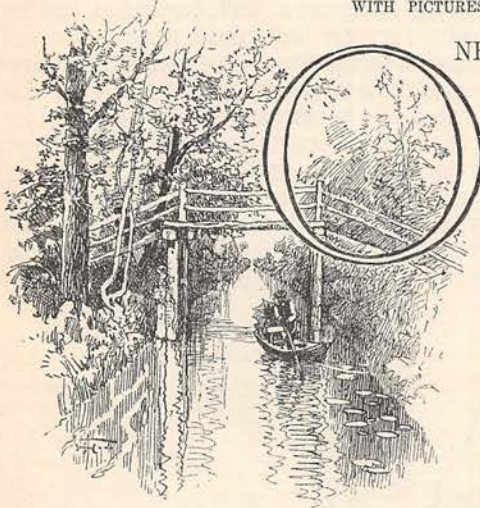


# AN INLAND VENICE.

THE SERBIAN SWAMP, VENDLAND.

WITH PICTURES BY LOUIS LOEB.



NE of the strangest and most interesting places in all Europe is the Spreewald, not far from Berlin, and very few travelers seem to know anything about it. The tourist is supposed to have left nothing untouched on the Continent; but there are curious loops and byways of travel that are virtually unknown to the outsider. One of the pleasures of a foreign tour is the making of these unexpected «finds.» The Spreewald, being a little out of the line of travel, is not likely to be overtoured, so it will probably be «discovered» continually for some time to come. Its peculiarity is hinted at in the title we have ventured to prefix to the author's more precise name for the region. It is not a Venice of palaces, but of farms and country inns; not only a bucolic home, but a haunt of pleasure-seekers;

a Holland far from the sea; a country where the streets are of water; an enormous network of canals and natural watercourses. A summer twilight there leaves mysterious memories. One speeds along the narrow, tree-lined water-lanes, now close to the front doors of cottages, and now through lonely farm-land stretches, the distance curtained by the evening mists, and the deep-voiced nightingales adding an imaginative charm to the haunted landscape.

*The Editor.*

Along a swift, faint-purling tide  
Through farms and high-flown elms to glide,  
Whilst in a copse as dark as night  
One brave impassioned nightingale  
Throbs like our hearts. . . .

But o'er the light,  
Fresh fields beyond the swale

An anxious cuckoo cheats the ear,  
Calling aloud, now far, now near,  
Upon that wayward one, his wife. . . .  
Sliding through dreams devoid of blame,  
Within that dream fall hints of strife,  
Of passionate faith and shame.



THERE is a distant rushing of water over a weir, and the boat itself, a slender, shallow punt, makes a faint, faint murmur under its shelving prow as the Vend thrusts his pole backward into the sandy bottom of the stream. Lying full length in the bows

on a bed of straw, I watch the reeds and grasses nod as we pass. Reaching out my hand, I can pluck great forget-me-nots, pinks with feathery petals, yellow iris standing in stateliness against the green slope of the bank. Before me stretches the highroad of

the queerest, most delightful community in all northern Germany. It is the Mühlspree, a branch of many waters that finally unite to enter Berlin, there part again, to join once more and flow by Potsdam into the Havel, thence to the Elbe, thence to the Atlantic. I am on the water turnpike between the Vendish villages of Burg and Lübbenau.

Tall trees almost meet overhead, shooting up close from the water's edge; with their overstretching branches they make a capital aerial road for chattering magpies clad in Prussian white and black, and for the more silent squirrel. Between their boles appear from time to time thatched roofs of barns, greenest green and richest yellow with moss; here the cotter's low home, with its steep roof, its



stoop, and small windows, there the larger house of a village magnate, some rich peasant or landlord. Suddenly on the bank rises a tiny woman in the picturesque costume of the Vends, an envoy of the little people, it might seem, who verily must linger in such out-of-the-way spots as this! In her strange horned head-dress and bright kirtle to the knee, with her little arms, legs, and feet bare, her blue eyes most solemn, she stands stock-still, afraid to throw us the bouquet she has gathered for no other purpose than to get our *groschen*.

«Tank—Tag!» cries she, makes a little bob, and flies away with the spoil, in her glee forgetting to throw us the wild flowers till it is too late.

But what is this approaching up the leaf-swung highway? One boat, two, three—it is a pleasure party up from Lübbenau, to stop at the Bleiche, or the Black Eagle, or some other locally famous inn. On seats athwart the first punt are several rows of young men and women laughing and singing; in the second are musicians; in the third is a group about a keg of beer. This is their outing, and vociferous is their enjoyment. As quiet falls again we rush round a corner into a transverse reach shadowed dark with trees—a reach that joins one Spree branch with another; and presently a deep, rich note is heard—yes, it is a nightingale practising for his evening concert; and there again, faint and ventriloquial,—who can tell exactly whence?—comes from across a broad stretch of crops the mellow cuckoo call!

For it is June, and not yet, as some Vends still believe, has the cuckoo changed his estate and taken on the form of a hawk, nor has he ceased his monotonous but ever delightful song.

As we pass a woman at work in the fields, her bare feet in wooden shoes, her one garment reaching just below the knee, but her head and shoulders well covered by the great *rubishko*, or horned head-dress, our boatman speaks to her in a strange tongue that sounds like Polish. She has smaller hands and feet than German peasants usually show, a small, slender figure, a plain but refined brown face, and brown eyes. She will work all day like a pony, and then think nothing of dancing half the night if she gets the chance; and dance well, too, far more gracefully than her German sisters in the cities. Her ambition is to get a position as wet-nurse in Berlin, where she will trot about the Thiergarten in a magnificent short skirt of

many yards' circumference, white stockings, real leather shoes, and an immense snowy-white horned head-dress. With the money she has earned she hopes to return to the Spreewald. She hates the city, and likes her time-honored black aprons and colored skirts and many-colored headgear. The men hold less to the old and traditional, so that one rarely sees more than a hint of the remote past in their jackets and country caps. For them the army is a great leveler and eradicator of racial traits and local oddities in dress.

Now we are out of the woods, rushing down a perfectly straight *fliess* the banks of which are planted with a quick growth of willows closely cropped by the basket-makers. Here we meet two slender fellows taking a pig to market—a lovely pink pig in a new crate as clean as a pin, and as proud as that heifer of which the crazy Roman emperor tried to make an empress. Then comes another boat stacked with yellow carrots and green vegetables, broad masses of color, poled along by a peasant woman in a dark blue dress and a white, broad-spreading cap. These people speak German to the lordings as we pass, Vendish to our boatman; but the Vendish is disappearing because, for the sake of the army, its teaching is discouraged. Throughout all this district, far over into Saxony, only a few churches still offer sermons in the old tongue. Yet if the Vendish tongue disappears the names of places will tell the tale, even as such names in Brandenburg and Saxony still do. Dresden, Leipzig, these are



A CANAL-SIDE.

Vendish words—or call them Slavic, with the broader term that now means the race. And hereabout are Cottbus, Vetschau, Müschen, Brahmow, Babow, Dlugy, Raddush, Leipe,



Lehde, Byhleguhre, Straupitz, and Lübben. And the fliesses that wind or shoot straight in and out of forest and cleared fields retain Vendish names: Mutniza, Blushnitsa, Rogazo, Zschapigk, Polenzo, Groblitzo, and Nabasatz. Efforts have been made to give German names to many of them, but country people everywhere are great holders to precedent, and the people who stick so tightly to their old costume are not going to give up their place-names without a struggle.

Strange indeed that so near Berlin so old-time and curious a community could have remained reasonably uncontaminated by the hordes of picknickers! The Spreewald is too near a great capital for foreigners to hear much of it. The museums and palaces of Berlin, the palaces of Potsdam, absorb all the spare energy of foreign visitors. And for convenient outflights it is a little too far for most burghers of Berlin. Some have country places in and near the Spreewald. Many visit it occasionally. It is a favorite place for people from Dresden and Leipzig who can give several days to exploring its watery labyrinths; especially for the teaching guild is it a favorite resort. Every village has its inns, and at Burg, where Vendish services are held in the old church and the costume remains the most antique, there are several famous taverns. One is the Bleachery, where Frederick the Great established a colony of dyers and weavers, who have all disappeared, although the art is still practised by private means for personal use in many farm-houses. But the fine green, orange, pink, and lilac head-dresses—the *wodzewanski rubishko*—and the turquoise, gray, and yellow skirts are now bought at Cottbus or in Berlin.

«School out» at the village school of Burg is a pretty sight. The substantial brick building overlooks the ever-murmuring highway, and the boys and girls, instead of stringing up a dusty road, tumble into punts and pole away for dear life—the boys much like other boys, but the girls reduced facsimiles of their mothers and elder sisters, clad in bright but short raiment, and visible afar off through their strange mob-caps with wings. As one moves down stream from Burg by Leipe to Lübbenau, these wings grow smaller and collapse, while the skirts grow longer and more resemble the ordinary dress of women. At a dance the Spreewälder knows instantly, by the peculiarities of her costume, from what village a woman or girl has come. At Leipe the multitudinous skirts of alarming girth are no more, the gown reaches the ankles, and the cap fits close to the head instead of

resting on a framework as in Burg. Thus the dress in Leipe is perhaps more graceful, but it is more commonplace; it no longer testifies to that pride of the peasant father or husband which is shown by the number of yards in the skirts of his womanfolk and the variety of their caps, by the richness of their dress as well as their jewelry.

Swamp the Spreewald once was, and swamp it again becomes from time to time when a freshet obliterates the paths beside the streams and all the fields are wide brown lakes. To the ravens flying over, the Spreewald in its ordinary state looks much like other land, because the fliesses are scarce visible through the lines of trees, and because where the dense forest once stood ruthless nobles and landowners have felled the trees to grow hay or to plant vegetables. But let the snows melt suddenly and the rains fall, then it is a little Holland with the dikes broken.

But for its past, imagine a marsh thick with trees that annual overflows do not kill. Into this swamp human beings have fled with no hope of ever regaining the arable lands and pastures from which they were driven. Fancy them bringing with them gentler manners than those possessed who drove them to the swamp, and also habits of industry, and an inherited, inbred knowledge of water-walls, canals, dikes, weirs, and fisheries. Imagine them speaking a well-sounding Slavic tongue full of soft *s*'s and modulations, complicated in its grammar, rich in synonyms. Think of them as pagans with some few cruel rites, yet treating their women and cattle with comparative humanity, and in many other ways, such as vivacity, gaiety, and humor, contrasting favorably with their conquerors.

Such is the race that, owing to a certain querulousness among themselves, a certain tendency to envy and backbiting, an inability to agree and fight the foe unitedly, was gradually forced off the good land into the dark woods on the upper reaches of the Havel. There they fell trees, dig big and little canals, make pastures and fields, trap fish and game, and build thatched huts, not round, but square. As the world outside moves on faster, and the Teutons take on a superficial skin of civilization, and by marriage, force, and fraud enter the Spreewald and become Vends also, the original Vends of this part of northern Europe find themselves a secluded community of woodmen and fishermen, with hardly a town to show, without a literature, but not without myriad myths



and superstitions; a community of men who are as lambs to the cruel Christian, ready to be gathered into the fold by threats of the sword and the auto de fe.

Such were the Serbs or Vends who dwelt in the twelfth century not far from a little town on the Spree called Kölln (from *kolna*, a shed), which, being afterward joined by another little spot called Barlin, formed the later city of Berlin. The Germans use for

Vends because of an old word, *wada*, meaning water. But the worst guess at the meaning of Vend is a German one, according to which they were called Vends in derision because they turned (*wenden*) in battle from the swords of the savage Teutons.

And of a truth they have given way before the foe just as the old Veneti fled from the mainland into the oozy islands of the lagoons at the head of the Adriatic when the Huns

grew too grievous, and lived ever after in boats, even as the Vends of the Spreewald to this day. The Venetians were of old great horsemen, and their racers took prizes at Olympia under the racing-colors of Hiero of Syracuse. The Vends have a passion for horses' heads as a decoration for their houses and barns, just as the modern Venetians love equestrian monuments. Have we here the survival of an idea in common from the earlier times when the Slavs were horsemen on the Asian plains? Vendland is better known to history as Lusatia, and the Spreewald belongs to Lower Lusatia, and contains all that is left of Vends, who speak not only the old tongue, but realize, as millions of Germanized Slavs do not, that they are a people by themselves who have manfully withstood centuries of persecution directed against their tongue, their dress, and their customs. This tongue is not unlike the Czech of Bohemia, and strongly resembles Russian and Polish.

As a rule, the older women wear white headgear; at least



THE BOATMAN—EN ROUTE.

ENGRAVED BY A. E. ANDERSON.

them the term Vends, a very old word which designates many other separated parts of one great Aryan race, such as the Veneti on the Baltic, the Veneti on the Adriatic, the Vendéans in France, the Vandals on the lower Elbe, the Pannonians of old Slav blood. Their nearer relatives were the Obotrites in Mecklenburg, the Kossubes in northeast Prussia, and the Pomorjans or Old Prussians. Like the Finns of Russia and Sweden, who speak quite another sort of language, however, they were preëminently men of the fens, amphibious, so that some have guessed none too profoundly that their neighbors called them

the big square kerchief that falls nearly to the shoulders is white, while with girls this upper part is colored like the tulip-beds of Haarlem. But on Trinity Sunday they wear the *plyachzishka*: all is white on head and shoulders, while the gown, the *wohnjanka*, is black. Then is the old church at Burg a sight that recalls Brittany. The men for the most part are in the galleries. Almost the entire floor of the church is filled with seated women, their starched caps, as white as white can be, having the effect of stiffened wind-rows of snow.

But on other Sundays the young women



appear in all their finery. Many of them enter the village barefoot, and put their shoes and stockings on just before assembling in front of the church. The men gather in one group, the women in another. As a gentle reminder of the uncertainty of life, the first thing one sees in the vestibule of the church is a pair of coffin-rests, past which the people troop to their German prayers and Vendish sermon. After the services a baptism may be held, when the godmothers (*kmotra*) are expected to appear in a special kind of white cap very difficult to describe. When the baptism is over the party adjourns to a tavern, and the dresses and caps are duly criticized or admired, and the proud parents are expected to do the handsome thing by the friends and godparents. Godfathers and godmothers are also given a present of money, but not a round sum,—that is unlucky,—always a little over. The child must not be left alone; at least a bird or beast must be left with it to baffle evil spirits. The elder godmother carries the child to the church, the younger from the sanctuary. But before they reënter the home some one lays symbolical tools across the threshold over which the baptismal party must pass. For a boy it may be an ax and a hoe; for a girl a spinning-wheel and a broom. As she steps across, the younger godmother, bearing the child in her arms, says aloud, «We carried away a heathen, and bring back a Christian with the proper name of John [or Mary].» In some villages children are named in a fixed order as they are born, and if the baby dies the new child is given its name. Thus in Schleifa it is customary to give boys names in the following order: Hanzo, Matthes, Juro, Kito, Merten, Lobo; and to girls, Maria, Anna, Madlena, Liza, Khrysta, Wortija, Worsula.

Next to a baptismal procession a wedding party is the jolliest sight on Spreewald fiesses, since every one is naturally decked in his or her best, and the men carry staves bound with bright ribbons, said to be a survival of the swords of an earlier period when the bride was carried off more or less by force, or at least with a show of violence. *Kozol*, the bagpipes, still survive in some parts of the forest. The bridegroom, preceded by his *druzba*, or best man, a fiddler, and a bagpiper, and followed by his friends, knocks loudly at the door of the bride, and on being admitted demands the young woman with great show of wrath, only to receive, instead of the bride, an old maid who has a false hump on her back. The men strike her

on the hump, which soon breaks, since it is an old cooking-pot, and drive her back into the house. Then the bridesmaid, or *druzka*, is given up; but she also is compelled to flee into the house. Finally the bride herself is handed to the best man, who places her beside the groom, whereupon the couple turn about three times, a peculiar pagan rite known formerly to Ireland and Scotland, and the whole party enters the house to breakfast. The Turkish and Finnish tribes of Asia have similar customs of teasing the groom and his best man before surrendering the bride. At the wedding both must have money in their shoes, or they will always be poor. On the return from the wedding a newly bought pot filled with milk and beer is sent to meet the couple; as soon as they have drunk, the *druzba* seizes the pot and dashes it to pieces. On reaching her new home, the bride must feed all the animals. At the wedding feast neither groom and bride nor best man and woman must rise from the table under any pretext whatever until dancing begins in the evening at the tavern.

But to tell all that is left of heathen and medieval Christian practices in the Spreewald would fill a book or two. The water-nixy is dangerous to young women who wade into ponds to cut reeds for thatch; the sandman has his female counterpart: when a boy nods it is Hermann that has come; when a girl gets sleepy over her spinning it is Dremotka. Reapers who fail to rest for an hour at mid-day are in danger of a ragged female demon called Pshespolniza; she comes with a sickle bound to a pole and cuts off their heads. She seems to have been sunstroke personified, but is now, like Serpowniza, only a bug-bear used to frighten children away from growing crops.

Here in the Spreewald exist many of the superstitions common to Ireland and Scotland—the changeling, the whirlwind, will-o'-the-wisp, kobold, leprechawn, and good little people generally. Have is the crafty spirit of the lake and the demon that springs on men's shoulders at night. Here especially is the banshee; indeed, no less a family than the Hohenzollerns have a private and particular white lady who appears in the unsentimental vicinage of the Schloss in the heart of Berlin and wails round the battlements when a death is to occur in the family. Connection between the British Islands and the lands drained by the Elbe and the Vistula has been constantly renewed by migration and conquest. In remote periods the race seems to have been alike in both countries.





AFTER THE CHRISTENING.



But considerations so remote and afar off in history are not suited to the fore-deck of a Spreewald punt. Better to note the picturesque royal hunting-box at the Eiche, where the dogs rush down to the bank with great show of anger, or the forester's house where one can get a cup of coffee from the forester's wife. Then we plunge into a beautiful bit of woods, and emerge on the Kanno Mill, with its little side-lock for punts; and so, descending to a lower level, spurt forward into the dark woods that still retain some of the swampy characteristics of the Spreewald as it was a thousand years ago.

A touch of the bayous of the Mississippi is here. In this oozy soil the trees have given out buttresses above their deep-lying roots, and as one rounds such a bole and a new reach of the stream opens up, one expects at least an alligator on the slimy bank to make the touch complete. This is the tragic passage in the symphony. Thence through freshly planted woods to pastures new, and with a turn into a rushing contrary tide we head for Lehde, a closely built vil-  
lage gathered thickly about the highway

and smaller water streets, there to land for dinner at the tavern of the Jolly Pike.

In Vendland we still are: witness houses that recall the mills in Hobbema's paintings; witness the heaps of giant pumpkins by the barns, and the bare-legged maids digging the first horse-radishes for the big distant city. But Lehde is near Lübbenau, and Lübbenau is a tight little town with cobblestoned streets, and a stately castle of the counts of Lynar (who descend, according to Vend tradition, from a dragon), and a beautiful old saw-mill, and a park—and, alas! a railway. Lehde, with its tavern suited for hundreds of thirsty citizens, begins already to let one gently down from medieval Vendland into modern Germany—Lehde, with her hundred factories and hideous furniture and cheap, ugly clothes. The flowers are gone, and the nightingale and the cuckoo, and the broad arable lands brightened by the rich spot of a laboring maid's skirt, and the solemn aisles with their silvery floor and their canopy of black branches.

But the storks cling to Lehde, and the wise, thieving magpies know it, and the swallows and gnat-catchers and bats skim over its

roofs of tile and thatch, while below are its fleets of white ducks and its busy barn-yard fowls. But one sad thing about Lehde is the orchestration at the inn as it grinds out dance-measures to the infinite content of mine host of the Jolly Pike.

The Spreewald is a «happy hunting-ground» for pedestrian and cyclist in summer. When the snow spares the great and little streams, the cross fliesses and those still smaller cuts in the meadows which just admit one hay-punt and no more, then is it a country that can be explored on skates even more delightfully than in punt or canoe. There is leisure then for the hard-worked Spreewälder and his wife and maids; merry bands glide from village to village. 'T is as if a bit of Holland had been taken up bodily and dropped between Dresden and Berlin.



A BACHELOR.





THE MORNING TOILET.

Philosophy and science may be said to have begun for northern Germany with Leibnitz, a Vend; and universities with that of Prague in the land of the Czechs, who can boast of the first school of art in Germany, and of a reformer of the church before Luther, namely, Huss; yes, and the first pleader for rational education, Amos Comenius.

The handsomest officers who ride in the

Thiergarten and parade on Tempelhofer Platz are apt to have Vendish names ending in *itz*, *witz*, and *ow*; they have the slim figure, smallish hands and feet, and often the pure Greek profile which is sometimes seen in the peasantry of the Spreewald.<sup>1</sup> The women are, comparatively speaking, less favored; but the soft, clear-cut, rather longish features, fine complexions, long, straight, thin noses, clear

<sup>1</sup> The Vends of the Spreewald do not call themselves Vends, but Serbjo, Serbski, or Sserski; that is to say, Servians. It has been argued that Vend is a term used by the Teutons to designate them, and attempts have been made to explain it as a Teutonic root. The fact seems to be that Vend is a very antique generic term—equivalent to, but older than, Slav—which was used in the

earliest times for the whole race throughout Europe and Asia, while Slav, Slovák, Russ, Czech, Pole, Serb, and Sorb were less comprehensive terms used by various parts of the Ventic race. The Serbs on the Danube preserve the same word as the Serbs on the Spree to designate themselves in a narrow sense.





THE NIGHT WATCHMAN.

foreheads, and small hands and feet, distinguish them from their more purely Teutonic sisters. Men and women are, as a rule, handsomer than their racial relatives the Saxon Slavs and the Czechs who dwell at the head waters of the Elbe. They are great worshipers of rank and precedence; the faint tendency toward democracy which the Teutonic races in Germany are supposed to show can hardly be found among them. Faithful to their royal houses, they have borne patiently the tyranny and insolence toward weaker races which seem part and parcel of the Teuton wherever he is found; it is only very recently that there have been some stirrings of a race feeling similar to that which has always inflamed the hardier and more combative Bohemians. Last year a call went out from the Czechs of Bohemia to the

Serbs (Vends) of Saxony about Bautzen and Zittau to remember their past, and read the papers which are devoted to the old literature of these disjointed portions of the Slav race. And as in Ireland the worshipers of the fetish of Anglo-Saxondom regard with distrust the endeavor to keep the Irish tongue alive, and try to boycott the Celtic elements in British speech and literature, so the Teuton in the older home of his race boycotts the Slavic elements in northern Germany, and denies their very existence if he can. There they are under his nose, but, with the obstinacy to facts which is at once his strength and his weakness, he will not see; or if he is forced to look, he explains the facts away in some fashion that suits his clumsy pride.

Some of the changes of government to which the patient Vends have had to submit may be recalled on examining one of three bells which were dismounted from a belfry in Lübbenau last

summer. Cast in 1625 by Mathias Paust in Prague, it bears the inscription, «I praise the true God, call together the people, convoke the priesthood, lament the dead, drive out the devil, beautify festivals.»<sup>1</sup>

For one hundred and eighty years it rang for the Vendish subjects of the Saxon kings and electors, and for nearly a hundred years for subjects of Prussia. It has seen the Swede, the Russian, and the Frenchman in the streets of Lübbenau. Very little hand in the making of the government have the good people for whom it did over two and a half centuries of service. I ask my boatman if he ever votes. No; it is done, if done at all, by certain big men of his village. But does n't he vote for the Reichstag? No; he seems to

<sup>1</sup> «Laudo Deum verum, plebem voco, congrego clerum, defunctos ploro, Satanam fugo, festa decoro.»



have a very hazy idea what the Reichstag may be, and is quite content with the apology for representation in Prussia, without pushing political activity so inordinately far as to avail himself of the rights of universal suffrage in the empire.

The Vends are great church-goers, but if their legends mean anything, their Christianity is, so to speak, but of yesterday. It was not so long ago that Sunday was a day for heavy drinking, and the sermon a good occasion to sleep off the excesses of Saturday night in order to be ready for the bout of the afternoon. Christianity was forced upon them by the Teutons, beginning with Charles the Great.

Like the Irish, the two hundred thousand Vends of Prussia and Saxony (they of Lower and Upper Lusatia) have ever been an agricultural race, obstinate in retaining their language under the sneers of the ruling race and the violent objections of many of their own. As the half-educated Irishman of Celtic stock reviles the Irish-speaking rustic, and does what he can to prevent the old tongue from being taught in schools and used in church, so the Vends who have become partially Germanized persecute their old language more vindictively than do the Germans themselves. And again, as in Ireland some of the most effective forefights in the cause of Irish have been Englishmen, so in Lusatia various German scholars, like Dr. Sauerwein, have been the boldest to denounce Germans for persecutions and recreant Vends for treachery to their own. Practical rising men in Lusatia, as in Ireland, oppose the old tongue because they believe that its cultivation hinders a boy from getting on materially in the world. It is this idea oftener than a dislike to keeping up the separation between Vend and German which animates these shallow-pates.

In some parts of the Spreewald the pleasant fashion of the spinning-wheel is retained. The *spinnte* or *spinne* is a room where girls

work together, also a society for spinning, talking gossip, and having fun, which has taken on a certain festive air since steam-looms have driven out private weaving. Thread for sewing is still made. In the Yule week, and especially on *Fastnacht*, the spinning-room where the village girls meet is the place for mummeries carried out by the boys, such as *Bačona vozyč* (leading the stork), *Mjedweča vozyč* (leading the honey-snatcher, or bear), or *Kona vozyč* (leading the horse), in which figure boys dressed in straw or sheets to resemble stork, bear, and horse, with their attendants. Faces are smutted with soot, and practical jokes are in order. In northern Germany the word *spinnte*, originally the room where the spinsters met, has come to mean a cupboard. If some of the maids



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began to nod over their spinning, one would creep out, and putting on rags, would return as Dremotka, the sandwoman, and indulge in various pranks that waked the sleepy ones and made everybody laugh. A favorite bugbear of the Vends was a race of supernatural beings called *Graben* or *Draben*, friendly with the water-nixy, but not with mankind. They persecuted girls, and had a taste for horseflesh in that they occasionally devoured a peasant's horse. As they were reported to open the window of the spinning-room and thrust in a horse's hoof, the village boys knew just what to do in order to put the girls in a panic. The *Graben* or *Draben* seem to have

been a sort of satyrs, since they had horses' legs and lived in caves in the woods and wastes, but often slipped into the villages in the form of men. They were creatures of extraordinary strength, but easily duped, and were often seen in bearskins. Evil things were said of them—cannibalism, for example. What remains in popular memory concerning them seems a condensation of memories of satyrs, bears, and robber knights.

The Spreewald men have always proved docile soldiers, and when well led are dangerous foes. Even in 1848 the Vendish regiments could not be alienated from their Saxon and Prussian kings. Unfair laws and social disabilities have driven many across the ocean. Indeed, the children in some villages sing a song about the stork—a song which makes America, not Africa, the place to which the stork migrates. In Bastrop County, Texas, there was not long ago, and probably is to-day, a village called Serbin, all of Vends, who still speak the old tongue and have a newspaper in their own old language. The Vendish literature, comparatively recent, has some noted luminaries. The promising young poet Kočyk, however, emigrated to America some years ago. Emigration and stupid officials are fast ruining the Spreewald. A railway has been projected to cut straight through the heart of the swamp and destroy the last vestiges of its antiquity.

Odd and charming is the Serbian marsh in Vendland, and not less interesting when we think of its indwellers as a fragment of the great scattered Slav race that forms an important section of Austria, is well represented in Hungary, and occupies most of the eastern parts of Prussia. The remnant is very small compared with Teutons and Teutonized Slavs, but valiantly has it fought in its own silent, bovine way against the assumptions and advice of the Teutons.

These little tribes and nations have a consciousness and vigor nowadays which former centuries lacked, because science has scouted many dull pretensions and history has connected many humble peoples with a not inglorious past. Panslavists have hoped that, proceeding from Russia as a great center of population, the Russian language and religion and government would some day break their barriers and reoccupy the old territory even as far westward as the Vendish forest on the Spree. The century has proved how fantastic was this hope. Scientists know the usefulness of variety of race and language to a country, so long as the disruptive elements are not too great; but governments and official classes



A SPREEWALD BEAUTY.





HOME WITH THE DAY'S HARVEST.

are timid, and seek to destroy all such differences for fear of complications. As we are poled home through the dark fliesses, scaring with our lantern the birds that are roosting over the stream, we mourn the folly of great nations in trying to reduce everybody to the level of one tongue and one habit of ugly clothes.

The little tribes and nations of the earth,  
 Oh, crush them not, mortals of coarser breed!  
 Your beefy insolence tramples on their mirth,  
 Their woods and pastures melt before your greed.  
 Cherish the shy things in the swamp that grow;  
 In vain ye search the spot that once has borne  
 White violets of the red lip, white as snow,  
 Or lilies making grand some isle forlorn.

*Charles de Kay.*

## ART.

SAID Life to Art, «I love thee best  
 Not when I find in thee  
 My very face and form expressed  
 With dull fidelity;

«But when in thee my craving eyes  
 Behold continually  
 The mystery of my memories  
 And all I long to be.»

*Charles G. D. Roberts.*