

[R1368 : page 54]

VIEWS ABROAD.

In passing through Europe just at this time and in view of the sure word of prophecy as to what will transpire there shortly, one feels much as he might be expected to feel if he were tenting on the slopes of an active volcano, such as Vesuvius, where the continually rising smoke gives evidence that the elements of destruction are close at hand and may at any moment suddenly devastate the surrounding country.

Indeed, as we looked upon that wonderful mountain, what a type it presented to our minds of the actual condition of the world, and especially of Europe, to-day. Upon its green and pleasant slopes villages are quietly nestled, and the inhabitants go about their daily avocations as if unaware of the awful threat of destruction that continually hovers over them; for above their heads at the mountain's summit is an immense crater, three thousand feet in diameter, from which proceeds a volume of smoke, while the ruins of the buried cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum at its base are constant reminders of its dreadful power. The traveler, in view of the past as well as of the present impending danger, almost shudders to pass that way, and cannot help wondering at the apparent indifference or unconsciousness of the residents of that locality, who have become accustomed to the sight and forgetful of the past in the bustle [R1369 : page 54] and confusion of the immediate present.

Just so it is with all Europe. The people are insecurely slumbering on the slopes of an active volcano. The smoldering fires of wrath, of immense proportions, are pent up in the heart of European nations; and here and there an opening is found where they issue forth in volumes that should send the warning alarm to every thinking mind. And indeed they do: but What is to be done?

is the question – a question, however, to which there is but one wise solution, a solution which the Word of God suggests, but which men are not yet willing to accept. The Scriptures say, "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth." (Psa. 2:10.) God's Word furnishes the only principles which, if put in operation, would avert the dread calamity now impending. But these principles of justice and love will not be accepted until the fearful, but much needed, chastisement shall force upon men of all classes and conditions their necessity as well as their superior value.

At present the national animosities are intense: **[R1369 : page 55]** Russia hates Germany with a zeal akin to her hatred of the persecuted Jew; and Germany reciprocates the feeling with equal zeal. France has no more tender feeling toward Germany, and Great Britain comes in for a similar portion. And while the great powers confront and menace each other, the little powers tremble in the balances, fearing them all, so that there is no rest nor security any where. Not only is there bitter international animosity, but in every nation there is a strong under-current of civil strife against the civil, financial and ecclesiastical powers.

It is noticeable, however, that these animosities exist more among the intelligent and well-to-do people abroad than among the very ignorant and miserably poor. Those of the latter class have not sufficient enlightenment to realize their degradation, while those of the former are ambitious to better their condition and scarcely know where to set the bounds of their ambitions. All through Europe, with the exceptions of Russia and Turkey, we were agreeably surprised to find the evidences of thrift and comfort in the home life of the masses of the people. True, the German farmers seem to fancy having their cattle under the same roof with their families, but the proverbial "pig in the parlor" in Ireland we did not find; nor was there a pig visible to the naked eye all the way from Cork to Dublin. Indeed, the majority of Irish emigrants to this country give rather an unfair impression to Americans of the Irish people in general.

We were pleased to find there culture and refinement beyond what we had anticipated. Our route through Ireland included Queenstown, Cork, Dublin, Belfast, Londonderry, Armagh and the intervening country and smaller towns. Through all that part of the country – the south, north and east – we saw no squalor nor misery, though, of course, there are plenty of poor people and some very humble homes. From all accounts, our impressions of the west coast would have been less favorable, had we found time to go there. The country is very picturesque and has been well named the Emerald Isle, from its ever fresh and beautiful greenness. When, after the monotony of the sea voyage, we first sighted its shores under the glow of a glorious sunset, the picture was indeed beautiful, and can better be imagined than described; and the flocks of graceful seagulls that come out to meet the incoming vessels seemed to be bidding us welcome as they gaily circled round the ship's masts and then dived down and gracefully floated on the water.

The small Irish steamer that conveyed us from the ocean steamer to the shore at Queenstown was a neat, pretty vessel, tastefully furnished, and landed us in Queenstown a little after 10 P.M. Here, and all through Great Britain and Ireland, they have fine stone docks; the streets are paved with large flag stones and the houses here and all through Ireland, both in the cities and in the country districts, are of stone. Stone walls are also used, both in the cities and in the country, for fences. Those separating farms are low and generally covered with something green. The little farms all over the country look neat and well kept, and the low, one story houses with thatched roofs, whitewashed outside and with a bit of lace at the windows, looked cozy and comfortable, and pretty wild flowers adorned the fields. The country is a continual succession of low hills and valleys, divided into small farms, and presents a pleasing prospect to the eye. The cities of Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Queenstown are flourishing and enterprising. Their good public buildings, private residences, railway stations, thrifty mercantile business, etc., do ample credit to the energy of the Irish people.

We were pleased also to notice the neatness of personal appearance and suavity of manner among the people in general, both in the cities and at every little railway station through the country, as well as in the hotels, railway carriages, etc., and at a fair in Armagh, which we visited specially for the purpose of coming in contact with the various classes of people there from the town and surrounding country. On the whole, our impressions of Ireland were very favorable; and the rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed, flaxen-haired babies of Ireland seemed the prettiest children in the world, until we met some dark eyed beauties of more southern lands, and then it was hard to decide which were prettiest. [R1369 : page 56]

Passing over to Scotland and England, we saw similar evidences of thrift and comfort; though in the large cities, tucked away in the alleys and courts, and up rickety stairways in old tenement houses, are thousands of wretchedly poor people whom the feeble hand of benevolent charity finds it impossible to relieve to any considerable extent. The Scotch are a serious, thoughtful people, though not so lighthearted and happy, apparently, as their Irish neighbors. They are proud of their inheritance in the fame of John Knox, and like to call their country "the land of the Bible and of John Knox." But we fear this pride has stood much in the way of their advancement in the knowledge of the truth, beyond what was due to the household in John Knox's day. However, we have great hope for a good harvest yet from Scotland. In England and Scotland the manufacturing towns are closely strewn along the railway lines, and the hum of machinery and the tall smoke-stacks, as well as the cultivated farms with their separating green hedges and neat farm houses, which are of brick in England and of stone in Scotland, tell of an industrious, hard-working, energetic people; while their fine public buildings, private residences, public accommodations, etc., do them credit.

Though we passed through England on our eastward course, we did not tarry there until our return. Then we halted in London

and in Liverpool, where we were most of the time among subjects, not of Great Britain, but of the Kingdom of Heaven; and these, together with a few more such in other countries, we need not tell you were, of course, the very cream of Europe – expecting, too, shortly to be skimmed off – so that they are not to be considered as factors in European society, nor representatives of it. But aside from these dear ones in Christ, it was indeed truly refreshing, after our sojourn in the southern countries, to find ourselves again among the polite and cultured English; for no where did we meet so commonly that dignified grace and noble bearing which always characterize true manhood and womanhood. Of course, there are all shades of character in every nation, and, alas, too often outward grace covers some hideous inner deformity; but we refer now to our general impressions of the people as a whole, compared with the peoples of other nations. Nowhere are national characteristics more noticeable than on the great thoroughfares of travel. The polite and careful attention of busy railway officials, toward promiscuous strangers whom they never expect to meet again, is an index of a noble character – an index specially favorable on English soil, not only to the heart but also to the head.

While few English people have a high appreciation of our late McKinley bill, yet there is nevertheless a very fraternal feeling among the masses of the people toward Americans. "Why," said an English friend at a hotel table one day, "there never could be another war between England and the United States: they are all our brothers and sisters over there." "Ah," said another, "America is a fine country, and your people are doing wonders over there." Again, as we passed out of a street car in London, a stranger who overheard some of our conversation with friends said inquiringly, "Ho! Americans?" "Yes," we replied; and he reached out his hand and with a hearty shake said, emphatically, "*Good luck to you.*"

Well, God bless the English people! welled up from our full hearts. His blessing is surer than luck; and we long for the glorious day when they and all men shall begin to realize it.

Passing through Holland – through Rotterdam, Amsterdam, the Hague, and thence across the country to Hanover – we were charmed with the general appearance and friendly courtesy of the Dutch, and must say that the Dutchman stands higher in our estimation than ever before. In these cities we carefully looked for the worst quarters as well as the best and the medium, and we saw no evidence of squalid poverty anywhere. Order and cleanliness seemed to characterize every home, and many of the working people about their daily duties were models of neatness. At hotels, railway stations, or if inquired of on the streets, they were uniformly kind and obliging – we thought specially so to us, because we were foreigners. One pleasant faced little woman with white cap and white [R1370 : page 57] apron, so commonly worn by working women there, seeing us halt at the wrong corner for a street car and intuitively discerning our English origin, came out of her way to say in broken English – "Cars no stay still here" – and to direct us where to stop. A Professor and his wife from one of the colleges of Amsterdam, whom we met on a train, manifested a similar cordiality. In all Holland we failed to see a single miserably ragged man, woman or child. Yet the thrift and comfort of this life and the earthly prosperity, we fear, are the principal aim of these (in many respects) commendable people.

Amsterdam is a beautiful, quiet, orderly city, with numerous small parks where mothers and children and old people of all classes enjoy the beauties of nature in near proximity to their city homes. It is well supplied with canals, too, which enhance the beauty of the city and at the same time provide a cheap way of transporting goods from place to place within and outside the city. Indeed, the whole country, which, it will be remembered, was reclaimed from the sea and ditched for the purpose of drainage, is

beautified by these canals, which separate farms so that no fences are needed, and connect with the cities, and so are of very general advantage, boats being substituted for wagons.

Rotterdam and the Hague are also fine and pleasant cities, and Zutphen is a small but very pretty town with the same air of comfort, etc. The dwellings in the cities, as well as in the country districts, are mainly of small, yellowish brick and quite tasteful, and there is a quiet and refined taste displayed in personal attire as well as in home appointments. With a few exceptions, where certain districts have adopted certain peculiar (though often pretty) costumes and colors, the same styles of clothing prevail there – and indeed, almost all over Europe – as are in vogue here. With a few exceptions – generally in country places – we did not find "loud" colors or uncomely costumes anywhere in Europe.

As soon as we cross the border line from Holland to Germany, we feel at once the different social atmosphere, and are among a people of altogether different tastes, customs and ideas. The country homes are less tasteful. The farmer's family and his cattle are generally sheltered under the same roof, and the farming is very generally left in the hands of the women, the men and the horses being required for the army and for the pursuits of city life. Comparatively little of the farm work is done by machinery. On market days the country women may be seen by hundreds coming in on the trains with great loads of produce in immense baskets strapped on their backs and often another load on each arm.

We saw one woman at a railway station with one of those large baskets, holding about two bushels, on her back, a half-bushel basket on her left arm and a package in her left hand, while with the right she supported one end of a trunk of which her little girl had the other end. And this was no uncommon thing: the women are literally beasts of burden. Many of them are old, gray-haired women of sixty or more, and often barefoot. It is not uncommon to

see an old woman and a dog pulling a cart along the middle of the streets, loaded with milk or with produce and heavy enough for a horse. Yet, neither through the German cities nor through the country districts is there any appearance of want or squalor. The Germans are an industrious people and believe that thrift and economy will keep them out of the ditch; and so it does. Indeed, if it were not for the pluck and enterprise and hard work of the women of Germany, where would be her military glory? Yet, who ever thought of giving any credit to the poor, toiling wives and mothers who cultivate the soil and supply the markets, and thus save the country from famine, in addition to rearing the children, keeping the home and tending the cattle? Yet they seem to do it cheerfully, and no murmurings or strikes or socialistic sentiments come from them. They have bent their backs to the burden, and take it as a matter of course.

In Germany and Austria, some of the principal cities visited were Hanover, Berlin, Wittenburg, Leipsic, Dresden, Prague, Vienna, Cracow, Strasburg, Mayence and Cologne. All of these cities are evidences of German thrift and **[R1370 : page 58]** prosperity. Berlin is a magnificent city and its palaces and public buildings are quite imposing, though not comparable with those of Washington, our capital city. Its private dwellings are of a substantial character and of good appearance, but very seldom does one family occupy an entire house. They are rented out in single rooms and suits, the cellars being rented to the poorest class. It is estimated that one in ten of the population of Berlin, or over 100,000 people, live in these cellars.

We were most interested here in its military museum, where the murderous engines of war of every variety, ancient and modern, are displayed. As we viewed this dreadful commentary on man's inhumanity to man, and thought of the near approach of the terrible conflict of the battle of the great day of God Almighty, in which we are even now living, and of the present threatening attitude of the

angry nations, we rejoiced in spirit as by faith we saw above the darkening war cloud the white-winged messenger of peace, commanding that the swords be beaten into plow shares and the spears into pruning hooks. Ah! yes, we said, it must needs be that one more great wave of anguish, as foretold in the Scriptures, shall roll over the world, but it will be the last; for after it the nations shall learn war no more.

Another museum in Berlin displays, in magnificent paintings and elegant statuary, the symbols of Germany's greatness and power. In the rotunda, over the doors and windows, are the sculptured heads of vanquished enemies, about four times the life size, in the agonies of dying, while on pedestals on all sides stood the German heroes larger than life size. The lofty ceiling was frescoed by a master hand to represent the old emperors of Germany as a Roman Senate in heaven, welcoming Emperor William, who was borne above the clouds by the angels, and extending to him a heavenly crown. The father of the present emperor is also shown as borne by the angels, and seemingly inquiring if he too may have a crown. Then there were dying soldiers on the field of battle also being received into glory. How strange and inconsistent the ideas seemed, compared with the truth. We fear that such hopes will be sadly disappointed when the heavenly crowns are actually awarded. The real conquerors of the world will never rejoice over the dying agonies of vanquished foes. And, thank God, a truer heroism will one day displace these false ideas.

At Wittenburg we visited the former home of Martin Luther, entered his study and sat in his old chair and at his old study table, beside the great old fashioned stove, and handled some of his books. As we went through the various apartments, including the little chapel, and looked out of the old windows upon the same scenes, and then went down to the church upon which Luther defiantly nailed his thirty-nine theses, how vividly it brought to mind those stormy times when the Lord, through the agencies of

the Reformers, began to cleanse his sanctuary from the pollutions of Rome. The old church is now undergoing extensive repairs, and the doors have been replaced by new ones of metal, in the panels of which are cast the thirty-nine theses once nailed there. We, dear friends, have great cause for rejoicing to-day that, although the beginners of the great reformation stopped short in the work and went about organizing other systems of error, nevertheless, under divine providence, the cleansing of the sanctuary progressed to completion, and the golden vessels of divine truth are now being replaced in order. (See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. III., Chap. iv.) Our joyous appreciation of "present truth," which these recollections revived, can better be imagined than described.

In the cities of Germany there is much pleasure-seeking on the part of all classes. Plenty of music and brilliantly lighted beer gardens in every direction present their attractions, and are abundantly patronized by the multitudes. This pleasure-seeking (and finding, too, in their way) together with military zeal and ambition on the part of a very large class, and the continual drudge-life of another class, which, of necessity, must spend all time and thought for the meat that perisheth, appear to crowd the finer sentiments and ambitions into the background, except in the aristocracy, with whom we came little in contact.

MRS. C. T. RUSSELL.

(To be continued in our next issue.)
