

DOWN IN A SALT MINE.—As we have been in the salt mine described below, and can testify to the truth of all that there is told, we publish it, and would ask our readers if they are ever in the neighborhood of Salzburg not to omit visiting the salt mines. They will receive a new sensation by doing so:—

"The fine old town of Salzburg, lying between Munich and Vienna, and on the route from the latter city to Innsbruck and Italy, seems now to be somewhat neglected by visitors, though the historic seat of the Bishop-Princes has interest both ancient and modern. The castle, the numberless churches, the house in which Mozart was born and that wherein he resided, his statue, and the museum containing relics of the master-singer of Salzburg, have in them much to charm students. For the generality there are excellent hotels, a good bathing establishment, which is frequented by the imperial and aristocratic families of Austria, a little theatre, etc., and in fact a good deal of amusement during the season, which lasts here, as elsewhere, from May till October. For the lovers of nature and the students of art (are not the two terms synonymous?) there is the ancient town hemmed on three sides by the now snow-tipped hills, clothed with dark green firs and with weeping birches turning to a rich golden hue: there are quaint old wooden bridges and tall houses, from which the Virginia creeper, now red in the tints which show that 'autumn has come and set the leaves on fire,' hangs luxuriantly. But one of the most interesting features of the whole neighborhood, and one which I was glad to see, from a glance at the well-filled visitors' book, had by no means been neglected by Americans, is the famous salt mine of the Dürrenberg, situated at Hallein, within an easy drive of other objects of interest, as Pass Lueg, the waterfall of Golling, and the Koenig's See (lake). This mine is, I am told, the second in size in Europe, being rather smaller than the Wieliczka mine near Cracow. The whole run is some twenty-four thousand feet in length, under the lovely hills of the Dürrenberg. The drive from Hallein is quite delightful, occupying about one hour and a half, and taking you through a broad but narrowing valley past the emperor's chateau, with a lofty hill, on the sides of which deer were browsing, at the back; past the castle of the Grand Duke Albrecht, surrounded by a wide moat; and through a most beautiful extent of country. Hallein is a dirty but somewhat picturesque old town, but the little inn at which we stopped is fortunate in possessing an hostess whose manners are obliging. Here we waited while our permission was made out and a vehicle got ready to drag us up the steep hill. The carriage was a sort of low tumbrel with four wheels, which tried to interlace in the most affectionate manner, and were only prevented from doing so (as it seemed to me) by an arrangement which served both as a step and a drag upon occasion. The ascent of the lovely hill-side took about forty minutes, and our slow progress seemed to give great satisfaction to several most wretched-looking beggar women, to whom the most persistent enemy to indiscriminate almsgiving could not have found in his heart to refuse a few kreutzers. At last we reached the top of the Dürrenberg, where is a really pretty village, inhabited, I believe, by the miners, who work from six in the morning till mid-day, and again from six P.M. until midnight, receiving one guilder (about forty cents at present). They number some three hundred. There is here also a very pretty church. Our guide then conducted us to a room where we were provided with a costume suited to the work before us, consisting of a jacket and trousers of coarse white canvas, tied in at the waist, ankles, and wrists, and a small brown cap, in which I felt, and I believe looked, very like a convict. We were also provided with a sort of leather cushion and a large leather glove, made with only a thumb. Our guide then took a lantern, and provided us with a candle, and we set off at once down long passages and seemingly interminable galleries, supported by wooden pillars, and with the crystals of the salt gleaming, red and golden brown, and black and olive-green, above us like unquarried marble. On we went under the floor of the church (a sort of foretaste of being buried), down more galleries, with very commonplace wooden doors, and then down a steep descent by sliding along a machine like a ladder without rungs, the guide going in front and holding a rope, which at once steadied us and regulated our speed. Now was the reason of the

glove made plain; for, as there were six more of these descents to be accomplished, with long galleries between each, and a well or two as a sort of oasis in the salt desert, we should have cut our hands pretty considerably without it. Then—

On a sudden, lo! the level lake.

"Yes, actually here, under ground that we had already traversed, and over ground that we were soon going to tread, at a distance of some six hundred and fifty feet from the surface of the earth, with the salt rock overarching it at about twelve feet from the surface, lay a lake some three hundred and sixty feet in length by two hundred and forty feet. Anything more weird, and at the same time more fascinating, I never saw, and never expect to see again; all around it, through the dark, little oil lamps gleamed and glistened red, and on the other side—it was the other side, as we discovered afterwards, for at the time you could have no idea of the extent—gleamed more lamps far away, like the signal lights of a railway on a foggy night. Our guide (whose kind attentions could not be described, and by no means rewarded by the sum given him in excess of the three guilder legitimately exacted) then pointed to something on the water, which looked like a ferry boat bewitched, and we entered it together; he waved his light three times, and we moved off with no sound of oars, and only a delicious gliding motion—no noise save the washing of the water cut by our bark. We blew out our light, and the guide, kind as ever, did likewise. One could not help thinking of Æneas when he descended (with a return ticket) to the Shades, and crossed the river Styx in company with Charon and the Sibyl of Cumæ. Insensibly as we neared the shore, and found that our means of progression had been a rope attached to a capstan and worked from this side, did I feel that I ought to see whether the penny which classic legend requires was in my mouth, and naturally did I seek to propitiate Charon. This was not difficult. Charon had not three throats, though if he had had them triple thirst would have been excusable in a salt mine, and was at once amenable to the dulcet influence of something wherewith to procure Bavarian beer. Then one more look at the lake and one more descent, and then you mount on a plank with wheels and shafts, into which two boys get, one before and the other behind; and then off you set at a tremendous pace, pausing only to see daylight for the first time far ahead of you; a dim, pale, golden star, but still daylight—and the two boys 'striking out' boldly and pluckily for it—and then you go on again, and the arched top gleams above you, and salt drops fall on you, and damp walls look pretty in the subdued light; and then you come to the pit's mouth, and you are told that you have had a run of 8000 feet, and you find that you have forgotten to take the time, and that the poor boys must be very tired, and that it is all over. You, on the contrary, feel sorry, but own that you would have given all your worldly wealth not to have missed it; but that would not do, for here are the boys, who must have a small portion of it, and the guide another, though he is trying not to laugh at the very different appearance you present in your damp canvas suit from that which you imagine you possess when you resume the superfluous clothing which was doffed before. And then you say good-by, and go down the hill, passing the salt streams on your way to the works, where they arrive long before you; and then your guide takes you through the churchyard, pausing to dash a few drops over a wreath which adorns a little grave, and looking very pleased because you both take off your hats while he does so; and then you understood all that is said to you about it, and only succeed in being a thorough impostor and in not knowing more of the processes than the fact that the salt streams run into the works, and are boiled in coppers heated red hot, and then, when the water has evaporated into steam, the salt remains as a sediment, and is rolled and blocked in due course; and you hear that ninety-six men are employed in the works. And then you bid your guide adieu, and make a note of the fact that Herr Wassmann is a guide whom you will recommend to your friends as pleasant, persevering, and most efficient, as well as amiable enough to call one florin nearly double his usual pay; and so you drive home to Salzburg.

"SAM, did you ever see the Catskill Mountains?"
"No, sah; but I've seen 'em kill mice."