

THE RIVIERA.

NICE, April 18, 1888.

The present season on the Riviera has been, on the whole, not a successful one, neither the climate nor the weather having been such as is usually expected. On the 29th of December snow to the depth of five inches occurred, killing many fine plants and orange trees, and for a few days causing much distress and rendering the streets and promenades unendurable. There have also been an unwonted number of cold, raw winds, with frequent abrupt changes of temperature. This applies to the littoral as a whole. The marked lack of visitors has not been wholly due to the fear of a repetition of earthquakes (though the one of last year is still in vivid remembrance), but is in all likelihood due to the universal shrinkage in incomes. The leisure class is diminishing enormously in Europe; particularly among the English—the bulk of the visitors—and these are falling off correspondingly. When one considers the economic condition of the land-holding class among the English people; the "Irish question," with its widespread injury, the diminution of profits in corporate enterprises, and the very general feeling of insecurity regarding social problems and the peace of Europe, the cause is readily perceived.

Cannes, with its many exclusive villas—here the "hotel boarder" has been nearly driven out by the "cottager"—has shown this as much as the more cosmopolitan Nice, and though it really seems to offer a better health site, more protection from harsh winds, and a more orderly local population, yet it is evident that more villas are unoccupied this season than ever before, and the hotels are mainly given up to visitors of a few days only. The town is beautifully situated, the environs are well wooded, roads are less dusty and white, and there seems to be a greater profusion, if not variety, of vegetation, than in the resorts further to the eastward along the shore. There is no more charming spot on all the coast than that in the vicinity of St. George's Chapel, erected in memory of the Duke of Albany by the Queen, the whole side of the hill being given up to elegant cottages and villas, surrounded by the most lovely parks and gardens, the drives leading to the highest peak, which overlooks the region for miles, and is named "California." Here are situated the villas of the royal family of England.

The usual attractions are held out by all the municipalities, including public music, fêtes, balls, carnivals with confetti and flower battles (very tame this year), and flower fairs—most interesting and beautiful exhibitions of the floral capabilities of this favored region. The Nice carnival requires more than a week's time and prodigious labor, and is a unique performance, yet very ridiculous, and tawdry to the last degree. The city shows but few signs of last year's earthquake, and the city government manage excellently well the repairing of buildings and streets, so that the damage done has been obliterated, and it is hard to realize that such a tremendous shaking-up ever occurred here. For those in search of amusement, social as well as public, such as balls plain, balls masked, and balls mixed, public display, the horse-play of a carnival, wide, dusty streets, and the presence of many thousands of questionable people among its population, Nice has much in its favor. Excepting Monaco, including Monte Carlo, all the other resorts offer in probably greater degree more shelter, purer air, and all the elements of a quiet, healthful sojourn. For a few months

San Remo has been signally full of people, the Germans being in possession.

It is well known that many questionable characters of both sexes frequenting Monte Carlo habitually reside in Nice, where the police have them registered to the number of over two thousand. These people are always seen on the trains, in the hotels and cafés, gaming-rooms, and theatres. In the gaming-rooms crowds of visitors are always to be seen during the season. There are now nine large tables constantly in use, three for trente-quarante, at which the minimum wager is one napoleon (about four dollars); and six for roulette, the lowest wager being five francs (one dollar). At the opening of the doors at eleven A. M. daily, Sundays included, the crowd that has been collecting for the previous fifteen minutes rushes in for seats and favorite places at tables, and the last play finishes near 11 P. M. It is an extraordinary spectacle to see gray-haired men and women, pale, dissipated adventurers of both sexes, the anxious and desperate, with here and there the casual self-respecting, yet curious, tourist, all pell-mell rushing over the polished floors in a mad grab for place to sit and gamble on the turn of a card or of the fascinating wheel. These people are all well dressed, and must have their addresses and selves scrutinized before being given a ticket of admission, which is sometimes issued daily. The rooms are lofty and palatial and the decorations superb.

The beautiful theatre is always offering attractive music, drama, and opera; and the weekly classical concerts here given gratis, under the direction of Arthur Steck, by an orchestra of nearly a hundred fine musicians, are probably not surpassed anywhere. On some occasions of operatic performances large prices of admission are charged, but the usual daily afternoon and evening concerts are free to all the Casino visitors. This building stands upon a rock and has no proper system of drainage, and for this reason the air in parts of the building and in the gaming-rooms is at all times foul and oppressive—palpably so to one first entering.

The neighborhood of Monte Carlo is superior to any on the Riviera for pure comfort of living to invalids: rain and harsh winds are less frequent, and the daily range of temperature seems to be not so great or sudden; but there is far less diversity of occupation or amusement. The gardens and park are extremely interesting and instructive, for here one sees, growing in the open air in winter, a surprising number of magnificent specimens of indigenous and exotic plants, while the walks, though limited, are beautiful, containing many charming views. Local writers along the Riviera are prolific in descriptions of the beneficent and healthful qualities of their several favorite resorts, and one reads of tonic, excitant tonic, sedative tonic climates, and the dreaded mistral in varying quantity, in contiguous localities, with more or less bewildering refinement in treating of the influences of the sea, sun, or the various adjacent slopes. The best that can be said is, broadly, that these mountain-protected shores, exposed to sunshine the majority of days, give certain invalids a near retreat during the harsh northern winter, and only a partial outdoor life; but with the defects of lime-dusty roads, sudden temperature changes on the declining of the sun, bad drainage and water supply in parts, and poor meats (compared with our standard). The dryness of the air is also not always desirable in lung and throat disorders. When the mistral is abroad, one must remain indoors by the fire to be comfortable. It is said that there are no warm houses in France or Italy in winter,

and to the average American of hot-house habits and tender throat this is above all the greatest annoyance.

The commercial treaty being in suspense, there is a war of tariff rates, almost prohibitory in its effects, between France and Italy, and the ordinary market products and wines (for Italy in great part feeds the Riviera) are trebly taxed now. There is much jealousy and ill-feeling and frequent small difficulties at the frontier, and it is quite possible that the Italians in France may yet go into Coventry along with the Teuton; if matters are not better accommodated in the near future. There is also agitated the project of steam communication between Nice and Algiers, but this is manifestly improbable, as the former has nothing to send in return, on a paying basis, for the food supplies from the latter country. There are now, however, infrequent steamers from Algiers stopping here en route to Genoa.

War preparations continue on both sides, and huge guns are being transported to new works on the mountains, even to their tops, in prominent and commanding positions, while by sea the huge ironclads and torpedo vessels patrol the coast. There is even evidence of an adaptability to war purposes in the masonry work of the railway tunnels, common roads, and embankments. The many garrisons and recently constructed workshops and barracks for troops all bear witness to the prevailing activity. Still, the people are habituated to these things and continue farming their vegetables, orange and olive groves, at a fair profit, catering to the wants of the stranger, whose money is usually cast about freely. With it all, the unreading peasant buries or secretes his savings as he has ever done in the past: one frequently comes upon bright new coins minted a score of years ago.

In old Nice probably half of the population are Italian, but they are fast forgetting their native country and its heroes, and the statue of Garibaldi projected for his native city is in abeyance for lack of funds. The Italian Consulate in its activity resembles one of our county-office buildings with its staff of clerks, waiting-rooms, attendants, shelves full of registers upon all subjects from the coming in to the going out of the world, and its general importance to many of the inhabitants. The consular officer in charge is a man of note in his country, and affixes his signature to documents like a minister of state, using the surname only.

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FREDERICK THE GREAT AND GERMAN LITERATURE.

BERLIN, April 22, 1888.

A SERIES of excellent articles have been from time to time appearing on the relation of Frederick to German literature. These have now been collected and revised, and were recently published in book form under the title, 'Friedrichs des Grossen Schrift über die Deutsche Litteratur.' The author of this charming brochure is Prof. Bernhard Suphan, keeper of the Goethe archives in Weimar. In Weimar, now, as a century ago, centres to a large extent the literary interest of Germany. The earnest enthusiasm of her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess of Saxe-Weimar, whose property the archives are, has summoned to the task of editing these treasures in monumental form the best talent and learning of Germany. It is about one year since Prof. Suphan was called to the position he now occupies, and of his address on Herder and Goethe, at the May meeting of the Goethe Society, a correspondent of

the *Nation* gave at the time an account. The greatest debt of the literary world to Prof. Suphan, however, is the first critical and satisfactory edition of Herder's works, which is now nearing completion. It is from this graceful pen that we have the five instructive chapters on Frederick's essay, which suggested the present letter. The book is dedicated to Herman Grimm.

The last half of the eighteenth century in Germany must be designated as the era of Frederick the Great and Goethe. For the first time in the literary history of 2,000 years, we have a great literary epoch for which the name of the greatest contemporary ruler is an inadequate description. The names of Augustus, Charlemagne, Elisabeth, Louis XIV., call up each a complete notion of the period in which they lived, and of the production, artistic, literary, political, industrial, and economical, that went on about them. The name of Frederick the Great, however, associates itself only with an age of martial heroism and brilliant victory, of vigorous economic administration, the establishment of Prussian prestige, and the deepening of the national self-respect. His name does not suggest that the years of his famous successes were also the years when German literature was ripening to maturity, and the first fruits had already fallen. Goethe!—and all the productions in the fields of art, poetry, philosophy, and science through a half-century of earnest effort and brilliant achievement, are recalled in association with that name. The sum of the last half of the preceding century amounts to Frederick the Great and Goethe. Lessing, with all his admiration for the Prussian King, denies him every claim to thanks at the hands of German literature, but adds: "I should not be willing to swear that a flatterer may not one day come who will think well of calling the present era of German literature the era of Frederick the Great." This fear has not been realized, but there are reasons why his name should be associated with that of Goethe, even in speaking specifically of the literary epoch—but of this more hereafter.

Frederick's celebrated essay, 'De la Littérature Allemande,' appeared in 1780. It is in the form of a letter, and begins with a rapid sketch of the history of universal literature. Of England's great era, we find recognition under the names of Milton and (particularly) of Bacon, but of Shakspeare's works only the drastic mention: "les abominables pièces de Schakspeare, . . . ces farces ridicules et dignes des sauvages du Canada." For this bungler, however, there is some excuse: "On peut pardonner à Schakspeare ces écarts bizarres, car la naissance des arts n'est jamais le point de leur maturité." But what excuse can be found for a 'Götz von Berlichingen,' an "imitation détestable de ces mauvaises pièces anglaises, et le Parterre applaudit et demande avec enthousiasme la répétition de ces dégoûtantes platitudes."

For the good work that had begun to appear, Frederick had no understanding. In an effort to give the devil his due, he mentions with praise a poem and poet both long since forgotten, and professes to discover in the work an agreeable cadence, of which he had not believed the German language capable. Of Lessing, Wieland, Klopstock, Herder, there is no word. But upon this circumstance, and upon the oft-quoted passages above, too much weight has been laid. They have an historical interest for the curious, but they do not characterize the essay. It is not polemical, nor was it intended to check the growing influence of the English drama. The historical representatives of German literature

were still adherents of the French school. Only the younger generation had broken with the traditions, and of these writers Goethe alone receives so much as mention. The absurd passages which Frederick cites as examples of German bad taste are such as he would not have attributed even to a Shakspeare. Nothing could be more ridiculous than the charge which chauvinistic mediocrity brought against him, as later against the author of 'Hermann und Dorothea,' of a lack of patriotism and German sympathy. The real spirit of the essay is one of earnest endeavor towards a better state of things.

It is not the method of his friend Voltaire. Frederick is constructive, and takes hold of his subject with a firm, practical grasp. He seeks the way to improvement, and looks confidently into the future with prophetic visions that have been most brilliantly realized. He lays great weight upon the study of the ancient languages and literature, points out the necessity of good translations in lieu of feeble imitations, and seeks the standard of taste in France. The importance of purifying and perfecting the German language is especially emphasized. In consequence of the numerous and deeply rooted dialects in Germany; the establishment of an Academy, to the decisions of which absolute submission be required, seemed unavoidably demanded. A certain justifiable particularism has rendered an "Académie der Sprache" impossible to this day, but the idea has not been lost sight of, as an address of Prof. Du Bois-Reymond in 1874 shows. To Frederick, the impossibility of a national literature in an imperfect tongue was clear. His suggestions for rendering the language euphonic were less happy (as adding to consonantal endings an *a: nehmen-a; geben-a*, etc.), but everywhere is the vigorous practical attempt to point out the way, excite discussion, and rouse the talent and learning of the land to earnest efforts in rendering possible and eventually creating a German national literature, worthy of a place among the greatest of the world.

Fourteen years before Frederick wrote these words, a dissertation upon modern German literature had secured for Herder the first prize from the Académie der Wissenschaften in Berlin, and that dissertation had become a kind of rule of faith for the younger generation. Of this dissertation, however, Frederick's essay makes no mention, and it is, therefore, highly interesting to notice, what Prof. Suphan points out, how nevertheless, in almost all essential points, the views and aims of the young Herder in 1766 coincide with those expressed by the King of Prussia in 1780. Though the one seeks his standards of taste in England and the other in France, both are conscious of the feebleness of German literature, both are striving towards a fundamental bettering of its condition, both recognize that to this end the language must first be perfected, both insist upon a study of the classics and demand careful translations, not imitations, both see the day of attainment coming, both think it still afar off, but both are laboring unrestingly in earnest towards the same goal. Frederick prophesies the time "when the German language, polished and perfected, will be taught in the schools of France and the fame of its literature be spread from one end of Europe to the other. . . . The days are not yet come, but they are nearing. I announce them to you; they will appear; I shall not see them; my age forbids me to hope it. I am like Moses. I see the promised land in the distance, but I shall not enter it." He was already across the Jordan and knew it not.

It was natural that the 'De la Littérature Allemande,' coming from the throne upon

which the eyes of all Europe rested, should be everywhere read and should everywhere make deep impression. It is interesting to note its effect upon the literary generation which it in silence condemned. Schiller was but twenty-one when it appeared, and could hardly have claimed for his wild republican dramas a hearing at the court of Prussia. Of the works of Goethe, all the greatest were yet to come. Frederick died in 1786. A few days later occurred the event which we, at this distance of time, may regard as a turning point in the history of German literature, the close of the *Sturm und Drang*, the beginning of the classic period. Goethe stole forth from Carlsbad, and the Italian journey was begun. So far as dates can be given to intellectual movements, the importance of Goethe as a power in our modern life may be dated from that time. All that had found its final form at his hands before the Italian journey belongs essentially to an age with which we are no longer in sympathy. Those works which are evidence to us of Goethe's greatness were still crescent—fragmentary MSS. in his pocket, or as yet merely visions without local habitation and a name. That Frederick found little to admire in what had already appeared is, all things considered, no great wonder, for Shakspeare was not yet crowned in Germany, and dramas in the Shaksperian manner were something too new and opposed to the traditional taste to find acceptance at sight. But it was natural, too, that the silently implied condemnation of the Prussian King should rouse enmity and opposition even among those who were in agreement with the main principles of his essay. The importance of the royal utterances was very generally recognized, but everywhere were murmurs of injustice, lack of patriotism, Franco-mania, and the like. Among the princes, even, we hear some private epistolary disapproval.

No one, however, flew into so great a rage as good old Klopstock. As self-elected literary dictator, he sat hugging the conviction that his efforts had brought the German tongue at last to perfection, while Herder, the most polished prose-writer of his time, still saw perfection afar off. From this dream of attainment Frederick's essay was for Klopstock a rude awakener. He had more than once doubted Frederick's claim to immortality, as several discontented odes bear witness, but, after the publication of this essay, he is no longer in doubt, the doors of the temple of fame shall be closed against Frederick for ever. Scarcely less angry was Hamann of Königsberg, the "wise man of the North," who, some years before, had attempted to convert the Prussian King, and supply him with clearer views in general concerning literature and its representatives. But hints of a sojourn in Spandau induced Hamann to retain his article in MS. A letter to Herder gives his wrath vent: "Such Herculean pudentia of ignorance and presumption are the real character of his (Frederick's) greatness. He treats our literature with his foreign goose-quill as the lying prophet Balaam his ass; it has already bent the knee. The miracle will not be wanting: an answer in the divine speech of the gods." A worthy answer did, indeed, come—a candid, vigorous, fair article from the pen of Justus Möser, recognizing the value of the inspiration which a life of great deeds like Frederick's must, of itself, supply to a national literature. Other answers came, too, in which, however, the uninspired bray predominated.

Far more edifying is the spirit in which the royal condemnation was received by the genius of the land, Lessing, and "the three kings" of Weimar. Lessing had completed his life work. Conscious of the influence he had exerted, and