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## Free and Independent Luxemburg

BY ROBERT SHACKLETON

DIRECTLY between Paris and Berlin; only a hair's breadth, indeed, from being on a straight line drawn between these two cities; there lies a little and independent country. By Americans it has been inexplicably overlooked. It contains multitude of ruined castles, perched craggily. It is of the diverting area of nine hundred and ninety-nine square miles. It presents phases of thriving modern life, yet there are extensive sections of wooded wilderness. In its wildest part I have seen the wild deer as I drove along the public road. It is saturated with historic association. There are regions of delectable charm. Its people take their autonomy with great seriousness, yet with the subtle sense of a jest in it all.

Although this almost unnoticed *Grossherzogthum* of Luxemburg, this Grand-Duchy, is in the very heart of most-travelled Europe, one may for a few francs and with the formality of an invitation join in the annual official chase of wild boar! A few dollars buys a license to hunt deer. At an inn one may find the right to miles of fishing included with room and food.

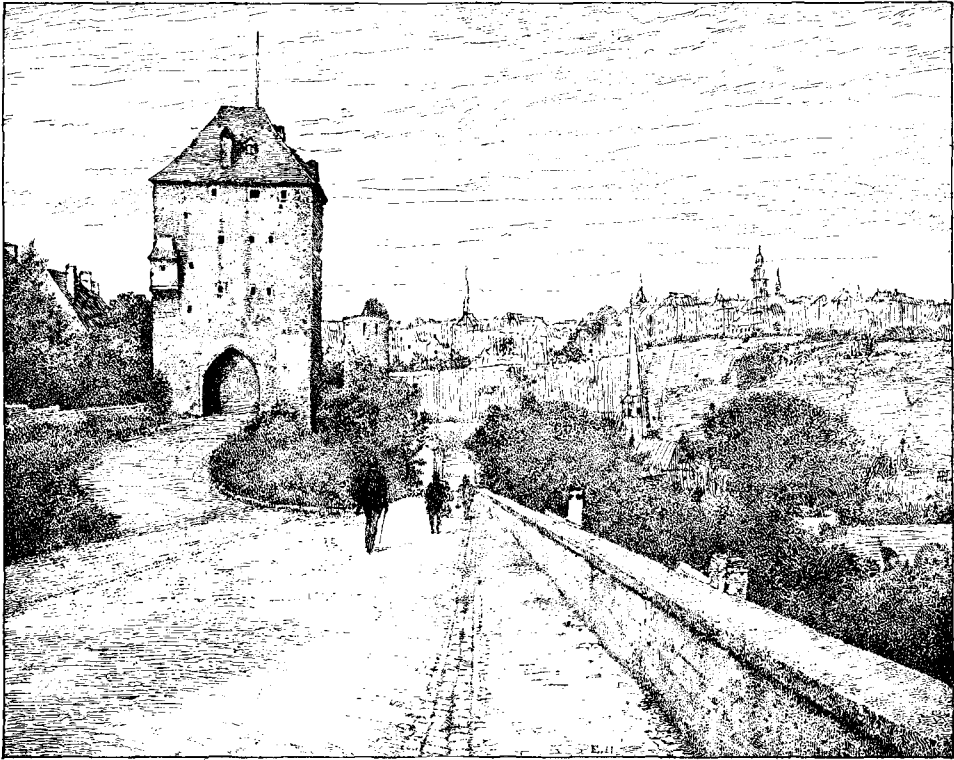
Luxemburg would not even now be independent had not Queen Wilhelmina been a girl. It would have remained a province of the Netherlands, although hedged in (such, again, the bewilderment of it) by Germany and Belgium

and France. But its constitution makes the succession hereditary in the male line of Nassau, and so at Wilhelmina's accession it eluded her grasp and placidly entered the family circle of independent European countries; not large for its age, this new member, for its size is less than a twelfth part that of tiny Holland.

In the quiver of the present Grand-Duke William there are six; but all are girls, and there are no other heirs. But to meet this confrontation there is to be invoked a constitutional interpretation not vouchsafed to pretty Wilhelmina, and the eldest of the six is to rule. For the people are resolved to give no pretext for the seizing of their land by France or Prussia, and especially by Prussia. The bells of the capital city ring out, preliminary to the striking of the hours, not the grave choral heard from the church towers of other parts of Europe, but this or that gay selection from opera or song, and nothing is so popular as the much-beloved tune, chimed with clangorous gusto: "*Wir wollen bleiben was wir sind! Wir wollen keine Preussen sein!*" (We will remain as we are! We will not be Prussians!) Thus with characteristic light-heartedness they daringly jest with what they dread.

Luxemburg, the capital of Luxemburg, is set proudly upon a plateau girdled by precipices two hundred feet

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THE BOULEVARDED LINE OF ONETIME FORTIFICATIONS

in height. Rivers wind circumfluent at the foot of the rocks, and from the boulevarded brink there are alluring views.

Until less than forty years ago the city was of a strength only second to that of Gibraltar, but by the Treaty of London, of 1867, the powers decreed that the Duchy should thenceforth be neutral, although it was a province of Holland, and that the fortifications of the capital should be destroyed. For centuries the city held a proud distinction, under the alternating rule of France and Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, and Spain; and the change has not come in order that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, but only that in case of war great armies may manœuvre without the check inherent in the very presence at this central spot of a powerful stronghold.

And so, the splendid haughtiness has gone, and only fragments of the fortifi-

cations remain. But what fragments! Rocks honeycombed with passages and pierced with embrasures; grim piles of stone; and here and there, projecting over the edges of the cliff, the noble Spanish Towers.

The powers decreed, too, that the army be reduced to a paltry three hundred, and the inhibition still holds. But the happy people, making a jest of necessity, smile when the handful march along with pomp of colors and blare of music; some sixth of the total army being band. But, with saving sense of humor, there is no extravagance of military title, and the commander-in-chief is but a major.

The decrees of the great powers may not be defied with impunity, for, after all, the little countries like Holland and Belgium and Andorra and Liechtenstein and Luxemburg preserve their independence only on sufferance, and at the price of a readiness to bow to the will

of their powerful and mutually jealous neighbors. It is well when, as with the cheerful folk of Luxemburg, the humors of their situation are appreciated. Smite Luxemburg anywhere, and humor bubbles forth.

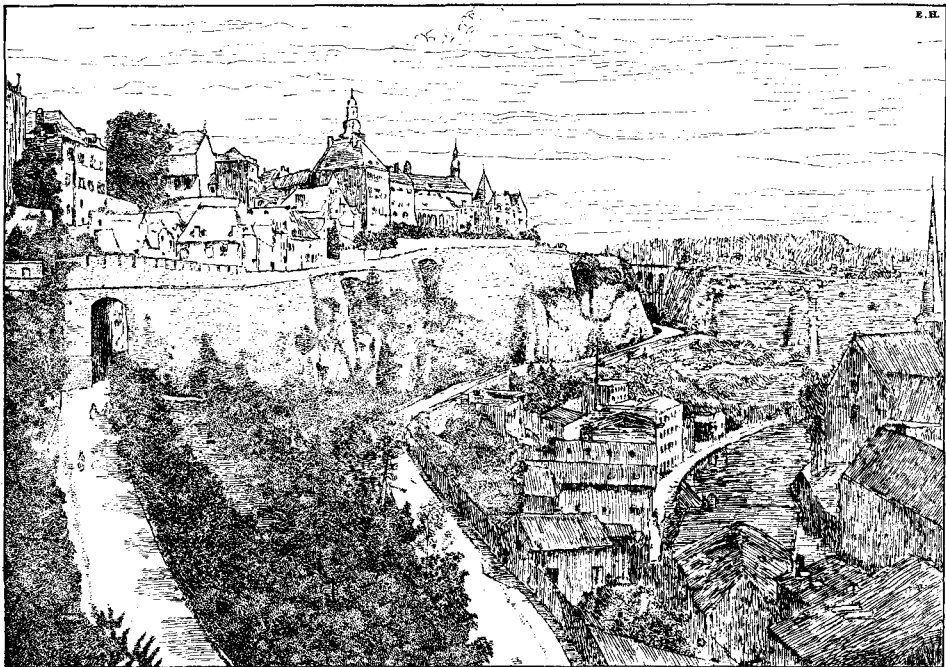
The fire department of the capital, and its hand apparatus and the few demands upon it, are one of the local jokes; but one of the fire officials, fearful lest I should belittle the basic importance of it all, told me, with paradoxical pride, that a few years ago the city had "one of the biggest fires in Europe"!

Once a year, through the streets of the capital, goes the unique March of the Muttons; a puzzled clump of snow-white lambs making their way through the amused and thronging people, close followed by volunteer musicians playing the ancient Mutton March.

Luxemburg must assuredly be the place to which the Pied Piper led the bewitched children, such a gay and a dancing folk these are.

On the evening of my arrival the people were celebrating the birthday of their Duke; they had really begun the day before, but had found one day insufficient for the expression of their jubilation. It was raining, but the population thronged the streets oblivious. A band was playing, and there, in the open square, a great number were dancing in the rain, some holding umbrellas and some not.

A city of some twenty thousand, this capital; and there are other and smaller towns, as, narrow-valleyed Vianden, on either side of which the mountains rise in mellow walls; Dickirch, set beside a smiling river, with glimmering meadows sentinelled by lofty heights; Echternach, where, once a year, on Whit-Tuesday, the Dancing Procession gathers from ten to twenty thousand, mostly pilgrims from distant places, under its rhythmic spell, to sway in spiritual ecstacy through the streets, three steps forward and two back, to the monotonous tune of "Adam,



THE CAPITAL IS GIRDLED BY PRECIPICES

he had seven sons," just as pilgrims have done here for a thousand years. There are interesting little villages away from the railroad. There is much of shadowy forest. There are serpentine streams in such number that one ceases to attempt differentiation.

It is the pride of Luxemburg that the principal reward of those who handle the public money consists in honorable decoration, and that there is consequently no embezzlement of public funds. "Why, if one were to steal he could have no decoration!"

Under the Grand-Duke is a Chamber of Deputies, of forty-eight members, chosen by the suffrages of such men of over twenty-five as pay an annual tax of ten francs. The Duke has power of veto, but that is but another Luxemburg joke for he never uses it.

But between the Chamber and the Duke, lest there should be too much of democracy, there is a Court; and it is a Court of title and ceremony.

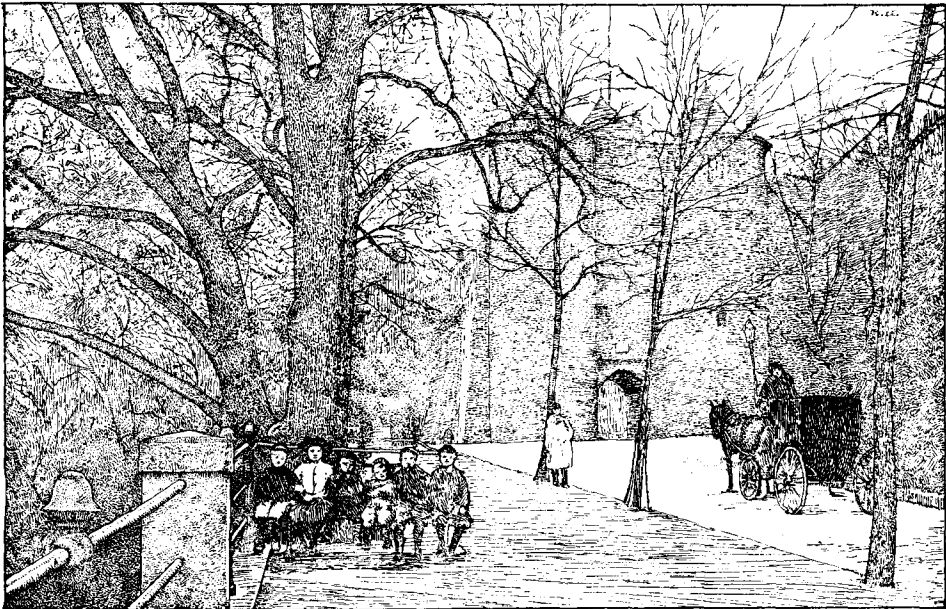
There is a grand-chamberlain; there are other chamberlains, with equerries and aides-de-camp, and a *maréchal de la cour*; there is a *grande-maitresse de la*

*grande-duchesse*; there are *dames du palais, d'honneur, du service, de la cour*.

The national colors are the red and white and blue; there are governmental departments of State, of Justice, of Agriculture, of the Interior, of Finance. The Minister of State sees personally the poor and the rich alike. The Department of Agriculture, alert to be of aid, gladly advises any farmer who presents a problem of seed or season or soil.

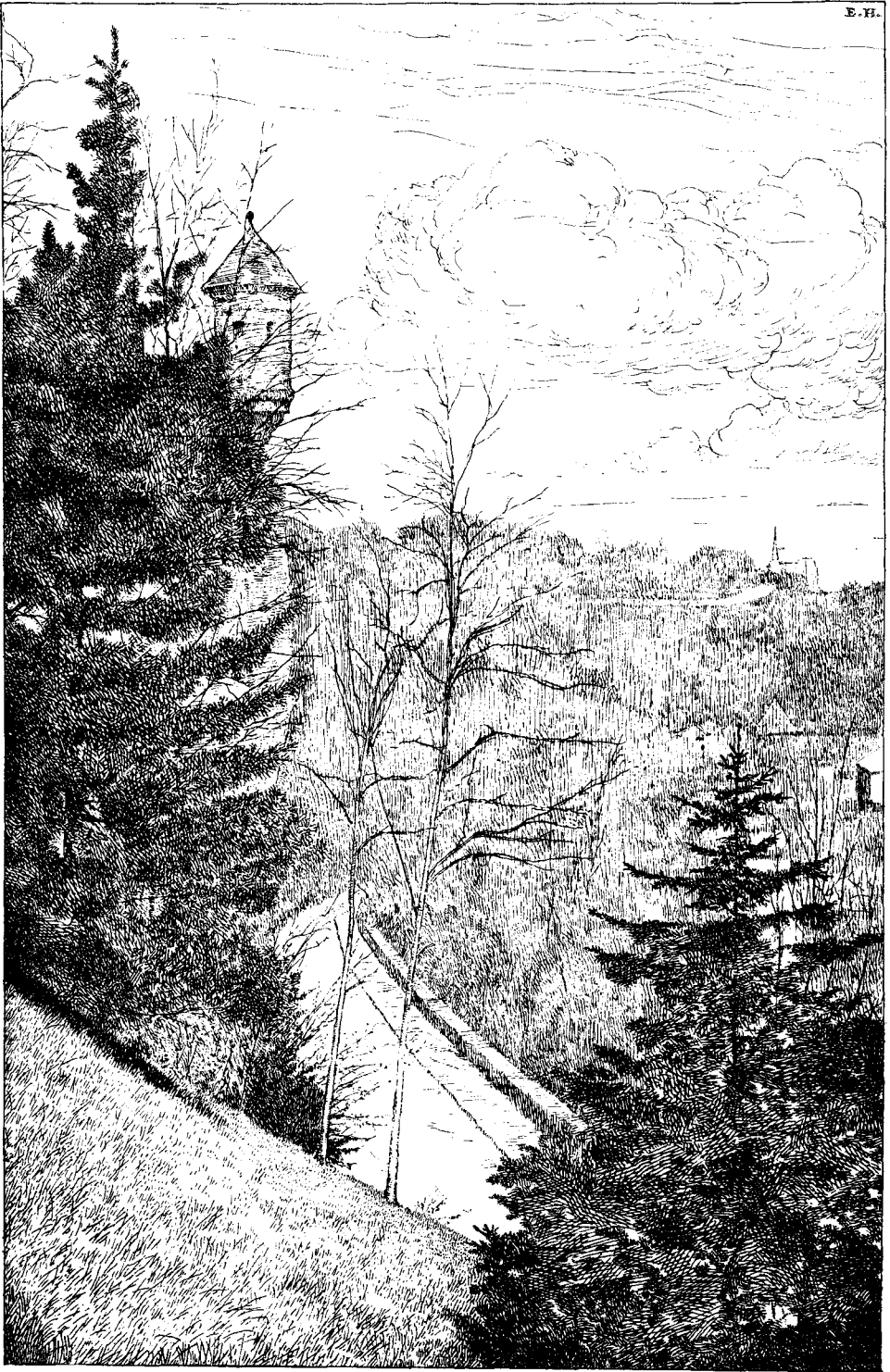
Ordinarily, there is dulness in statistics; but I was really pleased with the attention to detail of the official who compiled the census. Out of a total population of 236,543 all are Roman Catholics, with the exception of 1201 Israelites, 2269 Protestants, 49 "other Christians," and 186 who are rated as "not known." At once one wonders who and what are the 49, and what is the religion of the "not known."

The total annual revenue is small—only from two to three million dollars—yet the treasury always manages to hold a little surplus. The purposes for which a state spends money are always illuminative, and here, quoting from the report most recently published, I find that the



WALLS THAT HELPED TO MAKE THE CITY OF LUXEMBURG A SECOND GIBRALTAR





NOBLE SPANISH TOWERS PROJECT OVER THE EDGES OF THE CLIFFS

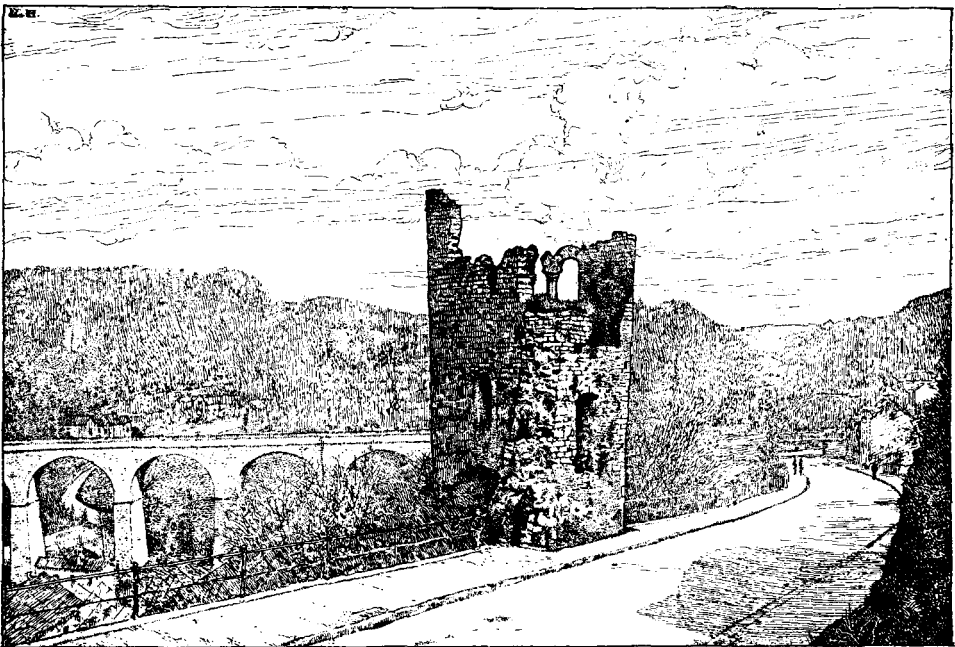
Chamber of Deputies costs but \$15,000; that prisons demand only \$50,000; the civil list and government, \$80,000; that religion and the army go hand in hand, each taking nearly \$100,000; that justice is given \$110,000, pensions, \$170,000, and agriculture, commerce, and industries, \$200,000; that "interior" expenses, one of the items under which is that of police, require \$230,000 (New York city spends annually on its police department alone \$13,000,000); that to public works goes over \$600,000; and that, under the noble classification of public instruction and the arts and sciences, Luxemburg gladly expends \$300,000.

It is a land of amenities. Ask a direction, and a man will quit his occupation, or turn back in his walk, to pilot you. Ask a question of the guardian of the gate at a railway station, and he is likely to lock his gate in the face of the other people and hurry off to find an answer for the stranger.

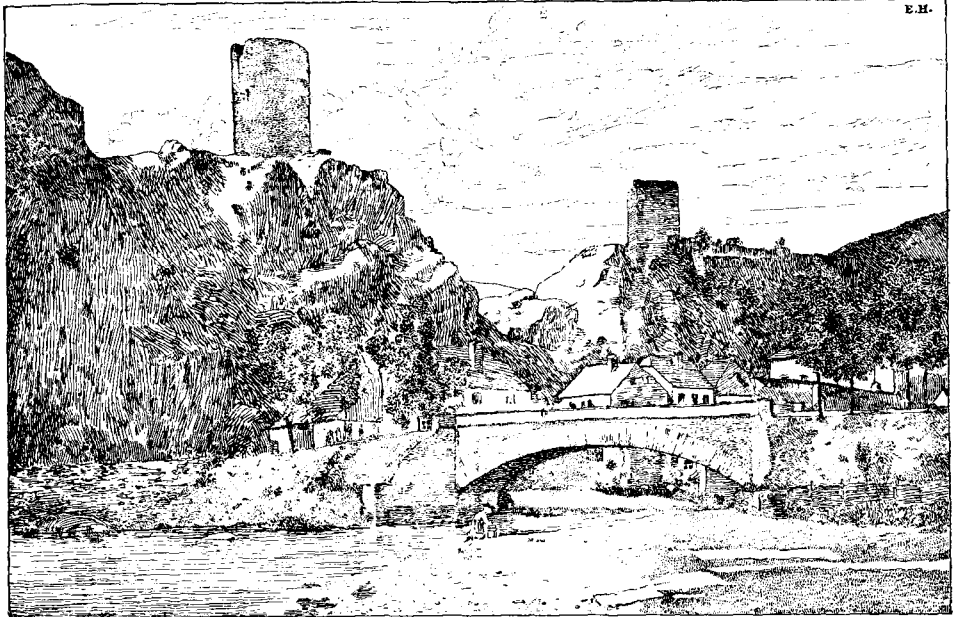
Luxemburg for centuries had an uneasy existence. In the pathway of the nations, army after army overran and harried it, changes of government were

frequent, shadowy claims and actual conquests succeeded one another. It escaped misusage in the Franco-Prussian war, because its neutrality had been decreed but a few years before.

The most picturesque of the men of Luxemburg was that John, the Blind King of Bohemia—hereditary ruler of Luxemburg, who set forth claims upon the Bohemian throne—who was slain at Crécy after heroically going into the battle linked to a knight on either side. "John the Errant," the old chroniclers term him, for he loved to roam about Europe, taking part, chivalrously, in as many quarrels as he could assume. Even when blindness came it did not cause him entirely to cease from activities, but permitted him to end his career in unique glory. In the hurly-burly of fight it may not have been possible to avoid killing him, but there is not in all history anything more unchivalrous recorded than the triumphant taking of the crest, the Three Feathers, of this slain old blind man, and its incorporation with the arms of the Prince of Wales as something to be transmitted as a proud heritage.



ONE OF THE GRIM PILES OF STONE



THE TOWERS OF ESCH, GLOOMING AT EACH OTHER ACROSS A ROCK-BOUND CLEFT

The general dislike and even dread of Germany are the more curious because the Luxemburg folk are mostly of Teutonic race, and only secondarily Walloon. More German than French is heard, but the common speech is a patois compounded from several languages.

By *diligence* or *postwagen* one may enter little-visited portions of the Duchy. I was so fortunate as to choose a time when, at some of the stopping-places, there was not a single visitor of any nationality. There are, however, portions that are freely visited by French and Belgians at certain seasons of the year.

The *diligences* proceed with restful leisure, stopping at every wayside tavern and many a house. For one family the driver carries a loaf of bread; for another a bottle of medicine, and here he makes solicitous inquiry before going on: at another house he leaves a box, in regard to which there is uproarious but incomprehensible patois of joke: for although one may, by dint of great effort, master

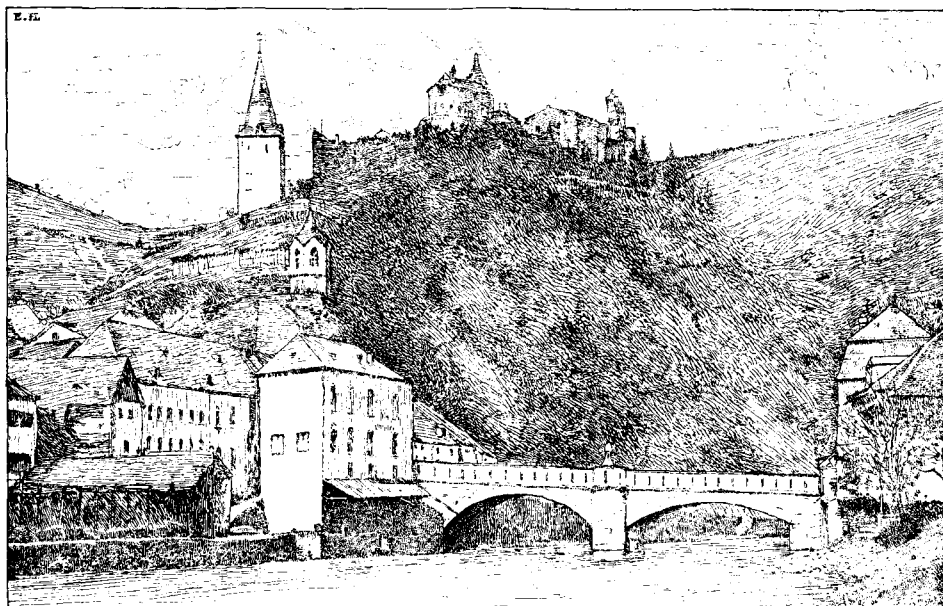
the patois, he shall never come to comprehension of the patois humor.

One is given a general impression of long drives by the side of sparkling rivers, of villages strung attenuatedly through slim valleys, of idyllic glades where women tend the grazing flocks, of two-wheeled ox-drawn carts, of old, old houses where ancient women offer snuff from ancient boxes, and where there are black-mouthed fireplaces, and enormous beams, and winding stairs of stone, and carven doors, and stately standing clocks.

Most Americans in Europe wish primarily to go where splendor falls on ruined castle walls, and in Luxemburg they may plethorically satisfy this desire, for the number of ruins is astonishing for so small a region.

Among the many are the two towers of Esch, glooming at each other across a rock-bound cleft; the splendid fastness of Brandenburg, brooding over white houses beneath it; the stern remains of Bourscheid, deployed in crenellated com-





MIGHTY VIANDEN, LOOMING SOMBRE AND GRAY

plexity against the sky; mighty Vianden, looming sombre and gray, and with spacious expanse of the subterranean.

One will not so much care to learn their definite history. Their greatest charm lies in a glorified indistinctness of association. Splendidly setting forth the character and life of an entire age, they must needs summon up remembrance of things past, and kindle imaginative fire even in those least prone to imaginative enthusiasm.

Old tales haunt these ancient piles. Penetrate to the deepest vaults of one, so the peasants believe, and there will be found two mail-clad warriors deep at play. "May the devil take him who first quits the table!" cried the two in unison, some sundry centuries ago, and at once the devil stood there, suave, smiling, expectant. Whereat the players, one may imagine with what chagrin, with what decision born of dire necessity, determined to play patiently on till the devil should be weary of waiting.

Between the rocky point of a castle and a rocky point beyond there was

stretched a slender plank for the convenience of men at work upon repairs. One day a mason hastened across the plank to meet his wife approaching with his dinner; thus doubly weighted the bridge broke, and the man was killed, and the woman, herself unhurt, set up a wail still remembered in this land of jests: "The good dinner; it is lost!"

One ruin is haunted by a fairy who sings softly in the brooding twilight; but woe to him so incautious as to utter criticism, for instantly he is metamorphosed into rock; and the rock-filled glen bears testimony to the legend's truth.

Far older than the castles are ancient Druid remains; and upon the summit of one Druid-haunted hill, topped by a great dolmen, the children build a fire upon one night of the year, and then, waving burning brands, come rushing down through the torch-lit darkness into the village at the mountain foot—rushing down, thus, out of none can tell what mistiness of vanished centuries.

Of many things are the people of Luxemburg proud, besides their independ-



ence. They are proud of their free press and free speech. They are proud of their schools, of which the government conducts not alone such as are for general education, but others for commerce, philosophy, gardening, farming, and manual training, and still others for instructing girls in housewifery.

There are agricultural societies for the purchase of machinery, and for combination and counsel in other lines, and for the handling and selling of milk and cheese and butter.

The important day for Luxemburg is that of the patron saint. Every one wishes to be at the capital on the annual day, and a vital point is that the saint must believe that all have pilgrimaged thither on foot. And so trains and wagons stop just outside of the city, and the people go walking gravely in!

A strongly religious folk these of Luxemburg. At a lonely hill village, one Sunday night, I entered the church, drearily perched under the shadow of a ruined castle. Shafts of pallid moonlight came through the narrow windows, but the church was in practical darkness, for the only other light was from three tiny candles that glimmered by the altar. The church was filled with people, almost indistinguishable in the gloom, the men upon one side and the women on the other. There was no priest or other leader, but the men and the women were antiphonally chanting, in almost ghostly resonance, a solemn service long since learned by heart. I left the church, and climbed to the ruin above, and there long listened to the antiphon coming up to me so effective and weird.

It is astonishing that in so small a land there are places which give the impression of being at a great distance from the beaten tracks of travel. One finds isolated villages, of houses gleaming white against the glaring green of hill-sides, where the landlord of the little inn will evince a desire to shake your hand on arriving. He will himself serve you with wine, or with strong waters distilled from plum-stone or cherry and bearing names all consonants, and his pretty daughter will wait upon you. You will sleep in a bed piled mountain high, with a mountainous bed to lie upon you. You will wake with the piping of birds and

look from your window upon the glory of lofty slopes white with cherry blossoms.

At one such village I was told that it was impossible to go on to the next; that I must needs go back by the *postwagen* by which I had come; but I found that not far away was the man who owned the solitary horse of the vicinity, and him I saw, and he hitched the soap-colored animal into his wagon and took me on my way. The horse was tight strapped within a tarpaulin, the wagon was without springs, the tugs were chains, and the man drove with a single rope—thus evidencing the prodigal waste of other lands, where two lines are required.

Beside the top of the front door of many a house is a little opening, and to this there runs a narrow ladder, usually placed as a staircase along the wall but sometimes standing out ladderwise. Bizarre in effect: but perhaps for children? one wonders—till one sees the ladders mounted, as evening comes on apace, by the family chickens.

The ploughing-oxen, the houses where wealth of pewter is preserved in deep old chests, the fairs where metal keepsakes are purchased for gifts interpretative by an ancient code of love, the grotto whose iron crowns cure headache, the discarding of a lover by the present of a black egg on Easter day—these are among the things of charm. At fascinating Vian-den, which Hugo loved, there is a church around which girls try to dance three times upon one foot and then to throw a stone into the stream that goes twinkling through the valley, for she who succeeds will be married within a twelvemonth.

A country piquant and fascinating. And when, on the *postwagen*, one approaches a mountain village through the mist of early morning, and the driver blows his horn, and the people gather where he stops, and he feeds his horses with big pieces of black bread, and the black-gowned priest, seeing that there is a stranger as passenger, hovers in the background and, divided between curiosity and dignity, bows till his tansured spot shows shining, it is hard to realize that this is in the heart of Europe, that this is directly between the two great cities of Paris and Berlin—but in such fascinating incongruence lies much of the charm of this *Grossherzogthum* of Luxemburg.



## A Truant Mountebank

BY CHESTER HOLBROOK BROWN

IT was surely hard, after yesterday, to come back to the same old humdrum life, to a Franklin speller and a Greenleaf's arithmetic, and to be packed off to school at half past eight with your face washed till it shone, your hair brushed in wet, flat curves over your forehead, and your necktie so fussed with and pulled at that it stood out a good six inches beyond your ears. Of course you always stopped when out of sight of the house and crumpled this flaring bow fiercely and thrust it inside your jacket, else you had been met with shouts of derision from your contemporaries. But of yesterday.

That had been a day of marvels and open-mouthed wonder; of dazzling pageantry and astounding feats; of close proximity to elephants and brown, shabby camels—in short, circus-day. We had a half-holiday; that was as far as the teacher's generosity could go. Since the circus was to be in town only two days, we judged it only right and fair that for those two days, at least, our minds should be free from any trivial matters of books and lessons. If the teacher had seen fit to add a day beforehand in which

to prepare for the coming prodigies, and a day after, that we might get our breaths again, we should have considered it handsome of her and worthy an attempt at good behavior for well-nigh a week. But no; it was a half-holiday.

We all saw the circus in one way or another. Charley Bates, whose father owns the woollen-mill and is rich, went in state and sat in a wicker chair that cost a dollar. Charley told me so afterwards. Joe Waters and I, who are not rich, got up early in the morning, and, while the circus men were at breakfast, cut a hole in the side of the tent, which we took turns peeking through all the afternoon. To be sure, we had to lie on our stomachs in the hot sun, and the backs of our necks got terribly blistered, but we were ever so much better off than Ik Henderson and Bunny Smith, who climbed a big hemlock to look over into the Museum of Wonders, and only saw an old man making brooms.

However, on this morning I am telling about, I started for school earlier and much more willingly than usual, for at breakfast I had devised the plan of going by way of the circus grounds. As I left