual stiff neck, riding the usual sort of horsethe horse that always walks on its hind legs, keeping its front paws for beating time. But in detail it possessed individuality. Instead of the usual sword or baton, the man was holding, stretched out in his hand, his own plumed hat; and the horse, instead

of the usual waterfall for a tail, possessed a somewhat attenuated appendage that somehow appeared out of keeping with his ostentatious behaviour. One felt that a horse with a tail like that would not have pranced so much.

It stood in a small square not far from the further end of the Karlsbrücke, but it stood there only temporarily. Before deciding finally where to fix it, the town authorities had resolved, very sensibly, to judge by practical test where it would look best. Accordingly, they had made three rough copies of the statuere wooden profiles, things that would not bear looking at closely, but which, viewed from a little distance, produced all the effect that was necessary. One of these they had set up at the approach to the FranzJosefsbrücke, a second stood in the open space behind the theatre, and the third in the centre of the Wenzelsplatz.

“If George is not in the secret of this thing,” said Harris we were walking by ourselves for an hour, he having remained behind in the hotel to write a letter to his aunt, “if he has not observed these statues, then by their aid we will make a better and a thinner man of him, and that this very evening.”

So during dinner we sounded him, judiciously; and finding him ignorant of the matter, we took him out, and led him by sidestreets to the place where stood the real statue. George was for looking at it and passing on, as is his way with statues, but we insisted on his pulling up and viewing the thing conscientiously. We walked him round that statue four times, and showed it to him from every possible point of view. I think, on the whole, we rather bored him with the thing, but our object was to impress it upon him. We told him the history of the man who rode upon the horse, the name of the artist who had made the statue, how much it weighed, how much it measured. We worked that statue into his system. By the time we had done with him he knew more about that statue, for the time being, than he knew about anything else. We soaked him in that statue, and only let him go at last on the condition that he would come again with us in the morning, when we could all see it better, and for such purpose we saw to it that he made a note in his pocketbook of the place where the statue stood.

Then we accompanied him to his favourite beer hall, and sat beside him, telling him anecdotes of men who, unaccustomed to German beer, and drinking too much of it, had gone mad and developed homicidal mania; of men who had died young through drinking German beer; of lovers that German beer had been the means of parting for ever from beautiful girls.

At ten o'clock we started to walk back to the hotel. It was a stormylooking night, with heavy clouds drifting over a light moon. Harris said:

“We won’t go back the same way we came; we’ll walk back by the river. It is lovely in the moonlight.”

Harris told a sad history, as we walked, about a man he once knew, who is now in a home for harmless imbeciles. He said he recalled the story because it was on just such another night as this that he was walking with that man the very last time he ever saw the poor fellow. They were strolling down the Thames Embankment, Harris said, and the man frightened him then by persisting that he saw the statue of the Duke of Wellington at the corner of Westminster Bridge, when, as everybody knows, it stands in Piccadilly.

It was at this exact instant that we came in sight of the first of these wooden copies. It occupied the centre of a small, railed-in square a little above us on the opposite side of the way. George suddenly stood still and leant against the wall of the quay.

“What’s the matter?” I said; “feeling giddy?”

He said: “I do, a little. Let’s rest here a moment.”

He stood there with his eyes glued to the thing.

He said, speaking huskily:

“Talking of statues, what always strikes me is how very much one statue is like another statue.”

Harris said: “I cannot agree with you there pictures, if you like. Some pictures are very like other pictures, but with a statue there is always something distinctive. Take that statue we saw early in the evening,” continued Harris, “before we went into the concert hall. It represented a man sitting on a horse. In Prague you will see other statues of men on horses, but nothing at all like that one.”

“Yes they are,” said George; “they are all alike. It’s always the same horse, and it’s always the same man. They are all exactly alike. It’s idiotic nonsense to say they are not.”

He appeared to be angry with Harris.

“What makes you think so?” I asked.

“What makes me think so?” retorted George, now turning upon me. “Why, look at that damned thing over there!”

I said: “What damned thing?”

“Why, that thing,” said George; “look at it! There is the same horse with half a tail, standing on its hind legs; the same man without his hat; the same”

Harris said: “You are talking now about the statue we saw in the Ringplatz.”

“No, I’m not,” replied George; “I’m talking about the statue over there.”

“What statue?” said Harris.

George looked at Harris; but Harris is a man who might, with care, have been a fair amateur actor. His face merely expressed friendly sorrow, mingled with alarm. Next, George turned his gaze on me. I endeavoured, so far as lay with me, to copy Harris’s expression, adding to it on my own account a touch of reproof.

“Will you have a cab?” I said as kindly as I could to George. “I’ll run and get one.”

“What the devil do I want with a cab?” he answered, ungraciously. “Can’t you fellows understand a joke? It’s like being out with a couple of confounded old women,” saying which, he started off across the bridge, leaving us to follow.

“I am so glad that was only a joke of yours,” said Harris, on our overtaking him. “I knew a case of softening of the brain that began”

“Oh, you’re a silly ass!” said George, cutting him short; “you know everything.”

He was really most unpleasant in his manner.

We took him round by the riverside of the theatre. We told him it was the shortest way, and, as a matter of fact, it was. In the open space behind the theatre stood the second of these wooden apparitions. George looked at it, and again stood still.

“What’s the matter?” said Harris, kindly. “You are not ill, are you?”

“I don’t believe this is the shortest way,” said George.

“I assure you it is,” persisted Harris.

“Well, I’m going the other,” said George; and he turned and went, we, as before, following him.

Along the Ferdinand Strasse Harris and I talked about private lunatic asylums, which, Harris said, were not well managed in England. He said a friend of his, a patient in a lunatic asylum

George said, interrupting: “You appear to have a large number of friends in lunatic asylums.”

He said it in a most insulting tone, as though to imply that that is where one would look for the majority of Harris’s friends. But Harris did not get angry; he merely replied, quite mildly:

“Well, it really is extraordinary, when one comes to think of it, how many of them have gone that way sooner or later. I get quite nervous sometimes, now.”

At the corner of the Wenzelsplatz, Harris, who was a few steps ahead of us, paused.

“It’s a fine street, isn’t it?” he said, sticking his hands in his pockets, and gazing up at it admiringly.

George and I followed suit. Two hundred yards away from us, in its very centre, was the third of these ghostly statues. I think it was the best of the threethree most like, the most deceptive. It stood boldly outlined against the wild sky: the horse on its hind legs, with its curiously attenuated tail; the man bareheaded, pointing with his plumed hat to the now entirely visible moon.

“I think, if you don’t mind,” said Georgehe spoke with almost a pathetic ring in his voice, his aggressiveness had completely fallen from him, “that I will have that cab, if there’s one handy.”

“I thought you were looking queer,” said Harris, kindly. “It’s your head, isn’t it?”

“Perhaps it is,” answered George.

“I have noticed it coining on,” said Harris; “but I didn’t like to say anything to you. You fancy you see things, don’t you?”

“No, no; it isn’t that,” replied George, rather quickly. “I don’t know what it is.”

“I do,” said Harris, solemnly, “and I’ll tell you. It’s this German beer that you are drinking. I have known a case where a man”

“Don’t tell me about him just now,” said George. “I dare say it’s true, but somehow I don’t feel I want to hear about him.”

“You are not used to it,” said Harris.

“I shall give it up from tonight,” said George. “I think you must be right; it doesn’t seem to agree with me.”

We took him home, and saw him to bed. He was very gentle and quite grateful.

One evening later on, after a long day’s ride, followed by a most satisfactory dinner, we started him on a big cigar, and, removing things from his reach, told him of this stratagem that for his good we had planned.

“How many copies of that statue did you say we saw?” asked George, after we had finished.

“Three,” replied Harris.

“Only three?” said George. “Are you sure?”

“Positive,” replied Harris. “Why?”

“Oh, nothing!” answered George.

But I don’t think he quite believed Harris.

From Prague we travelled to Nuremberg, through Carlsbad. Good Germans, when they die, go, they say, to Carlsbad, as good Americans to Paris. This I doubt, seeing that it is a small place with no convenience for a crowd. In Carlsbad, you rise at five, the fashionable hour for promenade, when the band plays under the Colonnade, and the Sprudel is filled with a packed throng over a mile long, being from six to eight in the morning. Here you may hear more languages spoken than the Tower of Babel could have echoed. Polish Jews and Russian princes, Chinese mandarins and Turkish pashas, Norwegians looking as if they had stepped out of Ibsen’s plays, women from the Boulevards, Spanish grandes and English countesses, mountaineers from Montenegro and millionaires from Chicago, you will find every dozen yards. Every luxury in the

world Carlsbad provides for its visitors, with the one exception of pepper. That you cannot get within five miles of the town for money; what you can get there for love is not worth taking away. Pepper, to the liver brigade that forms fourfifths of Carlsbad's customers, is poison; and, prevention being better than cure, it is carefully kept out of the neighbourhood. "Pepper parties" are formed in Carlsbad to journey to some place without the boundary, and there indulge in pepper orgies.

Nuremberg, if one expects a town of mediaeval appearance, disappoints. Quaint corners, picturesque glimpses, there are in plenty; but everywhere they are surrounded and intruded upon by the modern, and even what is ancient is not nearly so ancient as one thought it was. After all, a town, like a woman, is only as old as it looks; and Nuremberg is still a comfortable-looking dame, its age somewhat difficult to conceive under its fresh paint and stucco in the blaze of the gas and the electric light. Still, looking closely, you may see its wrinkled walls and grey towers.

CHAPTER II

Harris breaks the law
The helpful man: The dangers that beset him
George sets forth upon a career of crime
Those to whom Germany would come as a boon and a blessing
The English Sinner: His disappointments
The German Sinner: His exceptional advantages
What you may not do with your bed
An inexpensive vice
The German dog: His simple goodness
The misbehaviour of the beetle
A people that go the way they ought to go
The German small boy: His love of legality
How to go astray with a perambulator
The German student: His chastened wilfulness.

All three of us, by some means or another, managed, between Nuremberg and the Black Forest, to get into trouble.

Harris led off at Stuttgart by insulting an official. Stuttgart is a charming town, clean and bright, a smaller Dresden. It has the additional attraction of containing little that one need to go out of one's way to see: a mediumsized picture gallery, a small museum of antiquities, and half a palace, and you are through with the entire thing and can enjoy yourself. Harris did not know it was an official he was insulting. He took it for a fireman (it looked like a fireman), and he called it a "dummer Esel."

In German you are not permitted to call an official a "silly ass," but undoubtedly this particular man was one. What had happened was this: Harris in the Stadgarten, anxious to get out, and seeing a gate open before him, had stepped over a wire into the street. Harris maintains he never saw it, but undoubtedly there was hanging to the wire a notice, "Durchgang Verboten!" The man, who was standing near the gates stopped Harris, and pointed out to him this notice. Harris thanked him, and passed on. The man came after him, and explained that treatment of the matter in such offhand way could not be allowed; what was necessary to put the business right was that Harris should step back over the wire into the garden. Harris pointed out to the man that the notice said "going through forbidden," and that, therefore, by reentering the garden that way he would be infringing the law a second time. The man saw this for himself, and suggested that to get over the difficulty Harris should go back into the garden by the proper entrance, which was round the corner, and afterwards immediately come out again by the same gate. Then it was that Harris called the man a silly ass. That delayed us a day, and cost Harris forty marks.

I followed suit at Carlsruhe, by stealing a bicycle. I did not mean to steal the bicycle; I was merely trying to be useful. The train was on the point of starting when I noticed, as I thought, Harris's bicycle still in the goods van. No one was about to help me. I jumped into the van and hauled it out, only just in time. Wheeling it down the platform in

triumph, I came across Harris's bicycle, standing against a wall behind some milkcans. The bicycle I had secured was not Harris's, but some other man's.

It was an awkward situation. In England, I should have gone to the stationmaster and explained my mistake. But in Germany they are not content with your explaining a little matter of this sort to one man: they take you round and get you to explain it to about half a dozen; and if any one of the half dozen happens not to be handy, or not to have time just then to listen to you, they have a habit of leaving you over for the night to finish your explanation the next morning. I thought I would just put the thing out of sight, and then, without making any fuss or show, take a short walk. I found a wood shed, which seemed just the very place, and was wheeling the bicycle into it when, unfortunately, a redhatted railway official, with the airs of a retired fieldmarshal, caught sight of me and came up. He said:

“What are you doing with that bicycle?”

I said: “I am going to put it in this wood shed out of the way.” I tried to convey by my tone that I was performing a kind and thoughtful action, for which the railway officials ought to thank me; but he was unresponsive.

“Is it your bicycle?” he said.

“Well, not exactly,” I replied.

“Whose is it?” he asked, quite sharply.

“I can't tell you,” I answered. “I don't know whose bicycle it is.”

“Where did you get it from?” was his next question. There was a suspiciousness about his tone that was almost insulting.

“I got it,” I answered, with as much calm dignity as at the moment I could assume, “out of the train.”

“The fact is,” I continued, frankly, “I have made a mistake.”

He did not allow me time to finish. He merely said he thought so too, and blew a whistle.

Recollection of the subsequent proceedings is not, so far as I am concerned, amusing. By a miracle of good luck they say Providence watches over certain of us the incident

happened in Karlsruhe, where I possess a German friend, an official of some importance. Upon what would have been my fate had the station not been at Karlsruhe, or had my friend been from home, I do not care to dwell; as it was I got off, as the saying is, by the skin of my teeth. I should like to add that I left Karlsruhe without a stain upon my character, but that would not be the truth. My going scot free is regarded in police circles there to this day as a grave miscarriage of justice.

But all lesser sin sinks into insignificance beside the lawlessness of George. The bicycle incident had thrown us all into confusion, with the result that we lost George altogether. It transpired subsequently that he was waiting for us outside the police court; but this at the time we did not know. We thought, maybe, he had gone on to Baden by himself; and anxious to get away from Karlsruhe, and not, perhaps, thinking out things too clearly, we jumped into the next train that came up and proceeded thither. When George, tired of waiting, returned to the station, he found us gone and he found his luggage gone. Harris had his ticket; I was acting as banker to the party, so that he had in his pocket only some small change. Excusing himself upon these grounds, he thereupon commenced deliberately a career of crime that, reading it later, as set forth baldly in the official summons, made the hair of Harris and myself almost to stand on end.

German travelling, it may be explained, is somewhat complicated. You buy a ticket at the station you start from for the place you want to go to. You might think this would enable you to get there, but it does not. When your train comes up, you attempt to swarm into it; but the guard magnificently waves you away. Where are your credentials? You show him your ticket. He explains to you that by itself that is of no service whatever; you have only taken the first step towards travelling; you must go back to the bookingoffice and get in addition what is called a "schnellzug ticket." With this you return, thinking your troubles over. You are allowed to get in, so far so good. But you must not sit down anywhere, and you must not stand still, and you must not wander about. You must take another ticket, this time what is called a "platz ticket," which entitles you to a place for a certain distance.

What a man could do who persisted in taking nothing but the one ticket, I have often wondered. Would he be entitled to run behind the train on the sixfoot way? Or could he stick a label on himself and get into the goods van? Again, what could be done with the man who, having taken his schnellzug ticket, obstinately refused, or had not the money to take a platz ticket: would they let him lie in the umbrella rack, or allow him to hang himself out of the window?

To return to George, he had just sufficient money to take a thirdclass slow train ticket to Baden, and that was all. To avoid the inquisitiveness of the guard, he waited till the train was moving, and then jumped in.

That was his first sin:

- (a) Entering a train in motion;
- (b) After being warned not to do so by an official.

Second sin:

- (a) Travelling in train of superior class to that for which ticket was held.
- (b) Refusing to pay difference when demanded by an official. (George says he did not “refuse”; he simply told the man he had not got it.)

Third sin:

- (a) Travelling in carriage of superior class to that for which ticket was held.
- (b) Refusing to pay difference when demanded by an official. (Again George disputes the accuracy of the report. He turned his pockets out, and offered the man all he had, which was about eightpence in German money. He offered to go into a third class, but there was no third class. He offered to go into the goods van, but they would not hear of it.)

Fourth sin:

- (a) Occupying seat, and not paying for same.
- (b) Loitering about corridor. (As they would not let him sit down without paying, and as he could not pay, it was difficult to see what else he could do.)

But explanations are held as no excuse in Germany; and his journey from Carlsruhe to Baden was one of the most expensive perhaps on record.

Reflecting upon the case and frequency with which one gets into trouble here in Germany, one is led to the conclusion that this country would come as a boon and a blessing to the average young Englishman. To the medical student, to the eater of dinners at the Temple, to the subaltern on leave, life in London is a wearisome proceeding. The healthy Briton takes his pleasure lawlessly, or it is no pleasure to him. Nothing that he may do affords to him any genuine satisfaction. To be in trouble of some sort is his only idea of bliss. Now, England affords him small opportunity in this

respect; to get himself into a scrape requires a good deal of persistence on the part of the young Englishman.

I spoke on this subject one day with our senior churchwarden. It was the morning of the 10th of November, and we were both of us glancing, somewhat anxiously, through the police reports. The usual batch of young men had been summoned for creating the usual disturbance the night before at the Criterion. My friend the churchwarden has boys of his own, and a nephew of mine, upon whom I am keeping a fatherly eye, is by a fond mother supposed to be in London for the sole purpose of studying engineering. No names we knew happened, by fortunate chance, to be in the list of those detained in custody, and, relieved, we fell to moralising upon the folly and depravity of youth.

“It is very remarkable,” said my friend the churchwarden, “how the Criterion retains its position in this respect. It was just so when I was young; the evening always wound up with a row at the Criterion.”

“So meaningless,” I remarked.

“So monotonous,” he replied. “You have no idea,” he continued, a dreamy expression stealing over his furrowed face, “how unutterably tired one can become of the walk from Piccadilly Circus to the Vine Street Police Court. Yet, what else was there for us to do? Simply nothing. Sometimes we would put out a street lamp, and a man would come round and light it again. If one insulted a policeman, he simply took no notice. He did not even know he was being insulted; or, if he did, he seemed not to care. You could fight a Covent Garden porter, if you fancied yourself at that sort of thing. Generally speaking, the porter got the best of it; and when he did it cost you five shillings, and when he did not the price was half a sovereign. I could never see much excitement in that particular sport. I tried driving a hansom cab once. That has always been regarded as the acme of modern Tom and Jerryism. I stole it late one night from outside a publichouse in Dean Street, and the first thing that happened to me was that I was hailed in Golden Square by an old lady surrounded by three children, two of them crying and the third one half asleep. Before I could get away she had shot the brats into the cab, taken my number, paid me, so she said, a shilling over the legal fare, and directed me to an address a little beyond what she called North Kensington. As a matter of fact, the place turned out to be the other side of Willesden. The horse was tired, and the journey took us well over two hours. It was the slowest lark I ever remember being concerned in. I tried once or twice to persuade the children to let me take them back to the old lady: but every time I opened the trapdoor to speak to them the youngest one, a boy, started screaming; and when I offered other drivers to transfer the job to them, most of them replied in the words of a song popular about that period: ‘Oh, George, don’t you think you’re going just a bit too far?’ One man offered to take home to my wife

any last message I might be thinking of, while another promised to organise a party to come and dig me out in the spring. When I mounted the dickey I had imagined myself driving a peppery old colonel to some lonesome and cabless region, half a dozen miles from where he wanted to go, and there leaving him upon the kerbstone to swear. About that there might have been good sport or there might not, according to circumstances and the colonel. The idea of a trip to an outlying suburb in charge of a nursery full of helpless infants had never occurred to me. No, London," concluded my friend the churchwarden with a sigh, "affords but limited opportunity to the lover of the illegal."

Now, in Germany, on the other hand, trouble is to be had for the asking. There are many things in Germany that you must not do that are quite easy to do. To any young Englishman yearning to get himself into a scrape, and finding himself hampered in his own country, I would advise a single ticket to Germany; a return, lasting as it does only a month, might prove a waste.

In the Police Guide of the Fatherland he will find set forth a list of the things the doing of which will bring to him interest and excitement. In Germany you must not hang your bed out of window. He might begin with that. By waving his bed out of window he could get into trouble before he had his breakfast. At home he might hang himself out of window, and nobody would mind much, provided he did not obstruct anybody's ancient lights or break away and injure any passer underneath.

In Germany you must not wear fancy dress in the streets. A Highlander of my acquaintance who came to pass the winter in Dresden spent the first few days of his residence there in arguing this question with the Saxon Government. They asked him what he was doing in those clothes. He was not an amiable man. He answered, he was wearing them. They asked him why he was wearing them. He replied, to keep himself warm. They told him frankly that they did not believe him, and sent him back to his lodgings in a closed landau. The personal testimony of the English Minister was necessary to assure the authorities that the Highland garb was the customary dress of many respectable, lawabiding British subjects. They accepted the statement, as diplomatically bound, but retain their private opinion to this day. The English tourist they have grown accustomed to; but a Leicestershire gentleman, invited to hunt with some German officers, on appearing outside his hotel, was promptly marched off, horse and all, to explain his frivolity at the police court.

Another thing you must not do in the streets of German towns is to feed horses, mules, or donkeys, whether your own or those belonging to other people. If a passion seizes you to feed somebody else's horse, you must make an appointment with the animal, and the meal must take place in some properly authorised place. You must not break glass or china in the street, nor, in fact, in any public resort whatever; and if you do, you must

pick up all the pieces. What you are to do with the pieces when you have gathered them together I cannot say. The only thing I know for certain is that you are not permitted to throw them anywhere, to leave them anywhere, or apparently to part with them in any way whatever. Presumably, you are expected to carry them about with you until you die, and then be buried with them; or, maybe, you are allowed to swallow them.

In German streets you must not shoot with a crossbow. The German lawmaker does not content himself with the misdeeds of the average man the crime one feels one wants to do, but must not: he worries himself imagining all the things a wandering maniac might do. In Germany there is no law against a man standing on his head in the middle of the road; the idea has not occurred to them. One of these days a German statesman, visiting a circus and seeing acrobats, will reflect upon this omission. Then he will straightway set to work and frame a clause forbidding people from standing on their heads in the middle of the road, and fixing a fine. This is the charm of German law: misdemeanour in Germany has its fixed price. You are not kept awake all night, as in England, wondering whether you will get off with a caution, be fined forty shillings, or, catching the magistrate in an unhappy moment for yourself, get seven days. You know exactly what your fun is going to cost you. You can spread out your money on the table, open your Police Guide, and plan out your holiday to a fifty pfennig piece. For a really cheap evening, I would recommend walking on the wrong side of the pavement after being cautioned not to do so. I calculate that by choosing your district and keeping to the quiet side streets you could walk for a whole evening on the wrong side of the pavement at a cost of little over three marks.

In German towns you must not ramble about after dark “in droves.” I am not quite sure how many constitute a “drove,” and no official to whom I have spoken on this subject has felt himself competent to fix the exact number. I once put it to a German friend who was starting for the theatre with his wife, his mother-in-law, five children of his own, his sister and her fiancé, and two nieces, if he did not think he was running a risk under this bylaw. He did not take my suggestion as a joke. He cast an eye over the group.

“Oh, I don’t think so,” he said; “you see, we are all one family.”

“The paragraph says nothing about its being a family drove or not,” I replied; “it simply says ‘drove.’ I do not mean it in any uncomplimentary sense, but, speaking etymologically, I am inclined personally to regard your collection as a ‘drove.’ Whether the police will take the same view or not remains to be seen. I am merely warning you.”

My friend himself was inclined to poohpooh my fears; but his wife thinking it better not to run any risk of having the party broken up by the police at the very beginning of the evening, they divided, arranging to come together again in the theatre lobby.

Another passion you must restrain in Germany is that prompting you to throw things out of window. Cats are no excuse. During the first week of my residence in Germany I was awakened incessantly by cats. One night I got mad. I collected a small arsenal two or three pieces of coal, a few hard pears, a couple of candle ends, an odd egg I found on the kitchen table, an empty sodawater bottle, and a few articles of that sort, and, opening the window, bombarded the spot from where the noise appeared to come. I do not suppose I hit anything; I never knew a man who did hit a cat, even when he could see it, except, maybe, by accident when aiming at something else. I have known crack shots, winners of Queen's prizes those sort of men, shoot with shotguns at cats fifty yards away, and never hit a hair. I have often thought that, instead of bullseyes, running deer, and that rubbish, the really superior marksman would be he who could boast that he had shot the cat.

But, anyhow, they moved off; maybe the egg annoyed them. I had noticed when I picked it up that it did not look a good egg; and I went back to bed again, thinking the incident closed. Ten minutes afterwards there came a violent ringing of the electric bell. I tried to ignore it, but it was too persistent, and, putting on my dressing gown, I went down to the gate. A policeman was standing there. He had all the things I had been throwing out of the window in a little heap in front of him, all except the egg. He had evidently been collecting them. He said:

"Are these things yours?"

I said: "They were mine, but personally I have done with them. Anybody can have them you can have them."

He ignored my offer. He said:

"You threw these things out of window."

"You are right," I admitted; "I did."

"Why did you throw them out of window?" he asked. A German policeman has his code of questions arranged for him; he never varies them, and he never omits one.

"I threw them out of the window at some cats," I answered.

"What cats?" he asked.

It was the sort of question a German policeman would ask. I replied with as much sarcasm as I could put into my accent that I was ashamed to say I could not tell him what cats. I explained that, personally, they were strangers to me; but I offered, if the police would call all the cats in the district together, to come round and see if I could recognise them by their yowl.

The German policeman does not understand a joke, which is perhaps on the whole just as well, for I believe there is a heavy fine for joking with any German uniform; they call it "treating an official with contumely." He merely replied that it was not the duty of the police to help me recognise the cats; their duty was merely to fine me for throwing things out of window.

I asked what a man was supposed to do in Germany when woke up night after night by cats, and he explained that I could lodge an information against the owner of the cat, when the police would proceed to caution him, and, if necessary, order the cat to be destroyed. Who was going to destroy the cat, and what the cat would be doing during the process, he did not explain.

I asked him how he proposed I should discover the owner of the cat. He thought for a while, and then suggested that I might follow it home. I did not feel inclined to argue with him any more after that; I should only have said things that would have made the matter worse. As it was, that night's sport cost me twelve marks; and not a single one of the four German officials who interviewed me on the subject could see anything ridiculous in the proceedings from beginning to end.

But in Germany most human faults and follies sink into comparative insignificance beside the enormity of walking on the grass. Nowhere, and under no circumstances, may you at any time in Germany walk on the grass. Grass in Germany is quite a fetish. To put your foot on German grass would be as great a sacrilege as to dance a hornpipe on a Mohammedan's prayingmat. The very dogs respect German grass; no German dog would dream of putting a paw on it. If you see a dog scampering across the grass in Germany, you may know for certain that it is the dog of some unholy foreigner. In England, when we want to keep dogs out of places, we put up wire netting, six feet high, supported by buttresses, and defended on the top by spikes. In Germany, they put a noticeboard in the middle of the place, "Hunden verboten," and a dog that has German blood in its veins looks at that noticeboard and walks away. In a German park I have seen a gardener step gingerly with felt boots on to grassplot, and removing therefrom a beetle, place it gravely but firmly on the gravel; which done, he stood sternly watching the beetle, to see that it did not try to get back on the grass; and the beetle, looking utterly ashamed of itself, walked hurriedly down the gutter, and turned up the path marked "Ausgang."

In German parks separate roads are devoted to the different orders of the community, and no one person, at peril of liberty and fortune, may go upon another person's road. There are special paths for "wheelriders" and special paths for "footgoers," avenues for "horseriders," roads for people in light vehicles, and roads for people in heavy vehicles; ways for children and for "alone ladies." That no particular route has yet been set aside for baldheaded men or "new women" has always struck me as an omission.

In the Grosse Garten in Dresden I once came across an old lady, standing, helpless and bewildered, in the centre of seven tracks. Each was guarded by a threatening notice, warning everybody off it but the person for whom it was intended.

"I am sorry to trouble you," said the old lady, on learning I could speak English and read German, "but would you mind telling me what I am and where I have to go?"

I inspected her carefully. I came to the conclusion that she was a "grownup" and a "footgoer," and pointed out her path. She looked at it, and seemed disappointed.

"But I don't want to go down there," she said; "mayn't I go this way?"

"Great heavens, no, madam!" I replied. "That path is reserved for children."

"But I wouldn't do them any harm," said the old lady, with a smile. She did not look the sort of old lady who would have done them any harm.

"Madam," I replied, "if it rested with me, I would trust you down that path, though my own firstborn were at the other end; but I can only inform you of the laws of this country. For you, a fullgrown woman, to venture down that path is to go to certain fine, if not imprisonment. There is your path, marked plainly Nur für Fussgänger, and if you will follow my advice, you will hasten down it; you are not allowed to stand here and hesitate."

"It doesn't lead a bit in the direction I want to go," said the old lady.

"It leads in the direction you ought to want to go," I replied, and we parted.

In the German parks there are special seats labelled, "Only for grownups" (Nur für Erwachsene), and the German small boy, anxious to sit down, and reading that notice, passes by, and hunts for a seat on which children are permitted to rest; and there he seats himself, careful not to touch the woodwork with his muddy boots. Imagine a seat in Regent's or St. James's Park labelled "Only for grownups!" Every child for five miles

round would be trying to get on that seat, and hauling other children off who were on. As for any “grownup,” he would never be able to get within half a mile of that seat for the crowd. The German small boy, who has accidentally sat down on such without noticing, rises with a start when his error is pointed out to him, and goes away with downcast head, brushing to the roots of his hair with shame and regret.

Not that the German child is neglected by a paternal Government. In German parks and public gardens special places (Spielplätze) are provided for him, each one supplied with a heap of sand. There he can play to his heart’s content at making mud pies and building sand castles. To the German child a pie made of any other mud than this would appear an immoral pie. It would give to him no satisfaction: his soul would revolt against it.

“That pie,” he would say to himself, “was not, as it should have been, made of Government mud specially set apart for the purpose; it was nor manufactured in the place planned and maintained by the Government for the making of mud pies. It can bring no real blessing with it; it is a lawless pie.” And until his father had paid the proper fine, and he had received his proper licking, his conscience would continue to trouble him.

Another excellent piece of material for obtaining excitement in Germany is the simple domestic perambulator. What you may do with a “kinderwagen,” as it is called, and what you may not, covers pages of German law; after the reading of which, you conclude that the man who can push a perambulator through a German town without breaking the law was meant for a diplomatist. You must not loiter with a perambulator, and you must not go too fast. You must not get in anybody’s way with a perambulator, and if anybody gets in your way you must get out of their way. If you want to stop with a perambulator, you must go to a place specially appointed where perambulators may stop; and when you get there you must stop. You must not cross the road with a perambulator; if you and the baby happen to live on the other side, that is your fault. You must not leave your perambulator anywhere, and only in certain places can you take it with you. I should say that in Germany you could go out with a perambulator and get into enough trouble in half an hour to last you for a month. Any young Englishman anxious for a row with the police could not do better than come over to Germany and bring his perambulator with him.

In Germany you must not leave your front door unlocked after ten o’clock at night, and you must not play the piano in your own house after eleven. In England I have never felt I wanted to play the piano myself, or to hear anyone else play it, after eleven o’clock at night; but that is a very different thing to being told that you must not play it. Here, in Germany, I never feel that I really care for the piano until eleven o’clock, then I could

sit and listen to the "Maiden's Prayer," or the Overture to "Zampa," with pleasure. To the law-loving German, on the other hand, music after eleven o'clock at night ceases to be music; it becomes sin, and as such gives him no satisfaction.

The only individual throughout Germany who ever dreams of taking liberties with the law is the German student, and he only to a certain well-defined point. By custom, certain privileges are permitted to him, but even these are strictly limited and clearly understood. For instance, the German student may get drunk and fall asleep in the gutter with no other penalty than that of having the next morning to tip the policeman who has found him and brought him home. But for this purpose he must choose the gutters of sidestreets. The German student, conscious of the rapid approach of oblivion, uses all his remaining energy to get round the corner, where he may collapse without anxiety. In certain districts he may ring bells. The rent of flats in these localities is lower than in other quarters of the town; while the difficulty is further met by each family preparing for itself a secret code of bellringing by means of which it is known whether the summons is genuine or not. When visiting such a household late at night it is well to be acquainted with this code, or you may, if persistent, get a bucket of water thrown over you.

Also the German student is allowed to put out lights at night, but there is a prejudice against his putting out too many. The larky German student generally keeps count, contenting himself with half a dozen lights per night. Likewise, he may shout and sing as he walks home, up till halfpast two; and at certain restaurants it is permitted to him to put his arm round the Fraulein's waist. To prevent any suggestion of unseemliness, the waitresses at restaurants frequented by students are always carefully selected from among a staid and elderly class of women, by reason of which the German student can enjoy the delights of flirtation without fear and without reproach to anyone.

They are a law-abiding people, the Germans.

CHAPTER III

Baden from the visitor's point of view
Beauty of the early morning, as viewed from the preceding afternoon
Distance, as measured by the compass
Ditto, as measured by the leg
George in account with his conscience
A lazy machine
Bicycling, according to the poster: its restfulness
The poster cyclist: its costume; its method
The griffin as a household pet
A dog with proper self-respect
The horse that was abused.

From Baden, about which it need only be said that it is a pleasure resort singularly like other pleasure resorts of the same description, we started bicycling in earnest. We planned a ten days' tour, which, while completing the Black Forest, should include a spin down the DonauThal, which for the twenty miles from Tuttlingen to Sigmaringen is, perhaps, the finest valley in Germany; the Danube stream here winding its narrow way past oldworld unspoilt villages; past ancient monasteries, nestling in green pastures, where still the barefooted and bareheaded friar, his rope girdle tight about his loins, shepherds, with crook in hand, his sheep upon the hill sides; through rocky woods; between sheer walls of cliff, whose every towering crag stands crowned with ruined fortress, church, or castle; together with a blick at the Vosges mountains, where half the population is bitterly pained if you speak to them in French, the other half being insulted when you address them in German, and the whole indignantly contemptuous at the first sound of English; a state of things that renders conversation with the stranger somewhat nervous work.

We did not succeed in carrying out our programme in its entirety, for the reason that human performance lags ever behind human intention. It is easy to say and believe at three o'clock in the afternoon that: "We will rise at five, breakfast lightly at halfpast, and start away at six."

"Then we shall be well on our way before the heat of the day sets in," remarks one.

"This time of the year, the early morning is really the best part of the day. Don't you think so?" adds another.

"Oh, undoubtedly."

"So cool and fresh."

"And the halflights are so exquisite."

The first morning one maintains one's vows. The party assembles at halfpast five. It is very silent; individually, somewhat snappy; inclined to grumble with its food, also with

most other things; the atmosphere charged with compressed irritability seeking its vent. In the evening the Tempter's voice is heard:

"I think if we got off by halfpast six, sharp, that would be time enough?"

The voice of Virtue protests, faintly: "It will be breaking our resolution."

The Tempter replies: "Resolutions were made for man, not man for resolutions." The devil can paraphrase Scripture for his own purpose. "Besides, it is disturbing the whole hotel; think of the poor servants."

The voice of Virtue continues, but even feebler: "But everybody gets up early in these parts."

"They would not if they were not obliged to, poor things! Say breakfast at halfpast six, punctual; that will be disturbing nobody."

Thus Sin masquerades under the guise of Good, and one sleeps till six, explaining to one's conscience, who, however, doesn't believe it, that one does this because of unselfish consideration for others. I have known such consideration extend until seven of the clock.

Likewise, distance measured with a pair of compasses is not precisely the same as when measured by the leg.

"Ten miles an hour for seven hours, seventy miles. A nice easy day's work."

"There are some stiff hills to climb?"

"The other side to come down. Say, eight miles an hour, and call it sixty miles. Gott in Himmel! if we can't average eight miles an hour, we had better go in bathchairs." It does seem somewhat impossible to do less, on paper.

But at four o'clock in the afternoon the voice of Duty rings less trumpettioned:

"Well, I suppose we ought to be getting on."

"Oh, there's no hurry! don't fuss. Lovely view from here, isn't it?"

"Very. Don't forget we are twentyfive miles from St. Blasien."

“How far?”

“Twentyfive miles, a little over if anything.”

“Do you mean to say we have only come thirtyfive miles?”

“That’s all.”

“Nonsense. I don’t believe that map of yours.”

“It is impossible, you know. We have been riding steadily ever since the first thing this morning.”

“No, we haven’t. We didn’t get away till eight, to begin with.”

“Quarter to eight.”

“Well, quarter to eight; and every halfdozen miles we have stopped.”

“We have only stopped to look at the view. It’s no good coming to see a country, and then not seeing it.”

“And we have had to pull up some stiff hills.”

“Besides, it has been an exceptionally hot day today.”

“Well, don’t forget St. Blasien is twentyfive miles off, that’s all.”

“Any more hills?”

“Yes, two; up and down.”

“I thought you said it was downhill into St. Blasien?”

“So it is for the last ten miles. We are twentyfive miles from St. Blasien here.”

“Isn’t there anywhere between here and St. Blasien? What’s that little place there on the lake?”

“It isn’t St. Blasien, or anywhere near it. There’s a danger in beginning that sort of thing.”

“There’s a danger in overworking oneself. One should study moderation in all things. Pretty little place, that Titisee, according to the map; looks as if there would be good air there.”

“All right, I’m agreeable. It was you fellows who suggested our making for St. Blasien.”

“Oh, I’m not so keen on St. Blasien! poky little place, down in a valley. This Titisee, I should say, was ever so much nicer.”

“Quite near, isn’t it?”

“Five miles.”

General chorus: “We’ll stop at Titisee.”

George made discovery of this difference between theory and practice on the very first day of our ride.

“I thought,” said George he was riding the single, Harris and I being a little ahead on the tandem “that the idea was to train up the hills and ride down them.”

“So it is,” answered Harris, “as a general rule. But the trains don’t go up every hill in the Black Forest.”

“Somehow, I felt a suspicion that they wouldn’t,” growled George; and for awhile silence reigned.

“Besides,” remarked Harris, who had evidently been ruminating the subject, “you would not wish to have nothing but downhill, surely. It would not be playing the game. One must take a little rough with one’s smooth.”

Again there returned silence, broken after awhile by George, this time.

“Don’t you two fellows overexert yourselves merely on my account,” said George.

“How do you mean?” asked Harris.

“I mean,” answered George, “that where a train does happen to be going up these hills, don’t you put aside the idea of taking it for fear of outraging my finer feelings. Personally, I am prepared to go up all these hills in a railway train, even if it’s not

playing the game. I'll square the thing with my conscience; I've been up at seven every day for a week now, and I calculate it owes me a bit. Don't you consider me in the matter at all."

We promised to bear this in mind, and again the ride continued in dogged dumbness, until it was again broken by George.

"What bicycle did you say this was of yours?" asked George.

Harris told him. I forget of what particular manufacture it happened to be; it is immaterial.

"Are you sure?" persisted George.

"Of course I am sure," answered Harris. "Why, what's the matter with it?"

"Well, it doesn't come up to the poster," said George, "that's all."

"What poster?" asked Harris.

"The poster advertising this particular brand of cycle," explained George. "I was looking at one on a hoarding in Sloane Street only a day or two before we started. A man was riding this make of machine, a man with a banner in his hand: he wasn't doing any work, that was clear as daylight; he was just sitting on the thing and drinking in the air. The cycle was going of its own accord, and going well. This thing of yours leaves all the work to me. It is a lazy brute of a machine; if you don't shove, it simply does nothing: I should complain about it, if I were you."

When one comes to think of it, few bicycles do realise the poster. On only one poster that I can recollect have I seen the rider represented as doing any work. But then this man was being pursued by a bull. In ordinary cases the object of the artist is to convince the hesitating neophyte that the sport of bicycling consists in sitting on a luxurious saddle, and being moved rapidly in the direction you wish to go by unseen heavenly powers.

Generally speaking, the rider is a lady, and then one feels that, for perfect bodily rest combined with entire freedom from mental anxiety, slumber upon a waterbed cannot compare with bicycleriding upon a hilly road. No fairy travelling on a summer cloud could take things more easily than does the bicycle girl, according to the poster. Her costume for cycling in hot weather is ideal. Oldfashioned landladies might refuse her lunch, it is true; and a narrowminded police force might desire to secure her, and wrap

her in a rug preliminary to summoning her. But such she heeds not. Uphill and downhill, through traffic that might tax the ingenuity of a cat, over road surfaces calculated to break the average steam roller she passes, a vision of idle loveliness; her fair hair streaming to the wind, her sylphlike form poised airily, one foot upon the saddle, the other resting lightly upon the lamp. Sometimes she condescends to sit down on the saddle; then she puts her feet on the rests, lights a cigarette, and waves above her head a Chinese lantern.

Less often, it is a mere male thing that rides the machine. He is not so accomplished an acrobat as is the lady; but simple tricks, such as standing on the saddle and waving flags, drinking beer or beeftea while riding, he can and does perform. Something, one supposes, he must do to occupy his mind: sitting still hour after hour on this machine, having no work to do, nothing to think about, must pall upon any man of active temperament. Thus it is that we see him rising on his pedals as he nears the top of some high hill to apostrophise the sun, or address poetry to the surrounding scenery.

Occasionally the poster pictures a pair of cyclists; and then one grasps the fact how much superior for purposes of flirtation is the modern bicycle to the oldfashioned parlour or the playedout garden gate. He and she mount their bicycles, being careful, of course, that such are of the right make. After that they have nothing to think about but the old sweet tale. Down shady lanes, through busy towns on market days, merrily roll the wheels of the "Bermondsey Company's Bottom Bracket Britain's Best," or of the "Camberwell Company's Jointless Eureka." They need no pedalling; they require no guiding. Give them their heads, and tell them what time you want to get home, and that is all they ask. While Edwin leans from his saddle to whisper the dear old nothings in Angelina's ear, while Angelina's face, to hide its blushes, is turned towards the horizon at the back, the magic bicycles pursue their even course.

And the sun is always shining and the roads are always dry. No stern parent rides behind, no interfering aunt beside, no demon small boy brother is peeping round the corner, there never comes a skid. Ah me! Why were there no "Britain's Best" nor "Camberwell Eureka's" to be hired when we were young?

Or maybe the "Britain's Best" or the "Camberwell Eureka" stands leaning against a gate; maybe it is tired. It has worked hard all the afternoon, carrying these young people. Mercifully minded, they have dismounted, to give the machine a rest. They sit upon the grass beneath the shade of graceful boughs; it is long and dry grass. A stream flows by their feet. All is rest and peace.

That is ever the idea the cycle poster artist sets himself to convey rest and peace.

But I am wrong in saying that no cyclist, according to the poster, ever works. Now I come to reflect, I have seen posters representing gentlemen on cycles working very hardoverworking themselves, one might almost say. They are thin and haggard with the toil, the perspiration stands upon their brow in beads; you feel that if there is another hill beyond the poster they must either get off or die. But this is the result of their own folly. This happens because they will persist in riding a machine of an inferior make. Were they riding a "Putney Popular" or "Battersea Bounder," such as the sensible young man in the centre of the poster rides, then all this unnecessary labour would be saved to them. Then all required of them would be, as in gratitude bound, to look happy; perhaps, occasionally to backpedal a little when the machine in its youthful buoyancy loses its head for a moment and dashes on too swiftly.

You tired young men, sitting dejectedly on milestones, too spent to heed the steady rain that soaks you through; you weary maidens, with the straight, damp hair, anxious about the time, longing to swear, not knowing how; you stout bald men, vanishing visibly as you pant and grunt along the endless road; you purple, dejected matrons, plying with pain the slow unwilling wheel; why did you not see to it that you bought a "Britain's Best" or a "Camberwell Eureka"? Why are these bicycles of inferior make so prevalent throughout the land

Or is it with bicycling as with all other things: does Life at no point realise the Poster?

The one thing in Germany that never fails to charm and fascinate me is the German dog. In England one grows tired of the old breeds, one knows them all so well: the mastiff, the plumpudding dog, the terrier (black, white or roughhaired, as the case may be, but always quarrelsome), the collie, the bulldog; never anything new. Now in Germany you get variety. You come across dogs the like of which you have never seen before: that until you hear them bark you do not know are dogs. It is all so fresh, so interesting. George stopped a dog in Sigmaringen and drew our attention to it. It suggested a cross between a codfish and a poodle. I would not like to be positive it was not a cross between a codfish and a poodle. Harris tried to photograph it, but it ran up a fence and disappeared through some bushes.

I do not know what the German breeder's idea is; at present he retains his secret. George suggests he is aiming at a griffin. There is much to bear out this theory, and indeed in one or two cases I have come across success on these lines would seem to have been almost achieved. Yet I cannot bring myself to believe that such are anything more than mere accidents. The German is practical, and I fail to see the object of a griffin. If mere quaintness of design be desired, is there not already the Dachshund! What more is needed? Besides, about a house, a griffin would be so inconvenient: people would be

continually treading on its tail. My own idea is that what the Germans are trying for is a mermaid, which they will then train to catch fish.

For your German does not encourage laziness in any living thing. He likes to see his dogs work, and the German dog loves work; of that there can be no doubt. The life of the English dog must be a misery to him. Imagine a strong, active, and intelligent being, of exceptionally energetic temperament, condemned to spend twentyfour hours a day in absolute idleness! How would you like it yourself? No wonder he feels misunderstood, yearns for the unattainable, and gets himself into trouble generally.

Now the German dog, on the other hand, has plenty to occupy his mind. He is busy and important. Watch him as he walks along harnessed to his milk cart. No churchwarden at collection time could feel or look more pleased with himself. He does not do any real work; the human being does the pushing, he does the barking; that is his idea of division of labour. What he says to himself is:

“The old man can’t bark, but he can shove. Very well.”

The interest and the pride he takes in the business is quite beautiful to see. Another dog passing by makes, maybe, some jeering remark, casting discredit upon the creaminess of the milk. He stops suddenly, quite regardless of the traffic.

“I beg your pardon, what was that you said about our milk?”

“I said nothing about your milk,” retorts the other dog, in a tone of gentle innocence. “I merely said it was a fine day, and asked the price of chalk.”

“Oh, you asked the price of chalk, did you? Would you like to know?”

“Yes, thanks; somehow I thought you would be able to tell me.”

“You are quite right, I can. It’s worth”

“Oh, do come along!” says the old lady, who is tired and hot, and anxious to finish her round.

“Yes, but hang it all; did you hear what he hinted about our milk?”

“Oh, never mind him! There’s a tram coming round the corner: we shall all get run over.”

“Yes, but I do mind him; one has one’s proper pride. He asked the price of chalk, and he’s going to know it! It’s worth just twenty times as much”

“You’ll have the whole thing over, I know you will,” cries the old lady, pathetically, struggling with all her feeble strength to haul him back. “Oh dear, oh dear! I do wish I had left you at home.”

The tram is bearing down upon them; a cabdriver is shouting at them; another huge brute, hoping to be in time to take a hand, is dragging a bread cart, followed by a screaming child, across the road from the opposite side; a small crowd is collecting; and a policeman is hastening to the scene.

“It’s worth,” says the milk dog, “just twentytimes as much as you’ll be worth before I’ve done with you.”

“Oh, you think so, do you?”

“Yes, I do, you grandson of a French poodle, you cabbageeating”

“There! I knew you’d have it over,” says the poor milkwoman. “I told him he’d have it over.”

But he is busy, and heeds her not. Five minutes later, when the traffic is renewed, when the bread girl has collected her muddy rolls, and the policeman has gone off with the name and address of everybody in the street, he consents to look behind him.

“It is a bit of an upset,” he admits. Then shaking himself free of care, he adds, cheerfully, “But I guess I taught him the price of chalk. He won’t interfere with us again, I’m thinking.”

“I’m sure I hope not,” says the old lady, regarding dejectedly the milky road.

But his favourite sport is to wait at the top of the hill for another dog, and then race down. On these occasions the chief occupation of the other fellow is to run about behind, picking up the scattered articles, loaves, cabbages, or shirts, as they are jerked out. At the bottom of the hill, he stops and waits for his friend.

“Good race, wasn’t it?” he remarks, panting, as the Human comes up, laden to the chin. “I believe I’d have won it, too, if it hadn’t been for that fool of a small boy. He was right in my way just as I turned the corner. You noticed him? Wish I had, beastly brat! What’s he yelling like that for? Because I knocked him down and ran over him? Well,

why didn't he get out of the way? It's disgraceful, the way people leave their children about for other people to tumble over. Halloo! did all those things come out? You couldn't have packed them very carefully; you should see to a thing like that. You did not dream of my tearing down the hill twenty miles an hour? Surely, you knew me better than to expect I'd let that old Schneider's dog pass me without an effort. But there, you never think. You're sure you've got them all? You believe so? I shouldn't 'believe' if I were you; I should run back up the hill again and make sure. You feel too tired? Oh, all right! don't blame me if anything is missing, that's all."

He is so selfwilled. He is cocksure that the correct turning is the second on the right, and nothing will persuade him that it is the third. He is positive he can get across the road in time, and will not be convinced until he sees the cart smashed up. Then he is very apologetic, it is true. But of what use is that? As he is usually of the size and strength of a young bull, and his human companion is generally a weakkneed old man or woman, or a small child, he has his way. The greatest punishment his proprietor can inflict upon him is to leave him at home, and take the cart out alone. But your German is too kindhearted to do this often.

That he is harnessed to the cart for anybody's pleasure but his own it is impossible to believe; and I am confident that the German peasant plans the tiny harness and fashions the little cart purely with the hope of gratifying his dog. In other countries in Belgium, Holland and France I have seen these draught dogs illtreated and overworked; but in Germany, never. Germans abuse animals shockingly. I have seen a German stand in front of his horse and call it every name he could lay his tongue to. But the horse did not mind it. I have seen a German, weary with abusing his horse, call to his wife to come out and assist him. When she came, he told her what the horse had done. The recital roused the woman's temper to almost equal heat with his own; and standing one each side of the poor beast, they both abused it. They abused its dead mother, they insulted its father; they made cutting remarks about its personal appearance, its intelligence, its moral sense, its general ability as a horse. The animal bore the torrent with exemplary patience for awhile; then it did the best thing possible to do under the circumstances. Without losing its own temper, it moved quietly away. The lady returned to her washing, and the man followed it up the street, still abusing it.

A kinderhearted people than the Germans there is no need for. Cruelty to animal or child is a thing almost unknown in the land. The whip with them is a musical instrument; its crack is heard from morning to night, but an Italian coachman that in the streets of Dresden I once saw use it was very nearly lynched by the indignant crowd. Germany is the only country in Europe where the traveller can settle himself comfortably in his hired carriage, confident that his gentle, willing friend between the shafts will be neither overworked nor cruelly treat

CHAPTER IV

Black Forest House: and the sociability therein
Its perfume
George positively declines to remain in bed after four o'clock in the morning
The road one cannot miss
My peculiar extra instinct
An ungrateful party
Harris as a scientist
His cheery confidence
The village: where it was, and where it ought to have been
George: his plan
We promenade à la Français
The German coachman asleep and awake
The man who spreads the English language abroad.

There was one night when, tired out and far from town or village, we slept in a Black Forest farmhouse. The great charm about the Black Forest house is its sociability. The cows are in the next room, the horses are upstairs, the geese and ducks are in the kitchen, while the pigs, the children, and the chickens live all over the place.

You are dressing, when you hear a grunt behind you.

“Goodmorning! Don't happen to have any potato peelings in here? No, I see you haven't; goodbye.”

Next there is a cackle, and you see the neck of an old hen stretched round the corner.

“Fine morning, isn't it? You don't mind my bringing this worm of mine in here, do you? It is so difficult in this house to find a room where one can enjoy one's food with any quietness. From a chicken I have always been a slow eater, and when a dozen there, I thought they wouldn't leave me alone. Now they'll all want a bit. You don't mind my getting on the bed, do you? Perhaps here they won't notice me.”

While you are dressing various shock heads peer in at the door; they evidently regard the room as a temporary menagerie. You cannot tell whether the heads belong to boys or girls; you can only hope they are all male. It is of no use shutting the door, because there is nothing to fasten it by, and the moment you are gone they push it open again. You breakfast as the Prodigal Son is generally represented feeding: a pig or two drop in to keep you company; a party of elderly geese criticise you from the door; you gather from their whispers, added to their shocked expression, that they are talking scandal about you. Maybe a cow will condescend to give a glance in.

This Noah's Ark arrangement it is, I suppose, that gives to the Black Forest home its distinctive scent. It is not a scent you can liken to any one thing. It is as if you took roses and Limburger cheese and hair oil, some heather and onions, peaches and soapsuds, together with a dash of sea air and a corpse, and mixed them up together. You cannot define any particular odour, but you feel they are all there all the odours that

the world has yet discovered. People who live in these houses are fond of this mixture. They do not open the window and lose any of it; they keep it carefully bottled up. If you want any other scent, you can go outside and smell the wood violets and the pines; inside there is the house; and after a while, I am told, you get used to it, so that you miss it, and are unable to go to sleep in any other atmosphere.

We had a long walk before us the next day, and it was our desire, therefore, to get up early, even so early as six o'clock, if that could be managed without disturbing the whole household. We put it to our hostess whether she thought this could be done. She said she thought it could. She might not be about herself at that time; it was her morning for going into the town, some eight miles off, and she rarely got back much before seven; but, possibly, her husband or one of the boys would be returning home to lunch about that hour. Anyhow, somebody should be sent back to wake us and get our breakfast.

As it turned out, we did not need any waking. We got up at four, all by ourselves. We got up at four in order to get away from the noise and the din that was making our heads ache. What time the Black Forest peasant rises in the summer time I am unable to say; to us they appeared to be getting up all night. And the first thing the Black Forester does when he gets up is to put on a pair of stout boots with wooden soles, and take a constitutional round the house. Until he has been three times up and down the stairs, he does not feel he is up. Once fully awake himself, the next thing he does is to go upstairs to the stables, and wake up a horse. (The Black Forest house being built generally on the side of a steep hill, the ground floor is at the top, and the hayloft at the bottom.) Then the horse, it would seem, must also have its constitutional round the house; and this seen to, the man goes downstairs into the kitchen and begins to chop wood, and when he has chopped sufficient wood he feels pleased with himself and begins to sing. All things considered, we came to the conclusion we could not do better than follow the excellent example set us. Even George was quite eager to get up that morning.

We had a frugal breakfast at halfpast four, and started away at five. Our road lay over a mountain, and from enquiries made in the village it appeared to be one of those roads you cannot possibly miss. I suppose everybody knows this sort of road. Generally, it leads you back to where you started from; and when it doesn't, you wish it did, so that at all events you might know where you were. I foresaw evil from the very first, and before we had accomplished a couple of miles we came up with it. The road divided into three. A wormeaten signpost indicated that the path to the left led to a place that we had never heard of that was on no map. Its other arm, pointing out the direction of the middle road, had disappeared. The road to the right, so we all agreed, clearly led back again to the village.

“The old man said distinctly,” so Harris reminded us, “keep straight on round the hill.”

“Which hill?” George asked, pertinently.

We were confronted by half a dozen, some of them big, some of them little.

“He told us,” continued Harris, “that we should come to a wood.”

“I see no reason to doubt him,” commented George, “whichever road we take.”

As a matter of fact, a dense wood covered every hill.

“And he said,” murmured Harris, “that we should reach the top in about an hour and a half.”

“There it is,” said George, “that I begin to disbelieve him.”

“Well, what shall we do?” said Harris.

Now I happen to possess the bump of locality. It is not a virtue; I make no boast of it. It is merely an animal instinct that I cannot help. That things occasionally get in my way—mountains, precipices, rivers, and such like obstructions—is no fault of mine. My instinct is correct enough; it is the earth that is wrong. I led them by the middle road. That the middle road had not character enough to continue for any quarter of a mile in the same direction; that after three miles up and down hill it ended abruptly in a wasps’ nest, was not a thing that should have been laid to my door. If the middle road had gone in the direction it ought to have done, it would have taken us to where we wanted to go, of that I am convinced.

Even as it was, I would have continued to use this gift of mine to discover a fresh way had a proper spirit been displayed towards me. But I am not an angel. I admit this frankly, and I decline to exert myself for the ungrateful and the ribald. Besides, I doubt if George and Harris would have followed me further in any event. Therefore it was that I washed my hands of the whole affair, and that Harris entered upon the vacancy.

“Well,” said Harris. “I suppose you are satisfied with what you have done?”

“I am quite satisfied,” I replied from the heap of stones where I was sitting. “So far, I have brought you with safety. I would continue to lead you further, but no artist can work without encouragement. You appear dissatisfied with me because you do not

know where you are. For all you know, you may be just where you want to be. But I say nothing as to that; I expect no thanks. Go your own way; I have done with you both.”

I spoke, perhaps, with bitterness, but I could not help it. Not a word of kindness had I had all the weary way.

“Do not misunderstand us,” said Harris; “both George and myself feel that without your assistance we should never be where we now are. For that we give you every credit. But instinct is liable to error. What I propose to do is to substitute for it Science, which is exact. Now, where’s the sun?”

“Don’t you think,” said George, “that if we made our way back to the village, and hired a boy for a mark to guide us, it would save time in the end?”

“It would be wasting hours,” said Harris, with decision. “You leave this to me. I have been reading about this thing, and it has interested me.” He took out his watch, and began turning himself round and round.

“It’s as simple as A B C,” he continued. “You point the short hand at the sun, then you bisect the segment between the short hand and the twelve, and thus you get the north.”

He worried up and down for a while, then he fixed it.

“Now I’ve got it,” he said; “that’s the north, where that wasps’ nest is. Now give me the map.”

We handed it to him, and seating himself facing the wasps, he examined it.

“Todtmoos from here,” he said, “is south by southwest.”

“How do you mean, from here?” asked George.

“Why, from here, where we are,” returned Harris.

“But where are we?” said George.

This worried Harris for a time, but at length he cheered up.

“It doesn’t matter where we are,” he said. “Wherever we are, Todtmoos is south by southwest. Come on, we are only wasting time.”

“I don’t quite see how you make it out,” said George, as he rose and shouldered his knapsack; “but I suppose it doesn’t matter. We are out for our health, and it’s all pretty!”

“We shall be all right,” said Harris, with cheery confidence. “We shall be in at Todtmoos before ten, don’t you worry. And at Todtmoos we will have something to eat.”

He said that he, himself, fancied a beefsteak, followed by an omelette. George said that, personally, he intended to keep his mind off the subject until he saw Todtmoos.

We walked for half an hour, then emerging upon an opening, we saw below us, about two miles away, the village through which we had passed that morning. It had a quaint church with an outside staircase, a somewhat unusual arrangement.

The sight of it made me sad. We had been walking hard for three hours and a half, and had accomplished, apparently, about four miles. But Harris was delighted.

“Now, at last,” said Harris, “we know where we are.”

“I thought you said it didn’t matter,” George reminded him.

“No more it does, practically,” replied Harris, “but it is just as well to be certain. Now I feel more confidence in myself.”

“I’m not so sure about that being an advantage,” muttered George. But I do not think Harris heard him.

“We are now,” continued Harris, “east of the sun, and Todtmoos is southwest of where we are. So that if”

He broke off. “Bytheby,” he said, “do you remember whether I said the bisecting line of that segment pointed to the north or to the south?”

“You said it pointed to the north,” replied George.

“Are you positive?” persisted Harris.

“Positive,” answered George “but don’t let that influence your calculations. In all probability you were wrong.”

Harris thought for a while; then his brow cleared.

“That’s all right,” he said; “of course, it’s the north. It must be the north. How could it be the south? Now we must make for the west. Come on.”

“I am quite willing to make for the west,” said George; “any point of the compass is the same to me. I only wish to remark that, at the present moment, we are going dead east.”

“No we are not,” returned Harris; “we are going west.”

“We are going east, I tell you,” said George.

“I wish you wouldn’t keep saying that,” said Harris, “you confuse me.”

“I don’t mind if I do,” returned George; “I would rather do that than go wrong. I tell you we are going dead east.”

“What nonsense!” retorted Harris; “there’s the sun.”

“I can see the sun,” answered George, “quite distinctly. It may be where it ought to be, according to you and Science, or it may not. All I know is, that when we were down in the village, that particular hill with that particular lump of rock upon it was due north of us. At the present moment we are facing due east.”

“You are quite right,” said Harris; “I forgot for the moment that we had turned round.”

“I should get into the habit of making a note of it, if I were you,” grumbled George; “it’s a manoeuvre that will probably occur again more than once.”

We faced about, and walked in the other direction. At the end of forty minutes’ climbing we again emerged upon an opening, and again the village lay just under our feet. On this occasion it was south of us.

“This is very extraordinary,” said Harris.

“I see nothing remarkable about it,” said George. “If you walk steadily round a village it is only natural that now and then you get a glimpse of it. Myself, I am glad to see it. It proves to me that we are not utterly lost.”

“It ought to be the other side of us,” said Harris.

“It will be in another hour or so,” said George, “if we keep on.”

I said little myself; I was vexed with both of them; but I was glad to notice George evidently growing cross with Harris. It was absurd of Harris to fancy he could find the way by the sun.

“I wish I knew,” said Harris, thoughtfully, “for certain whether that bisecting line points to the north or to the south.”

“I should make up my mind about it,” said George; “it’s an important point.”

“It’s impossible it can be the north,” said Harris, “and I’ll tell you why.”

“You needn’t trouble,” said George; “I am quite prepared to believe it isn’t.”

“You said just now it was,” said Harris, reproachfully.

“I said nothing of the sort,” retorted George. “I said you said it was a very different thing. If you think it isn’t, let’s go the other way. It’ll be a change, at all events.”

So Harris worked things out according to the contrary calculation, and again we plunged into the wood; and again after half an hour’s stiff climbing we came in view of that same village. True, we were a little higher, and this time it lay between us and the sun.

“I think,” said George, as he stood looking down at it, “this is the best view we’ve had of it, as yet. There is only one other point from which we can see it. After that, I propose we go down into it and get some rest.”

“I don’t believe it’s the same village,” said Harris; “it can’t be.”

“There’s no mistaking that church,” said George. “But maybe it is a case on all fours with that Prague statue. Possibly, the authorities hereabout have had made some lifesized models of that village, and have stuck them about the Forest to see where the thing would look best. Anyhow, which way do we go now?”

“I don’t know,” said Harris, “and I don’t care. I have done my best; you’ve done nothing but grumble, and confuse me.”

“I may have been critical,” admitted George “but look at the thing from my point of view. One of you says he’s got an instinct, and leads me to a wasps’ nest in the middle of a wood.”

“I can’t help wasps building in a wood,” I replied.

“I don’t say you can,” answered George. “I am not arguing; I am merely stating incontrovertible facts. The other one, who leads me up and down hill for hours on scientific principles, doesn’t know the north from the south, and is never quite sure whether he’s turned round or whether he hasn’t. Personally, I profess to no instincts beyond the ordinary, nor am I a scientist. But two fields off I can see a man. I am going to offer him the worth of the hay he is cutting, which I estimate at one mark fifty pfennig, to leave his work, and lead me to within sight of Todtmoos. If you two fellows like to follow, you can. If not, you can start another system and work it out by yourselves.”

George’s plan lacked both originality and aplomb, but at the moment it appealed to us. Fortunately, we had worked round to a very short distance away from the spot where we had originally gone wrong; with the result that, aided by the gentleman of the scythe, we recovered the road, and reached Todtmoos four hours later than we had calculated to reach it, with an appetite that took fortyfive minutes’ steady work in silence to abate.

From Todtmoos we had intended to walk down to the Rhine; but having regard to our extra exertions of the morning, we decided to promenade in a carriage, as the French would say: and for this purpose hired a picturesquelooking vehicle, drawn by a horse that I should have called barrelbodied but for contrast with his driver, in comparison with whom he was angular. In Germany every vehicle is arranged for a pair of horses, but drawn generally by one. This gives to the equipage a lopsided appearance, according to our notions, but it is held here to indicate style. The idea to be conveyed is that you usually drive a pair of horses, but that for the moment you have mislaid the other one. The German driver is not what we should call a firstclass whip. He is at his best when he is asleep. Then, at all events, he is harmless; and the horse being, generally speaking, intelligent and experienced, progress under these conditions is comparatively safe. If in Germany they could only train the horse to collect the money at the end of the journey, there would be no need for a coachman at all. This would be a distinct relief to the passenger, for when the German coachman is awake and not cracking his whip he is generally occupied in getting himself into trouble or out of it. He is better at the former. Once I recollect driving down a steep Black Forest hill with a couple of ladies. It was one of those roads winding corkscrewwise down the slope. The hill rose at an angle of seventyfive on the offside, and fell away at an angle of seventyfive on the nearside. We were proceeding very comfortably, the driver, we were happy to notice, with his eyes shut, when suddenly something, a bad dream or indigestion, awoke him. He seized the reins, and, by an adroit movement, pulled the nearside horse over the edge, where it clung, half supported by the traces. Our driver did not appear in the least annoyed or surprised; both horses, I also, noticed, seemed equally used to the situation. We got out,

and he got down. He took from under the seat a huge claspknife, evidently kept there for the purpose, and deftly cut the traces. The horse, thus released, rolled over and over until he struck the road again some fifty feet below. There he regained his feet and stood waiting for us. We reentered the carriage and descended with the single horse until we came to him. There, with the help of some bits of string, our driver harnessed him again, and we continued on our way. What impressed me was the evident accustomedness of both driver and horses to this method of working down a hill.

Evidently to them it appeared a short and convenient cut. I should not have been surprised had the man suggested our strapping ourselves in, and then rolling over and over, carriage and all, to the bottom.

Another peculiarity of the German coachman is that he never attempts to pull in or to pull up. He regulates his rate of speed, not by the pace of the horse, but by manipulation of the brake. For eight miles an hour he puts it on slightly, so that it only scrapes the wheel, producing a continuous sound as of the sharpening of a saw; for four miles an hour he screws it down harder, and you travel to an accompaniment of groans and shrieks, suggestive of a symphony of dying pigs. When he desires to come to a full stop, he puts it on to its full. If his brake be a good one, he calculates he can stop his carriage, unless the horse be an extra powerful animal, in less than twice its own length. Neither the German driver nor the German horse knows, apparently, that you can stop a carriage by any other method. The German horse continues to pull with his full strength until he finds it impossible to move the vehicle another inch; then he rests. Horses of other countries are quite willing to stop when the idea is suggested to them. I have known horses content to go even quite slowly. But your German horse, seemingly, is built for one particular speed, and is unable to depart from it. I am stating nothing but the literal, unadorned truth, when I say I have seen a German coachman, with the reins lying loose over the splashboard, working his brake with both hands, in terror lest he would not be in time to avoid a collision.

At Waldshut, one of those little sixteenthcentury towns through which the Rhine flows during its earlier course, we came across that exceedingly common object of the Continent: the travelling Briton grieved and surprised at the unacquaintance of the foreigner with the subtleties of the English language. When we entered the station he was, in very fair English, though with a slight Somersetshire accent, explaining to a porter for the tenth time, as he informed us, the simple fact that though he himself had a ticket for Donaueschingen, and wanted to go to Donaueschingen, to see the source of the Danube, which is not there, though they tell you it is, he wished his bicycle to be sent on to Engen and his bag to Constance, there to await his arrival. He was hot and angry with the effort of the thing. The porter was a young man in years, but at the moment looked old and miserable. I offered my services. I wish now I had not though not so fervently, I

expect, as he, the speechless one, came subsequently to wish this. All three routes, so the porter explained to us, were complicated, necessitating changing and rechanging. There was not much time for calm elucidation, as our own train was starting in a few minutes. The man himself was voluble always a mistake when anything entangled has to be made clear; while the porter was only too eager to get the job done with and so breathe again. It dawned upon me ten minutes later, when thinking the matter over in the train, that though I had agreed with the porter that it would be best for the bicycle to go by way of Immendingen, and had agreed to his booking it to Immendingen, I had neglected to give instructions for its departure from Immendingen. Were I of a despondent temperament I should be worrying myself at the present moment with the reflection that in all probability that bicycle is still at Immendingen to this day. But I regard it as good philosophy to endeavour always to see the brighter side of things. Possibly the porter corrected my omission on his own account, or some simple miracle may have happened to restore that bicycle to its owner some time before the end of his tour. The bag we sent to Radolfzell: but here I console myself with the recollection that it was labelled Constance; and no doubt after a while the railway authorities, finding it unclaimed at Radolfzell, forwarded it on to Constance.

But all this is apart from the moral I wished to draw from the incident. The true inwardness of the situation lay in the indignation of this Britisher at finding a German railway porter unable to comprehend English. The moment we spoke to him he expressed this indignation in no measured terms.

“Thank you very much indeed,” he said; “it’s simple enough. I want to go to Donaueschingen myself by train; from Donaueschingen I am going to walk to Geisengen; from Geisengen I am going to take the train to Engen, and from Engen I am going to bicycle to Constance. But I don’t want to take my bag with me; I want to find it at Constance when I get there. I have been trying to explain the thing to this fool for the last ten minutes; but I can’t get it into him.”

“It is very disgraceful,” I agreed. “Some of these German workmen know hardly any other language than their own.”

“I have gone over it with him,” continued the man, “on the time table, and explained it by pantomime. Even then I could not knock it into him.”

“I can hardly believe you,” I again remarked; “you would think the thing explained itself.”

Harris was angry with the man; he wished to reprove him for his folly in journeying through the outlying portions of a foreign clime, and seeking in such to accomplish

complicated railway tricks without knowing a word of the language of the country. But I checked the impulsiveness of Harris, and pointed out to him the great and good work at which the man was unconsciously assisting.

Shakespeare and Milton may have done their little best to spread acquaintance with the English tongue among the less favoured inhabitants of Europe. Newton and Darwin may have rendered their language a necessity among educated and thoughtful foreigners. Dickens and Ouida (for your folk who imagine that the literary world is bounded by the prejudices of New Grub Street, would be surprised and grieved at the position occupied abroad by this athomesneeredat lady) may have helped still further to popularise it. But the man who has spread the knowledge of English from Cape St. Vincent to the Ural Mountains is the Englishman who, unable or unwilling to learn a single word of any language but his own, travels purse in hand into every corner of the Continent. One may be shocked at his ignorance, annoyed at his stupidity, angry at his presumption. But the practical fact remains; he it is that is anglicising Europe. For him the Swiss peasant tramps through the snow on winter evenings to attend the English class open in every village. For him the coachman and the guard, the chambermaid and the laundress, pore over their English grammars and colloquial phrase books. For him the foreign shopkeeper and merchant send their sons and daughters in their thousands to study in every English town. For him it is that every foreign hotel and restaurantkeeper adds to his advertisement: "Only those with fair knowledge of English need apply."

Did the Englishspeaking races make it their rule to speak anything else than English, the marvellous progress of the English tongue throughout the world would stop. The Englishspeaking man stands amid the strangers and jingles his gold.

"Here," cries, "is payment for all such as can speak English."

He it is who is the great educator. Theoretically we may scold him; practically we should take our hats off to him. He is the missionary of the English tongue.

CHAPTER V

We are grieved at the earthly instincts of the GermanA superb view, but no restaurantContinental opinion of the EnglishmanThat he does not know enough to come in out of the rainThere comes a weary traveller with a brickThe hurting of the dogAn undesirable family residenceA fruitful regionA merry old soul comes up the hillGeorge, alarmed at the lateness of the hour, hastens down the other sideHarris follows him, to show him the wayI hate being alone, and follow HarrisPronunciation specially designed for use of foreigners.

A thing that vexes much the highclass AngloSaxon soul is the earthly instinct prompting the German to fix a restaurant at the goal of every excursion. On mountain summit, in fairy glen, on lonely pass, by waterfall or winding stream, stands ever the busy Wirtschaft. How can one rhapsodise over a view when surrounded by beerstained tables? How lose one's self in historical reverie amid the odour of roast veal and spinach?

One day, on elevating thoughts intent, we climbed through tangled woods.

“And at the top,” said Harris, bitterly, as we paused to breathe a space and pull our belts a hole tighter, “there will be a gaudy restaurant, where people will be guzzling beefsteaks and plum tarts and drinking white wine.”

“Do you think so?” said George.

“Sure to be,” answered Harris; “you know their way. Not one grove will they consent to dedicate to solitude and contemplation; not one height will they leave to the lover of nature unpolluted by the gross and the material.”

“I calculate,” I remarked, “that we shall be there a little before one o'clock, provided we don't dawdle.”

“The 'mittagstisch' will be just ready,” groaned Harris, “with possibly some of those little blue trout they catch about here. In Germany one never seems able to get away from food and drink. It is maddening!”

We pushed on, and in the beauty of the walk forgot our indignation. My estimate proved to be correct.

“Here we are; I can see the summit.”

“Any sign of that restaurant?” said George.

“I don’t notice it,” replied Harris; “but it’s there, you may be sure; confound it!”

Five minutes later we stood upon the top. We looked north, south, east and west; then we looked at one another.

“Grand view, isn’t it?” said Harris.

“Magnificent,” I agreed.

“Superb,” remarked George.

“They have had the good sense for once,” said Harris, “to put that restaurant out of sight.”

“They do seem to have hidden it,” said George. “One doesn’t mind the thing so much when it is not forced under one’s nose,” said Harris.

“Of course, in its place,” I observed, “a restaurant is right enough.”

“I should like to know where they have put it,” said George.

“Suppose we look for it?” said Harris, with inspiration.

It seemed a good idea. I felt curious myself. We agreed to explore in different directions, returning to the summit to report progress. In half an hour we stood together once again. There was no need for words. The face of one and all of us announced plainly that at last we had discovered a recess of German nature untarnished by the sordid suggestion of food or drink.

“I should never have believed it possible,” said Harris: “would you?”

“I should say,” I replied, “that this is the only square quarter of a mile in the entire Fatherland unprovided with one.”

“And we three strangers have struck it,” said George, “without an effort.”

“True,” I observed. “By pure good fortune we are now enabled to feast our finer senses undisturbed by appeal to our lower nature. Observe the light upon those distant peaks; is it not ravishing?”

“Talking of nature,” said George, “which should you say was the nearest way down?”

“The road to the left,” I replied, after consulting the guide book, “takes us to Sonnensteig where, by the way, I observe the ‘Goldener Adler’ is well spoken of in about two hours. The road to the right, though somewhat longer, commands more extensive prospects.”

“One prospect,” said Harris, “is very much like another prospect; don’t you think so?”

“Personally,” said George, “I am going by the lefthand road.” And Harris and I went after him.

But we were not to get down so soon as we had anticipated. Storms come quickly in these regions, and before we had walked for quarter of an hour it became a question of seeking shelter or living for the rest of the day in soaked clothes. We decided on the former alternative, and selected a tree that, under ordinary circumstances, should have been ample protection. But a Black Forest thunderstorm is not an ordinary circumstance. We consoled ourselves at first by telling each other that at such a rate it could not last long. Next, we endeavoured to comfort ourselves with the reflection that if it did we should soon be too wet to fear getting wetter.

“As it turned out,” said Harris, “I should have been almost glad if there had been a restaurant up here.”

“I see no advantage in being both wet and hungry,” said George. “I shall give it another five minutes, then I am going on.”

“These mountain solitudes,” I remarked, “are very attractive in fine weather. On a rainy day, especially if you happen to be past the age when”

At this point there hailed us a voice, proceeding from a stout gentleman, who stood some fifty feet away from us under a big umbrella.

“Won’t you come inside?” asked the stout gentleman.

“Inside where?” I called back. I thought at first he was one of those fools that will try to be funny when there is nothing to be funny about.

“Inside the restaurant,” he answered.

We left our shelter and made for him. We wished for further information about this thing.

“I did call to you from the window,” said the stout gentleman, as we drew near to him, “but I suppose you did not hear me. This storm may last for another hour; you will get so wet.”

He was a kindly old gentleman; he seemed quite anxious about us.

I said: “It is very kind of you to have come out. We are not lunatics. We have not been standing under that tree for the last halfhour knowing all the time there was a restaurant, hidden by the trees, within twenty yards of us. We had no idea we were anywhere near a restaurant.”

“I thought maybe you hadn’t,” said the old gentleman; “that is why I came.”

It appeared that all the people in the inn had been watching us from the windows also, wondering why we stood there looking miserable. If it had not been for this nice old gentleman the fools would have remained watching us, I suppose, for the rest of the afternoon. The landlord excused himself by saying he thought we looked like English. It is no figure of speech. On the Continent they do sincerely believe that every Englishman is mad. They are as convinced of it as is every English peasant that Frenchmen live on frogs. Even when one makes a direct personal effort to disabuse them of the impression one is not always successful.

It was a comfortable little restaurant, where they cooked well, while the Tischwein was really most passable. We stopped there for a couple of hours, and dried ourselves and fed ourselves, and talked about the view; and just before we left an incident occurred that shows how much more stirring in this world are the influences of evil compared with those of good.

A traveller entered. He seemed a careworn man. He carried a brick in his hand, tied to a piece of rope. He entered nervously and hurriedly, closed the door carefully behind him, saw to it that it was fastened, peered out of the window long and earnestly, and then, with a sigh of relief, laid his brick upon the bench beside him and called for food and drink.

There was something mysterious about the whole affair. One wondered what he was going to do with the brick, why he had closed the door so carefully, why he had looked so anxiously from the window; but his aspect was too wretched to invite conversation, and we forbore, therefore, to ask him questions. As he ate and drank he grew more cheerful,

sighed less often. Later he stretched his legs, lit an evil-smelling cigar, and puffed in calm contentment.

Then it happened. It happened too suddenly for any detailed explanation of the thing to be possible. I recollect a Fräulein entering the room from the kitchen with a pan in her hand. I saw her cross to the outer door. The next moment the whole room was in an uproar. One was reminded of those pantomime transformation scenes where, from among floating clouds, slow music, waving flowers, and reclining fairies, one is suddenly transported into the midst of shouting policemen tumbling yelling babies, swells fighting pantaloons, sausages and harlequins, buttered slides and clowns. As the Fräulein of the pan touched the door it flew open, as though all the spirits of sin had been pressed against it, waiting. Two pigs and a chicken rushed into the room; a cat that had been sleeping on a beer-barrel spluttered into fiery life. The Fräulein threw her pan into the air and lay down on the floor. The gentleman with the brick sprang to his feet, upsetting the table before him with everything upon it.

One looked to see the cause of this disaster: one discovered it at once in the person of a mongrel terrier with pointed ears and a squirrel's tail. The landlord rushed out from another door, and attempted to kick him out of the room. Instead, he kicked one of the pigs, the fatter of the two. It was a vigorous, well-planted kick, and the pig got the whole of it; none of it was wasted. One felt sorry for the poor animal; but no amount of sorrow anyone else might feel for him could compare with the sorrow he felt for himself. He stopped running about; he sat down in the middle of the room, and appealed to the solar system generally to observe this unjust thing that had come upon him. They must have heard his complaint in the valleys round about, and have wondered what upheaval of nature was taking place among the hills.

As for the hen it scuttled, screaming, every way at once. It was a marvellous bird: it seemed to be able to run up a straight wall quite easily; and it and the cat between them fetched down mostly everything that was not already on the floor. In less than forty seconds there were nine people in that room, all trying to kick one dog. Possibly, now and again, one or another may have succeeded, for occasionally the dog would stop barking in order to howl. But it did not discourage him. Everything has to be paid for, he evidently argued, even a pig and chicken hunt; and, on the whole, the game was worth it.

Besides, he had the satisfaction of observing that, for every kick he received, most other living things in the room got two. As for the unfortunate pig—the stationary one, the one that still sat lamenting in the centre of the room—he must have averaged a steady four. Trying to kick this dog was like playing football with a ball that was never there not when you went to kick it, but after you had started to kick it, and had gone too far to stop

yourself, so that the kick had to go on in any case, your only hope being that your foot would find something or another solid to stop it, and so save you from sitting down on the floor noisily and completely. When anybody did kick the dog it was by pure accident, when they were not expecting to kick him; and, generally speaking, this took them so unawares that, after kicking him, they fell over him. And everybody, every halfminute, would be certain to fall over the pig the sitting pig, the one incapable of getting out of anybody's way.

How long the scrimmage might have lasted it is impossible to say. It was ended by the judgment of George. For a while he had been seeking to catch, not the dog but the remaining pig, the one still capable of activity. Cornering it at last, he persuaded it to cease running round and round the room, and instead to take a spin outside. It shot through the door with one long wail.

We always desire the thing we have not. One pig, a chicken, nine people, and a cat, were as nothing in that dog's opinion compared with the quarry that was disappearing. Unwisely, he darted after it, and George closed the door upon him and shot the bolt.

Then the landlord stood up, and surveyed all the things that were lying on the floor.

"That's a playful dog of yours," said he to the man who had come in with the brick.

"He is not my dog," replied the man sullenly.

"Whose dog is it then?" said the landlord.

"I don't know whose dog it is," answered the man.

"That won't do for me, you know," said the landlord, picking up a picture of the German Emperor, and wiping beer from it with his sleeve.

"I know it won't," replied the man; "I never expected it would. I'm tired of telling people it isn't my dog. They none of them believe me."

"What do you want to go about with him for, if he's not your dog?" said the landlord. "What's the attraction about him?"

"I don't go about with him," replied the man; "he goes about with me. He picked me up this morning at ten o'clock, and he won't leave me. I thought I had got rid of him when I came in here. I left him busy killing a duck more than a quarter of an hour away. I'll have to pay for that, I expect, on my way back."

“Have you tried throwing stones at him?” asked Harris.

“Have I tried throwing stones at him!” replied the man, contemptuously. “I’ve been throwing stones at him till my arm aches with throwing stones; and he thinks it’s a game, and brings them back to me. I’ve been carrying this beastly brick about with me for over an hour, in the hope of being able to drown him, but he never comes near enough for me to get hold of him. He just sits six inches out of reach with his mouth open, and looks at me.”

“It’s the funniest story I’ve heard for a long while,” said the landlord.

“Glad it amuses somebody,” said the man.

We left him helping the landlord to pick up the broken things, and went our way. A dozen yards outside the door the faithful animal was waiting for his friend. He looked tired, but contented. He was evidently a dog of strange and sudden fancies, and we feared for the moment lest he might take a liking to us. But he let us pass with indifference. His loyalty to this unresponsive man was touching; and we made no attempt to undermine it.

Having completed to our satisfaction the Black Forest, we journeyed on our wheels through Alt Breisach and Colmar to Münster; whence we started a short exploration of the Vosges range, where, according to the present German Emperor, humanity stops. Of old, Alt Breisach, a rocky fortress with the river now on one side of it and now on the other for in its inexperienced youth the Rhine never seems to have been quite sure of its way, must, as a place of residence, have appealed exclusively to the lover of change and excitement. Whoever the war was between, and whatever it was about, Alt Breisach was bound to be in it. Everybody besieged it, most people captured it; the majority of them lost it again; nobody seemed able to keep it. Whom he belonged to, and what he was, the dweller in Alt Breisach could never have been quite sure. One day he would be a Frenchman, and then before he could learn enough French to pay his taxes he would be an Austrian. While trying to discover what you did in order to be a good Austrian, he would find he was no longer an Austrian, but a German, though what particular German out of the dozen must always have been doubtful to him. One day he would discover that he was a Catholic, the next an ardent Protestant. The only thing that could have given any stability to his existence must have been the monotonous necessity of paying heavily for the privilege of being whatever for the moment he was. But when one begins to think of these things one finds oneself wondering why anybody in the Middle Ages, except kings and tax collectors, ever took the trouble to live at all.

For variety and beauty, the Vosges will not compare with the hills of the Schwarzwald. The advantage about them from the tourist's point of view is their superior poverty. The Vosges peasant has not the unromantic air of contented prosperity that spoils his visavis across the Rhine. The villages and farms possess more the charm of decay. Another point wherein the Vosges district excels is its ruins. Many of its numerous castles are perched where you might think only eagles would care to build. In others, commenced by the Romans and finished by the Troubadours, covering acres with the maze of their still standing walls, one may wander for hours.

The fruiterer and greengrocer is a person unknown in the Vosges. Most things of that kind grow wild, and are to be had for the picking. It is difficult to keep to any programme when walking through the Vosges, the temptation on a hot day to stop and eat fruit generally being too strong for resistance. Raspberries, the most delicious I have ever tasted, wild strawberries, currants, and gooseberries, grow upon the hillsides as blackberries by English lanes. The Vosges small boy is not called upon to rob an orchard; he can make himself ill without sin. Orchards exist in the Vosges mountains in plenty; but to trespass into one for the purpose of stealing fruit would be as foolish as for a fish to try and get into a swimming bath without paying. Still, of course, mistakes do occur.

One afternoon in the course of a climb we emerged upon a plateau, where we lingered perhaps too long, eating more fruit than may have been good for us; it was so plentiful around us, so varied. We commenced with a few late strawberries, and from those we passed to raspberries. Then Harris found a greengagetree with some early fruit upon it, just perfect.

"This is about the best thing we have struck," said George; "we had better make the most of this." Which was good advice, on the face of it.

"It is a pity," said Harris, "that the pears are still so hard."

He grieved about this for a while, but later on came across some remarkably fine yellow plums and these consoled him somewhat.

"I suppose we are still a bit too far north for pineapples," said George. "I feel I could just enjoy a fresh pineapple. This commonplace fruit palls upon one after a while."

"Too much bush fruit and not enough tree, is the fault I find," said Harris. "Myself, I should have liked a few more greengages."

“Here is a man coming up the hill,” I observed, “who looks like a native. Maybe, he will know where we can find some more greengages.”

“He walks well for an old chap,” remarked Harris.

He certainly was climbing the hill at a remarkable pace. Also, so far as we were able to judge at that distance, he appeared to be in a remarkably cheerful mood, singing and shouting at the top of his voice, gesticulating, and waving his arms.

“What a merry old soul it is,” said Harris; “it does one good to watch him. But why does he carry his stick over his shoulder? Why doesn’t he use it to help him up the hill?”

“Do you know, I don’t think it is a stick,” said George.

“What can it be, then?” asked Harris.

“Well, it looks to me,” said George, “more like a gun.”

“You don’t think we can have made a mistake?” suggested Harris. “You don’t think this can be anything in the nature of a private orchard?”

I said: “Do you remember the sad thing that happened in the South of France some two years ago? A soldier picked some cherries as he passed a house, and the French peasant to whom the cherries belonged came out, and without a word of warning shot him dead.”

“But surely you are not allowed to shoot a man dead for picking fruit, even in France?” said George.

“Of course not,” I answered. “It was quite illegal. The only excuse offered by his counsel was that he was of a highly excitable disposition, and especially keen about these particular cherries.”

“I recollect something about the case,” said Harris, “now you mention it. I believe the district in which it happened the ‘Commune,’ as I think it is called had to pay heavy compensation to the relatives of the deceased soldier; which was only fair.”

George said: “I am tired of this place. Besides, it’s getting late.”

Harris said: “If he goes at that rate he will fall and hurt himself. Besides, I don’t believe he knows the way.”

I felt lonesome up there all by myself, with nobody to speak to. Besides, not since I was a boy, I reflected, had I enjoyed a run down a really steep hill. I thought I would see if I could revive the sensation. It is a jerky exercise, but good, I should say, for the liver.

We slept that night at Barr, a pleasant little town on the way to St. Ottilienberg, an interesting old convent among the mountains, where you are waited upon by real nuns, and your bill made out by a priest. At Barr, just before supper a tourist entered. He looked English, but spoke a language the like of which I have never heard before. Yet it was an elegant and finesounding language. The landlord stared at him blankly; the landlady shook her head. He sighed, and tried another, which somehow recalled to me forgotten memories, though, at the time, I could not fix it. But again nobody understood him.

“This is damnable,” he said aloud to himself.

“Ah, you are English!” exclaimed the landlord, brightening up.

“And Monsieur looks tired,” added the bright little landlady. “Monsieur will have supper.”

They both spoke English excellently, nearly as well as they spoke French and German; and they bustled about and made him comfortable. At supper he sat next to me, and I talked to him.

“Tell me,” I said I was curious on the subject “what language was it you spoke when you first came in?”

“German,” he explained.

“Oh,” I replied, “I beg your pardon.”

“You did not understand it?” he continued.

“It must have been my fault,” I answered; “my knowledge is extremely limited. One picks up a little here and there as one goes about, but of course that is a different thing.”

“But they did not understand it,” he replied, “the landlord and his wife; and it is their own language.”

“I do not think so,” I said. “The children hereabout speak German, it is true, and our landlord and landlady know German to a certain point. But throughout Alsace and Lorraine the old people still talk French.”

“And I spoke to them in French also,” he added, “and they understood that no better.”

“It is certainly very curious,” I agreed.

“It is more than curious,” he replied; “in my case it is incomprehensible. I possess a diploma for modern languages. I won my scholarship purely on the strength of my French and German. The correctness of my construction, the purity of my pronunciation, was considered at my college to be quite remarkable. Yet, when I come abroad hardly anybody understands a word I say. Can you explain it?”

“I think I can,” I replied. “Your pronunciation is too faultless. You remember what the Scotsman said when for the first time in his life he tasted real whisky: ‘It may be purr, but I canna drink it’; so it is with your German. It strikes one less as a language than as an exhibition. If I might offer advice, I should say: Mispronounce as much as possible, and throw in as many mistakes as you can think of.”

It is the same everywhere. Each country keeps a special pronunciation exclusively for the use of foreigners a pronunciation they never dream of using themselves, that they cannot understand when it is used. I once heard an English lady explaining to a Frenchman how to pronounce the word Have.

“You will pronounce it,” said the lady reproachfully, “as if it were spelt Hav. It isn’t. There is an ‘e’ at the end.”

“But I thought,” said the pupil, “that you did not sound the ‘e’ at the end of have.”

“No more you do,” explained his teacher. “It is what we call a mute ‘e’; but it exercises a modifying influence on the preceding vowel.”

Before that, he used to say “have” quite intelligently. Afterwards, when he came to the word he would stop dead, collect his thoughts, and give expression to a sound that only the context could explain.

Putting aside the sufferings of the early martyrs, few men, I suppose, have gone through more than I myself went through in trying to I attain the correct pronunciation of the German word for church “Kirche.” Long before I had done with it I had determined never to go to church in Germany, rather than be bothered with it.

“No, no,” my teacher would explain he was a painstaking gentleman; “you say it as if it were spelt Kirchke. There is no k. It is.” And he would illustrate to me again, for the twentieth time that morning, how it should be pronounced; the sad thing being that I could never for the life of me detect any difference between the way he said it and the way I said it. So he would try a new method.

“You say it from your throat,” he would explain. He was quite right; I did. “I want you to say it from down here,” and with a fat forefinger he would indicate the region from where I was to start. After painful efforts, resulting in sounds suggestive of anything rather than a place of worship, I would excuse myself.

“I really fear it is impossible,” I would say. “You see, for years I have always talked with my mouth, as it were; I never knew a man could talk with his stomach. I doubt if it is not too late now for me to learn.”

By spending hours in dark corners, and practising in silent streets, to the terror of chance passersby, I came at last to pronounce this word correctly. My teacher was delighted with me, and until I came to Germany I was pleased with myself. In Germany I found that nobody understood what I meant by it. I never got near a church with it. I had to drop the correct pronunciation, and painstakingly go back to my first wrong pronunciation. Then they would brighten up, and tell me it was round the corner, or down the next street, as the case might be.

I also think pronunciation of a foreign tongue could be better taught than by demanding from the pupil those internal acrobatic feats that are generally impossible and always useless. This is the sort of instruction one receives:

“Press your tonsils against the underside of your larynx. Then with the convex part of the septum curved upwards so as almost but not quite to touch the uvula, try with the tip of your tongue to reach your thyroid. Take a deep breath, and compress your glottis. Now, without opening your lips, say ‘Garoo.’”

And when you have done it they are not satisfied.