

REMINISCENCES OF A PLEASURE-TRIP.

BY ROBERT GANTHONY.

THE drawback to a cruise like that which Sir Donald Currie gave his friends in the *Tantallon Castle* is that when the excitement of the trip is over and you shake your kindly host by the hand at Fenchurch Street Station, you feel as you drive home that you are nobody—men no longer stand at the street corners and raise their hats, blue-eyed maidens with blonde tresses no longer smile on you and whisper a welcome, and clerks do not tear themselves away from entrancing account-books and rush to their office windows to greet you.

The newspapers no longer chronicle your doings, and you eat your meals without being surrounded by kings, princes, and notabilities, and without being daily perplexed as to what dainties you should select from the elaborate menu-cards presented to you by an obliging steward.

I felt all this as acutely as a dethroned Lord Mayor when I drove from Fenchurch Street, and I said in the fullness of my heart to a porter at Waterloo Station as I alighted—

"I have just come from the Baltic."

"'Ave yer?" he replied. "Well, I'm just agoin' to my dinner."

The enthusiasm to which I have alluded, the lack of which now makes me disconsolate, began as we went up the Elbe, when the binocular glasses often revealed fluttering pocket-handkerchiefs at distant villa windows which the unaided eye would have passed unnoticed.

When a steamer on the Elbe is run into

and sinks, it is allowed to remain as a delicate hint to those still floating to be careful. We passed several half-submerged vessels; and if they have many more accidents, and don't gather up the fragments, there will be no room to pass.

At Hamburg there is plenty of life and bustle and no wrecks. Knowing that chronology varies when travelling, every-



Photo by R. Ganthony.

THE PILOT BOAT LEAVING KIEL.

body on board began twisting their watch-hands to agree with a large clock that stood opposite to our mooring-station, only to discover afterwards that it indicated the depth of water in the river.

Down the Elbe the deputation from Hamburg boarded us like a lot of bearded and smiling pirates, armed to the teeth with bouquets and umbrellas, and bound us, not with ropes, but to keep the two

following days—*tags* they call them—according to their pre-arranged and printed programme.

In America the first thing they do to cheer you is to show you a cemetery. At

escorted to another building, where, after being shown *Elbe animalculæ* through microscopes to modify our wild enthusiasm for water, which to many of us was a new drink, we were induced to taste of wine and liqueurs, and asked to smoke some very choice cigars.

I do not understand what connection there is between tobacco and waterworks, but I enjoyed the cigar presented me until forced to re-enter the building to express an opinion on German *animalculæ*. I thought they looked like my English eyelashes, and I turned out to be right, for during the glass-clinking and mutual compliment, the water under inspection had dried up, to the discomfort of the insects, and the temporary postponement of entomological investigation.

After our return from the *Wasserwerke* we tackled the next item—after studying it, as will be seen by our Illustration—



Photo by R. Ganthony.

STUDYING OUR PROGRAMME.

Hamburg it is a shade better, for at 8.30 a.m. we were taken to see the *Wasserwerke*. The next German friend that visits me I shall trot off to Chelsea or Surbiton soon after daybreak, and give him an equally pleasant outing. What they call "*Ab Passagierhallen per Lauenburger Dampfer*," means a trip down the river, which was much pleasanter and far less complicated than it reads.

We had a capital brass band in tall black hats on board the *Dampfer*, and also a woman with a handkerchief on her head, who handed round beer, which had a head but no handkerchief. Indeed, we had everything to make us happy—a fine day, plenty of cameras, Mr. Wyllie, A.R.A., and his macintosh, and no sea-sickness.

The manager's house and grounds are really pretty, and our party may be seen above threading their way under the trees. Their slow and stately gait is due to the fact that they were not aware at the time that drink other than *Elbewasser* was awaiting them in the distant buildings.

I tasted the water, which appeared to me to be of the same brand as the beverage in our cistern, only more so, and was then

tion—viz., "*Rundfahrt durch den Hafen*," and steamed about the shipping in the *Dampfer*, where our brass band was much appreciated by the sailors and wharf labourers, who shouted lustily for music as we passed, if the band happened to be showing its appreciation of the foaming lager, which we as a body sometimes neglected.

On disembarking we found a whole string of well-appointed pair-horse carriages with cockade-hatted coachmen ready to drive us to the *Alsterlust*, where we arrived arm-tired from continual hat-raising.

After lunch at the *Alsterlust*—a charming restaurant on the *Alster* river, we embarked on two small steamers, as soon as Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone and the ladies had joined us, and steamed up the *Alster* past the houses and gardens of the merchant princes to *Sophienterrasse*, where Sir Donald went ashore to assist in christening a child. We remained on the *Alsterdampfböten*, and, as it came on to rain, we had a christening also, but no child, and the *Alsterdampfböten* became very damp boating indeed.

The genial clergyman who performed the ceremony came down to the steamboat, and was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone. The enormous Elizabethan ruff he wore did not seem to me calculated to create a deep religious feeling in the minds of the uninitiated if sprung on them suddenly.

We returned to the *Tantallon Castle* to dress, and then, via the *Ariadne* and carriages, went off to dine at the Zoologischen Garten.

The Zoo rather suggests seeing animals fed than dining oneself, but it turned out all right, and we were not, I was relieved to discover, put in cages and fed through the bars.

Banquets that read well in the papers are always to me rather trying, especially when they last from seven to after midnight. The speeches—in ornate English by the way—were sandwiched in between the courses, which plan, though it allows you time to get hungry between each instalment of food, must worry the life out of the *chef*, who never can tell how long any speech may be, and is consequently always on the brink of uncertainty as to whether the dishes upon which his reputation depends will be uncooked or over-baked.

I suppose speeches at dinners are necessary, but Daniel in the lions' den had this comfort—that if there was to be an after-dinner speech, he would neither have to make nor listen to it.

During the elocutionary portion of the banquet I wandered about the grounds, heard the band, smoked a cigar under the trees, and studied the populace enjoying itself; then I clambered over the rope that protected our portion from the crowd, and heard all about what I had missed as we returned to the ship, and that finished what the official programme calls "Freitag, den 14. Juni."

Sonabend I took quietly, as we had dropped down the river into pretty country, and lunched on board with Mr. Gladstone, leaving the young ones to "Frühstück bei

Jacobs" (*vide* programme), and I found that I lost nothing, as the "Frühstück," if I may accept Mr. Garland Soper's report, turned out to be a frühstück on a mud bank opposite Jacobs, where, while enduring the pangs of hunger, those who went frühstücking could see on shore the decorated tables groaning under the weight of luxuries, beside which idle waiters stood prepared to serve the collation to which, owing to their stranded condition, our party could not do justice. In despair Mr. John Paddon of Africa gallantly pushed the steamer off with his silk umbrella, which to this day remains stuck in the mud bank, and evidence of how the brave are rewarded, and the uncertainty of human plans and desires.

When the stranded ones returned to the *Tantallon Castle*, minus their lunch and a silk umbrella, they found the awnings up, and the vessel gay with bunting, to make our Hamburg friends welcome at the banquet on board that evening to their honour and appetites.



Photo by R. Ganthony.

MRS. GLADSTONE ON BOARD THE "TANTALLON CASTLE."

Never did a body of men work with such unflagging zeal and with such loyalty as Sir Donald's staff to make everything go off well. Mr. Walker's handsome face looked a shade anxious, and though Mr. Jack surveyed matters calmly, there

was a nervous twinkle in his flashing eye that even his smoked glasses could not altogether conceal.

Where to seat everyone and please everyone was no easily solved puzzle. Every cabin was brought into requisition, and even the second-class saloon was graced by the company of lords, one admiral, and several knights, in addition to my own presence.

After the banquet we joined the others in the saloon, and Mr. Gladstone gave us a speech, "made in Germany," which we cheered as though we were in a police-court.

After the speeches we had a concert, Mr. William Nicholl charming us with

singing and Mr. Robert Ganthony making an emphatic hit with his comic lecture on geometry, Mr. Gladstone heartily applauding this novel employment of mathematics. It gives me great pleasure to record the success of these deserving young entertainers.

The Hamburg visitors, ladies and gentlemen, shook hands with the concert-givers at the conclusion of the entertainment as they went on deck, where conversation became general until, with cheers and counter-cheers, the *Ariadne* paddled away back with our visitors to Hamburg; and I am sure neither Sir Donald's English nor his German guests will ever forget that evening on the Elbe.

